

TEEN SUMMIT CONNECTION

8 Youth Participants from 6 States and 1 Country.
Army and Air Force dependents represented.
Two volunteers provided 9 hours of support.

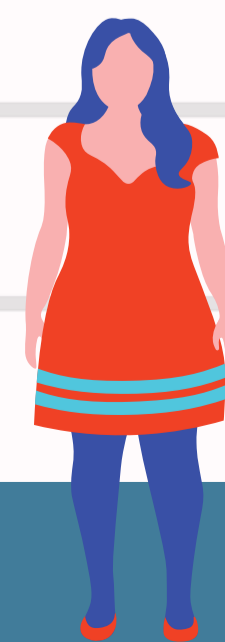
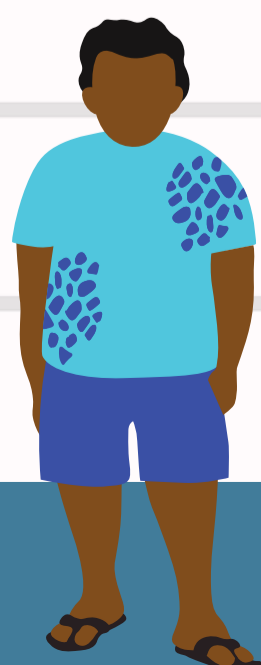
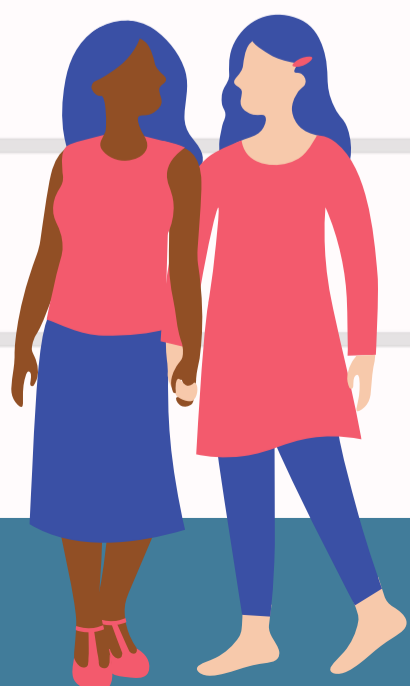
Virtual Connections:
Whole group and
breakout sessions on
Zoom.

Summary

All Georgia 4-H Summer Camping programs were canceled in 2020 including the 4-H Military Summits that aim to support, connect, and educate military dependent teens. The 4-H Military Staff worked to build connections for teens as they experienced the global pandemic without the opportunity for a face-to-face camp. Staff created, implemented, and evaluated the first-ever virtual Teen Summit Connection.

Presentation Topics:
Leadership, outdoor
education, and healthy
living topics.

CONNECTING MILITARY TEENS
ACROSS THE GLOBE



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Situation

Due to the global pandemic, COVID-19 caused adults and youth to either limit or restrict recreational, social, and educational activities. In a pre-program survey, 82% of respondents who had either previously attended or planned to attend a Military Teen Leadership Summit stated they were not planning to attend any other camps in 2020 due to the pandemic. Due to this lack of opportunity, the Georgia 4-H Military Partnership elected to create the virtual program called, Teen Summit Connection.

Response

Of the 64 respondents in the pre-event survey youth and parents stated they were willing to commit 1-2 hours to a virtual camp and shared if a virtual program was provided, they preferred to learn and connect through a live format. Youth also highlighted the programs that interested them the most, thus creating the framework for the Teen Summit Connection. The Georgia 4-H program is well-situated to respond to the situation facing military-connected youth. One of the core program areas of the 4-H program in Georgia is camping. Staff created 6 hours of content to share virtually with participants based on youth feedback spread out across three sessions throughout July. The Topics addressed sugar within drinks, exercise, how to work as a team, and how to prepare meals for backpacking, and how to be safe while hiking and camping. To ensure all could participate lessons were designed to require no supplies or used common household items. The program was free to all attendees and was available to youth ages 14 to 18. Georgia 4-H worked in partnership with Volunteers to facilitate and promote the opportunity.

Impact

Through the virtual Teen Summit Connection, youth learned valuable life skills such as leadership, communication, outdoor safety, and healthy living. The most important aspect provided was a sense of connection. Through the selection, research, and development of the Teen Summit Connection staff were able to create three separate sessions that allowed youth to connect within 2 hours. The Georgia 4-H Military Partnership was able to connect eight military-dependent youth that had no other opportunities for camping. Six states and one country were represented in the virtual program. The youth represented the Army and Air Force including the guard and reserve components of both branches. Due to the virtual program, 75% who responded to the survey felt they were able to connect with other military teens and 100% stated they would attend another virtual program in the future. One participant shared, "I learned that even if you don't know the team you can still work together to make a great product" and another participant shared her favorite part of the sessions was "the teamwork and games, in the beginning, to pull us out of our shell."

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