

## Project: 4-H Military Project

**Project Leader: Linda Horn**

### Project Overview

One of the frequently overlooked consequences of American military involvement, both in other countries and within the United States, is that many thousands of children of National Guard and Reserve households must cope with the deployment and reintegration of a family member. Those children can experience problems coping with new family circumstances, new responsibilities and new stresses that are now part of their daily lives. A specific, critical need for Massachusetts is that many of our Reserve and National Guard personnel do not live on or near military bases. Instead, thousands of military families are scattered throughout communities across the state and do not have access to the same support and resources that are often associated with living in a more concentrated military community. Research has shown that the most stressful time for reintegrating military families is 9 to 16 months back.

The 4-H Military Project connects children ages 5-18 with educational, recreational and social activities before, during and after the deployment of a parent. The project provides direct assistance to military children and families and educates the broader community on the effects of deployment on children to ensure that all Massachusetts military youth are safe, healthy, and supported.

### Activity Summary - 2015

- Conduct Hero Pack Letter Writing Workshops (4)
- Maintain OMK Website (2)
- Mobile Technology Lab (2)
- Present Hero Packs (298)
- Present OMK informational Workshops (47)
- Yellow Ribbon Events (1)

### ***Total Educational contacts***

	Youth Contacts	Adult Contacts
In Person	758	920
Indirect Contacts (Print, Web, etc...)	200	1000

## **Narrative Summary and Impact**

The 4-H Military Partnership program has undergone changes during the past year. The Operation Military Kids funded portion ended on March 31, 2015, however the Military Partnership grant program continues to move forward. Many of the collaborations and partners built through the OMK grant have remained dedicated to working with 4-H military youth and military youth in general.

Because of the loss of OMK funding, some programs and events that were funded by that program ended. Additionally, the statewide OMK team no longer met, resulting in a breakdown of communications between extension programs and some of the military programs. However, we are now working toward rebuilding that coalition to ensure a stronger partnership.

Youth from around the state were able to participate in a wide range of 4-H programs throughout the year, including the Summer of Science two-day event held at UMass Amherst, Visual Presentations, and 4-H fairs. The 4-H program provided short term programming such as the Babysitter's Training and continues to oversee and run a successful group of 4-H clubs at Hanscom Air Force Base. Youth were invited to attend and participate in hands on 4-H STEM activities including building solar cars and the annual National 4-H Youth Science Day experiment. Teens are encouraged to become engaged in the 4-H teen ambassador program.

Massachusetts 4-H military youth continue to learn a wide variety of life skills which help them to become caring, competent adult citizens. They are able to problem solve, work collaboratively with a variety of age groups, listen to and accept opinions of others, organize their time and tasks, and speak clearly and with a purpose in small and large groups.

## **Collaborating Organizations**

- **(4-H) Boys & Girls Clubs**
- **Hanscom Air Force Base**
- **Massachusetts 4-H Foundation**
- **Massachusetts National Guard and Army Reserve - Family and Youth Programs**
- **Westover AFB**

