



NEBRASKA: OPERATION MILITARY KID

JULY, 2007

READY, SET, GO (RSG) - TRAINING



Setting up of Mobile Technology Lab (MTL)

MOBILE TECHNOLOGY LAB (MTL) WHAT IS IT?

The Mobile Technology Lab (MTL) supports Operation: Military Kids by helping to facilitate connections between deployed soldiers and their kids. They contain software and programs for children and youth to send personal messages and pictures to their deployed family members.

They are also utilized by OMK partner organizations such as UNL Cooperative Extension, The National Guard, after school programs, Boys & Girls Clubs, and 4-H, who request the lab for events that involve or support military kids. The MTL can be used for events that have a combination of military and non-military youth. Many OMK team members and community partners have also held trainings to become familiar with the MTL and its many uses.

Possible Uses of MTL

- Bringing military and non-military kids together to create a DVD about issues that affect military kids.
- Doing special projects with OMK theme in after-school programs.
- Taking digital pictures at events and making a slide show.
- Having military kids from OMK youth events send messages, cards, pictures, etc. to deployed family member.

The contents of the MTL are 10 laptops, headsets and external floppy drivers, 1 external DVD recorder, 1 scanner, 1 standard printer, 2 Photosmart printers, 4 video cameras with tripods, 1 laminator, 1 Canon digital camera, 4 Kodak digital cameras with memory cards, 1 camera TV adaptor, 5 Phillips FunCams, 1 AA battery charger, 1 wireless router. All contents come with the necessary software, power cords, and batteries.

To sign out the MTL, call or email the OMK office or Mark Simmons with your request. An MTL application and contents list will be sent for you to complete and return to request the equipment needed for your event. For any event, it is possible to sign out as much or as little of the MTL as is required. All of the contents are available, but you can specify the exact components that you want to include.

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, especially our National Guard and Reserve youth who may be geographically separated from other youth like them.

Operation Military Kids! (OMK) is a program designed to help military youth living in civilian communities to connect to other youth in similar situations and to local community entities they can turn to for support.

OMK is the way YOU can get involved to support these youth and their families. We are offering in your community a mini training, designed to give you a feel for the program, and how you can get more involved to make an impact in the lives of young people in your own backyard. The training will last approximately 2 hours (6:00 pm - 8:00 pm) and will be held at the following National Guard Armory locations:

Monday July 9, 2007 - Omaha - 11650 Rainwood Rd.

Wednesday July 11, 2007 - Wayne - 800 E. 7th

Thursday July 12, 2007 - O'Neill - 635 N. 4th Street

Monday July 16, 2007 - Fremont - 910 N. Lincoln

Tuesday July 17, 2007 - Lincoln - 2400 N.W. 24th Street

Penterman Armory (Air National Guard Base)

These trainings are free of charge, and refreshments will be provided!! Please RSVP to Beth Kaiser at 402-440-9580 or beth.kaiser@us.army.mil, to let us know what location works best for you!

CONTENTS

MOBILE TECHNOLOGY LAB (MTL)	1
RSG - TRAINING	1
OMK @ NEBRASKA STATE FAIR	2
SOMK RETREAT	2
2007 OMK CAMP TOTALS	2
WHAT IS A HERO PACK?	3

OMK AT NEBRASKA STATE FAIR-CYBER FAIR

Volunteers will be needed to help run the Cyber Fair booth for OMK at the Nebraska State Fair from Friday, August 24 - Labor Day, Monday, September 3, 2007. Friday, August 31 will be Veteran's Day. We will be having a video from the view of a deployed unit in Iraq or Afghanistan that day. Dignitaries, politicians, commanders will be present for the event. To volunteer check the following website <http://4h.unl.edu/forms/cyberfair.htm> or Michele Myer at mmyer2@unl.edu or (402)444-4638. For volunteering you will receive free admission for yourself that day.

SPEAK OUT FOR MILITARY KIDS (SOMK) RETREAT

Join the Operation Military Kids' effort and be a spokesperson for military kids in your community. We are hosting a Speak Out for Military Kids Retreat to help you discover what you can do to help kids like you in your own backyard. Plus, you will meet a lot of other cool youth from around the state!

Who: Any youth grades 7-12

What: SOMK Retreat

When: July 26-27

Where: University of Nebraska- Lincoln

Why: To create a group of young people willing to speak out for military families (and we plan to have a lot of fun too!)

This overnight retreat is free to any youth interested in the Operation Military Kids program. Please contact us if transportation is a concern. To reserve your spot contact Jamie Nuss by July 9th at 402-637-7834 or jamieltman@yahoo.com

For more information about Speak Out for Military Kids or Operation Military Kids check out our website at www.nebraskaomk.org

2007 OMK CAMP TOTALS

The following is the number of military children that Operation: Military Kid's paid for to attend 4-H camps this year.

Day Camps - Ages 5 - 8:

Alma 4-H Camp	0
Halsey 4-H Camp:	1
Gretna 4-H Camp:	30
Total	31

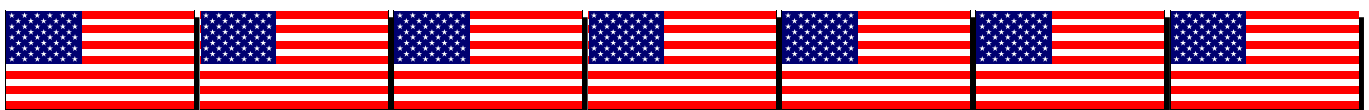
Explorer Camps - Ages 8 - 11

Alma 4-H Camp	2
Halsey 4-H Camp:	3
Gretna 4-H Camp:	26
Total	31

Discovery Camps - Ages 11 - 15:

Alma 4-H Camp	0
Halsey 4-H Camp:	0
Gretna 4-H Camp:	8
Total	8

GRAND TOTAL **70**



WHAT IS A HERO PACK?

The Hero Pack Initiative is an outreach effort for *Operation: Military Kids*. Hero Packs are backpacks filled with mementos and items designed to help connect kids with their deployed family member. Presenting Hero Packs to kids is a way to show appreciation and hand-deliver a salute to military youth for their strength and sacrifices while their parents are deployed.

The Hero Pack project is a chance for groups of youth and adults to become involved in a valuable community service effort that also builds awareness and fosters community support for geographically dispersed military families.

The Hero Pack backpack contains fun and educational items such as: a disposable camera; a picture frame; a small photo album; a journal; a storybook; a new stuffed animal; a Frisbee; stationary; pens/pencils; stamps and a hand written letter. The key component in the Hero Pack is the hand written letter. The letter thanks the child for their contribution to our country.

Volunteer to do a Hero Pack Project...

The Hero Pack Process...

1. Contact the OMK office via phone or email. You will then be provided with empty backpacks and specific guidelines for filling them.
2. Think about involving other individuals, groups, and businesses in this effort.
3. Purchase Hero Pack supplies or obtain donations from local business (for example: toy stores, bookstores, stationary stores, etc.)
4. Have the youth involved hand write letters of appreciation and support to the military kids.
5. Get your group together to fill Hero Packs.
6. Once your group has finished packing the Hero Packs, they need to be returned to the OMK office. They will then be distributed to military youth in Nebraska.

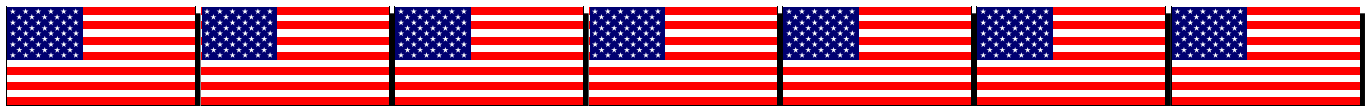
Contact Mark Simmons or Sara Cease to begin your Hero Pack Drive. Their contact information can be found at the bottom of this newsletter.



Hero packs being distributed. Story at left.



***If you should have story ideas, for the OMK newsletter, please contact Michele Myer at mmyer2@unl.edu.*



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