

USDA / Army Youth Development Project

Partners for Youth

2004



PARTNERS FOR YOUTH: USDA/ARMY YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

The effects of the global war on terrorism continued to dominate the work of the US Department of Agriculture/Army Youth Development Project (YDP). In 2004, five State 4-H Military Liaisons and their National 4-H Youth Directions Council representatives were invited to become part of a design team to develop an outreach initiative to serve children and youth of Army National Guard and Army Reserve Soldiers in communities across the country. This cooperative effort with Army and National 4-H Headquarters staff resulted in Operation: Military Kids state teams in 15 States with high military deployments.

Operation: Military Kids State Teams focus on services for newly military youth who, until their parents were deployed, did not have a day to day military connection and now find their lives changed dramatically! These youth often assume additional family responsibilities and find themselves without the support systems available to on post military youth. The intent of Operation: Military Kids is to form community support networks to help reduce the stress associated with a parent's assignment in a combat area and to educate the community at large about the impact of parental deployments on local military kids "in their own backyard."

Operation: Military Kids was launched by 4-H and Army teens at the National 4-H Conference in March, 2004 and featured in the opening keynote at USDA's CYFAR Conference in Seattle in May, 2004. Army teens at Ft. Meade, Maryland have produced a video to tell the OMK story. Youth at National 4-H Conference assembled "HERO



4-H youth writes a thank you letter to a Soldier as part of the OMK Community Service project.

photo credit: Edwin Remsberg-USDA/CSREES

PACKS" and distributed them to military youth in their states. Since then the Project has provided Operation: Military Kids grants to 15 states, and distributed 20,000 OMK manuals and 50,000 brochures to organizations and the general public.

Strong support to military children and youth has been the primary work of 24 Extension professionals from 15 Land Grant Universities who are on assignment to the Project. In addition, State 4-H Military Liaisons have responded to the call to help establish 4-H clubs on every Army installation, train Army staff in "4-H 101" and most recently, to collaborate with National Guard and Reserve to serve children and youth in local communities. State 4-H Military Liaisons in 25 states applied for and received Military 4-H Club grants totaling \$600,000 from Army, Air Force and CSREES. Hawaii's State 4-H Military Liaison, Claire Nakatsuka, was presented the second Army Salute Award in recognition for her commitment to building and supporting Army 4-H clubs in Hawaii.

Other 2004 highlights include distribution of the "4-H 101" Manual /CD ROM to State 4-H Military Liaisons and Army and Air Force Program staff; selection of Army teens to the National 4-H Technology Team and National 4-H Conference Planning Committee; participation of N4-HYDC teens in the Army Teen Panel; fielding 38 new Youth Technology Labs at 18 Army installations; and conducting "technology" training for Army staff. Faculty at Auburn University, Kansas State University, Virginia Tech, and University of Maryland have continued their invaluable support to all aspects of this complex collaboration which has played a significant role in meeting the youth development mission of Army Child and Youth Services and National 4-H Headquarters.

Please enjoy reading additional details of the accomplishments of the Project team in 2004!

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Child and Youth Services
HQ Department of Army

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Through the USDA/Army Youth Development Project, National 4-H Headquarters and Army Child and Youth Services provide predictable, consistent youth programs and introduce new youth to 4-H programs on Army installations worldwide. This partnership between the U.S. Army Community & Family Support Center and the USDA Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service brings together USDA's expertise in 4-H youth development with the Army's goal of becoming the nation's model for youth programs.

4-H youth development and technology specialists from Extension Services in 13 Land Grant Universities who are assigned to the USDA/Army Youth Development Project provide training and technical assistance to Army Child and Youth Services staff on multiple education and technology initiatives. Army installation staff work directly with 4-H youth development professionals in their counties and State 4-H Military Liaisons who coordinate military support on a statewide basis.

HERE'S A LOOK AT WHAT WE'VE ACCOMPLISHED THIS YEAR:

Operation: Military Kids creates community support networks for military youth when Soldier Parents in the National Guard and Army Reserve are deployed. Cooperative Extension staff, community agencies, schools, 4-H youth, National Guard and Reserve Family Program staff are reaching out to military youth...before, during and after their parents are deployed. In our first year, Operation: Military Kids accomplishments include:

- Sponsored a strategic planning session with 4-H youth and adult participants who developed the framework for Operation: Military Kids.
- Provided grants to pilot the OMK program in six states and increased the initiative to 15 states.
- Developed brochures, a training manual, website, displays and a youth produced Public Service Announcement.
- Unveiled OMK at the National 4-H Conference; participants created 320 HERO PACKS and wrote letters for the National Service Project to recognize the children of deployed National Guard and Reserve Soldiers.
- Supported and provided resources for 21 states and territories to replicate the HERO PACK community service project.
- Sponsored strategic planning session with 4-H youth and adult participants who developed the framework for ten Operation: Military Kids teams to participate in the Military Child Education Coalition training, Supporting the Children of the National Guard and Reserve.
- Facilitated State 4-H Military Liaisons participation in state/regional National Guard and Army Reserve meetings and provided 4-H and Operation: Military Kids information to attendees.
- Showcased the USDA/Military Partnership and conducted workshops at the National 4-H, Galaxy and CYFAR conferences.
- Youth Development: This work is a combined effort of CSREES and Army staff, 11 USDA Youth Development Specialists, 51 State 4-H Military Liaisons, university and county 4-H professionals and Army installation Child and Youth staff around the world. Teams collaborated to provide a wide variety of programs for our military children and youth!
- Achieved a 47% increase in Army sponsored 4-H Clubs for a total of 435 Army 4-H Clubs at 95 installation locations worldwide.
- Enrolled 11,707 Army youth and 936 staff volunteers in a variety of 4-H projects such as technology, visual and performing arts, photography, citizenship, gardening, foods and more – approximately 25,000 project enrollments!
- Conducted six 4-H 101 trainings for 143 participants including Extension staff, Native American communities, Army Child and Youth Service and Air Force Family Member Program staff.
- Completed the 4-H 101 training materials and distributed more than 4,000 copies in CD ROM format.
- Awarded Military 4-H Club Grants to Cooperative Extension offices in 25 states funded and sponsored by a joint CSREES/USDA, Army and Air Force partnership.
- Increased the number of State 4-H Military Liaisons to 51 in the continental United States and territories in an effort to establish and expand 4-H clubs and reach out to National Guard and Reserve families in communities where they reside.
- Facilitated strategic planning session with 37 State 4-H Military Liaisons who developed action plans on how to meet the needs of military families and youth in their communities.
- Presented 2nd USDA/Army Youth Development Project Salute Award to Claire Nakastuka, Oahu County, Hawaii at the Galaxy II National Conference for Extension Professionals.
- Provided on site technical assistance to increase Army School Age Programs national accreditation rate to 84%.
- Worked with Regional Child and Youth Evaluation Teams to maintain 100% DOD certification of Army School Age, Middle School and Teen Programs.
- Established new partnership between the Army Teen Panel and National 4-H Youth Directions Council.
- Conducted three CHARACTER COUNTS! trainings for 113 Army Child & Youth Services staff.
- Trained 63 Army Sport Directors in Pursuing Victory with Honor curriculum.
- Supported Army youth selected for the National 4-H Conference Planning Committee.
- Youth Technology: This work is a combined effort of CSREES and Army staff, nine USDA Technology Specialists, State 4-H Tech teams and countless university and county Extension 4-H professionals working with Army installation staff across the country. Army and 4-H staff collaborated to integrate program and technology in support of educational programs for military children and youth.
- Supported technology programming and program integration at 193 Youth Technology Labs. Increased Internet connectivity to 90% of these labs.
- Expanded Army technology programs to include many GPS/GIS and Robotics activities. Installations used the GPS/GIS to involve teens in mapping projects, scavenger hunts and team building exercises.
- Increased CYS Tech Teams activity across the Army to include participation in State 4-H Technology Team and Boys & Girls Club of America technology activities.
- Supported Army youth participating on the National 4-H Youth Technology Leadership Team and the 4-H USA Web team.
- Installed new Youth Technology Lab (YTL) prototypes at Fort Knox; fielded 38 new YTL at 18 Army Installations.
- Conducted training for 33 Functional Technology Specialists working in Army Child and Youth Programs.
- Completed an Operations Reference Book for the Youth Technology Labs that provides a concrete framework for technology in Child & Youth Services programming for all ages.
- Supported deployment and training of Child & Youth Management System (CYMS) at 34 Army locations.
- Completed training guide that will ensure consistent and predictable assessment of functionality and implementation of CYMS in CYS programs.
- Launched the web based ArmyFCC.com resource and marketing tool for Army Family Child Care providers.

USDA/ARMY YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROJECT LOOKS TOWARD THE FUTURE:

We are proud of our accomplishments in 2004, and even more excited about new initiatives we have identified for 2005 and beyond! Army and 4-H will collaborate with numerous universities to develop and build predictable programs around fitness and nutrition, babysitting classes, home alone skills, camping manuals and protocols, and helping youth cope with the stresses of deployment. We will continue our collaboration with Air Force on the Military 4-H Grants and provide up to 10 new Operation: Military Kids grants. Our 4-H babysitting programs will be linked with the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies and we are working to establish mobile youth technology labs to enable military youth to communicate with deployed parents. The partnership of National 4-H Headquarters and Army Child and Youth Services is 10 years old and the benefits to these Federal agencies are second only to the benefits to children and youth whose parents are serving our country.

For more information about the USDA/Army Youth Development Project, contact:

Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture
202-720-5075

U.S. Army Community & Family Support Center
703-681-5385

Or visit our website at: www.usda-army-ydp.org

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