



Supports Florida military youth through collaboration with military partners providing 4-H Clubs, afterschool programs, camps, activities, and events on military installations and in local communities. Florida 4-H has two military programs. The Florida 4-H Military partnership started in 2003 and supports military youth at 12 military installations and those that are geographically dispersed. Florida Operation Military Kids started in 2004 and supports military youth that have a parent in the deployment cycle. There are approximately 58,000 military youth (ages 5-18) in Florida. These programs have served youth in all military branches and components. These programs educate the public about the unique challenges of military youth; recruit volunteers; train educators, volunteers, and military youth program staff on the impact of deployment and 4-H curriculum.

- ★ Military youth have unique issues including frequent relocations, adjusting to new communities and schools, separation anxiety regarding the safety of a deployed parent, and increased responsibilities at home especially when a parent is deployed. 4-H provides a safe, educational supportive environment for the youth to come to after school when they are more likely to make poor choices or follow the crowd. It can also empower youth to be able to stand up to bullies and others that may be trying to get them to participate in risky behaviors.
- ★ Moving is part of military life, making youth vulnerable. 4-H provides a support network delivering recreational, social and providing quality developmental programs so military members can pursue their critical high-risk assignments.
- ★ The 4-H Military partnership allows military youth to join 4-H at one installation and continue at a new location providing some continuity and consistency in the lives of these young people.
- ★ 4-H offers positive youth development projects related to the mission mandates of healthy living, science, and citizenship. 4-H military clubs offers opportunities for military youth to explore new interests and gain skills. In addition to learning-by-doing in their club, military youth have an opportunity to participate with other 4-H youth in county and state programs.
- ★ Youth are provided opportunities to master life skills like decision-making, coping, improving self-esteem, leadership and citizenship. The skills youth learn in 4-H help them adapt to adversity and develop competencies important to their future success and assist them to lead healthy and productive roles in the community.

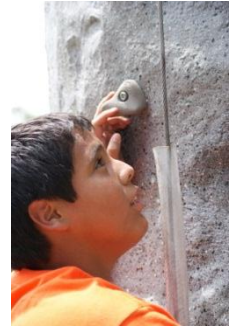
## Highlights

- ★ During the past 5 years, there have been 20 residential camps with 1,691 youth participating. Camps offer the opportunity for military youth to meet other military youth especially beneficial for geographically dispersed youth. Camps also provide educational activities on Healthy Living, Science and Technology, and Citizenship.
- ★ Babysitting classes using the 4-H Army Babysitting curriculum are offered. These classes help teens care for younger siblings and help them gain entrepreneur experience. Caring for younger siblings is especially important when a parent is deployed.
- ★ MacDill Youth Stomp group performed at the 2012 NAE4-HA National Conference marketing 4-H and highlighting the diverse talent of the military youth. Florida also provided a presentation highlighting Florida Military Partnerships at the 2010 Children, Youth, and Families at Risk (CYFAR) and NAE4-HA Conference.
- ★ Received a grant to fund a military tract at Family Café, a state wide two day conference to support families with special needs youth. As a result of this conference, a support network has been established with regular conference calls, social media and resource information.
- ★ Military youth are participating in other 4-H programs—residential/day camps; fair; Tropicana Public Speaking contest; State 4-H Executive Board; 4-H Day at the Capital; 4-H Legislature.



## Healthy Living

- ★ Supporting the physical, mental, and emotional health of the youth, helps them lead healthy and productive lives. These programs address critical issues of childhood obesity, substance abuse and physical safety.
- ★ Youth participate in activities concerning Healthy Living where they learn about nutrition; food preparation; food science and safety; and wellness and health topics.
- ★ Youth that participate in food safety and preparation gained the knowledge necessary to reduce the risk of food borne illnesses. Participants in healthy living programs learned how food and physical exercise affect the body. Proper diet and physical activity will ensure youth are performing their best in school and reduce the likelihood of developing illnesses caused from improper nutrition and poor exercise habits. Children who learn to make healthy lifestyle choices while they are young will make healthy choices as adults thereby reducing their chances of acquiring a chronic disease.



## Science, Engineering and Technology

- ★ Youth participate in activities involving plant and environmental science, marine science, recycling, photography, robotics, sewing, and National Science Day. These activities provide hands-on learning experiences to encourage young minds and help fill our shortage of leaders proficient in science, engineering and technology.
- ★ These programs tackle important issues like climate change, workforce development and technological innovation and prepare youth for the challenges of the 21st Century by engaging them in a process of discovery and exploration.

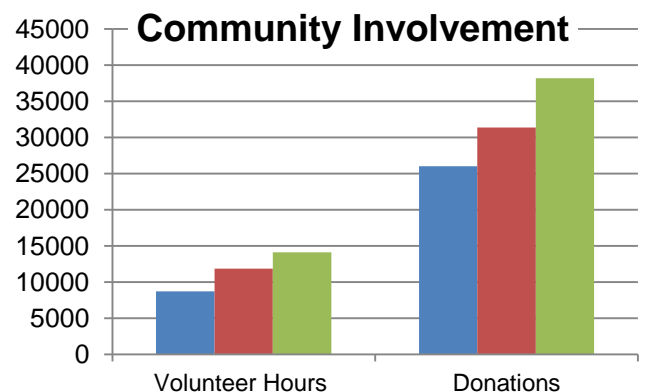
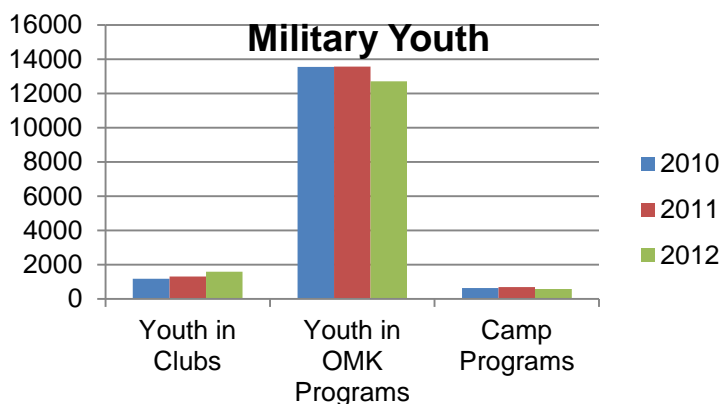


## Citizenship

- ★ Youth gain a better understanding of their role in civic affairs, expand their decision making process, and provides a foundation for youth to take an active role in the community as adults.
- ★ Participation in such activities can also improve staff communication and job satisfaction, which leads to a more productive employee. Of the job skills most valued by employers, communication consistently ranks at the top of the list. Employers look for communication skills such as the ability to express thoughts clearly, efficiently, and effectively through oral and written communication. Youth also participate in 4-H Day at the Capital and Legislature where they learn about government.
- ★ Military youth participate in various community service projects which helps youth connect to the community. Youth have organized food and coat drives, visited local day care centers reading to the children and leading activities, and prepared care packages for military members. Organizing these projects helps youth improve time management, organizational skills, flexibility, teamwork and communication. Teambuilding activities unite a group, develop strengths, and address weaknesses.



## Participation and Community Involvement

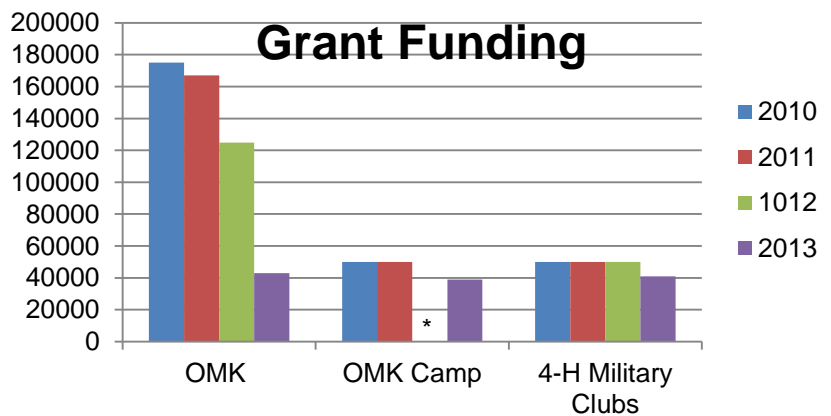


- ★ Donations include in-kind and monetary donations. Many local businesses, community members, volunteers and organizations like the American Legion donate items, funds or provide facilities.
- ★ In-kind contribution of volunteer hours at \$18.00 per hour would equal \$636491 value contributed to the program.

## Funding

### Federal grant funding

- ★ US Department of Agriculture
- ★ US Department of Defense
  - ★ Army Child Youth and School Services
  - ★ Air Force Child and Youth Programs
  - ★ Navy Child and Youth Programs
- ★ From 2009 – 2013, \$1,490,295.83 has been provided from grants.
- ★ OMK grant for FY 2013 provides funding until March 31, 2013 (6 months); FY 2012 funded 13 months; FY 2011 funded 11 months; FY 2010 funded 12 months.



## Testimonials

### Military Youth

- ★ "I love 4-H, it is the best, my favorite thing to do is to go competitions or fairs. Who doesn't like 4-H? I learned many different wonderful things. 4-H is the best ever."
- ★ "I started helping Ms. Stephanie do the cooking classes with the pre-teens because I thought I would get to eat a lot of good food. I didn't know I would learn so much about proper nutrition and how to cook stuff the right way. I really like it and I do a lot of the same cooking recipes at home with my family."
- ★ "I'm having so much fun in 4-H that I'm glad to know it's at my new duty station."
- ★ "Thank you [OMK representative] for the flowers we planted, camo eggs, communication bag and your effort. The games were really fun with the bubbles and the smelly game. Thank you so much for the awesome things. I am using the communication bag so I can tell my Dad all about the things I'm doing."
- ★ "I liked how they taught us [in the 4-H Army Babysitting Class] in step-by-step lessons and not just throwing it at us and saying that we were wrong, they took their time with each individual person to help them and prepare them for the job. I liked everything and had a lot of fun! I would just like to say thank you because you have helped me so much to prepare me for this job that I really enjoy."

### Teen volunteer

- ★ "OMK has taught me so much about what the family of someone who serves in the military goes through. It has inspired me to work on other programs supporting military programs. The stories I hear from the kids and parents of these military families are amazing and inspiring. I believe that OMK is a valuable program and it truly does make a difference in the lives of military kids across the United States."

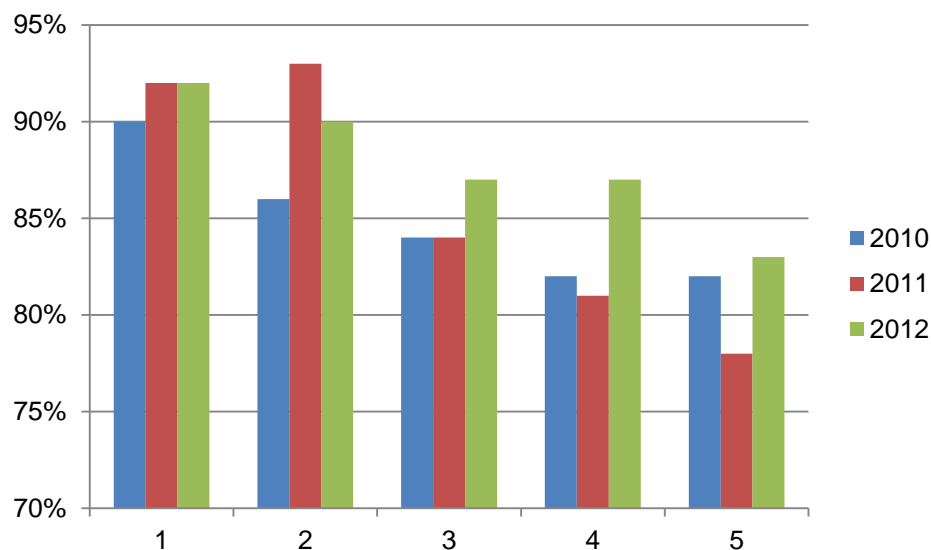
### Military Parents

- ★ "Being that I have an only child who has experienced several deployments it is hard for her to relate. This year was my daughter's 3rd year and I can truly say that she so looks forward to them and grows each time. Although military life brings separation, camps like this bring it all back together."
- ★ "Camp has literally changed the life of my oldest son. I saw great strides in his maturity the first summer and the past summer. This was the first summer for our youngest sons (8 & 9). We were extremely proud of the level of responsibility they displayed as well as friendships that were cultivated."
- ★ "Thanks to 4-H, it was so much easier for my daughter to move to a new county and new school this year. There were several kids at her new school that she knew through 4-H activities. Serving on the District Council and State 4-H Executive Board gave her opportunities to develop her leadership skills"
- ★ "My kids didn't like their after-school program until they started doing 4-H activities. Now they enjoy going to after-school program!"
- ★ "I was in 4-H when I was young. I'm happy to see that it is offered here. Now they can have some fun activities to participate in and have the opportunity to learn while they are participating."
- ★ "My son loves coming to this camp more than he has enjoyed anything else in his life. Never has he felt more accepted and not had some sort of problem. You make all the kids feel welcomed and loved and allow them to be themselves. Thanx for loving our kids!"
- ★ "This is the one thing that my child looks forward to besides Christmas. Just being around other people you have things in common with is fun. OMK TEAM ROCKS!"

## Impacts

- ★ Youth that participate in 4-H generally receive better grades; achieve higher levels of academic competence; obtain an elevated level of engagement on school; are nearly two times more likely to plan to go to college; and are more likely to pursue courses on a career in science, engineering or computer technology.
- ★ The outcome of a UF/IFAS research study shows that **84%** of youth (N=523) reported that 4-H is a safe place for growing and learning. Also, **83%** of youth (N=515) reported that 4-H clubs are supportive environments where they feel accepted. The study found that **92%** of youth (N=572) reported that nearly half of the life skills developed while involved in 4-H clubs are directly related to the mentoring and support provided by their 4-H club leader.
- ★ Club development and military partnership staff training in the 5 Florida counties resulted in engaging 1174 youth in 31 clubs, as reported by the 2011-12 State 4-H ES237 Statistical Report, as compared to 23 clubs and 631 youth enrolled in 2007.
- ★ Evaluation of the training programs indicate that military youth center staff use tools learned from training: new educational activities, skill-a-thons, club planning and programming, and have implemented new youth curriculum. As a result of 4-H youth development programming on military sites, staff reported that youth are developing life skills; experiencing continuity in programming and activities as they move from one base to the next; learning to serve their communities; and are developing career interest in project areas focused on the 4-H mission mandates of Science, Engineering and Technology, Healthy Living, and Citizenship.
- ★ Impact Results from the National Evaluation of Military Partnerships with 4-H Club programming conducted (52 out of 57 surveys completed) revealed:
  - ★ **56%** of participants experienced an increased awareness of military families
  - ★ **30%** of participants experienced an increase in enrollments
  - ★ **15%** of participants experienced strengthened partnerships between military youth and families and 4-H.
  - ★ **7 %** of participants experienced very little or no effect from the partnership.

## Camp Impacts – Parent Survey



1. Camp improved their child's social skills
2. Child showed increased self-confidence as a result of their camp experience
3. Child showed increase respect for others
4. Child learned to a great extent skills related to responsibility
5. Child improved their decision-making skills

## Program Managers / Websites

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- ★ OMK  
<https://www.operationmilitarykids.org>  
<http://floridaomk.blogspot.com/>

- ★ 4-H Military Partnership  
<http://www.4-hmilitarypartnerships.org/>  
[http://florida4h.org/programs/\\_special-programs/military-programs/](http://florida4h.org/programs/_special-programs/military-programs/)