

Project: 4-H Military Partnership Program

Project Leader: Linda Horn

Project Overview

Many thousands of children of National Guard and Reserve households experience the deployment and reintegration of a family member. These children are at a high risk of experiencing emotional issues due to their need to cope with new family circumstances, new responsibilities and new stresses that are now part of their daily lives. Although some military families in Massachusetts live on a base, most are in the Reserves and living in regular neighborhoods. This sometimes causes a disconnect for young people as many times they are not aware of other young people who are also military connected. They can feel as though they are the only person in those circumstances.

Research has shown that the most stressful time for reintegrating military families is from between 9 to 16 months upon the adult's return home. Young people in this situation commonly experience stress and may act out both within the home and at school and social situations. The 4-H Military Partnership Project connects children ages 5-18 with educational, recreational and social activities before, during and after the deployment of a parent, whether they live on a military base, in communities, or on overseas installations.

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. 4-H clubs and opportunities provide consistency in belonging and an opportunity to develop life skills through a positive youth development framework. The 4-H Program is built upon four Essential Elements ensuring that youth feel a sense of belonging in a safe environment, develop independence in both group and individual work, share with others in the community through generosity, and develop a sense of mastery that continues throughout life as they practice and share what they have learned with others. As military families move frequently and experience the difficulties surrounding deployment and reintegration, 4-H provides predictable programming and a safe and nurturing environment for military connected children and youth.

Activity Summary 2018

- 4-H clubs established at Hanscom Air Force Base (3)
- Geographically dispersed military youth attend educational and support programming held during drill weekends (18)
- Updates to Military Portion of 4-H website (8)
- Trainings held by 4-H Educators (4)

Total Educational contacts

| | Youth Contacts | Adult Contacts |
|---|-------------------|-------------------|
| In Person | 198 | 62 |
| Indirect Contacts (Print, Web, etc...) | 240 | 26000 |

Narrative Summary and Impact

4-H Military Partnerships create opportunities and provide support to military connected youth whether they live on or near an installation, in our communities, or on overseas installations. The 4-H Military Partnerships rely on Land Grant University Extension faculty, the “Extension 4-H Military Liaison” to serve as a link between the State Cooperative Extension System, Military Service Branches, and 4-H National Headquarters at USDA. 4-H clubs provide quality educational experiences to military youth using research based curricula for military youth ages 5-18. 4-H clubs have been established on nearly every Army, Navy, and Air Force installation worldwide, while 4-H clubs in communities have opened their doors to military youth. Currently, military youth are connected to Massachusetts 4-H through:

- 4-H clubs at Hanscom Air Force Base
- 4-H clubs at Joint Base Cape Cod/Otis Air National Guard Base
- Greater Westfield Boys and Girls Club Military Drill Weekend Events
- Communities across the State

Visit <http://4-hmilitarypartnerships.org/> for more information

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**

