



NEBRASKA: OPERATION MILITARY KIDS

JULY, 2009

We are on the web! See us at: State-www.nebraskaomk.org; National-www.operationmilitarykids.org

OPERATION PURPLE CAMPS HOSTED BY EASTER SEALS OF NEBRASKA

Deployment affects everyone – not just the service member but the spouse and children as well. As an association dedicated to serving military families, National Military Family Association (NMFA) recognized the need for more resources to help military children. The *Operation Purple*™ camp program was created in 2004 with a generous grant from Sears through its Sears American Dream Campaign.

The goal of *Operation Purple*™ summer camps is to impart the message on these young heroes that “They Serve Too”. The program aims to help military children, of various ages, learn coping skills which deal with deployment related stress, foster relationships with other military children in similar circumstances, and most of all – have fun.



Mark Simmons doing a GPS activity at OP Camp



Beth Kaiser & Michele Myer doing an MTL activity at OP Camp

For the past two years the *Operation Purple* camps held in Nebraska have been hosted by Easter Seals of Nebraska at Camp Eagle near Fremont. This year they were awarded two camp sessions. The first one was held on June 21-26 for ages 8-12, with the second camp will be on July 26-31 for ages 10-14.

To make *Operation Purple* camps fun and exciting each day of the camps is assigned a theme. Wednesday, June 24th was “Military Day”. The Campers got to see real military vehicles and eat MRE’s. Thursday, June 25 was “Communication Day”. Beth Kaiser and Michele Myer spoke to the campers about the written form of communication. They assisted the campers in making cards for their loved ones using the OMK Mobile Technology Lab (MTL). Mark Simmons taught the campers how GPS works and how to use it to find cache with the coordinates on their units. Barb Shupe the Military and Family Life Consultant, talked to the campers about the importance of communicating your feeling with others.

Some of the other activities campers got to experience were fishing, horseback riding, archery, BB guns, swimming, rock climbing, zip lines, flying squirrels and above all memories of a time well had.

If you have story ideas for the OMK newsletter, please contact Michele Myer at mmyer2@unl.edu

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2009 Events & Activities:

For additional events happening in the Lincoln & surrounding area please visit: www.lincolnkidsinc.com

UNL Campus Recreation is offering two camps this summer. Husker Kids: Fun-filled & action packed summer events for children entering 2nd – 6th grades. Husker Adventures: Activities & adventure for a lifetime for youth entering 7th & 8th grades. There will be eight weekly session held June 9th - August 8th for both camps. For more information please visit: <http://crce.unl.edu/youth> or call 402-472-3467.

Lincoln Children's Zoo offers a Zoo Camp. Send your 2nd through 5th graders to the best summer camp ever, with games, activities and animal friends they'll find nowhere else. For more information please visit http://lincolnzoo.org/zoo_camp.php

Lincoln Children's Museum is offering many camps this summer beginning June 16th and ending August 15th. For more information or to register for camp please visit them at www.lincolnchildrensmuseum.org or call 402-477-4000.

Lost is Fun offers children an indoor area to play. For more information please visit them at <http://lostinfun.com/fun/index.html>

YWCA Lincoln offers swimming lessons for ages 6 months – adults. For more information on dates and prices please visit them at www.ywcalincoln.org or call 402-434-3494.

YMCA of Lincoln Camp Kitaki located between Omaha & Lincoln is offering a full range of summer camps for ages 7-14. Family Days & Family Camp allow the whole family to partake in a fun camping experience. For more information or to register for camp please visit them at www.ymcalincoln.org/kitaki or call 402-434-9222.

For additional events happening in the Omaha & surrounding area please visit: <http://www.momsofomaha.com/>

City of Omaha Parks and Recreation offers a variety of camps and activities for children all summer long. For a complete list please visit <http://www.ci.omaha.ne.us/parks/> click on "summer recreation program schedule" link on the right side of page.

Omaha Henry Doorly Zoo is offering many exciting exhibits this summer. For more information please visit them at <http://www.omahazoo.com/> or call 402-733-8400.

Omaha Children's Museum is offering many camps this summer beginning in June and running through August. For more information on dates and prices please visit them at <http://www.ocm.org/> or call 402-342-6164.

Omaha Fun-Plex is the highest quality of family fun in the Omaha area. There is truly something for everyone. For more information please visit them at <http://www.fun-plex.com/> or call 402-331-8436.

Joslyn Art Museum presents year-round studio classes for toddlers through adults – including weekday drop-in classes, art camps, weekend and evening series, a 24-week Art School for students in grades 1-9, and more. For more information please visit <http://www.joslyn.org/activities/> or call 402-342-3300.

Strategic Air & Space Museum located between Omaha & Lincoln is offering several camps this summer. For more information visit: www.strategicairandspace.com or call 402-827-3100

Fontenelle Nature Association offers day camps for toddlers through 6th grade. For more information please visit <http://www.fontenelleforest.org/daycampform.html>

School of the Stars offers a fun filled week of acting camp. For more information on these camps please visit <http://www.schoolofstars.com/schedule.asp>

State wide programs-

YMCA offers day camps for all ages. To find one near you visit their link and enter your zip code. <http://www.ymca.net/maps/>

Nebraska 4-H offers many camps and so many other activities for your child to attend this summer. For more information please visit: <http://4h.unl.edu/>

Nebraska Games and Parks offer many summer activities. For more information please visit <http://www.ngpc.state.ne.us/parks/parks.asp>

Towns throughout Nebraska-

City of Beatrice offers a variety of youth activities this summer. For a complete listing please visit their link and choose from the menu on the left side of your screen. <http://www.beatrice.ne.gov/>

City of Fremont is offering a variety of youth activities this summer. For a complete listing please visit <http://ne-fremont.civicplus.com/index.asp?nid=141>

City of Grand Island Parks and Recreation Department offers a variety of youth activities this summer. For a complete listing please visit their link and choose from the menu on the left side of your screen. http://www.grand-island.com/departments/parksandrec/parkandrec_index.htm

City of Hastings Aquacourt offers swimming lessons. For more information please visit: <http://www.cityofhastings.org/parks/Aquacourt/aquacourt.htm>

City of Kearney is offering a variety of youth activities this summer. For a complete listing please visit <http://www.cityofkearney.org/index.asp?SID=802>

City of Lexington is offering a variety of youth activities this summer. For a complete listing please visit <http://www.visitlexington.org/recreation/index.html>

City of North Platte Leisure Services Department is offering a variety of youth activities this summer. For a complete listing please visit <http://www.ci.north-platte.ne.us/leisureservices/default.htm>

City of Seward Parks and Recreation Department offers a variety of youth activities. For a complete listing please visit: <http://www.cityofsewardne.com/recreation.htm>

City of Valentine offers a variety of youth activities this summer. For a complete listing please visit their link and choose from the menu on the top of your screen. <http://www.valentine-ne.com/>



OMK AT THE 2009 NEBRASKA STATE FAIR CYBER FAIR

Come visit the Operation: Military Kids booth at the Cyber Fair during the 2009 Nebraska State from August 28th to September 7th. The Cyber Fair is located in the air conditioned Farmland Building.

This year OMK is inviting all military youth to show just how proud they are of their military parent! They will be able to make a 3" button to wear of their military parent. You will simply need to bring a picture of your parents face no larger than 1 ½" to make your button. If you have any question please contact Beth Kaiser at 402.440.9580

OMK is inviting the general public to make cards of support for the deployed military members using our Mobile Technology Lab.

OMK is always in need of volunteers for the Cyber Fair booth. If you sign-up for a 4 hour shift you will receive a free Fair pass. To sign-up to please visit: <http://4h.unl.edu/forms/cyberfair.htm> In the "Comment" area at the bottom of the form please put "for the OMK booth".

Other exciting booths to see and do at the Cyber Fair include:

- **NEW** Backyard Living Display – on back patio (live plants, amphibians & other wildlife)
- Dell Cyber Café – See HOT new products!
- **NEW** Giant Inflatable Movie Screen
- Digital Video Pro – green screen technology
- XaviX Healthy Lifestyles Zone
- Shooting Sports Gallery
- Sneak Peek at NEW 4-H Curricula

And Many Other Great Displays!



FLAT DADDY/MOMMY

If you have a soldier that is deploying or is deployed and would like to order a Flat Daddy/Flat Mommy, please email Barb Kenny of the Central Plains Chapter, American Red Cross at barb@giredcross.org or phone: 308-382-3790. You will need to include a phone number in your email so that a Red Cross representative can talk to you about the process and follow up with you.

You will need to have a good picture of the soldier from the waist up. When you receive the Flat Daddy/Mommy it will not be mounted on a board. You will have to do that if you wish.

Barb will email you the link so you can order, submit a picture & pay with a Red Cross Voucher. The Flat Daddy/Mommy will be shipped directly to the military family.

If you have questions please contact Nick Farruggia at farruggian@usa.redcross.org

EVENING OUT

The American Red Cross, Central Plains Chapter, would like to treat military spouses of deployed soldiers as a group to an "Evening Out" at a restaurant in their armory town with two of our staff.

For those who need babysitting services they would provide up to a \$20.00 allotment per family, payable directly to the childcare provider to defray the cost of babysitting while they are out. They have available 20 "Evening Out" packages per town (Grand Island, Hastings and O'Neill) that include a meal and gifts as well as information on resources available for military spouses.

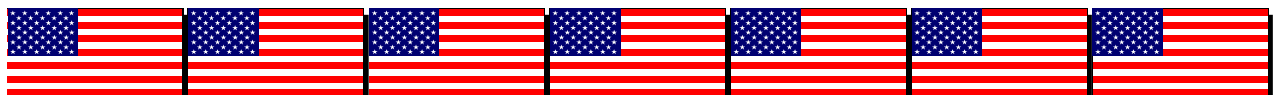
The dates for this event are yet to be determined. For more information please contact Barb in the Grand Island office at 308-382-3790 or Mindy in the Hastings office at 402-461-2374.

FREE ENTRY TO NATIONAL PARKS

Free entry to 147 U.S. national parks will be available two weekends this summer: July 18-19 and August 15-16.

The National Park Service typically waives entry fees for everyone on National Public Lands Day (the last Saturday in September) and for military service people and veterans on Veterans Day, November 11. But, this is the first time in 20-plus years that the fees being waived for entire weekends for the public. For more information, visit the National Parks Service website.

<http://www.nps.gov/findapark/feefreeparks.htm>



Military Child Education Coalition™ Free Training Opportunity!!

The Military Child Education Coalition's™ *Supporting Children of the National Guard and Reserve Institute*® is a professional development program for educators and professionals to reach out in a support network to the children and families of the National Guard and Reserve. The conference includes two continental breakfasts, two lunches, two break refreshments and conference materials (no registration, meal, or resource material cost to participants). The curriculum, content, process, and delivery are correlated with the National Staff Development Council's Standards and the National Standards for School Counseling Programs. Because the Institute is very interactive and participation is required to fully benefit from this training, participants must commit to attend both days.

Goal of Guard and Reserve Institute

The primary goal of the Institute is to reach out in a support network to the children of the Army National Guard, Reserve components, and geographically isolated families through:

Concept and Expectation

The Institute uses a school-based model with schools as the central and major system of delivery for:

- Reaching all children nation-wide
- Tapping into existing systems
- Building on schools as the hub for communities and neighborhoods
- Using efficiently established professional support structures
- Establishing sustainable state and local models that are accepted and adaptable
- "Fitting" into all locations - state and local

Dates & Locations:

Lincoln – Sept 23-24, 2009	North Platte – Sept 29-30, 2009
Holiday Inn Downtown	Quality Inn & Suites
141 N. 9 th Street	Sandhills Convention Center
Lincoln, NE 68508	2102 South Jeffers
	North Platte, NE 69101

Time: 8:30 am – 4:00 pm (registration and continental breakfast at 8:00 am). 12 full seat hours required for institute credit – attendance both full days required – no partial attendance accepted. For CEU credit participants please see website for additional information.

Register online at <http://www.militarychild.org/> in the grey tool bar click on the "upcoming trainings". Find the one you wish to attend and click on the "register now" link to begin the process.

If you have further questions please call the Military Child Education Coalition at 245.953.1923

FREE SAT/ACT PREP PROGRAM

In alliance with the Department of Defense (DoD) and a group of patriotic NFL football players, the donation of SAT and ACT Test Prep Software to military families and veterans for a fourth consecutive year. The SAT/ACT Power programs are available as a DVD ROM set. Families may now use the program for an entire year even if the program is requested the last day of the sponsorship. For more information, visit the Military Homefront website.

<http://www.militaryhomefront.dod.mil>

SPECIAL AAFES OFFERS TO GOOD STUDENTS

Beyond being a destination for school supplies and clothes, BXs and PXs offer an array of free and discounted products to students who excel in the classroom through its "You Made the Grade" program. Now in its ninth year, the AAFES education rewards initiative is anchored by a booklet full of complimentary offers for grade school and high school students who maintain a "B" average or better. To receive the AAFES "You Made the Grade" booklet, students must present a valid military ID card and proof of an overall "B" or better average to their local BX/PX. For more information, contact your local AAFES main store manager or general manager.

SOMETHING TO DO

Papio Fun Park honors all military active duty, dependents and retirees by offering a \$3 discount on their EXTREME wristband. Personnel need only show their military ID card to receive the discount. Papio Fun Park is located at 210 E. Lincoln St., Papillion, NE. For more information visit their website at

www.papiofunpark.com.

WEBSITES TO CHECKOUT

This website brings you up-to-date on the latest information available to **service providers**.

<http://cs.mhf.dod.mil/content/dav/mhf/QOL-ibrary/MHF/251472.html>

Sage Hospitality Hotels offer a 50% discount to the military community. There are approximately 50 hotels listed. This discount is restricted only by availability. To find the nearest one to where you may want to travel please go to hotel tab at top then go to hotel by state on left hand side of screen.

<http://www.sagehospitality.com>



WORLDS OF FUN/OCEANS OF FUN PUBLIC SAFETY AND MILITARY APPRECIATION WEEK

Police officers, firefighters, EMT's, and members of the armed forces present their active military or public safety ID at the Worlds of Fun Main Entrance August 24, 25 & 28 for FREE admission to Worlds of Fun or the Worlds of Fun or Oceans of Fun Main Entrance August 29 & 30, 2009 for FREE admission to both parks!

Special Display Day, Saturday, August 29, 2009 – See giant displays from the police department, fire department, EMS Agencies, and branches of the military!

Family, friends, and all other guests who do not qualify for the free admission on these days receive a special discount.

Add a meal to make your day even better! Backyard BBQ includes all-day admission and an all-you-can-eat BBQ buffet. Advance reservation and payment required. Minimum 2 days advance notice. There are Junior/Senior and meal only discounts available.

Visit worldsoffun.com and click on Special Events for additional information or to buy online.

Free admission offer valid August 24, 25, 28, 29 & 30, 2009 only. Limit ONE free ticket per ID holder.

Free ticket is valid only for the ID holder on the date issued. Active military or public safety photo ID required receiving a free ticket. Not valid in conjunction with any other offer. Free tickets for this offer are available at the Worlds of Fun and Oceans of Fun Main Entrance only. Special discount ticket offer is available at the Worlds of Fun and Oceans of Fun Main Entrance and online at worldsoffun.com.

Worlds of Fun, 4545 Worlds of Fun Ave, Kansas City, MO 64161, 816-303-5135

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NEED GROUPS/ORGANIZATIONS TO PACK HERO PACK BACKPACKS

What is a Hero Pack Backpack?

The Hero Pack Initiative is an outreach effort of *Operation: Military Kids*. Hero Packs are backpacks filled with mementos and items designed to help geographically dispersed military children to stay connected with their deployed parent. Presenting Hero Packs to military children is a way to show appreciation and hand-deliver a salute for their strength and sacrifices while their parent is deployed.

The Hero Pack project is a chance for groups of youth and adults to become involved in a valuable community service effort that also builds awareness and fosters community support for geographically dispersed military families. Hero Packs can be assembled by a variety of groups: 4-H Clubs, Boys and Girls Clubs, school "Home Rooms," Boy Scout and Girl Scout troops, church groups, home school groups...etc. The most important item included in each Hero Pack is the personal, hand-written note.

The letter is written by a youth to a military child thanking them for their sacrifices that they are making for our country. The OMK State Team works with the National Guard, Reserves and other military branches to find youth to distribute the Hero Packs to.

What can I do to help?

- Secure items to be included in Hero Packs or make a donation to OMK to purchase items for the packs – see *wish list*.
- Organize a group to help assemble Hero Packs and/or write letters to military families.

Hero Pack Wish List:

Disposable cameras; small plastic picture frames; small photo albums; children's storybooks; stationary sets; day planners; stickers; coloring books; small flashlights & batteries; Frisbees; Yo-Yo's; compass; bandana and key chains. *Since the Hero Pack backpacks are given out to military children across Nebraska please do not include gender specific items; seasonal or regional items.*

Contact Beth Kaiser to begin your Hero Pack drive!



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Lincoln