

HIGHLIGHT

Operation Military Kids Program Assists National Guard Families



(Left: Youth in many states can attend OMK summer camps; Center: Training programs work with schools and youth development personnel; Right: Kevin Wright, 4-H State Program Manager.)

In 2004, with the increase in deployment of National Guard and Reserve personnel, Kevin Wright, 4-H State Program Manager at the WSU Puyallup Center, started a test project with the Department of Army. The project was for families in Washington as deployment of personnel in the state had reached nearly 50% of all reservists, affecting many of the state's communities. Later, along with colleagues in four other states and the Department of Defense, Kevin began the first Operation Military Kids program to create support networks and programs for children before, during and after the deployment of a parent or loved one. The project was so successful that OMK is now operated in 42 states, a partnership between 4-H, local Boys and Girls Clubs, schools, all branches of the military, and several other national organizations

As the program grew, Kevin and his Washington State team recognized the need to have a training program for youth development professionals, school teachers and counselors. With the help of team members from the National Guard, 4-H, Army Reserve, and the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, a new national training program emerged entitled, Ready, Set, Go! Kevin has continued to grow the OMK Program at the Puyallup Center, expanding program development to include other national training, logistics support for all OMK promotional materials, and the popular Hero Packs given to each child. To view a short video about the OMK program click on the following link and then click on Operation Military Kids in the first paragraph. <http://www.operationmilitarykids.org/public/omk.aspx>

WSU Puyallup: Solutions for the Region; Programs for Its People

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