



OPERATION: MILITARY KIDS PROGRAM HOSTS 5TH ANNUAL CAMP

For a week in August, Kelleys Island on Lake Erie was home for 227 campers participating in the Operation: Military Kids (OMK) program, which held its 5th annual camp this year. The camp, a joint effort of Ohio 4-H and the Ohio National Guard's Family Readiness program, is for youths who have parents in any branch of the military who have been deployed, are currently deployed, or are preparing to deploy overseas.

New this year, OMK held two camps simultaneously, one for 9- to 11-year-olds at the Erie County 4-H Camp, and another for teens at Camp Patmos, a mile down the road. This expansion, made possible by additional funding from the Office of the Secretary of Defense as well as cash and in-kind donations, enabled slots for nearly 100 additional campers. This year's teen camp included a community service project in which campers painted tables at the local VFW post and laid a paver sidewalk to improve access to the local veterans' memorial.

A unique aspect of the camp is the participation of military service members. Each day, "Military Moments" is devoted to military values such as honor, loyalty, courage, commitment, integrity, and selfless service. A highlight of the week was when Major General Matthew Kambic, Assistant Adjutant General, Army, led a team of military leaders from all five branches of the service in landing in a Chinook helicopter on the camp field.

Closing ceremonies included a delegation of seven state legislators, the mayors of Kelleys Island and Marblehead, and several donors, including Bob Joseph, a graduate of the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences. In addition, checks totaling \$11,500 were presented from new donors Wal-Mart Stores, Inc., Cash America International, Check Smart Financial, Meijer, Proggemeyer Design Group, Nucor Steel Marion, Inc., and Tom Pappas & Associates.

State Representative Peter Ujvagi described the bill that he and Representative Ross McGregor sponsored to make August "Ohio Military Family Month." On behalf of the legislators, Rep. Ujvagi presented camp directors — Theresa Ferrari, the Project Director of Operation: Military Kids and youth development specialist with Ohio 4-H, and Sue Ann Carroll, State Youth Coordinator with the Ohio National Guard — with a certificate congratulating Operation: Military Kids Camp on its fifth anniversary and for its "remarkable record of service to the community."

The OMK program is a partnership with Army Child, Youth, and School Services; National 4-H Headquarters; and Ohio 4-H Youth Development. For information on Ohio's program, see <http://operationmilitarykids.ohio4h.org>. ■ CHRISTY GEORGE



Many thanks to all of the individual donors who support OMK as well as these donors:

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For information on how to donate to Operation: Military Kids, contact the 4-H Foundation office at 614-292-6943.