



Chapter Three:

Introducing Operation: Military Kids and the OMK Implementation Framework

I. Lesson Plan

- A. Purpose: Define Operation: Military Kids Outreach Initiative and explain the OMK Implementation Framework and oversight responsibilities of the different levels of that framework.
- B. Objectives:
 - 1. What is Operation: Military Kids?
 - 2. Who are the Core OMK Partners?
 - 3. Define and discuss “Building Community Capacity.”
 - 4. What/who are the Management Groups of OMK and what are their oversight responsibilities?
 - 5. Define three program components of Operation: Military Kids.
- C. Time: 45–60 minutes
- D. Preparation/Materials Needed:
 - ✦ Flip chart paper and markers
 - ✦ Participant Handouts—OMK Overview and OMK Implementation Framework
 - ✦ Participant Handouts—Speak Out for Military Kids and Hero Packs
 - ✦ List of Deployment Issues

II. Training Session Content

- A. PowerPoint Slides
 - Operation: Military Kids Overview**
 - Slide 3-1: Introduction to Operation: Military Kids and OMK Implementation Framework
 - Slide 3-2: What is Operation: Military Kids?
 - Slide 3-3: Quote From General Helmly—Change in the Army Reserve
 - Slide 3-4: Army Youth Development Project—Why Expand?
 - Slide 3-5: Operation: Military Kids—The Concept
 - Slide 3-6: Goal and Objectives of Operation: Military Kids
 - Slide 3-7: Guiding Principles of Operation: Military Kids

- Slide 3-8: Operation: Military Kids Documentation
- Slide 3-9: Operation: Military Kids Core Partners
- Slide 3-10: States Receiving Operation: Military Kids Grants
- Slide 3-11: What is Building Community Capacity?
- Slide 3-12: Definition of Building Community Capacity

Operation: Military Kids Implementation Framework

- Slide 3-13: Introduction to the OMK Implementation Framework
- Slide 3-14: 4-H/Army Youth Development Project Chart
- Slide 3-15: What is the Army Youth Development Project?
- Slide 3-16: OMK Oversight Responsibilities of the 4-H/Army YDP
- Slide 3-17: OMK Management Team
- Slide 3-18: OMK Management Team Oversight Responsibilities
- Slide 3-19: OMK Program Marketing and Resource Materials Provided by OMK Management Team
- Slide 3-20: OMK Partnership Advisory Group
- Slide 3-21: Oversight Responsibilities for OMK Advisory Group
- Slide 3-22: OMK State Teams
- Slide 3-23: OMK Community Volunteer Partners
- Slide 3-24: OMK State Team Roles and Responsibilities
- Slide 3-25: OMK Management Framework
- Slide 3-26: OMK Statewide Support Networks
- Slide 3-27: OMK Local Community Support Networks
- Slide 3-28: OMK Implementation Framework
- Slide 3-29: OMK Keys to Implementation
- Slide 3-30: Core OMK Programs
- Slide 3-31: Ready, Set, Go! Training Content
- Slide 3-32: Ready, Set, Go! Chapter Framework
- Slide 3-33: Speak Out for Military Kids (SOMK)
- Slide 3-34: Speak Out for Military Kids: Outcomes
- Slide 3-35: Speak Out for Military Kids: Resources
- Slide 3-36: Hero Pack Initiative
- Slide 3-37: What is in a Hero Pack?
- Slide 3-38: Hero Pack Implementation
- Slide 3-39: Mobile Technology Labs
- Slide 3-40: Mobile Technology Labs Hardware/Software
- Slide 3-41: Mobile Technology Labs OMK State Team Oversight

B. Activity & Directions

1. Operation: Military Kids Overview Brief
 - Brief large group on OMK overview.
2. Building Community Capacity Discussion
 - Break into small groups.
 - Ask participants to respond to the question, “What do we mean by ‘Building Community Capacity?’”

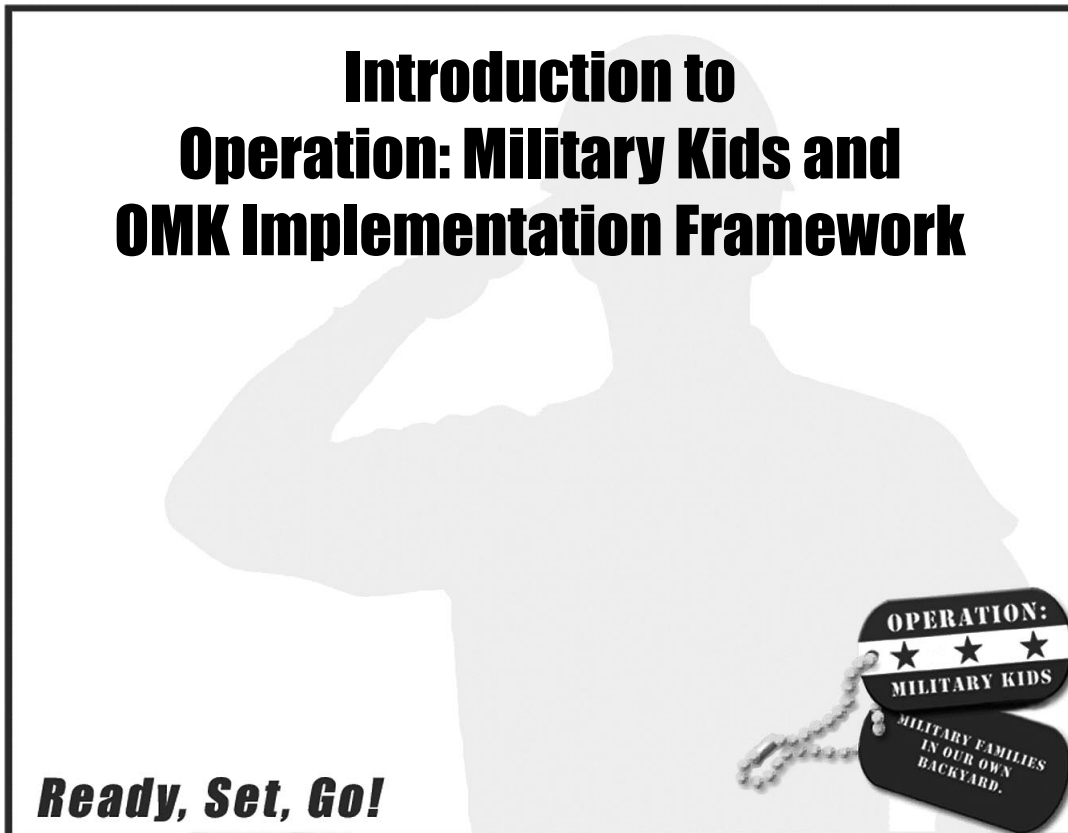
- Give one issue to each group. Each group must develop a strategy on how to build capacity on the issue they were given. They will need to include needed resources, training requirements, etc.
 - Have the smaller groups brief back to entire group.
3. Operation: Military Kids Implementation Framework Brief
 - In the large group, go through the OMK Implementation Framework Brief.

III. Must-Read Background Material

- A. Operation: Military Kids Website—<http://www.operationmilitarykids.org>
- B. Overview of National 4-H Program
- C. Boys & Girls Clubs of America Description
- D. Operation Proud Partner (OPP) Sites (Boys & Girls Clubs)
- E. American Legion OMK Fact Sheet
- F. Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC) Description
- G. Speak Out for Military Kids (SOMK) Program Overview
- H. Hero Pack Initiative Overview

IV. Evaluation

- A. Reflection Questions
 1. What did you learn in this discussion about Operation: Military Kids that you didn't know before?
 2. Does this information change your perception/purpose of your role on your State OMK Team?
 3. What strengths do you and your organization bring to the Operation: Military Kids Implementation Framework?
- B. Application Questions
 1. How are we going to work together as a State Operation: Military Kids Team?
 2. Do any of us know someone/another organization that we need to ask to be a part of this team?
 3. How are we as a team going to ensure we create the links and support systems to establish the Community Capacity necessary to effectively address the issues children and youth are facing in our state?



Slide 3-1: Introduction to Operation: Military Kids and OMK Implementation Framework

Content of this slide adapted from: N/A

Materials Needed: Copies of RSG! Read-Ahead Materials

Trainer Tips: If your group was given the RSG! Read-Ahead Materials, you can treat much of the Implementation Framework as review, therefore not spending as much time on it.

What to **Do**, What to **Say**:

Say: *In the next 30 minutes or so we are going to introduce the concept of OMK and discuss the framework that will help you operationalize OMK in your state.*

What is Operation: Military Kids (OMK)?

A U.S. Army Collaborative Effort with
America's Communities to Support
"Suddenly Military" Kids Impacted by
the Global War on Terrorism

Ready, Set, Go!



Slide 3-2: What is Operation: Military Kids?

Content of this slide adapted from: N/A

Materials Needed: N/A

Trainer Tips: N/A

What to **Do**, What to **Say**:

Do: • Review slide.

Say: *Operation: Military Kids is a collaboration with America's communities, starting with the members of your state team.*

Throughout the week, you will discuss and plan as a team who else in your state needs to be engaged in this collaboration.

The focus of OMK is to provide support for children and youth impacted by the Global War on Terrorism and geographically dispersed from military installations—primarily the youth of National Guard and Reserve families.

The main goal of these state collaborations is to build community capacity to address issues that these children and youth may be facing.

LTG James R. Helmly, Chief, Army Reserve

“A major order culture change is taking place in the Reserve so that reservists know, upon joining, that they will be called up to active duty for between nine and twelve months every 4 to 5 years”

Ready, Set, Go!



Slide 3-3: Quote from General Helmly—Change in the Army Reserve

Content of this slide adapted from: N/A

Materials Needed: N/A

Trainer Tips: N/A

What to **Do**, What to **Say**:

Do: • Review slide.

Say: *The lives of National Guard and Army Reserve Soldiers are changing in dramatic fashion.*

This quote from LTG Helmly indicates a major change for the Reserve Soldier. Rather than a possibility of being called to active duty, it is a certainty during their time of service that they will be called up for a tour of duty.

This change is having and will continue to have tremendous impacts on the families and communities of these soldiers.

Say: *What are some of the impacts on children and youth when a parent of a National Guard or Army Reserve family is deployed?*

Do: • Ask for a few examples from the audience.

4-H/Army Youth Development Project (YDP)

Why Expand?

- When parents are deployed, “suddenly military” kids who live in local communities:
 - Become “different,” but still “look” the same
 - Discover their world is turned upside down
 - Find usual support systems no longer relevant
 - Lack “connections to each other”
 - Impacted by intensity/frequency of media coverage of the Global War on Terrorism

Ready, Set, Go!



Slide 3-4: 4-H/Army Youth Development Project (YDP)

Content of this slide adapted from: N/A

Materials Needed: N/A

Trainer Tips: N/A

What to **Do**, What to **Say**:

Do: • Review slide.

Say: *These are some of the reasons that the 4-H/Army Youth Development Project developed Operation: Military Kids.*

Do: • Get a definition from the audience of “suddenly military” kids.

Say: *“Suddenly military” kids of National Guard and Reserve families don’t live on or near a military installation.*

OMK—The Concept

- Responds to the needs of geographically dispersed Army National Guard, Army Reserve, and Active Component military—youth whose parents have been deployed in support of the Global War on Terrorism.
- Delivered in local communities through collaboration with U.S. Army Child and Youth Services, 4-H, Boys & Girls Clubs of America, the Military Child Education Coalition, The American Legion, National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (NACCRRRA), and other community agencies serving youth at national, state, and local levels.
- Infrastructure developed in 34 OMK state teams that work to build the community capacity of local community support networks to provide services that support child and youth of National Guard and Army Reserve families.

Ready, Set, Go!



Slide 3-5: Operation: Military Kids—The Concept

Content of this slide adapted from: N/A

Materials Needed: N/A

Trainer Tips: N/A

What to **Do**, What to **Say**:

Do: • Review slide.

Say: *The YDP project wanted to expand and develop a program that responds to the needs of geographically dispersed National Guard, Reserve, and Active Component youth whose parents have been deployed in support of GWOT.*

Again, it is a collaborative effort, focused on building community capacity to address issues and provide support for children and youth.

OMK is operating in 34 states.

Goals and Objectives of Operation: Military Kids

OMK GOAL: Support the children and youth of those who serve in the National Guard and Reserve

OMK OBJECTIVES:

- Raise community awareness of “suddenly military” kids
- Build community capacity to deliver outreach services
- Implement outreach support services
- Provide OMK Ready, Set, Go! Training to each OMK state team

Ready, Set, Go!



Slide 3-6: Goals and Objectives of Operation: Military Kids

Content of this slide adapted from: N/A

Materials Needed: N/A

Trainer Tips: N/A

What to **Do**, What to **Say**:

Do: • Review slide.

Say: *These are the goals and objectives of OMK.*

The focus of OMK is to support the National Guard and Army Reserve; however, we don't turn away a military child just because their parent is in the Coast Guard or Marines or any other branch of service.

We will discuss a little later some core OMK program components.

Guiding Principles of OMK

- Partnerships and joint commitment at the federal, state, and local level are critical.
- Rapid response to the issues is necessary to effect change.
- Youth's best interests are paramount.
- OMK outreach services must be replicable.
- OMK initiatives must be sustainable.
- OMK impact must be documented.

Ready, Set, Go!



Slide 3-7: Guiding Principles of OMK

Content of this slide adapted from: N/A

Materials Needed: N/A

Trainer Tips: N/A

What to **Do**, What to **Say**:

Do: • Review slide.

Say: *These are the guiding principles for OMK. These principles should help guide your OMK efforts and be built into your state team actions plans that you will be developing.*

With all of the changes happening in the Army, National Guard, Reserve, and Active Component military, local community support networks need to be ready to deliver programs quickly. Deployments and return dates are no longer entirely predictable, and we need to be prepared for these changes.

Say: *Because we want to share good programs ideas across the nation, activities should be replicable. Each state should report program activities on the state section of the OMK website.*

State teams should work to build capacity in their state so communities have support systems in place for the duration of the Global War on Terrorism.

Reporting is going to be very important, not only so we can collect best practices and good program activities but also to enable the Army to justify the dollars being invested.

Documentation needs to be a team effort!

OMK Documentation

- State Teams need to provide regular updates to the OMK website <http://www.operationmilitarykids.org>
- State Teams are required to submit a year-end report that documents OMK outcomes.

Ready, Set, Go!



Slide 3-8: OMK Documentation

Content of this slide adapted from: N/A

Materials Needed: N/A

Trainer Tips: N/A

What to ***Do***, What to ***Say***:

Do: • Review slide.

Say: *These are the two mediums of documentation for OMK State Teams.*

1) Each state has its own page on the OMK website. You should update your state page regularly with photos and upcoming events. Every member of your state team should have input on your state page.

2) State teams are required to submit year-end reports. These reports need to be done as a team so that all OMK activities are captured in the reporting process.

OMK CORE PARTNERS

- U.S. Army Children and Youth Services (Active and Reserve Components) and Cooperative State Research Education and Extension Service (CSREES)
- 4-H
- Boys & Girls Clubs of America (BGCA)
- Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC)
- The American Legion
- Community Agencies, e.g., National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (NACCRRA)

Ready, Set, Go!



Slide 3-9: OMK Core Partners

Content of this slide adapted from: N/A

Materials Needed: N/A

Trainer Tips: N/A

What to ***Do***, What to ***Say***:

Do: • Review slide.

Say: *These are the core OMK partners that have made a commitment to support OMK. You will be learning more about each of these organizations as we go through the training.*

Do: • As you go down the list, ask members of each organization to stand. This gives people a visual image of who is in the room.

States Receiving OMK Grants

- Alabama
- Arkansas
- Arizona
- California
- Florida
- Georgia
- Hawaii
- Idaho
- Illinois
- Indiana
- Iowa
- Kansas
- Kentucky
- Louisiana
- Maine
- Maryland
- Massachusetts
- Michigan
- Minnesota
- Mississippi
- Missouri
- Nebraska
- Nevada
- New Hampshire
- New Jersey
- New York
- North Carolina
- Ohio
- South Carolina
- South Dakota
- Tennessee
- Texas
- Virginia
- Washington

Ready, Set, Go!



Slide 3-10: States Receiving OMK Grants

Content of this slide adapted from: N/A

Materials Needed: N/A

Trainer Tips: N/A

What to **Do**, What to **Say**:

Do: • Review slide.

Say: *These are the states that have received OMK grants. The states in red are new OMK states.*

However, there are other states not listed here who are also conducting OMK-type activities in support of military families.



Slide 3-11: What is Building Community Capacity?

Content of this slide adapted from: N/A

Materials Needed: List of issues children and youth face due to deployment of a parent from newspaper article activity conducted Monday evening; chart paper; markers

Trainer Tips: N/A

What to **Do**, What to **Say**:

Say: *We now know what the concept of OMK is. And we have been talking a lot about building capacity...creating networks of support for children and youth of Guard and Reserve families. What comes to your mind when I say COMMUNITY CAPACITY?*

- Do:**
- Get groups to brainstorm what they think community capacity is.
 - Capture all responses on chart paper.

Definition of Building Community Capacity

Community capacity is the interaction of human capital, organizational resources, and social capital existing within a given community that can be leveraged to solve collective problems and improve or maintain the well-being of that community. It may operate through informal social processes and/or organized efforts by individuals, organizations, and social networks that exist among them, and between them and the larger systems of which the community is a part.

Ready, Set, Go!



Slide 3-12: Definition of Building Community Capacity

Content of this slide adapted from: *Building Community Capacity* by Robert J. Chaskin, Prudence Brown, Sudhir Venkatesh, and Avis Vidal

Materials Needed: N/A

Trainer Tips: N/A

What to **Do**, What to **Say**:

Do: • Review slide.

Say: *This is the definition used by Robert J. Chaskin and others to define community capacity.*

Do: • Capacity building exercise:

- Write issues on index cards (at least one issue per small group).
- Goal of the exercise is to get state teams to brainstorm strategies on how to build capacity to address a particular issue.
- Give each state team or small group an issue that may face a youth from a National Guard or Reserve family.

- Have them develop a strategy to build capacity in their state to support those youth.
- Have the smaller groups report back to the large group.

Say: *Keeping that definition in mind, we will conduct a capacity building exercise. Each state team will receive an index card that describes one or more issues that may confront a child. Examples might include lack of educator awareness of this issue at school, lack of partnership in the community, or lack of child care. As a team, develop a strategy or ideas on how you would build community capacity to support that issue. Include needed resources, training requirements, communication links, etc.*



Slide 3-13: Implementation Framework

Content of this slide adapted from: N/A

Materials Needed: N/A

Trainer Tips: N/A

What to **Do**, What to **Say**:

Do: • Review slide.

Say: *In the introduction to OMK we talked about the concept of OMK and some of the goals and objectives we want to accomplish.*

We want to:

- Build community capacity across each OMK state to deliver support programs*
- Raise awareness of the impact of the GWOT on geographically isolated families*
- Deliver support services to military children and youth*

We have identified Core OMK Partners. Now we are going to look at the various levels of the OMK Implementation Framework and the oversight responsibilities at each of those levels.

As we look at the framework, think about how you as a state team are going to operationalize the framework throughout your state.



Slide 3-14: 4-H/Army Youth Development Project Chart

Content of this slide adapted from: N/A

Materials Needed: N/A

Trainer Tips: N/A

What to **Do**, What to **Say**:

Do: • Review slide.

Say: *As we discussed earlier, OMK is the reaction of the 4-H Army YDP to the GWOT and the impact that it is having on geographically dispersed youth.*

The U.S. Army Community and Family Support Center (CFSC) and the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES) have had an interagency partnership since 1995. Over these ten years, they established the solid foundation that led to the development of OMK.

What	Who
<p>AYDP is a collaborative effort between the National 4-H Headquarters and U.S. Army Child and Youth Services to provide predictable, consistent youth programs and introduce new youth to 4-H programs on Army installations worldwide.</p> <p>This partnership brings together USDA's expertise in youth development with the Army's goal to become the nation's model for youth programs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4-H Youth Development and Technology Extension Specialists from 13 land-grant universities are assigned to the Army to provide training and technical assistance to installation Child and Youth Staff. • Additionally, Army Child and Youth Staff work directly with local 4-H County Personnel and State 4-H Military Liaisons, who coordinate support for military youth on a state-wide basis. <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nationally recognized, effective youth organization • Source of youth development professionals • Compatible positive youth development strategy • Outreach delivery complements Army facility-based programs • Strong national infrastructure and international capability • Research-based materials support Army youth framework • Links to local communities and off-post youth opportunities • Federal interagency partnership = wise use of public resources

Slide 3-15: What is the 4-H/Army Youth Development Project?

Content of this slide adapted from: N/A

Materials Needed: N/A

Trainer Tips: N/A

What to **Do**, What to **Say**:

Do: • Review slide.

Say: *This partnership has helped the Army provide predictable, quality programs for their families and has helped 4-H reach a whole new audience across the country and around the world.*

The outreach delivery system of 4-H complements the Army's facility-based programs and has allowed the Army CYS Programs to reach more of their target youth audience.

This federal interagency partnership is a wise use of public resources.

4-H/Army Youth Development Project

Oversight Responsibilities for Operation: Military Kids (OMK)

- Identify Potential OMK States
- Secure Funding for OMK Grants
- Develop OMK State Request for Proposals
- Approve State OMK Proposals

Ready, Set, Go!



Slide 3-16: Oversight Responsibilities of the 4-H/Army YDP

Content of this slide adapted from: N/A

Materials Needed: N/A

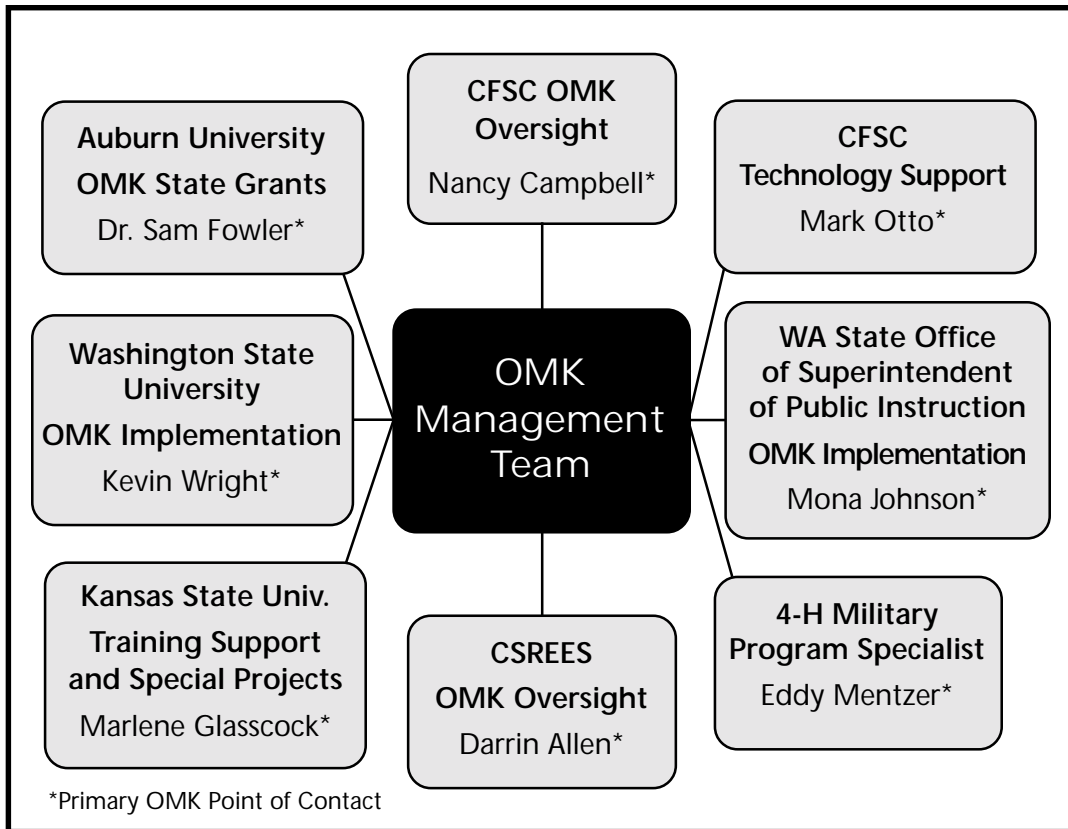
Trainer Tips: N/A

What to ***Do***, What to ***Say***:

Do: • Review slide.

Say: *The Youth Development project helps identify potential OMK states by working with National Guard, Army Reserve, and State 4-H Military Liaisons.*

Potential OMK states are identified by mobilization/deployment numbers and the level of support in the Extension System, National Guard, and Army Reserve for this collaborative effort.



Slide 3-17: OMK Management Team

Content of this slide adapted from: N/A

Materials Needed: N/A

Trainer Tips: N/A

What to **Do**, What to **Say**:

Do: • Review slide.

Say: *The OMK management team is a combination of staff Army Child and Youth Services and the YDP.*

Do: • As you go through the text boxes, have representatives from these organizations stand and be recognized.

Say: *Washington State has taken the lead in developing and printing the RSG! Manual and executing the annual RSG! Trainings.*

Kansas State University handles the logistics for all RSG! Trainings.

University of Auburn manages all of the OMK sub-agreements with the OMK states.

OMK Management Team

Oversight Responsibilities for OMK Management Team:

- Manage OMK State Grants
- Provide OMK program resources and marketing materials
- Provide technical assistance to OMK State Teams
- Field and support OMK Mobile Technology labs
- Fund RSG! Training Course for OMK State Teams
- Provide guidance for OMK implementation

Ready, Set, Go!



Slide 3-18: OMK Management Team

Content of this slide adapted from: N/A

Materials Needed: N/A

Trainer Tips: N/A

What to ***Do***, What to ***Say***:

Do: • Review slide.

Say: *The OMK Management Team has programmatic oversight for the OMK grants. They develop and disseminate national OMK marketing and program resources, such as informational brochures, the Speak Out for Military Kids manual, Hero Packs, and the Mobile Technology Labs.*

OMK Program Marketing and Resources Materials

- OMK Annual State Grants (\$50K)
- OMK Hero Pack Initiative
- OMK Speak Out for Military Kids Manual
- OMK Mobile Technology Labs
- Promotional Materials (e.g., lanyards, OMK bracelets)
- Marketing Materials
 - OMK Informational Cards
 - OMK Portable Displays
 - Committed Partner Posters
 - OMK Public Service Announcements
- OMK Annual Reports

Ready, Set, Go!



Slide 3-19: OMK Program Marketing and Resources Materials

Content of this slide adapted from: N/A

Materials Needed: N/A

Trainer Tips: N/A

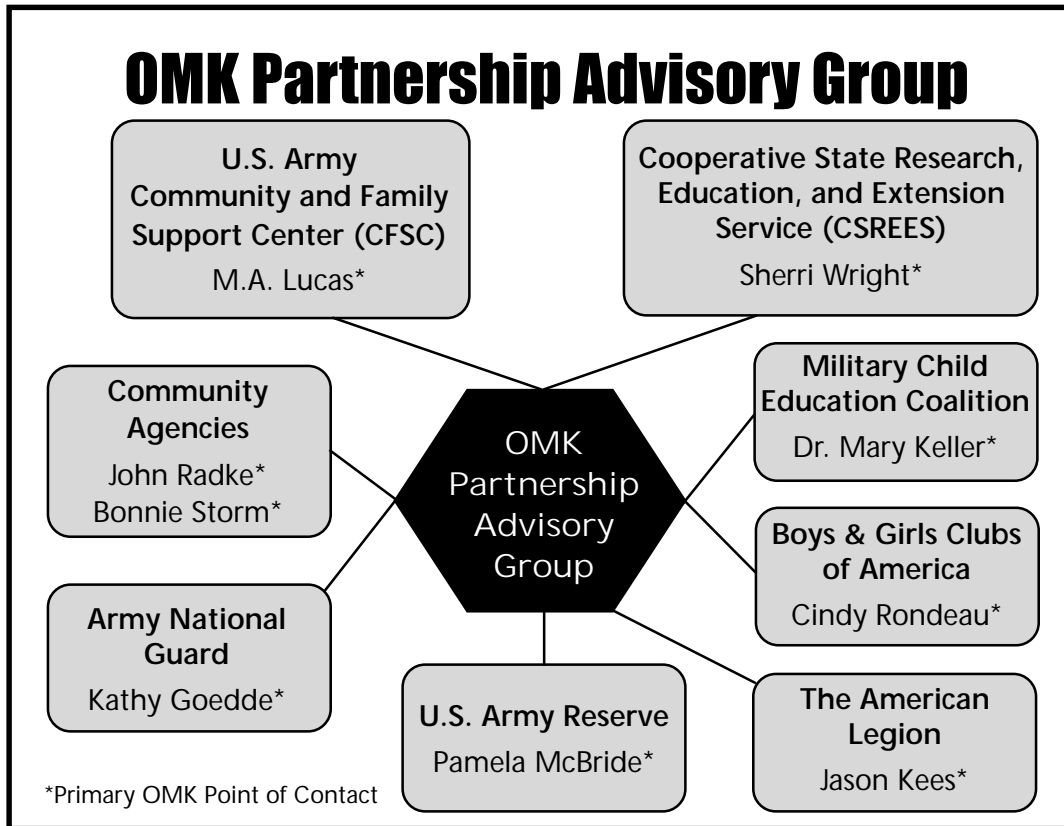
What to ***Do***, What to ***Say***:

Do: • Review slide.

Say: *These are some of the OMK materials that are available.*

Do: • Have some of the OMK materials to show and tell.

Say: *These items are available to all OMK partners. Items must be requested through your State 4-H Liaison. This helps us track which states have been given materials and allows us to distribute them equitably.*



Slide 3-20: OMK Partnership Advisory Group

Content of this slide adapted from: N/A

Materials Needed: N/A

Trainer Tips: N/A

What to **Do**, What to **Say**:

Do: • Review slide.

Say: *The partnership advisory group includes a representative from each core OMK partner.*

Do: • Have representatives of each organization stand and be recognized.

OMK Partnership Advisory Group

Oversight Responsibilities for OMK Advisory Group:

- Help OMK State Teams connect with core OMK Partners at state and local levels
- Train constituencies in OMK States
- Promote OMK to key personnel in Partner Organizations
- Develop Partner Program materials for use with OMK States
- Work with National OMK Director and OMK State Team Leaders (4-H Military Liaisons) to ensure State Teams have current OMK information and materials

Ready, Set, Go!



Slide 3-21: Oversight Responsibilities for OMK Advisory Group

Content of this slide adapted from: N/A

Materials Needed: N/A

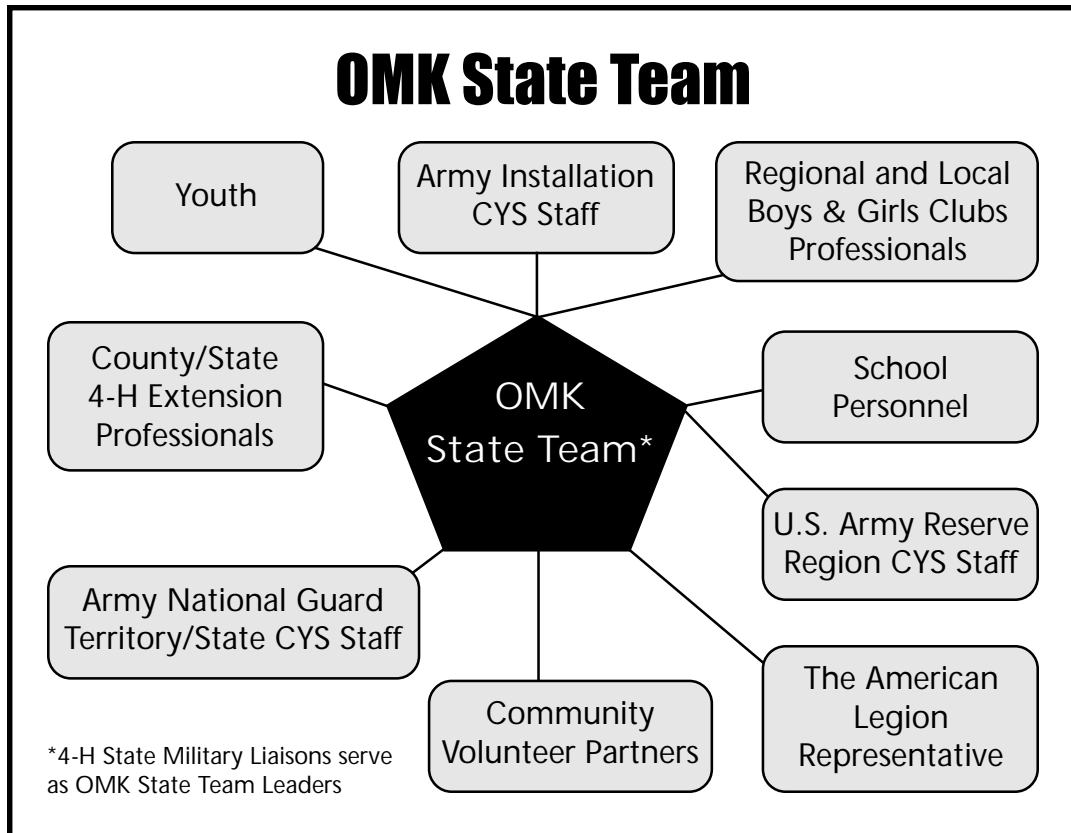
Trainer Tips: N/A

What to **Do**, What to **Say**:

Do: • Review slide.

Say: *The partnership advisory group members are resources for state teams. They can help them find a good state or local partner to participate on their state team. For example, the Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC) can help find a Department of Education staff person for your state team.*

Partners also provide technical assistance and strategies to OMK state teams, helping them connect and work effectively with local and state partner constituencies.



Slide 3-22: OMK State Teams

Content of this slide adapted from: N/A

Materials Needed: N/A

Trainer Tips: N/A

What to **Do**, What to **Say**:

Do: • Review slide.

Say: *The OMK State Teams are the heart of OMK.*

Building on the infrastructure of the YDP, State 4-H Military Liaisons serve as the OMK State Team Leaders.

State Teams are comprised of representatives from each of the core OMK partners and any other agencies in the state that have resources and a willingness to contribute to OMK.



Slide 3-23: OMK Community Volunteer Partners

Content of this slide adapted from: N/A

Materials Needed: N/A

Trainer Tips: N/A

What to **Do**, What to **Say**:

Do: • Review slide.

Say: *Here are some examples of community volunteer partners.*

The goal of your state team should be to have a committed, diverse, inclusive group representing OMK at the state and local levels.

OMK State Team

OMK Roles and Responsibilities:

- Create Statewide OMK Community Support Networks
- Provide OMK Ready, Set, Go! Course to State OMK Partners
- Coordinate delivery of "Speak Out for Military Kids" OMK Speakers Bureau
- Deliver youth outreach service programs through Partner Organizations
- Coordinate Partner use of the OMK Mobile Technology Lab(s)
- Submit OMK year-end accomplishment reports to OMK Management Team

Ready, Set, Go!



Slide 3-24: OMK State Team Roles and Responsibilities

Content of this slide adapted from: N/A

Materials Needed: N/A

Trainer Tips: N/A

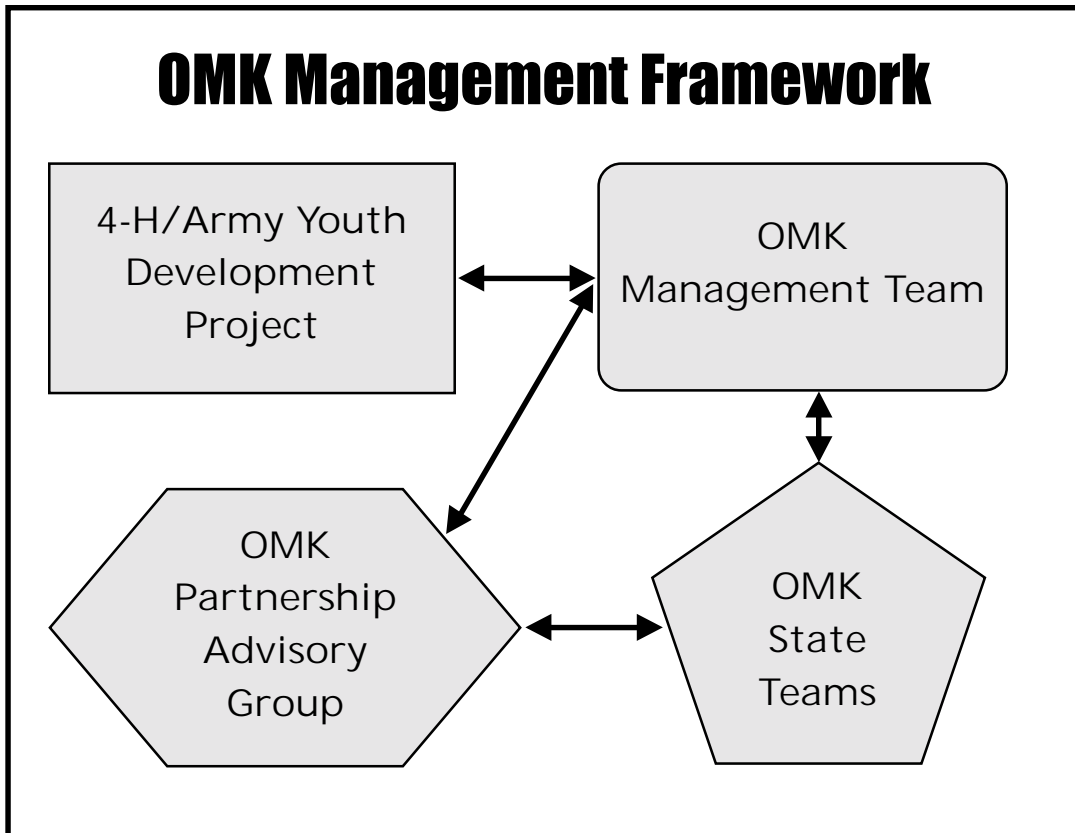
What to **Do**, What to **Say**:

Do: • Review slide.

Say: *State teams build the capacity of local communities to deliver outreach support programs.*

They manage, market, and coordinate use of the Mobile Technology Lab.

Each member of the state team should have input into the year-end reports.



Slide 3-25: OMK Management Framework

Content of this slide adapted from: N/A

Materials Needed: N/A

Trainer Tips: N/A

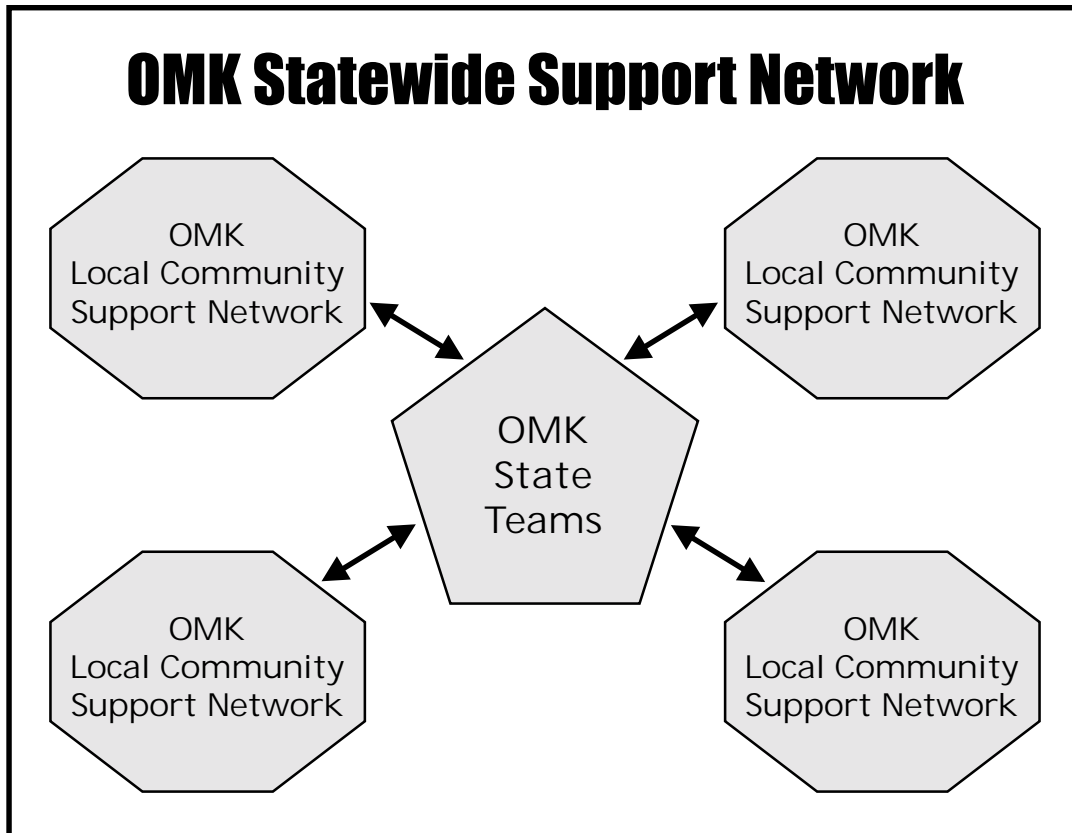
What to **Do**, What to **Say**:

Do: • Review slide.

Say: *These four groups make up the OMK Management Framework.*

Communication between each of these groups is essential to ensure that people and groups get the information they need in order to support the children and youth of National Guard and Reserve families.

The next couple of slides explain how we make OMK operational.



Slide 3-26: OMK Statewide Support Network

Content of this slide adapted from: N/A

Materials Needed: N/A

Trainer Tips: N/A

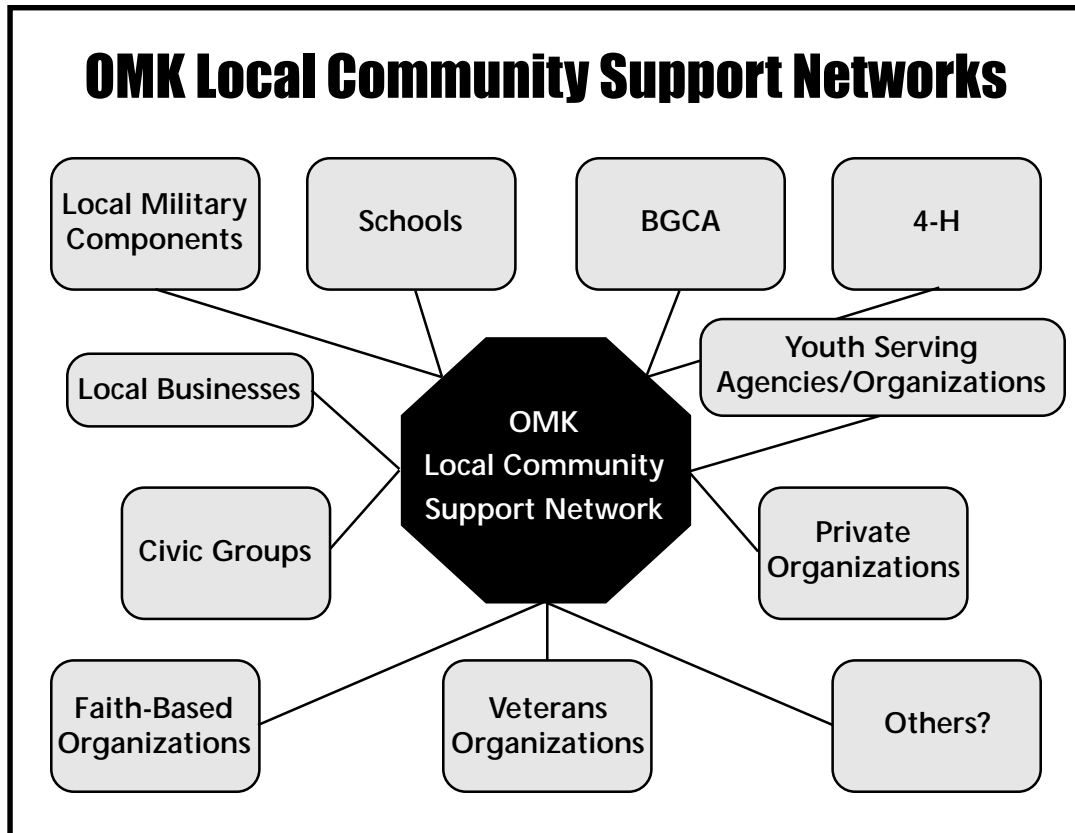
What to **Do**, What to **Say**:

Do: • Review slide.

Say: *OMK state teams are responsible for engaging and training local community agencies, organizations, and people to create OMK local community support networks.*

With help from OMK State Team members, Local OMK Community Support Networks are able to deliver the needed support services to the children and youth who need them.

This RSG! manual is your training resource.



Slide 3-27: OMK Local Community Support Networks

Content of this slide adapted from: N/A

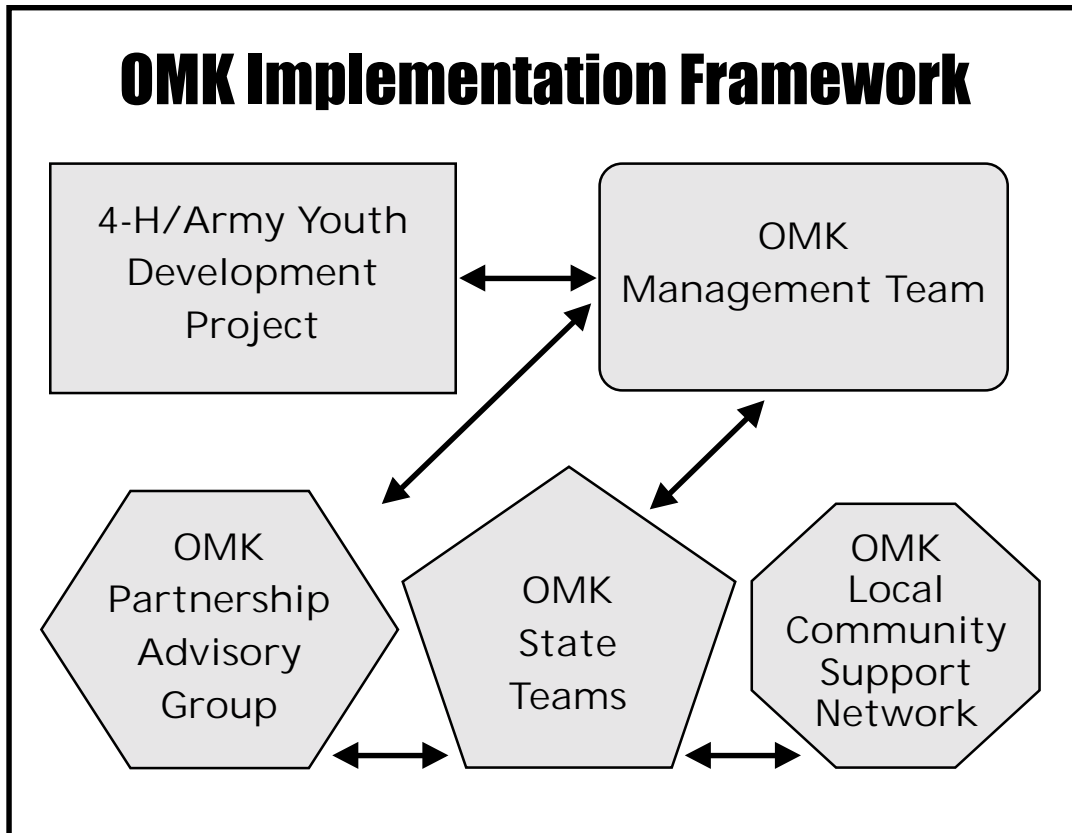
Materials Needed: N/A

Trainer Tips: N/A

What to **Do**, What to **Say**:

Do: • Review slide.

Say: *Local OMK Community Support Networks are made up of a wide variety of organizations, agencies, and volunteers who can provide the necessary resources and have a desire to support geographically dispersed suddenly military youth.*



Slide 3-28: OMK Implementation Framework

Content of this slide adapted from: N/A

Materials Needed: N/A

Trainer Tips: N/A

What to **Do**, What to **Say**:

Do: • Review slide.

Say: *The implementation framework outlines the oversight responsibilities of the OMK Management Team, the OMK Partnership Advisory Group, and the OMK State Teams, all in support of building strong local community support networks.*

As indicated by the arrows, communication flow is in two directions. It is important to get information to those that need it in a timely fashion.

Operation: Military Kids

Keys to Implementation:

- OMK Management Team sets direction and provides financial and program resources to support OMK.
- OMK Partnership Advisory Group members define roles, responsibilities, and capabilities of their organizations to collaborate in support of OMK at National, Regional, State, and Local levels.
- State 4-H Military Liaisons serve as OMK State Team Leaders and facilitate the work of the OMK State Teams.
- State Teams include representatives from all OMK core partners.
- State Teams build the capacity to develop/activate Local Community Support Networks throughout the state.
- Local Community Support Networks deliver OMK services in impacted communities.

Ongoing communication among OMK Management Team, Partnership Advisory Group, and OMK State Teams is critical to successful Local Community Support Networks!

Ready, Set, Go!



Slide 3-29: OMK Keys to Implementation

Content of this slide adapted from: N/A

Materials Needed: N/A

Trainer Tips: N/A

What to **Do**, What to **Say**:

Do: • Review slide.

Say: *It is important that you keep these keys in mind as you go through your OMK State Team planning process throughout this week. You will need to operationalize the OMK implementation framework and develop strategies and plans to build the capacity of local communities to implement OMK in your state.*

Operation: Military Kids Core Program Components

- Ready, Set, Go! Training Manual
- Speak Out for Military Kids
- Hero Pack Initiative
- Mobile Technology Labs

Ready, Set, Go!



Slide 3-30: Operation: Military Kids Core Program Components

Content of this slide adapted from: N/A

Materials Needed: N/A

Trainer Tips: N/A

What to ***Do***, What to ***Say***:

Do: • Review slide.

Say: *To help OMK states get started and to provide some consistency, each OMK state will receive resources to support four core program components or initiatives.*

Ready, Set, Go! Training Contents

- Chapter 1: Introduction to Ready, Set, Go!
- Chapter 2: A New Reality: Impact of the Global War on Terrorism
- Chapter 3: Operation: Military Kids—An Overview and Framework for Implementation
- Chapter 4: Exploring Military Culture
- Chapter 5: The Deployment Cycle: Mobilization and Deployment
- Chapter 6: The Deployment Cycle: Homecoming and Reintegration
- Chapter 7: Stress and Coping Strategies
- Chapter 8: Impact of Grief, Loss, and Trauma
- Chapter 9: Fostering Resilience in Children and Youth
- Chapter 10: Understanding the Influence of the Media
- Chapter 11: Building Community Capacity To Take Action
- Chapter 12: Additional Resources and Best Practices

Ready, Set, Go!



Slide 3-31: Ready, Set, Go! Training Contents

Content of this slide adapted from: N/A

Materials Needed: RSG! Training Manual

Trainer Tips: Thoroughly familiarize yourself with the chapter titles and content of the manual before training this section.

What to **Do**, What to **Say**:

Do: • Review slide.

Say: *The RSG! Training Manual is the tool that State Teams will use to train and build Local Community Support Networks throughout your state.*

The content is designed to give participants an understanding and appreciation of unique stressors that suddenly military families may face during a deployment. This training will give you the tools and skills to support “suddenly military” children and youth, and a framework to create comprehensive action plans to make OMK an effective statewide support network for National Guard and Reserve families.

Do: • Ask participants if they have any questions about the content of the manual.

Ready, Set, Go! Chapter Framework

- **Lesson Plan**—includes purpose, training objectives, timeframe, and preparation/materials and activities
- **Training PowerPoint Content**—includes slides, materials needed, trainer tips, and “What to Do/What to Say” sections for trainers. Discussion and hands-on activities will help participants understand the topics presented.
- **“Must-Read” Background Material**—to increase knowledge of trainers regarding topics presented
- **Evaluation**—suggested reflection and application questions to measure impact and application of group understanding

Ready, Set, Go!



Slide 3-32: Ready, Set, Go! Chapter Framework

Content of this slide adapted from: N/A

Materials Needed: N/A

Trainer Tips: N/A

What to **Do**, What to **Say**:

Do: • Review slide.

Say: *The RSG! Chapter Framework is designed to enable State Team members to be able to go back to their organizations and train any section of the RSG! Manual. Hopefully, State Team members will find and plan for ways to team teach diverse audiences across the state.*

Speak Out for Military Kids (SOMK)

The Program:

- Common program initiative for all OMK States
- Program raises community awareness of issues faced by geographically dispersed military children and youth
- SOMK is a youth-led program facilitated and supported by adults
- Youth participants are both civilian and military connected youth
- SMOK is a community service project that builds awareness and fosters community support

Ready, Set, Go!



Slide 3-33: Speak Out for Military Kids (SOMK)

Content of this slide adapted from: N/A

Materials Needed: N/A

Trainer Tips: N/A

What to **Do**, What to **Say**:

Do: • Review slide.

Say: *Speak Out for Military Kids is the one common program component of all 34 OMK states. One of the biggest issues confronting families is the lack of awareness that communities have regarding the stressors facing many “suddenly military” families.*

Speak Out for Military Kids should be a youth-led, adult-facilitated program.

This is an on-going community service project whose focus is to raise awareness and foster community support.

Speak Out for Military Kids

Outcomes:

- Participants create a Speakers Bureau and presentations, then deliver informative briefings to a variety of audiences throughout the state.
- Youth gain knowledge and skills in developing creative and informative presentations in a variety of different media.
- Youth learn about the military lifestyle and culture, and gain empathy for issues that confront military families.

Ready, Set, Go!



Slide 3-34: Speak Out for Military Kids: Outcomes

Content of this slide adapted from: N/A

Materials Needed: N/A

Trainer Tips: N/A

What to **Do**, What to **Say**:

Do: • Review slide.

Say: *The primary outcome of SOMK is the creation of a Youth Speakers Bureau. The Speakers Bureau creates informative and dynamic presentations of issues that children and youth of National Guard and Reserve families may face during the deployment of a parent.*

Speak Out For Military Kids

Resources:

- OMK Ready, Set, Go! Training Manual
- Speak Out For Military Kids Manual
- OMK Core Partners
- National Guard and Army Reserve CYS Points of Contact

Ready, Set, Go!



Slide 3-35: Speak Out for Military Kids: Resources

Content of this slide adapted from: N/A

Materials Needed: N/A

Trainer Tips: N/A

What to **Do**, What to **Say**:

Do: • Review slide.

Say: *There is a draft copy of the SOMK manual on the RSG! CD in your manual that you can use as a resource.*

The RSG! Training manual can also be used as a resource to teach youth about military culture, action planning, or other topics covered in the RSG! Manual.

Like all programs, activities, and support developed by your OMK initiative, it should include all your core partners and other resources within your state.

Hero Pack Initiative

- Outreach effort of Operation: Military Kids (OMK)
- Salute to military children for their strength and sacrifices made while a parent is deployed
- Combined effort of all National OMK Partners
- Community Service Project that builds awareness and fosters community support for geographically isolated military families

Ready, Set, Go!



Slide 3-36: Hero Pack Initiative

Content of this slide adapted from: N/A

Materials Needed: Assembled Hero Pack

Trainer Tips: N/A

What to ***Do***, What to ***Say***:

Do: • Review slide.

Say: *The Hero Pack initiative was the first outreach effort of Operation: Military Kids. The main purpose of the Hero Packs is to say "Thank You" and to recognize Military Children for their strength and also for their sacrifices during a parent's deployment.*

Do: • Have a Hero Pack to show to all the participants.

Say: *Again, the core partners should be involved in the Hero Pack initiative in your state.*

What is in a Hero Pack?

- A Hero Pack is a backpack that contains fun and educational material for the youth and informational material for parents.
- Each National OMK partner provides a variety of program items.
- Our goal is to provide material and activities to keep youth and deployed parent connected.

Ready, Set, Go!



Slide 3-37: What is in a Hero Pack?

Content of this slide adapted from: N/A

Materials Needed: N/A

Trainer Tips: N/A

What to **Do**, What to **Say**:

Do: • Review slide.

Say: *Items in the Hero Pack, like stationery, envelopes, and a patriotic camera, are selected to help keep the child connected to the parent during the deployment.*

State Teams should seek out local contributions to include in the Hero Pack, such as movie passes, free video game rentals, and other local attractions.

Hero Pack Implementation

- Youth assemble Hero Packs and write letters of support to the families to include in the backpack.
- OMK State Teams find local donations to supplement Hero Pack items provided by National OMK Partners.
- Hero Packs are distributed to deserving National Guard or Army Reserve Children and Youth.

Ready, Set, Go!



Slide 3-38: Hero Pack Implementation

Content of this slide adapted from: N/A

Materials Needed: N/A

Trainer Tips: N/A

What to **Do**, What to **Say**:

Do: • Review slide.

Say: *Hero Packs should be assembled by a variety of youth groups: 4-H clubs, Boys & Girls Clubs of America, school homerooms, Boy Scout and Girl Scout troupes, home school groups, etc.*

Youth assemble the packs and write a letter of thanks. The letter should have a positive tone, be politically neutral, and contain no personal identification.

Youth groups need to work with their State Teams' Points of Contact with the National Guard and Army Reserve to help find others to help with the project.

On the RSG! CD in your manual, there is a Hero Pack Guide that will give you all you need to know about Hero Packs and more. It is a fantastic tool to help you put together a Hero Pack program in your state.



Slide 3-39: Mobile Technology Labs

Content of this slide adapted from: N/A

Materials Needed: N/A

Trainer Tips: N/A

What to **Do**, What to **Say**:

Do: • Review slide.

Say: *Each OMK State will receive a Mobile Technology Lab, contingent on available funding. The labs provide access to technology to communicate with deployed loved ones, learn about technology, and make videos or photos to send to a deployed parent.*

Mobile Technology Labs

HARDWARE

- 15 laptops
 - Pentium 4, 2.4 GHz or higher, 400 MHz
 - Wireless access point
- 1 external DVD recorder
- 1 printer network
- 1 portable laminator
- 1 digital camera (Canon Powershot A310)
- 1 digital video camera (Canon ZR-90)
- 1 scanner
- 3 cases
- DVD media (writable/rewritable)
- Power strips/extension cords

SOFTWARE

- Pinnacle 9.0
- QuickTime 9.0
- DVD or CDROM burning software
- PhotoshopElements
- FrontPage
- Macromedia Flash
- BGCA Digital Arts Suite
- KidPix
- Hallmark Card Maker
- MS Publisher
- Encarta

Ready, Set, Go!



Slide 3-40: Mobile Technology Labs Hardware/Software

Content of this slide adapted from: N/A

Materials Needed: N/A

Trainer Tips: N/A

What to **Do**, What to **Say**:

Do: • Review slide.

Say: *The Mobile Technology Labs have wireless network capabilities. The hardware and software packages in the labs were chosen to give a variety of different program options, with communication being a major theme.*

Mobile Technology Labs OMK State Team Oversight

OMK Role and Responsibilities:

- Develop process and procedure for how MTL will be requested, delivered, operated, and returned
- Coordinate Partner use of the MTL
- Train Partner on facilitating and supervising a MTL
- Deliver MTL programs through Partner Organizations
- Ensure all Partners and the public are informed and knowledgeable about the MTL
- Document MTL program options developed to share with other OMK State Teams
- Document facilitation and supervision of the MTL
- Document MTL use in OMK Progress Reports to OMK Management Team

Ready, Set, Go!



Slide 3-41: Mobile Technology Labs OMK State Team Oversight

Content of this slide adapted from: N/A

Materials Needed: N/A

Trainer Tips: N/A

What to ***Do***, What to ***Say***:

Do: • Review slide.

Say: *The Mobile Technology Labs are available for all Partners to use.*

Each State Team needs to have solid standard operating procedures in terms of check out, setup/teardown, and return of the lab.

All use of the Lab must be documented and included in year-end reports.

Overview of National 4-H Program

1. Who We Are...4-H is the Youth Development Component of Cooperative Extension

4-H is the youth development component of the Cooperative Extension System. National 4-H Headquarters is in the US Department of Agriculture, Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES).

The **mission of National 4-H Headquarters** is:

To advance knowledge for agriculture, the environment, human health and well-being, and communities by creating opportunities for youth. We seek to promote positive youth development, facilitate learning, and engage youth in the work of the Land Grant Universities and USDA to enhance their quality of life.

4-H is the youth program with direct access to technological advances in agriculture and life sciences, home economics, human development, and related areas, which result from Land Grant University Research. The foundation of 4-H Youth Development is in the practical application of Land Grant University knowledge by youth in their communities.

Land Grant Universities were established by legislation in 1862 to provide a public education institution in every state. Extension Services in all of those institutions were created and charged with bringing the university research and education resources to citizens in the states. All of the university Extension Services are linked with the US Department of Agriculture (USDA), their Federal partner. In USDA, the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service provides financial support and program leadership to Extension programs, including 4-H, in all states and territories.

The **Cooperative Extension System** is the collaboration of CSREES, Extension Services in Land Grant Universities in all states and territories, and County Extension offices in all 3150 counties across the country. There are 4-H youth development professionals at National 4-H Headquarters in Washington, DC; at each university Extension office; and in all US counties. University 4-H staff are faculty members; County 4-H Educators typically hold Masters' Degrees in youth development, education, social services, communications, agriculture, technology and/or other related areas. 4-H is funded through a combination of Federal, state, and county dollars with strong private side involvement through National 4-H Council and 4-H Foundations in states and counties.

More than 3500 Extension faculty work with a large network of 700,000 adult and youth volunteers who lead and implement 4-H programs to share information and resources from the Land Grant Universities with the general public and help young people apply the knowledge at the local level. Over 7 million youth

ages 5–19 participate in 4-H Clubs in community and school settings, after-school programs, in military child and youth settings, school enrichment programs, residential and day camps, and special interest and short term projects. Since 4-H is over 100 years old, there are about 60,000,000 4-H alumni in the US.

2. What We Offer...4-H is Youth Development

Some youth programs focus on individual learners developing competencies. Other youth programs focus on risks and risk factors and work to reduce problems. The 4-H Youth Development approach focuses on needs of young people—considering the whole young person, not just a single characteristic or problem. Research has shown that young people need:

- positive relationships with caring adults
- inclusive and safe environments
- to be engaged in their own learning
- to have opportunities for mastery and self-determination
- to see themselves as active participants in the future
- to value and practice service for others

Youth Development is designed to focus on the positive outcomes we desire for young people, not the negative outcomes we hope to prevent. 4-H emphasizes the importance of environment and creating opportunities. Youth Development is dependent on family and community development as it occurs in the context of the family, community, and society.

Dr. Cathann Kress, Director of Youth Development, National 4-H Headquarters, CSREES, USDA, has distilled the needs of youth into the **Essential Elements of 4-H**:

- ✦ To experience BELONGING—***I pledge my heart to greater loyalty***
Youth need to know they are cared about by others and feel a sense of connection to others. 4-H gives young people the opportunity to feel physically and emotionally safe while actively participating in a group. Current research emphasizes the importance of youth having opportunities for long-term consistent relationships with adults other than their parents.
- ✦ To experience INDEPENDENCE—***I pledge my head to clearer thinking***
Youth need to know that they are able to influence people and events through decision-making and action. By exercising independence through 4-H leadership opportunities, youth mature in self-discipline and responsibility, learn to better understand themselves, and become independent thinkers.
- ✦ To experience MASTERY—***I pledge my health to better living...For my club, my community, my country, and my world***
To develop self-confidence, youth need to believe they are capable and they must experience success in solving problems and meeting challenges. Youth

must have access to quality research-based content and have opportunity to learn by doing. By exploring 4-H projects and activities, youth master skills to make positive career and life choices. 4-H offers youth the breadth and depth of topics that allow them to pursue their own interests within a safe environment for making mistakes and getting feedback.

- ✦ To experience GENEROSITY—*I pledge my hands to larger service*
Youth need to feel their lives have meaning and purpose. Community service projects allow 4-H club members to see that their effort to help others is important and valuable. By participating in 4-H community service and citizenship activities, youth can connect to communities and learn to give back to others. Youth learn that they are part of a global community, which requires awareness and compassion for others.

The educational foundation for the 4-H program lies in:

- Science, Engineering, and Technology
- Healthy Lifestyles
- Citizenship/Leadership

Within these Mission mandates, 4-H offers opportunities for youth to participate in a wide variety of programs including:

- Citizenship and Civic Education
- Communications and Expressive Arts
- Consumer and Family Sciences
- Environmental Education and Earth Sciences
- Healthy Lifestyle Education
- Personal Development and Leadership
- Plants and Animals
- Science and Technology

4-H offers professional development opportunities for faculty, staff, and volunteers of 4-H and partner organizations. These include:

- Moving Ahead—Adolescent Growth & Development
- 4-H 101: The Basics of Starting 4-H Clubs
- National Association of Extension 4-H Agents (NAE4-HA) Conference
- Children, Youth, and Families at Risk (CYFAR) Conference
- 4-H Camping Institute
- National 4-H Conference
- 4-H Volunteer Leader Forums

☛ 4-H has a Long Standing Partnership with Army

The 4-H/Army Youth Development Project (YDP) has used Extension's capacity to reach out to audiences not previously served and to its network of youth development professionals and 4-H programs in every county in the country. Initiated to bring 4-H youth development and youth technology experience to military youth programs, the partnership draws upon the unique strengths of each organization to meet critical needs of youth wherever they live. Youth development and technology specialists from multiple Land Grant Universities take assignments to Army Regions and CYS Headquarters to provide technical assistance and training for Army staff. Together 4-H and military staff have built a support network for military youth who move frequently as their parents' assignments change. Military youth who can "find 4-H" in any of 3150 counties in the U.S. and also on Army installations overseas have an immediate connection to other youth and caring adults. Thanks to the work of committed YDP Specialists in the 7 Army Regions and 53 State 4-H Military Liaisons, 4-H programs in all counties across the US are welcoming Army youth and their families, and Army staff are working closely with county 4-H educators. As of October 2005, more than 12,000 Army youth were enrolled in four hundred 4-H clubs in the US, Europe, and Korea. Army staff from all installations have been trained in "4-H 101" and provided with 4-H curriculum. Army 4-H members are now involved with state, regional, and national 4-H programs. Army youth are thus provided opportunities to experience belonging, independence, mastery, and generosity through their involvement with 4-H.

3. How Do OMK Teams Connect with 4-H...

Each state has identified a State 4-H Military Liaison who links county 4-H educators to military staff and coordinates all 4-H military efforts across the state. They work with all branches of military and recently also with National Guard and Reserve staff, families, and youth. It is their responsibility to ensure that military 4-H programs and youth are integrated into the ongoing county, state, and national 4-H program and all associated opportunities. The State 4-H Military Liaison leads the Operation: Military Kids State Team and is responsible for bringing together a broad coalition of partners to support children of deployed National Guard and Reserve Soldiers. State 4-H Military Liaisons work directly with National 4-H Headquarters to develop 4-H strategies for responding to needs of military youth.

4. How Does 4-H Connect with OMK...

4-H staff, youth, and adult volunteers can link with OMK through the State 4-H Military Liaison who coordinates the State OMK team. Many states have established OMK networks in regions of the state or in specific communities with high deployments. Each OMK network benefits from collaboration of all the OMK partner groups and appropriate and interested local groups and

individuals. Teens who are active in 4-H leadership and citizenship programs will find that OMK and SOMK provide excellent opportunities for them to link with military teens in critical leadership and community service actions.

4-H Website Resources

National 4-H Headquarters

<http://www.national4-hheadquarters.gov/>

Children, Youth, and Families at Risk (CYFAR)

<http://www.csrees.usda.gov/nea/family/cyfar/cyfar.html>

Children, Youth, and Family Education Research Network (CYFERnet)

<http://www.cyfernet.org/>

4-H/Army Youth Development Project (YDP)

<http://www.usda-army-ydp.org/>

Operation: Military Kids (OMK)

<http://www.usda-army-ydp.org/omk/>

State 4-H Military Liaisons

http://www.usda-army-ydp.org/contact_liaisons.html

Sharon KB Wright 10/17/05

National Program Leader

National 4-H Headquarters

Cooperative State Research, Education, & Extension Service, USDA

Boys & Girls Clubs of America

Who Are We?

Boys & Girls Clubs have their roots deep in American history. The first Club was a Boys' Club founded in 1860 during the Civil War era by a group of women in Hartford, Conn., who believed that boys roaming the streets needed a positive, constructive alternative. Thus, the Dashaway Boys' Club was established. The Boys Club concept eventually gained popularity throughout the country. The Boys Club Federation was formed in 1906 to bring standardization to this special brand of youth work.

In 1956, the national organization, Boys Clubs of America, received a Congressional Charter during their 50th anniversary. The national organization's name was changed in 1990 to Boys & Girls Clubs of America (BGCA) in recognition of the fact that girls had now become an integral part of its membership. Accordingly, Congress amended and renewed the charter.

Boys & Girls Clubs of America's mission reads: "To inspire and enable all young people, especially those from disadvantaged circumstances, to realize their full potential as productive, responsible and caring citizens." This mission is about making connections: between Club staff and youth, between volunteers and Clubs, and between the national organization and its local affiliates.

Boys & Girls Clubs of America relies on autonomous local Clubs to implement their national catalog of tested national programs utilizing a Youth Development Strategy designed to support youth in successful growth and development. The BGCA Youth Development Strategy stresses the inclusion of the following four senses in every aspect of youth development programming:

A sense of **belonging**: a setting where young people know they fit in and are accepted.

A sense of **usefulness**: the opportunity to do something of value for other people.

A sense of power or **influence**: a chance to be heard and to influence decisions.

A sense of **competence**: a feeling there is something boys and girls can do and do well.

When this strategy is fully implemented, self-esteem is enhanced and an environment is created which helps boys and girls achieve their full potential.

In addition to federal funds, BGCA relies heavily on fund-raising and commercial sponsorship to offer their programs and services.

Boys & Girls Clubs provide services to approximately 4.4 million children and youth aged 6–18 during non-school hours. Clubs are often referred to as "The Positive Place for Kids."

Boys & Girls Clubs operate neighborhood-based facilities scattered across 3700 communities throughout the United States, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands and U.S. military installations worldwide. Boys & Girls Clubs have distinguished themselves as being willing to operate wherever the need exists for safe, quality child and youth development programming, be it in public housing developments, juvenile correction facilities, schools, or on Native American reservations, just to mention a few.

Clubs are staffed with trained full- or part-time youth development professionals and volunteers. Club membership fees are low, averaging \$5–\$10 per year. Military-connected youth are often admitted free of charge, but this is determined on a site-by-site basis.

What Do We Offer?

Boys & Girls Clubs of America offers a wide variety of programs and activities which are categorized in five areas based on the physical, emotional, cultural and social needs and interests of youth: **character & leadership development, education & career development, health & life skills, the arts, and sports, fitness & recreation.** More than a decade ago, BGCA first officially partnered with the military during the Persian Gulf conflict, reaching out to families of deployed National Guard and Reserve men and women living off post.

When offered on Army installations, the Boys & Girls Clubs' five areas of program delivery are re-engineered into the Four Service Areas within Army School-Age Services and Youth Programs. Specific Boys & Girls Clubs programs and curricula are prescribed as follows:

Life Skills, Citizenship & Leadership

- **TEENSupreme Keystone and Torch Clubs**—chartered small-group leadership and service clubs.
- **The Ultimate Journey**—an environmental education program.

Academic Support, Mentoring & Intervention Services

- **Youth of the Year**—a year-round youth recognition program that promotes and celebrates youth service to the program, community and family, academic performance, spiritual values, life goals, and poise and public-speaking ability.
- **Project Learn**—reinforces and enhances the skills and knowledge youth learn at school. The program uses all areas of the Club to create and promote “high-yield learning activities,” emphasize parental involvement, and collaboration with school personnel.
- **Power Hour**—provides an advanced homework help and tutoring strategy.
- **SMARTMoves, SMART Kids, Act SMART, SMART Girls, and Passport to Manhood**—together form a comprehensive prevention program that helps youth resist alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use, as well as premature sexual activity.

Arts, Recreation & Leisure Activities

- **Back Pocket Program Hints**—a pocket-sized resource booklet full of ideas for activities and games that can be played at a moment's notice and with little or no equipment or materials.
- **National Fine Arts Exhibit Program**—encourages artistic expression in youth through drawing, painting, print-making, collage, mixed media, and sculpture displayed at local and regional exhibits. Works selected by a panel of judges are included in the National Fine Arts Exhibit, which debuts at the BGCA National Conference and is displayed at BGCA events throughout the following year.
- **ImageMakers National Photography Program**—a year-round program and annual contest which encourages youth to learn and practice black and white and color process photography and express themselves in creative and unusual ways. The contest provides local recognition and national awards.

Sports, Fitness & Health Options

- **Triple Play—A Game Plan for the Mind, Body and Soul**—is a comprehensive sports, fitness, recreation and nutrition program. Each of the three components can stand on their own but when taken together are a holistic approach to educating youth about nutrition, making physical fitness a daily practice and developing individual strengths and good character.

Information regarding BGCA's full lineup of programs and services is available through its website, www.bgca.org.

How Do State OMK Teams Link to Boys & Girls Clubs?

Each local Boys & Girls Club (BGC) is autonomous, but takes significant direction from the national headquarters, BGCA. Local Clubs are fully aware of the national partnership BGCA has with the military, as well as the positive messages that their senior leadership has regularly issued in support of this relationship.

The BGCA structure includes national, regional, state, and community levels, all of which may become involved in the Operation Military Kids (OMK) program. At the national level, BGCA's Military Services Department has the responsibility of implementing OMK. Five regional offices, specifically regional service directors, support Clubs by geographic location. State-level BGC coordinators support the executive directors in the states where BGCA has received funding: FL, GA, NC, WA, TX, and VA. 4-H state liaisons in other states have partnered successfully with Clubs, also. Local community BGC Club directors provide programming to directly serve youth.

State OMK teams should feel free to contact any Boys & Girls Club to begin discussions about OMK and to identify Club personnel interested in the OMK effort. Contact information can be found at www.bgca.org, Find A Club.

In states with Army or Air Force installations, the Youth Program Manager can assist state OMK teams by contacting Boys & Girls Clubs. In addition, the Army has contracted for technical assistance at 13 Operation: Proud Partners (OPP) sites which may be used as another link between Boys & Girls Clubs and OMK state teams. A list of OPP sites with contact information is attached.

How Do Boys & Girls Clubs Participate in OMK?

Local Boys & Girls Clubs interested in becoming involved in Operation: Military Kids may contact the following:

- **Cindy Rondeau** is the Point of Contact (POC) for BGCA's Military Services office charged with supporting BGCA outreach efforts to the Army. She can be reached at: 404-487-5869 or crondeau@bgca.org.
- The **State 4-H Military Liaison** in each state is the point of contact for OMK. Their contact information is available on the following websites: www.usda-army-ydp.org OR www.operationmilitarykids.org. Generally, 4-H County and Extension Agents will also be able to assist them in contacting the 4-H state military liaison.
- The National Guard and Army Reserves have Family Assistance Centers in each state. Each branch has hired Territory or Regional Child & Youth Services (CYS) Coordinators who can put them in touch with the state OMK team leaders. The Family Assistance Center staff can assist individuals to contact their CYS Coordinator and then their state OMK Team Leader.
- Military One Source, a Department of Defense Family Assistance Program, will refer individuals to OMK State Team Leaders. Military One Source can be contacted by phone toll-free: 1-800-342-9647 or online: www.militaryonesource.com. User ID: military; Password: onsource.

Operation Proud Partner (OPP) Sites (Boys & Girls Clubs)

These sites have received grants to enroll 100 new military youth in the next year. WBKearney & Assoc. is POC for assisting them with this effort.

BGCs of Greater Washington DC:

Dale City, VA	Vinnie Borello	703-670-3311
Alexandria, VA	James Almond	703-549-3077
Dumfries, VA (OMK State Lead)	Vinnie Borello	703-670-3311
Manassas, VA		

BGC of Silver Spring, MD	Tim Sheahan	301-562-2000
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BGCs of the Midlands, Columbia, SC	James Brown	803-252-9578
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BGCs of Columbus/Phenix, GA	James Wink	706-596-9330
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BGCs of Miama, FL	Alex Rodriguez-Roig	305-446-9910
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BGCs of Tomah, WI	Peggy Meiners	608-374-4386
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BGCs of Sparta, WI	Natalie Carlisle	608-269-2582
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BGCs of Greater Kansas City, MO & KS	Donald Lee	816-361-3600
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Clement BGC, Killeen, TX (OMK State Lead)	Woodrow Hall	254-699-5808
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BGCs of San Antonio, TX	James Watson	210-436-0686
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BGCs of Pikes Peak Region, Colorado Springs, CO	James Sullivan	719-570-7077
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BGCs of South Puget Sound, Tacoma, WA	Gary Yazwa	253-572-8440
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BGCs of Hawaii (OMK State Lead) Aliamanu Hali Manu	David Nakada	808-949-4203
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B&GCA Outreach States

These states are receiving grants to conduct outreach to National Guard & Reserve youth. Cindy Rondeau is the POC for assisting them with that effort.

Florida
Georgia
North Carolina

Texas
Washington
Virginia

The American Legion OMK Fact Sheet

The American Legion, the world's largest veterans organization with 2.7 million members, is a federal corporation chartered by Congress in 1919 as a patriotic, mutual-help, and community-service organization of honorably discharged war-time veterans of World War I. Membership now includes veterans of World War II, Korea, Vietnam, Lebanon and Granada, Panama, and the Persian Gulf. Any honorably discharged wartime veteran is eligible to join. Both men and women veterans have been eligible for membership in The American Legion since it was first chartered.

There are nearly 15,000 American Legion Posts, organized into 55 Departments across the U.S. and in several foreign countries. Each Department has its own constitution and holds an annual convention of delegates from Posts within its jurisdiction. The American Legion's National Headquarters is in Indianapolis, Indiana, with additional offices in Washington, DC.

Among its youth programs, The American Legion sponsors American Legion Baseball, National High School Oratorical Contest, Junior Shooting Sports Program, Flag Education Program, and American Legion Boys State and Boys Nation. Since its inception, The American Legion has also sponsored the Boy Scouts of America to help achieve patriotic attitudes in youth. Today, The American Legion sponsors more than 2,500 Scout units serving over 79,000 young people.

The American Legion has dedicated itself to our citizens of tomorrow, and remains committed to ensuring that every child has a safe home, a quality environment, and the opportunity to make their dreams come true. As the nation's largest organization of wartime veterans, The American Legion represents the pinnacle in support of programs benefiting veterans, their families, and their communities. Here are just a few ways our members got involved last year:

- Needy children and families received more than \$26 million in cash, goods, and services.
- Over \$450,000 in grants were distributed to children of eligible veterans to help them maintain basic needs including shelter, utilities, food, and clothing.
- Nearly \$11 million dollars were donated to charitable organizations, including the American Red Cross, United Way, and Children's Miracle Network hospitals.

Since 1919, The American Legion has actively voiced concerns related to the care, welfare, and education of our Nation's children. Our programs designed for youth keep them active, and help instill within them a sense of pride in their community, state, and nation. Specific programs include:

- ✦ American Legion Baseball—Each year, about 95,000 young men experience the benefits of good sportsmanship and team play in one of the country’s best known and most respected amateur athletic programs.
- ✦ American Legion Boys State and Boys Nation—More than 25,000 outstanding high school students attend these programs every year. During the weeklong program, participants receive instruction on citizenship and experience firsthand how state and federal governments function.
- ✦ School Awards—Posts and units give special recognition to local elementary through high school students for outstanding leadership, academic excellence, and other character-building qualities.
- ✦ Scholarship Information—The Legion’s annual publication *Need a Lift?*, which is distributed nationally to all high schools, provides information for students on how to obtain financial aid for college.
- ✦ The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation—This Foundation is unique in that every penny it receives in donations is awarded in grants designed to help children.
- ✦ The American Legion Family Support Network—When a family member serves in the military, the whole family is affected. The Family Support Network exists to connect military families to vital community resources through the local American Legion Post.
- ✦ Temporary Financial Assistance—Our Temporary Financial Assistance (TFA) program just completed 80 years of service to children. Last year, TFA provided \$450,874 in non-repayable grants for food, clothing, and shelter to more than 1,000 children of veterans.
- ✦ Publications—Last year, the Children & Youth Commission of The American Legion distributed hundreds of thousands of brochures on issues that affect our nation’s youth. Our most popular publications include:
 - ***Make Halloween a Fun and Safe Night***—Information to help parents and children keep the annual practice of trick-or-treating safe.
 - ***Warning Signs***—Discusses the warning signs of youth suicide.
 - ***Gateway Drugs***—Information on drugs that often lead to drug abuse.
 - ***National Family Week***—Advocates for an annual observance of Family Week.

The American Legion is proud of its advocacy and accomplishments on behalf of our country’s youth. Our members’ efforts in the area of child welfare are a living testament to our service to America and speak to the many hours, the tremendous amounts of energy, and the personal sacrifice of free men and women on behalf of others.

For more information:

The American Legion
Americanism and Children & Youth Division
P.O. Box 1055
Indianapolis, IN 46206
317-630-1323
Telephone: (317) 630-1323
Email: acy@legion.org
Web: www.legion.org

Operation Military Kids: Ready, Set, Go!

MILITARY EDUCATION COALITION

School-Based Approach

Objective:

The participants will learn about the Military Child Education Coalition and the MCEC role as an OMK partner.

Critical Components:

1. The MCEC's Mission and History
2. Examples of MCEC's Expertise and Strategic Initiative
3. The MCEC Approach—Partnerships between the Military Community and Schools

A. The MCEC's Mission and History

The Military Child Education Coalition

The Military Child Education Coalition is a 501(c)(3) non-profit, world-wide organization that identifies the challenges that face all military children, increases awareness of these challenges in military and educational communities, and initiates and implements programs to meet the challenges. MCEC's goal is to level the educational playing field for military children wherever they are located around the world and to serve as a model for all highly mobile children.

Why the Military Child Education Coalition's Efforts are Essential

In America's ongoing war on terror, overdue attention is finally being paid to the sacrifices of military personnel. Overlooked sometimes, however, are the sacrifices made by military families and especially military children, who "also serve." From birth through college, life for a military child is one of transitions punctuated with increasing frequency by the additional stresses of separation. Consequently, the MCEC's initiatives focus on two interrelated issues for military children: transition and deployment.

Military children who have parents serving Active Duty generally move from six to nine times during their K-12 school years. Many make multiple moves during high school years alone, some even during their senior year. Academic standards, courses, access to programs, promotion and graduation requirements, programs for children with special needs, and transfer and acceptance of records vary greatly from state to state and even from school to school. These frustrations are in addition to giving up friends and associates with whom a rapport has been established.

Separation from a deployed parent (or parents) raises an additional issue. MCEC's role is to help families, schools, and communities be better prepared to support children during these frequent moves and difficult—and sometimes traumatic—times in the life of military families. The MCEC has coined the description "Suddenly Military Child" to describe the child whose lives are changed when a parent is activated, mobilized, and deployed. For some of these children the separation from a parent also includes school transition if the family needs require a relocation.

The Military Child Education Coalition History and Experience

The Military Child Education Coalition was chartered in 1998 as a private non-profit and has already achieved a great deal of success. With more than 1200 members worldwide, the Military Child Education Coalition serves the 1.8 million military-connected children through a network of school systems and military organizations. The MCEC is governed by a twenty member volunteer Board of Directors. The MCEC Board represents professionals and those with personal experience as military, educators, and corporate leaders. The MCEC also has a volunteer National Advisors Committee that is made of senior leadership from the military and public sectors. The Military Child Education Coalition is an approved Combined Federal Campaign organization.

In 2004 the MCEC was named the Congressional Club's Charity of the Year. Recognized by First Lady Laura Bush, the MCEC has a strong reputation for dedication and commitment to the child.

B. The MCEC's Expertise and Strategic Initiatives

The Military Child Education Coalition Initiatives

Founded only seven years ago, MCEC has made great strides in thoroughly researching the needs of military children and using the expertise, knowledge and experience gained to initiate programs to meet the needs of these children. Some of the programs MCEC provides are:

- ✪ **The Guard and Reserve Training Institute** © 2004 & patent pending. This training addresses how educators, military, and other concerned professionals can support the children of National Guard and Reserve personnel that have been mobilized or deployed. Mobilization and deployment of National Guard and Reserve personnel is at an exceptionally high level, which leaves youth in impacted families learning to cope with the long-term absence of a parent and having to assume more responsibilities. Because these youths are dispersed in both urban and rural communities, they may often be isolated from others experiencing the same situations. This initiative addresses support for the "suddenly military" child. The MCEC's school-based efforts are a part of the Operation: Military Kids effort with the U.S. Army, Child and Youth Services.

- **The Transition Counselors Institute (TCI)** © 2002 & patent pending. TCI was developed by MCEC to train school counselors, along with other educators, in the transitional challenges faced by our very mobile student population. The TCI, based on solid research, prepares professionals to recognize and address school transition concerns that impact mobile military students. MCEC has trained almost 2000 educators from over 100 school districts including DoDEA to date.
- **The Special Education Leaders Institute (SELI)** © 2003 & patent pending. SELI trains military and school professionals in the amplified challenges for children with special needs. The purpose of the SELI is to support the military-connected, special needs student through understanding, accommodation, networking, technologies, and communication.
- **The MCEC Parent Workshops.** This initiative is a direct outreach and support for parents. The purpose is to empower military parents to be an informed and involved advocate regardless of the school setting. The Parent Workshops teach parents about the academic, social and emotional, and program implication of transition from pre-school through college application. These workshops give practical ideas, provide resources, and inform parents about the strategies and processes that will increase the likelihood of a seamless transition from exit to entrance.
- **The Student-2-Student (S2S) Program.** The MCEC designed and developed this student-centered project with the purpose of S2S is to establish the framework for a school managed, student led, school transition program. In 2004, under the sponsorship of the U.S. Army Child and Youth Services, the MCEC researched and developed this program for youth in grades 9–12. Initially the S2S project was piloted at six selected high schools from six states. The S2S project has been so successful that in 2005 43 more high schools will participate in the S2S project and, with MCEC’s support, implement their campus-based program. The S2S expansion to schools that serve Army posts is a result of continued support from the U.S. Army Child and Youth Services (21 schools). The MCEC also received support through the Department of Defense for 22 additional high schools that served Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force communities. The S2S program is enhanced through the global connection of project sites using the Interactive Counseling Center.
- **The Interactive Counseling Center (ICC)** © 2002 & patent pending. MCEC has developed an Interactive Counseling Center, a web-based video conferencing system that allows families and educational counselors to exchange confidential school records and information between sending and receiving schools. MCEC has installed ICCs and trained educators in over 74 schools. The ICC network has now connected schools that are serving the military communities in the US and overseas. We also have an ICC with the First Cavalry Division in Baghdad.

- ✦ **Assessment Resource Center** © 2001. MCEC has developed and maintains a special component of our web site as a resource on state testing requirements. This web-based information helps parents and students negotiate their way through various accountability systems and educate them about resources available for families through the states.
- ✦ **Publications.** One example of MCEC's publications is *Chart Your Course*© 2001. This is for students and parents to use as a guidance tool and checklist for students grades 6–12. There are over 100,000 copies distributed. Over 80,000 copies of our deployment brochure for parents and educators, *How To Prepare Our Children and Stay Involved in Their Education During Deployment*, have been distributed worldwide. The MCEC's companion publication supporting the “suddenly military child” of parents serving in the National Guard and Reserve components has also been widely distributed and well-received. Our newest publication, *Preparing for the Journey*, is geared to help parents of children birth through second grade to a successful start in their educational careers.
- ✦ **Research.** The MCEC has been entrusted with several major research projects, including the Secondary Education Transition Study (SETS) for the U.S. Army (2001); the Department of Defense Round Tables into school transitions issues for military students (California, Georgia, Texas, and Washington, 2000-2002); the U.S. Pacific Command's study concerning K-12 transitions in and out of the Hawaii schools (2004); and the U.S. Army study into the amplified transition challenges for children with special needs (2005). The MCEC's extensive research base is broadened and deepened by the ongoing research that is the backbone of every publication and professional development initiative. Above all, MCEC strives to reach out to and empower military parents as their child's advocate.

C. The MCEC Approach—Partnerships between the Military Community and Schools

1. Respecting Local and State Control of Schools
2. Encouraging Partnerships between the Schools and the Military Communities
3. Supporting Local Initiatives
4. Sharing Resources, Research, and Experience with Transitions and Separation
5. Committing to the Power of Parent-School Relationship

The Military Child Education Coalition is the only Coalition of all communities:

- Military Organizations
 - School Systems
 - Supporting Organizations
 - Caring Individuals
- ...for the sake of the child.*

www.MilitaryChild.org
www.militarychild.org/assessment
www.interactivecounselingcenter.org

SOMK PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Speak Out for Military Kids

One of the issues facing military youth and families is the lack of community awareness of the unique stressors and challenges they face during times of conflict and war. This lack of understanding by the general public can make military youth feel isolated and misunderstood. These issues are particularly important for youth from National Guard and Reserve families who may be geographically isolated from other military youth and who may not be familiar with or have access to traditional military supports.

Speak Out for Military Kids (SOMK) is the ongoing youth driven community outreach program associated with OMK, an educational program designed to raise the awareness about issues facing military families. SOMK is designed to generate awareness of issues and to foster community activism in solving the problems faced by military youth and families. SOMK is a Core Program that every OMK state agrees to execute.

The Program

Both military and non-military youth can be involved in SOMK. Through youth-led simulations, interviews, and research, participants find out firsthand what military families go through. Based on their experiences, SOMK participants form SOMK Speakers Bureaus. Participants in the Speakers Bureau develop lectures, public service announcements, videos, and other materials, and actively seek to share their experiences with others in the community (e.g. school assemblies, Rotary clubs, city council, teacher in-services etc.). In addition to building public awareness and support about issues facing military families during mobilization and deployment, SOMK provides its youth participants with the opportunity to gain valuable leadership, research, organization, technology, and public speaking skills.

It is essential that SOMK be implemented as an ongoing learning and sharing experience rather than an isolated one-shot event. SOMK participants need to gain specific skills before they are asked to deal with sensitive issues accompanying deployment.

Goals:

- ✦ Engage OMK partners to help provide support. These partners include the U.S. Army Children and Youth Services, Cooperative Extension, Boys & Girls Clubs of America, Community Agencies (e.g. National Association of Child Care Resources and Referral Agencies), and the American Legion.
- ✦ Increase community awareness about issues facing Army National Guard and Army Reserve families during times of mobilization and deployment.

- ✦ Increase community awareness about stressors faced by “suddenly military” youth. Get people interested in the issue!
- ✦ Mobilize community support and activism for creating solutions to support Army National Guard and Reserve youth and families.
- ✦ Teach SOMK valuable lifeskills.

Potential Outputs

- ✦ Youth-driven Speakers Bureaus in which youth develop speeches on these issues and are available to speak to various organizations (e.g., Rotary Club events, School In-Services, local cable channels, etc.)
- ✦ Youth authored newspaper articles based on their experiences and interviews. This could be conducted as part of an in-school or after-school program.
- ✦ Public Service Announcements developed by SOMK participants
- ✦ Video productions of youth telling their stories
- ✦ PowerPoint briefings with video inserts of veterans’ and youth stories
- ✦ Interactive theater productions

Desired Outcome:

As a result of the SOMK education and awareness efforts, multiple sections of the community will voluntarily engage their resources to provide support to Army National Guard and Reserve families.

The SOMK Manual

The SOMK manual contains all the information you will need to start your own SOMK program. The first section of the manual contains background information about SOMK and the appendices contain lesson plans for conducting an initial SOMK kick-off training program for teens. It is highly recommended that you review the entire manual before beginning your program.

Manual highlights include:

- Listing of targeted life skills
- Talking points about the importance of this project
- Youth recruitment strategies
- Job descriptions
- Program component summaries
- Complete kick-off training lesson plans
- Sample agendas
- Other organizations to involve
- Special considerations

SOMK Youth & Adult Job Descriptions

Because SOMK requires an ongoing commitment from youth and adult participants, it is important that both youth and adult participants be aware of what they are committing to do.

Youth Participants:

- ✧ Make a year-long commitment to SOMK meetings, trainings, and events
- ✧ Participate in initial SOMK training session to
 - become aware of issues facing families when a parent is deployed
 - develop messages about these issues to educate community members
 - gain skills related to writing, videography, interactive theater, and public speaking
- ✧ Participate in weekly SOMK meetings to refine messages and to present messages to community members
- ✧ Promote SOMK to peers
- ✧ Participate in SOMK Speakers Bureaus

Adult Leaders:

- ✧ Become familiar with SOMK training handbook and lesson plans
- ✧ Recruit SOMK adult and youth team members
- ✧ Organize and conduct an initial SOMK kick-off training
- ✧ Facilitate weekly on-going meetings of SOMK participants
- ✧ Recruit partners to facilitate specific training sessions at kick-off event and afterwards as needed. Examples include:
 - A member of the American Legion could facilitate a newspaper article session about current issues
 - A local newspaper columnist could facilitate a session on writing for publication
 - A National Guard or Reserve partner might present a website lesson on National Guard information and history
 - A Military representative could facilitate 'mock' deployment session
 - A local theater arts person could facilitate an interactive theater session
 - A local videographer or television personality could facilitate a session on creating videos
- ✧ Secure ongoing commitments from these team members so that messages can be refined over time
- ✧ Document SOMK training and Speakers Bureau presentations to the community; include information in overall OMK report

Training your SOMK Team

Before the actual Speakers Bureau can get its message out to the community, youth involved in SOMK need to conduct research on the issues and master a set of core skills. The core skills include writing articles, speaking in public, creating presentations, creating videos or public service announcements, and interactive theater productions.

There are seven main SOMK training components. These include:

- 1) **Session 1: Introduction/Overview**—The session described in this document
- 2) **Session 2: Archival Research**—This means we will look at website and

newspaper articles to learn about the military in general and how deployment has impacted people and families in our state.

- 3) **Session 3: Experiential**—In this component we will actually tour a military installation and participate in a mock deployment to get a better understanding of what military life is like.
- 4) **Session 4: Research with Military Personnel**—This means we will attend a panel discussion with military families and one with veterans to hear about their experiences firsthand.
- 5) **Session 5: Developing Messages**—In this session we will take all that we have learned about deployment issues and start developing ideas about what kinds of messages we want to share with others in our community.
- 6) **Session 6: Skills Development**—In this session we will spend time learning the skills we will need to create public service announcements, newspaper articles, speeches, or interactive theater productions.
- 7) **Session 7: Organizing Speakers Bureau**—In this final training session, we will develop a plan for organizing our Speakers Bureau. We'll determine roles and responsibilities and come up with a calendar of events.



Hero Pack Program Overview

What is a Hero Pack?

A Hero Pack is a tangible way to hand-deliver a salute to military children and youth for their strength and sacrifices while parents are deployed. A Hero Pack serves as an expression of support for military families from their communities and OMK Partners. The Hero Pack program is community service work that builds awareness and fosters community support for geographically dispersed military families.

Hero Packs consist of three components: an appreciation component, a content component, and a support component.

The **appreciation** component: The Hero Pack in its entirety serves as a salute and a token of thanks to the “suddenly military” family. Hero Packs are backpacks that include a collection of family support materials, communication tools, and fun items that military children can enjoy with their siblings, non-military parent, or friends.

The **content** component: Participants will pack into the backpack a variety of family support materials, communications tools, and fun items. Communication tools are meant to help encourage a connection between the deployed parent and their child. For instance, the camera can be used to capture memories that the child may wish to share with their parent either by mailing the pictures immediately or saving them in the photo album/scrapbook until reunion. Fun items, such as a stuffed animal or Frisbee, are there simply to bring joy to the affected youth.

The **support** component: In each backpack, participants will be provided with OMK Partner information and family support materials. The OMK program has partners on the national, state, and local level. OMK Partners are working together to create support networks in communities across America to support these geographically dispersed military families.

Why are Hero Packs important to Operation: Military Kids?

Operation: Military Kids is an initiative dedicated to supporting children of military members belonging to the National Guard and U.S. Army Reserves. These youth rarely have a direct connection to the military and are often located far away from any military installation. Very few support programs exist for these youth whose lives are turned inside out when their parents are deployed for long periods of time. Operation: Military Kids combines military,

4-H, Boys & Girls Clubs, The American Legion, schools, and various community organizations to help build community networks of support for these youth and families and create broader understanding of the challenges of military life throughout the communities and states.

Operation: Military Kids (OMK) includes several core program support pieces; the Hero Pack program is one of these outreach efforts.

The goals of the Hero Pack program are to:

- Recognize the strengths of military-connected children and youth
- Provide a symbol of thanks to children and youth for the sacrifices they make when their parents are deployed
- Provide the tools to help “suddenly military” children and youth stay connected with their absent parent
- Create awareness and educate the non-military community about the struggles “suddenly military” families are facing.

Who can build a Hero Pack?

Any group of youth that wants to get involved—Boys & Girls Clubs of America members, The American Legion local baseball team, 4-H members, a chess club from school, a church youth group, etc.

Where do you start?

Youth and adult leaders wanting to participate in a Hero Pack program should contact their State 4-H Military Liaison or the State Hero Pack Point of Contact (HP POC). The State 4-H Military Liaison in conjunction with the National Guard Family Program Coordinator and/or the U.S. Army Reserve Family Program Coordinator can assist your youth group in identifying what units are currently deployed in your area and the Family Readiness Groups (FRG) leader(s) associated with these units.

Family Readiness Groups (FRGs) are the primary way of communicating information to a soldier’s family. The FRG Leader(s) will then assist your group in identifying the number of youth affected by the deployment and how best to access the families. Please understand there is a great degree of confidentiality in working with the families. We do not want to advertise the fact that the family has a loved one gone and set them up for any risks.

Core elements of a Hero Pack are:

- ⊕ **Backpack**—Backpacks can be purchased or handmade.
- ⊕ **Disposable camera**—If a parent is deployed for long periods of time we want the recipients to have an opportunity to take pictures of family and friends and have people take pictures of the recipient to send to the deployed parent or to post in a photo album/scrapbook.

- ✪ **Photo album/scrapbook**—Military children will want to take lots of pictures to show their parent. Photo albums/scrapbooks will help the child to organize the pictures by chronological order, by events, or by favorite pictures.
- ✪ **Journal/pen**—Recipients will use the journal to write down their thoughts and/or daily events. This could be shared with the deployed parent on homecoming day.
- ✪ **Stationery**—Military youth will want to send their parent lots of mail and especially handwritten letters. Soldiers really enjoy getting mail. Providing the child with paper will motivate him or her to write more to the parent.
- ✪ **Fun items**—Good examples of fun items may be a stuffed animal or Frisbee. These items are there simply to bring joy to the affected youth.
- ✪ **Partner information**—Recipients need to be provided information from the many partners (national, state, and local) to assist them in being more aware of the supports available to them during this stressful deployment time. A sample list of national partner information follows (but is not limited to):
 - Generic OMK card
 - 4-H Invitation
 - Boys and Girls Clubs of America Invitation (Operation Proud Partners)
 - Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC) Staying Involved In Your Child’s Education During Deployment booklet
 - Operation Military Child Care Blue Card (OMCC)
 - MilitaryOneSource Information
 - Operation Child Care RandR card (OCC)
 - Kissing Hand Card
 - Local Partner information
- ✪ **Handwritten letters**—These letters should be written to the child and to their deployed family member, thanking them for their service and sacrifices to our country. It also might be nice to have letters of encouragement from local partners or businesses that have donated items for the Hero Packs.

These items are the core elements for Hero Packs because they are integral in supporting the three components of Hero Packs. (Note: In funding year 2005, OMK States must have the required elements listed in the Appendix of the HP Implementation Guide.)

What other types of items are acceptable?

Hero Packs are not limited to the items listed above. Participants may include additional items (i.e., family support materials, communication tools, fun items) such as:

- Worry dolls
- Non-breakable items
- Postage stamps
- Pens
- OMK lanyards
- Candy

- Prepaid phone calling card (Operation UpLink)
- Stickers
- Locally donated items

How to obtain locally donated items

Locally donated items will assist the OMK initiative in building community awareness and the local support network. In addition it will give the “suddenly military” families a little touch of home. When working within your community and soliciting donations, please keep in mind the donations need to be a family support material, a communication tool, or a fun item to support the components of the Hero Packs.

A good example of a locally donated item is from a company in New York State, which is located just outside of Ft. Drum. The company, famous for their little tree car deodorizers, expressed an interest in donating a product (specifically their patriotic trees). These are items that can either be a connection tool or a family support material. The trees can be easily mailed to the deployed soldier (i.e., assist with connecting to the soldier) or displayed by the family of the deployed soldier (i.e., community awareness and support). As a result of the desire to become involved, the company becomes a local support partner through its donations.

How do Hero Packs get assembled?

Have a Hero Pack backpack set out with the contents around it in a place where it is visible for all packers to see. Once you’re ready to begin, assembly lines are an efficient way to assemble backpacks. There are two options:

- Have each youth fill the entire backpack by carrying it along the line.
- Have backpacks passed down the line with each youth in charge of a particular item.

Each backpack should have handwritten letters from one youth to another plus one to the soldier.

What kinds of events lend themselves to include Hero Packs?

- ✦ **Small groups:** Torch club meeting, 4-H club meeting, Keystone club meetings, church youth group meetings, etc.
- ✦ **Mass events:** Operation Purple Camps, County or State fairs, Teen Leadership events, 4-H Congress, School Government Day, community get-together at The American Legion, Make a Difference Day events, etc.

How to distribute to groups or individually

Youth and adult leaders participating in a Hero Pack program should continue to communicate with the State 4-H Military Liaison or Hero Pack POC. The

State 4-H Military Liaison needs to be apprised of your plans for your Hero Pack program as they should continue to play a role in the communication with the National Guard Family Program Coordinator and/or the U.S. Army Reserve Family Program Coordinator as well as the FRG leader of the identified unit(s). It is the intent of the Hero Pack program to *hand-deliver* the backpacks to the recipients. Deliveries could be made at an FRG meeting or perhaps a community event, etc. It should be the goal to find a common date and time that your youth group and volunteers can meet with the FRG representative to create an action plan to hand-deliver these packs.

The FRG representative will be the link for your group's point person in order to be able to personally deliver Hero Packs to deserving families. Preferably, someone from the unit can arrive on the same day the packs were assembled. This is significant in that the youth who worked so hard can see that their efforts are going to support actual people, and not just sitting behind in a closet. Please stress with the group that if a face-to-face opportunity does not occur it is only because there needs to be a great degree of confidentiality in working with the families. We do not want to promote that the family has a loved one gone and set them up for any risks.

On the day of distribution it would be helpful to the receiving families to have current partner information in the backpacks. These "suddenly military" families should be invited to participate in 4-H programs and BGCA programs as well as our other national, state, and local partner programs located within their area. It would be helpful to the recipients to have a list of upcoming open events (shows, fairs, etc.) and local contact information if they decide they would like to become involved in partner programs. Once the packs are distributed, please alert partners (state and local) that they may be receiving phone calls of interest.

Documentation of Hero Pack assembly and distribution

Thank you for your dedication and support of the Hero Pack support program! We are in great need for a short narrative and pictures of your event. Please be sure to complete the Hero Pack report form. Once you have submitted a report form, the State 4-H Military Liaison will forward a certificate to your group as a small token of thanks for participating in this program support piece for Operation: Military Kids.