



SINCE OPERATION MILITARY KIDS (OMK) began in 2005, the focus has remained on building networks of support for the children and youth of deployed service members where they live. Regardless of whether Families are experiencing deployment for the first time, the second time or another in a string of multiple deployments, OMK's goal is to connect military children and youth with local resources in order to achieve a sense of community support and enhance their well-being.

Ways to Support Massachusetts

Operation: Military Kids

- Attend an RSG! workshop
- Become part of SOMK
- Donate to Hero Packs
- Provide a youth membership to a Boys & Girls Club, YMCA or 4-H
- Host an RSG! or SOMK presentation
- Connect with military families
- Volunteer with the MTL
- Offer services to military families
- Join a Regional OMK team!

For more information contact:

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**Operation:
 Military Kids
 MASSACHUSETTS**

Touching the
 Lives of Military
 Youth through
 Collaborations

Operation: Military Kids is a partnership of Army Child, Youth & School Services, 4-H National Headquarters/USDA, and UMass Amherst Extension. Operation: Military Kids - Massachusetts is supported by the 4-H/Army Youth Development Project under Kansas State University special project number 2007-48661-03868.



Massachusetts Operation Military Kids began in 2006 under the coordination of the University of Massachusetts Amherst Extension 4-H Youth Development Program. Currently MA OMK has a statewide team, regional teams, collaborators, and volunteers from across the Commonwealth who are committed to supporting military children in the following ways:

Organizing and delivering **Ready, Set, Go! Workshops (RSG!)** which are led by trained facilitators and designed for youth workers, educators, counselors and community members to offer insight into military culture, the deployment cycle and ways to best provide for, understand the needs of, and support military children and their families. Scheduling is based on request and there is no cost.

Sponsoring **Speak Out for Military Kids (SOMK)** which is an educational program designed by and for teens – both military and civilian - to raise the awareness of issues facing military families. SOMK trains teens in leadership, research, organization, technology, and public speaking skills. SOMK participants become members of speakers bureaus and present posters, lectures, public service announcements, videos, and other materials to share their knowledge and experiences with others in the community.

Providing **Hero Packs** which are backpacks or tote bags for military youth who have a deployed loved one. Along with a disposable camera, stationery, and other small gifts, each pack contains a personal letter from a young person to the military child, thanking him or her for being a “hero too.” Service organizations, community and youth groups are invited to create Hero Packs. Donations are welcome from all.

Joining a **Regional OMK Team** in which groups of community members and organizations develop ways to support young people in military families in their communities.

Volunteering with the **Mobile Technology Lab (MTL)** which is a set of laptops, printers, cameras and supplies in portable containers. Its purpose is to allow children of military families to create and print cards, pictures, etc. to send to their deployed loved ones. It is staffed by volunteers at events throughout the state where military families are in attendance.

Massachusetts OMK State Team

- Leslie Ardison Mass 4-H Volunteer
- Kerry Bickford Cape Cod Extension
- John Bynoe III MA Dept of Elementary & Secondary Education
- Jamie Foley Westover Airman & Family Readiness Center
- Judy Gagnon UMass Military Community Resource Center
- Sue Hamlett Preschool Enrichment Team
- Va Shon Hiltbold UMass Extension 4-H
- Ruby James-Saucer The American Legion Auxillary
- Pam Lefave UMass Extension 4-H
- Gretchen May UMass Extension 4-H
- Shirley Mietlicki Floyd UMass School of Public Health & Health Sciences
- Tammy Mosher Army One Source
- Meghan Norris U.S. Army Reserve
- Bill Parks Boys and Girls Club of Greater Westfield
- Susan Pixley MA National Guard Family Program
- Kim Pond UMass Extension 4-H
- Barbara Powers Joint Family Support Assistance Program
- Ruth Provost Cape Cod Boys & Girls Club
- Donald Temple The American Legion
- Sandra Winkler Army Reserve Family Readiness Group