

August 2008

For additional information on OMK and how County OMK Teams can be involved, visit:

<http://www.four-h.purdue.edu/omk/>

Or contact:

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The purpose of The Bugle is to keep you updated on events, activities and information related to Indiana OMK and methods to support children and youth of military families.

We encourage you to share your success stories, suggestions and reports on military-related activities in your county. Submit stories and photos to Judy or Steve and they will be included in future editions of The Bugle.

Share The Bugle with other County OMK Team members and community supporters. They may be working with programs that can be adapted for use with military children.



Layout of The Bugle by
Ashley Broady

The Bugle



AUGUST 2008– STARTING BACK TO SCHOOL

Coming back to school each fall brings changes in routines for children, parents, and school staff. Change is always stressful but it can also be an opportunity to learn new, more effective coping skills. Military children may be experiencing a great deal of changes outside of school as well. A parent and/or other family member may be leaving for an overseas assignment with the military or they may already be gone. Reunions can be stressful too as the soldiers return home and readjust to all the changes they and their families have experienced during the separation. All of these changes can be very stressful for children as well as for their families. Listed below are some excerpts taken from the article entitled “Talking to Kids About Violence, Terrorism, and War” issued from the Office of the Washington Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Listen to Kids

Find out what kids are worried about, what information they do or don't have, and how they are interpreting what is being said.

Offer information, clarification, and reassurance as needed **and** appropriate.

Ask Questions

Ask thoughtful open-ended questions, ones which can't be answered with “yes” or “no.”

Ask clarifying questions to find out what kids mean. Remember their ideas of violence and war may be very different from yours.

Acknowledge kids' feelings

Try to recognize feelings underlying kids' reactions and help them identify these feelings in healthy ways through play, drawing, or words.



When kids are upset, don't deny the seriousness of the situation as they see it by saying such things as “Don't cry, everything will be okay.” Reflecting back their feelings to show understanding is generally a more helpful response, at least initially.

Help kids to feel physically safe

Maintain normal routines and schedules to provide a sense of stability and security. Let those who are worried about a parent/loved one's deployment talk and share their feelings as needed and appropriate.

Help kids maintain a sense of hope by taking action

Send letters, cookies, magazines, or care packages to those in the military. Encourage kids to write letters to legislators about their concerns and feelings.

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Back to School continued...

Expect and respond to changes in behavior

Kids will most likely display signs of stress. Immature, aggressive, and oppositional behaviors are normal reactions to uncertainty.

Remember it is important to maintain consistent expectations for behavior and hold kids accountable.

Kids may pretend play or use drawing/art/journals to express their varied emotions.

Encourage positive expressions for these healthy behavioral and emotional outlets.

Day-to-day support, consistency, and patience will help kids return to routines and their usual behavior patterns.

For kids exhibiting signs of severe stress it is important to refer them for additional professional school/community assistance to help them cope effectively.



Coordinate between school and home

Create a sense of collective security between school and home. This will help kids feel safe and provide a sense of protection.

Teachers should let parents know if kids are exhibiting stress in school. Provide helpful suggestions or information on school and community resources available for support.

Parents and/or caregivers need to let school personnel know if a family member is called to active duty so schools can provide needed understanding and support.

Invite parents or caregivers with relevant professional experience to come to school and talk about their jobs in age-appropriate terms.

Heroes' Tree

“Our Heroes’ Tree” is a national initiative founded to recognize the families of current service members, Veterans, and deceased service members. One of the goals of this initiative is to help communities come together in support of current and former service members while fostering a stronger sense of patriotism and respect for military members and their families. Here in Indiana the Military Family Research Institute at Purdue will be working with local libraries and other community organizations in hopes of decorating a “Hero Tree” in each county. If your county would like to be a part of promoting this activity, please contact your local library.



Babysitting Training

Through OMK we can provide babysitting training, curriculum, participant workbooks, and other training resources such as First Aid and CPR training if you know of a group of adults or youth who would be interested in such training. The training can be open to military and non-military participants with the intent that it will create a larger pool of trained babysitters available to care for younger brothers or sisters or neighbors and friends. We have also created a template of information about the training if you would like to use it to promote the training locally. Contact Judy Hauser for more information and/or to request the training. (765-494-9516 or jhauser@purdue.edu)



4-H Campers and Junior Leaders fill Hero Packs

This summer 4-H campers and Junior Leaders filled over 1400 hero packs, with 270 of those hero packs going to children from military families attending the National Guard AT camp at Camp Atterbury and the Purple Camp in Gibson County! What a fantastic job by our 4-H members and Extension Educators to be such a vital part of



a community service project that shows support for other children. Feedback we receive indicates the experience of writing letters and filling hero packs is as meaningful to the 4-H members as receiving them is to the children of military families.

Ideas and Resources for OMK Holiday Activities

OMK “Activities to Assist” manuals offer a wide variety of craft and recreational activities for children that are not only fun but also offer opportunities to discuss leadership and other life skills. Tubs of supplies to support these activities are available in selected Purdue Extension offices throughout the state. These are excellent resources to use with children during deployment briefings, military family resource group meetings or during special community events honoring our military families. OMK funds are available to purchase additional and/or replacement supplies for these tubs so we encourage any and all local volunteer groups to use these resources as needed and appropriate. In addition to the supplies for the tubs, OMK can also provide up to \$500 per county for county sponsored events for military children and their families. Using these OMK resources in partnership with other community groups, resources, and volunteers make it possible to show strong community pride and support for our military families.



A recent example of this community wide effort was in Martinsville

Kids with a Mission Morgan County 4-H group collected funds, organized entertainment, set up and even cooked for and served about 100 members of Indiana National Guard’s B Co. 1-151 Family Readiness Group. 4-H member Erica Honaker, with the help of her mother, Angel, collected donations and recruited sponsors for the event, including Fun Services, which donated the use of play and concession equipment; the American Legion, which chipped in on paper products, and Youth as Resources, which paid for the food. OMK provided \$500 which was used for games. The Morgan County 4-H Junior Leaders helped out with setup and cleanup. Junior Leader president Bree Towell said, “It’s not just the kids having fun, we have fun too.”

