

WSU PUYALLUP HIGHLIGHT

June 7, 2005

Operation: Military Kids

U.S. Military reaches out to 4-H to lead the way for the program in Washington

The U.S. military called on 4-H when it needed increased assistance for children of deployed soldiers. In April 2004, a unique partnership was formed between 4-H, the office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Washington State National Guard and the U.S. Army Reserve to come together in the creation of Operation: Military Kids. This program is designed to foster support networks for children in schools and communities before, during and after the deployment of a parent or loved one.

Washington has one of the highest deployment rates in the country. Because of this, it was chosen to be one of five pilot Operation: Military Kids programs. The program targets families in the National Guard, Army Reserve and other military units that are living in civilian communities away from military bases. Because they are not on the base, they are somewhat isolated and there is not an adequate support system for these families. These children attend public schools where their peers are not in military families and are not as understanding and sensitive to the issues they face. Often there isn't anyone available at the school who understands what the children are facing and they don't have the resources to offer to help them cope. The Operation: Military Kids Team members work directly with the families of deployed soldiers, providing the much needed support.

Operation: Military Kids is currently serving hundreds of children and families. The Washington team, lead by Kevin Wright, developed its own training which has now become the national model. The state 4-H team is now leading the way in helping to guide the project nationally.



Weekly Highlights provided by the people and programs of WSU Puyallup. To include a highlight in an upcoming announcement, please contact either Heather Schriver, hschriver@wsu.edu, 253-445-4504, or Jon Newkirk, jnewkirk@wsu.edu, 253-445-4568

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