

# NEW HAMPSHIRE OPERATION: MILITARY KIDS



**WORKING TOGETHER TO  
SUPPORT MILITARY KIDS  
AND THEIR FAMILIES**

**2009 ANNUAL REPORT  
A UNH COOPERATIVE EXTENSION  
4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM**

## Mission

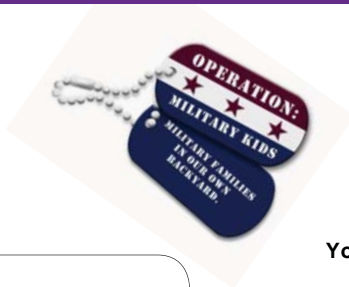
New Hampshire Operation: Military Kids (OMK) collaborates with all branches of the military, as well as community organizations across the state, to provide sustainable local support services to military youth and their families before, during, and after deployment.



- Broaden existing networks of support for military youth and continue to connect them with other military and non-military youth through a variety of recreational, social, and educational programs, such as OMK youth and family camps.
- Conduct Ready, Set, Go! (RSG!) programs to foster understanding of the impact the deployment cycle has on military youth, their families, and their community.
- Conduct youth-focused programs for military kids and their families so they can have fun, share new learning experiences, and offer support to one another in an informal environment.
- Train additional military and non-military teen ambassadors for the Speak Out for Military Kids (SOMK) team.
- Continue to encourage community groups to write letters to military kids and gather Hero Pack donations to ensure we have an adequate supply to fill packs for deployment ceremonies.
- Continue to partner with organizations to implement the 4-H/Army Child & Youth Services babysitter training program to provide childcare support for military families.
- Maintain existing relationships with OMK State Team members, while actively recruiting new members to achieve the broadest possible level of community support.
- Regularly promote the use of the Mobile Technology Lab (MTL) in youth programming, diligently reviewing the MTL equipment and check-out process to ensure a well-run system of equipment management and transfer around the state.

## 2009 Goals

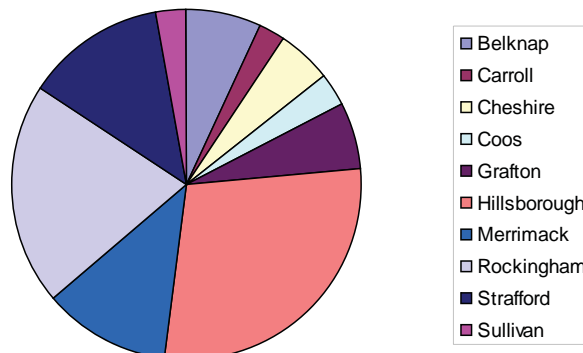




## Children of Military Members by County

Youth of Military Families in New Hampshire by County

County	Total Youth
Belknap	283
Carroll	99
Cheshire	197
Coos	128
Grafton	248
Hillsborough	1140
Merrimack	465
Rockingham	837
Strafford	520
Sullivan	116
<b>Total</b>	<b>4033</b>



## Ready, Set, Go!

NH OMK held 52 Ready, Set, Go! (RSG!) programs in 2009, reaching over 3000 community members and partners. Each RSG! program, specifically tailored for the given audience, served to educate participants about the unique needs facing military kids and offered ideas on how to support our state's military youth and their families during all stages of the deployment process.

## Partner Projects

The 2009 NH OMK Partner Project program enabled seven community organizations to extend their programs across our state, reaching approximately 1250 military youth and families. A few examples follow:

- International Order of Odd Fellows Evergreen Lodge third annual youth fishing derby
- Pemi Youth Center second event to collect and assemble items for 25 Hero Packs
- Youth-focused yoga, meditation and relaxation class, and other group activities, at 8 Limbs Yoga
- Apple picking, pumpkin carving, face painting, hayrides and entertainment at the annual Apple Hill Farm's Military Appreciation Day
- Granite State Dairy tours, games, wagon rides and ice cream at the UNH Dairy Barns



## Speak Out for Military Kids

The NH Speak Out for Military Kids (SOMK) team does a fantastic job raising awareness about the unique needs of geographically dispersed military kids.

The teens bring their message, through assorted means and media to their peers, schools, and communities, helping educate others about what it's like to be a military kid. They are known for their creative DVDs, viewed by over 1000 people in programs conducted throughout New Hampshire in 2009, in addition to featuring their latest video on the OMK web site.

## Mobile Technology Lab

The OMK Mobile Technology Lab (MTL) makes its way around our state with great frequency. The MTL is used by the members of our Speak Out Team, at the OMK youth and family camps, during Partner Project programs and events, and by various community groups throughout New Hampshire. In 2009, a total of 1,456 individuals used some portion of the MTL.

## Hero Packs

In 2009, NH OMK presented 85 military youth with Hero Packs at deployment ceremonies. Hero Packs are backpacks filled with items that help kids keep in touch with their deployed loved ones and serve as a token of thanks for the many sacrifices they make. Thousands of Hero Pack items have been donated to NH OMK by numerous community groups and partners, in anticipation of the large deployment expected in 2010. Groups include:

- 4-H Groups
- Scouts
- Rotary
- Veterans Groups
- NH Businesses
- School Programs
- Individual Donations
- UNH Sororities



## Examples of OMK Tour of Discovery Camps Impact

- 90% reported meeting another military kid at camp with whom they wanted to stay in touch.
- 80% learned theater activities gave them a new way to express their thoughts and feelings.
- 90% felt the theater camp experience improved their overall ability to share their ideas.
- 100% of youth at the babysitting camp reported learning more about the responsibilities of being a caring, competent babysitter, safety awareness, child development, and age-appropriate activities.
- 100% "You're the Chef" campers reported learning more about making smart eating choices, kitchen safety, following a recipe and cooking items they can prepare at home.
- 100% of Family Adventure Camp participants reported complete satisfaction with the family camp event, including balancing the amount of time to relax, have fun, and connect with other military families.





## OMK Tour of Discovery Camps

A series of theme based camps reaching 102 youth, focused on theater, babysitting, cooking and nutrition, and aeronautics. Camps were geographically dispersed across NH in an effort to provide opportunities to youth in all regions of the state. All camps included many social and recreational activities, in addition to new skills learned.



### **Lights, Camera, Action!**

This camp focused on theater arts with themes relevant to military kids. Youth collaborated, wrote and performed group skits. They gained

creative and public speaking experience, and learned about artistic and technical aspects of the theatre. *“What I liked best about Lights, Camera, Action! were the people I met and the camp itself--the place was beautiful!”*

### **Family Adventure Camp**

Families shared adventures like white water rafting, canoeing, kayaking, geo-puzzles, a challenge course, Native American games, an educational hike, and a 10-Tips seminar on essential outdoor survival gear.

### **Adventures in Babysitting**

Youth were taught about child development, safety and first aid, the business of babysitting, as well as

information relevant to military families and their children. Babysitting Camps reached 41 youth and paved the way for training additional babysitters for military families in 2010. *“I loved learning about the*

*safety hazards there might be in the house and yard.”*



### **You're the Chef**

Youth learned about food and meal preparation,

including nutrition, consumer education, kitchen and food storage safety, meal planning, and cooking techniques. *“I loved meeting new friends and just getting to cook!”*

***“I could have stayed home and gone to a cool party with my friends from school, but I'm so glad I came to this Family Camp instead--it's been an awesome way to meet other military kids now that I no longer live on a base...”***

***-- 16 year old boy***

### **Flight Command!**

Youth slept under the stars at a state-of-the-art planetarium. They developed their aerospace skills-assembling and launching model rockets. Campers used

handheld GPS units as well. *“Looking through the telescope at Neptune and it's rings, was really cool!”*





## New Hampshire Working Together

### New Hampshire OMK Partners

- American Legion
- American Red Cross
- Army Integrated Family Support Network
- Army Reserve Child Youth and School Services
- Boys and Girls Club
- Child Care Resource and Referral
- Digital Media Academy
- Disaster Behavioral Health Response Team
- Girl Scouts of the Green and White Mountains
- Joint Family Support Assistance Program
- Marine Family Readiness
- NH 4-H Youth Development
- NH Air National Guard
- NH Army National Guard
- NH Council of Churches
- NH Department of Education
- NH Department of Health & Human Services, Community Based Military Programs
- NH Military Family Life Consultant
- NH National Guard State Family Program
- NH Parks and Recreation
- NH Transition Assistance Advisor
- Service Credit Union
- The Works Health and Family Fitness Center
- UNH Cooperative Extension

**JOIN US!**



### Get Involved & Make A Difference

- Host a Ready, Set, Go! program about military youth issues.
- Collect items and/or write appreciation letters for OMK Hero Packs for military kids.
- Join our Speak Out For Military Kids (SOMK) Team.
- Take an OMK Babysitting Course become a sitter for military families
- Share your photo, film making or computer skills with military kids– borrow our Mobile Technology Lab (MTL).
- Use the OMK Mobile Tech Lab at any event with a military theme.
- Train to become an OMK Babysitting Course Instructor.
- Conduct an OMK Partner Project for military kids.
- Donate money in support of military kids' hero packs, camps and activities.
- Write letters to local media encouraging your community to remember military kids.
- Join our OMK State Team, or volunteer to help.

**AND THEN, SEND US AN EMAIL -- WE WOULD LOVE TO HEAR WHAT YOU'VE DONE!**



UNIVERSITY of NEW HAMPSHIRE  
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

### Want More Ideas? Contact Us!

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### OMK WEB LINKS

[nhomk.com](http://nhomk.com)  
[operationmilitarykids.org](http://operationmilitarykids.org)  
[4-hmilitarypartnerships.org](http://4-hmilitarypartnerships.org)  
[extension.unh.edu](http://extension.unh.edu)

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