



NEBRASKA: OPERATION MILITARY KIDS

JANUARY, 2008

We are on the web! See us at: State-www.nebraskaomk.org; National-www.operationmilitarykids.org



Eddy Mentzer giving directions on team building at the RSG! Training in Kansas City.

OMK TRAINING IN KANSAS CITY

During the week of December 3-7, 2007 there was a Ready, Set, Go (RSG)! Training in Kansas City. Sara Cease, Beth Kaiser, and Michele Myer from the Nebraska State Team attended the training.

The trainers at the event were Darrin Allen - OMK National Coordinator, Mona Johnson - Director of Learning and Support, Eddy Mentzer - Youth Development Specialist, Nancy Campbell - Youth Education Support Services Program Manager, and Kevin Wright - Washington State Program Manager.

A representative from each of the partners: Army National Guard, Army Reserve, Boys & Girls Club of America, the Military Child Education Coalition, The American Legion, 4-H, Child & Youth Services, presented how they support OMK.

The emotional stages that a family goes through and the variables involved were well presented. Many personal families from deployed families were also there to support OMK to get RSG! Training. They discussed the emotions they have personally dealt with having a loved one deployed. Those that attended learned first hand the hardships dealt with in the Global War on Terrorism and those affected.

The different components of OMK were also presented which is Speak Out Military Kids (SOMK), RSG! Training, the Mobile Tech Lab (MTL), and Hero Packs.

An abbreviated RSG! Training in 2008 will be set up to educate the community and civic organizations across the state of Nebraska. Check the website www.nebraskaomk.org to find out when and where a nearby training will be held.

GUARD AND RESERVE INSTITUTE

The Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC) is a non-profit group established to train teachers and counselors on the unique issues facing Guard and Reserve children. Mark Simmons and Sara Cease recently attended one of the trainings in Salina, KS. The training is held in four training modules:

The Basics: Discusses military basics for civilian educators.

Insights: Sheds light on stressors and challenges unique to Guard and Reserve children.

Response and Resilience: Helps attendees develop healthy responses and reactions to foster positive reactions in youth.

Actions and Reactions: Gives the educators a tool kit and information to take back to their communities.

The training was beneficial for all educators and counselors, especially those in communities that are impacted by deployment.

We are excited to announce that this training will be available in Nebraska on February 26 and 27.

UPCOMING EVENTS

WHAT: MCEC Training
WHEN: February 26-27
WHERE: TAC Building, 3215 Cuming St., Rm. 406, Omaha, NE
CONTACT: Sara Cease, (402)309-7338 or sara.cease@us.army.mil

WHAT: Nebraska National Guard State Family Program Conference & State Youth Symposium
WHEN: March 28-29
WHERE: South Sioux City, NE
CONTACT: Lori Neumann, (402)309-7333 or lori.neumann@us.army.mil

CONTENTS

OMK RSG! TRAINING IN KANSAS CITY	1
GUARD AND RESERVE INSTITUTE	1
UPCOMING EVENTS	1
KUDOS	2
HERO PACKS NEEDED	2
HAUNTED ARMORY	3
OMK VEGETABLE SOUP	3



Kaitlyn Swanger and Taylor Berine pictured above are two who helped out at a recent pre-deployment briefing.

KUDOS

On a snowy Sunday morning, December 2, 2007, part of the OMK team got together to bring part of the Mobile Technology Lab (MTL) to the Douglas County Civic Center to an Army pre-deployment briefing. The OMK team used various components of the MTL to make DVDs of children of those being deployed. The parents enjoyed receiving the DVDs of their children. Pictures were also taken of the youth present. Then the youth chose a frame on one of the programs from the laptops in the MTL that they thought that their parent would enjoy to place around the picture taken. Then a printer was used to print out the framed picture for the youth to present to their parent. With the MTL the OMK team was able to do all this. If your group or organization would like to use the MTL for a military youth activity please contact Operation: Military Kids.

The two young ladies pictured above helped out at the pre-deployment briefing at the Douglas County Civic Center. They interacted well with the young children present and were rather technologically savvy. They were terrific help.

Thank you from OMK to these two fine young ladies!

HERO PACKS NEEDED

Operation: Military Kids needs your help! There is huge urgency right now for Hero Packs due to the large deployment recently of military members.

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.

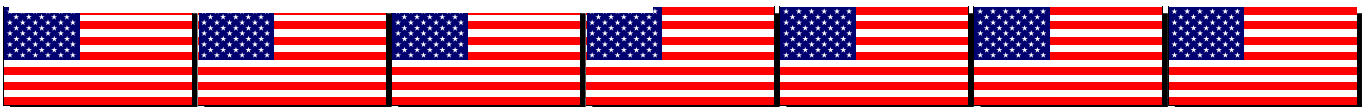
The Hero Pack project is a chance for groups of youth and adults to become involved in a valuable community service effort that also builds awareness and fosters community support for geographically dispersed military families.

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.

There are three ways a group/organization can do a Hero Packing...

1. *Operation: Military Kids* supplies the group/organization with all the supplies to pack a Hero Pack. The group/organization does the packing along with writing the letter thanking the military child.
2. *Operation: Military Kids* supplies the group/organization with only the Hero Pack (back pack). The group/organization supplies the items to put in them and does the packing along with writing the letter thanking the military child.
3. The group/organization purchases or gets donations for ALL the items (backpack and supplies inside). The group/organization then also does the packing of them along with writing the letter thanking the military child.

A group/organization can also participate by holding a donation drive for the items to be put into Hero Packs. For a complete list of items needed please visit our web site at www.nebraskaomk.org. If your group/organization would like to participate or have any questions please contact Mark Simmons or Beth Kaiser.





Lil' Green and a Hanna Montana look alike at
HAUNTED ARMORY

The Third Annual Haunted Armory hosted by the Nebraska National Guard Family Program Office was October 26, 2007. Over 600 military families from all branches of the military enjoyed a trick or treat trail with goodies and games from many different partner organizations. Younger trick or treaters were also able to enjoy riding in the Choo Choo Train and bouncing in the Bounce House. Older kids were scared walking through the Haunted Halls of the Armory. General Lempke was the judge for the best costume in the different age categories. Operation Military Kids help to sponsor this annual event.

The event was a great success and could not have happened without the help and support of the Nebraska State Youth Coordinator, Sara Cease and our partner organizations.

OMK VEGETABLE SOUP

We are often confused with acronyms put out by the military and thus OMK. Below are some translations that you may find helpful.

GWOT - *Global War on Terrorism*
OMK - *Operation Military Kids*
SOMK - *Speak Out for Military Kids*
MTL - *Mobile Tech Lab*
RSG - *Ready, Set, Go!*
CYS - *Child and Youth Services*
FMWRC - *Family, Morale, Welfare, and Recreation Command*
USDA - *United States Department of Agriculture*
MCEC - *Military Child Education Coalition*
BGCA - *Boys and Girls Clubs of America*
JFSAP - *Joint Family Support Assistance Program*
AIFSN - *Army Integrated Family Support Network*
NACCRRA - *National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies*

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



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