

# WI NG Child & Youth



## Wisconsin National Guard Child and Youth Program

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## Coordinator's Corner

The WING Child and Youth Program is pleased to once again be providing FRG Volunteers and families with a bi-monthly newsletter for all things Child and Youth!

There have been a lot of changes in the program since our last newsletter. We have been very active in the Badger Yellow Ribbon events from Pre-MOB to Phase II Reintegration. Child and Youth Programming is available at these events that give youth skills they

need to adjust to the changes in their family throughout the deployment cycle.

Great things are happening in the WING Child and Youth Program and we look forward to meeting your military youth very soon!

Please read through our initial newsletter to see what we have been up to recently and for some great resources for you and your military child..

If you have topics you would like to see covered in our newsletter, please do not hesitate to contact us. We would love to hear from you!

Check out our Youth Program at:  
[Wisconsin.military.org](http://Wisconsin.military.org)  
And click onto the 'Youth Program' tab!

## WING Youth Symposium !

Sep 16-18 was the date for the annual Wisconsin National Guard Youth Symposium. The event was held in conjunction with the WI State Family Program conference at the Olympia Resort in Oconomowoc.

The Gaddis sisters, Cassy and Alyssa Gaddis, were one of the highlights of the Youth Symposium. Born at Scott Air Force Base, their dad has been in the National Guard all of their lives.

*The following appeared in the State Journal-Register, Springfield, IL (May 2009) teen section, the Voice, written by and for teenagers.*

"Well, my dad (Jim, who serves in the Illinois Army National Guard) has been in the military our whole life. We are military kids and born on military bases. We have lived the life of our dad being gone and I wanted that to come alive through the song," Alyssa said.

In May 2008, Alyssa Gaddis, 13 wrote the song "The Price of Peace," a military in-

spired song that speaks of the love and support for soldiers in the military. "We knew this song was bigger than us. The whole point of the song was to reach out to everyone and allow the world to know not only are our soldiers fighting a war, but so are the military families," Cassy said.

Following in the footsteps of popular music acts such as Kid Rock and 3 Doors Down are Cassy and Alyssa Gaddis of Springfield, IL. Kid Rock and 3 Doors Down both recorded music and filmed performances for the Army National Guard. Now, the two local girls have become the new faces of the National Guard music campaign. ( go to <http://www.sj-r.com/features/x313656374/Sisters-hit-the-big-screen-in-music-video> for the entire article.).

On Saturday Cassy and Alyssa discussed the emotional aspects of sacrifice and performed songs for 3 groups of excited kids.

The youth also participated in the 'Art' of Relaxation/Self Care, 'Resiliency' and the 'UW Fun with Science'.



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[www.naccrra.org](http://www.naccrra.org)

NACCRA works with the U.S. Military Services to help those who serve in the military find and afford child care that suits their unique needs. Through several innovative civilian/military efforts between the Services, NACCRA and Child Care Resource and Referral agencies (CCR&Rs) are building the quality and capacity of child care throughout the country.



**BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS**  
Great Futures Start Here

Baraboo/Sauk County Tomah  
WI Rapids Kenosha  
West Salem Sparta  
Dane County Milwaukee  
Chippewa Valley Beloit

*These are just a few locations in WI. To find a club near you go to:*

[www.bgca.org](http://www.bgca.org)

## Camp Serenity September 23–25, 2011



Wisconsin National Guard Survivor Outreach Services (SOS) Program, with sponsorship from the Wisconsin American Legion have offered the first Wisconsin Camp Serenity that was held at Camp American Legion in Lake Tomahawk. This free weekend camp provided support and assistance to Families experiencing a bereavement due to the loss of a service member. The event provided Survivors opportunities to connect, share in family activities, acquire resources and information and have fun in a natural serene setting.



SOS was created to embrace and reassure Survivors that they are continually linked to the Army Family through a unified support program that enables them to remain an important part.

### School Quest.org

An initiative of



- Blog
- SchoolQuest Library
- Naviance College and Career Planner
- Ask Aunt Peggie <http://www.schoolquest.org/>

## WI National Guard Youth Camp

Wisconsin youth ages 8-17 gathered at Volk Field at the end of July to join together for the annual Youth Camp. For 19 years the Wisconsin National Guard has conducted this weekend summer camp.

Growing from 80 youth in the first year to more than 210 this year and with over 200 volunteers Volk Field was bursting with energy and activity. This years theme was 'Mission of Discovery, Friendship and Teamwork'.



Campers had fun experiences that introduced them to aspects of military life.

Some of the activities included rappelling, marching, T-shirt designing, swimming, obstacle courses, tug-of-war, dancing, bonfires, and rock wall climbing. Everyone had a safe successful time, making new friends and exchanging ideas and experiences. We look forward with anticipation to next years camp.



## National Youth Symposium

Once a year Youth Delegates from all over the United States come together to share information and learn how other states programs work. This year the Delegates gathered in Louisville, Kentucky. Hot and sticky at the end of July, the Delegates enjoyed good company and beautiful sunny skies. To start off the symposium delegates brought



WI Delegates Madi & Amanda stand beside the 'Flag of Honor'-honoring the victims of 9/11—at the Louisville Slugger Museum

school supplies from their state and packed them to send to Afghan Youth. Dinner, welcome and kickoff followed. Monday morning brought a hot breakfast, energizers, guest speakers and breakout sessions throughout the day. The evenings pizza and pool party cooled and relaxed everyone. Tuesday brought a visit to the Louisville Slugger Museum, crafter of the Official Bat of Major League Baseball and later that evening a Montgomery Gentry concert at the YUMI Center. The Delegates worked at region planning & brainstorming Wednesday morning and then prepped for a Delegate Ball for the last evening of the symposium. It was a wonderful experience and everyone looks forward to next year.



**MILITARY KIDZ INSTALLATION**

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[Get an ID CARD](#)

Want to learn the Semaphore Flag system or Morse code? How about 'The Next Frontier'? You can even go to their on-line Boot Camp to find out more about 'The Ranks' in any service, Knowledge & Drill Movements, and R n R. Just visit [www.militarykidz.com](http://www.militarykidz.com)

# 2011 Horse Camp Highlights



As the summer winds down here in Wisconsin, we reflect on all the fun we have had supporting camp activities. One unique experience is the Horse Camps for Military Kids. The WI National Guard Child & Youth Program initiated the Horse Camps in 2008 and currently was able to offer four camps this summer. The camps were held at the Sioux River Stables in northern Wisconsin. Sioux Rivers is a NARHA (North American Riding for the Handicapped Association) certified stable and they have a certified instructor on staff. NARHA is the leading organization that has set standards for “therapeutic” equine activities and their philosophy stresses safety first.

Throughout the camps, the power of the human/horse connection was evident in multiple ways. Because horses are prey animals, their very survival depends on observing and responding to their environment in each moment. Horses are also very social animals who organize in groups that have to cooperate to ensure smooth functioning for the good of the whole group. When humans interact with horses, we expand our personal awareness of ourselves by observing how the horse responds to us. Horses have an uncanny ability to reflect back to us in their behavior our emotional state, our ability to communicate and our sense of our own personal power. This was evident as kids from seven to seventeen developed relationships with the horses they encountered.



**A horses height is measured in 'hands.' One hand is equal to four inches.**

The camps began with team building activities where groups attempted to complete various tasks such as carrying four bales of hay as a unit from point A to point B, using the very skills that would be necessary when they began connecting with the horses. Next, they were introduced to grooming the horse. They learned what tools to use in grooming and began to listen to their horse. How the child approached the horse, the pressure used in brushing, the attention to the child’s own personal space (when in the vicinity of an 1100 lb. animal) and the child’s own emotional state were all reflected in the language of the horse. Whether the horse became calm and relaxed as evident in the licking/ chewing response or pinned his ears back and swished his tail in irritation, every interaction gave the child immediate feedback on his/her behavior. It was amazing to watch how the individual children connected to individual horses. One of the horses was a smaller spotted POA (Ponies of America). His name was Buttons and he was notorious for showing his irritation by swishing his tail. One of the girls commented she “loved Buttons because he had a

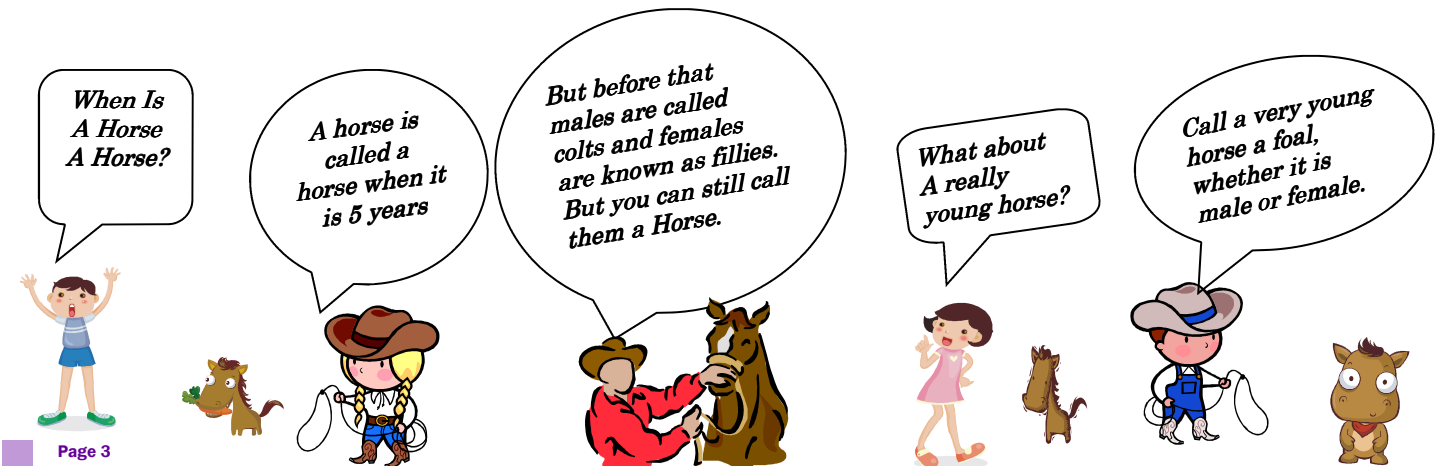
little attitude just like she did”.

Following the grooming, the children were taught how to “tack” (saddle & bridle) the horses in preparation for riding. And then, the moment they had all been waiting for had arrived, finally getting to mount the horse. The children learned the basics of how to sit, how to communicate with reins & leg pressure and, most importantly, how to stop their horse. The children learned different patterns and engaged in different tasks while astride their horses. Throughout every interaction, the child gained an awareness of how they were communicating with their horse through words, tone of voice, body position and pressure. A great example of this was watching the children ride Izzy & Ozzy, the stable owner’s Friesian horses. These are the very large, black horses with flowing mane and tail. It was incredible to see some of the younger and smaller children gain the confidence to effectively use their own personal power to move such a huge animal.

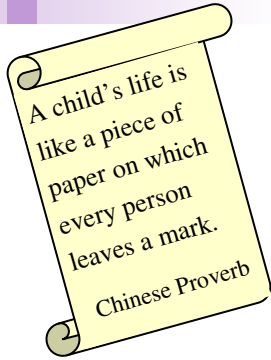
*“There is something about the outside of a horse that is good for the inside of a man.” – Winston Churchill*

Throughout the camps the children developed and practiced multiple skills while having a great time. They learned how much their body language and emotional state can impact others in their environment. Also they learned how to challenge fears, choose assertive actions, own personal power and communicate clearly & effectively.

Yet, with all of that, the best part of Horse Camp: the expressions of pure joy in the smiles and giggles of all the kids.



# Children & Stress

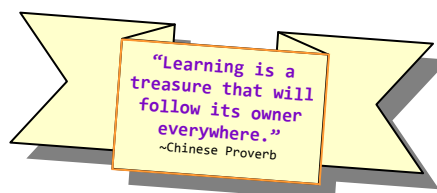
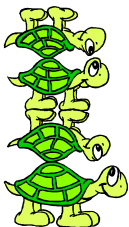


It's important to remember that children experience stress. They may not be able to put it into words to express it; but major life stressors such as moving, changing schools, parent's loss of a job, birth of a sibling, death and divorce are stressful experiences for kids. Other stressors like anxiety over a teacher or parental expectations, conflict with peers or siblings, arguments with parents, or peer rejection can impact everyday life. Dealing with all the changes demanded by the deployment cycle presents unique challenges for even the youngest family member.

Many times the way children express their stress is misunderstood as a behavioral problem or symptoms of a mental health disorder. Younger children, who do not have verbal skills or the ability to understand abstractly, will express their feelings through their behavior. Remember with children, ALL Behavior is a communication. Children absorb and express the tension that they experience in their environment.

The effects of stress reflect the developmental stage the child is going through. Young children (1-5) may become irritable, display crying outbursts, experience regressive behaviors (i.e., bedwetting; thumb sucking) and have a change in sleeping or eating patterns. They may also appear tired and/or be extra clingy with caregivers. School-aged children (6-11) may display a low tolerance for frustration and may even express anger frequently. Sometimes they can appear distractible and fidgety. These behaviors could be interpreted by caregivers, unaware of the stressors the child is experiencing, as resistance or attention problems. These kids also report tummy aches or headaches as a result of their increased worry. In addition, they may go through difficulty with separation from caregivers when going to school or other activities. And, they may also show increased passivity and withdrawal from social interaction. Older children have a more advanced understanding and ability to talk about stressful issues but continue to need adult guidance. Adolescents (13-17) may try to assert control by challenging authority figures. They may engage in high risk behaviors like using alcohol or drugs, drive recklessly or defies curfew. Teens may also engage in disruptive or aggressive behavior at school, being reflected in a drop in grades or other consequences at school.

When looking at the many responses of stress that a child may experience, it is important to remember that children are very resilient! Most frequently, these symptoms of stress lessen over time and do not cause long term harm. Keeping a balanced schedule with consistent structure and routine can help to lessen the stress, as well as providing the child opportunities to express their feelings in other ways; such as talking, journaling, or drawing. Remember that children pick up on your stress, so "set a good example and find healthy outlets for your own stress".



# Web Site Resources



A safe place where kids can create, share and learn.

<http://www.kids.gov/>

A collection of information and fun for kids K-8. It includes arts, careers, fun stuff, math, money, science and more. Some of the 'Hot Topics' include Our YouTube Channel, Activities and Games, Government, American History and more!



## MILITARY CHILD EDUCATION COALITION (MCEC)

<http://www.militarychild.org/>

Military Parent information with education and family links. Contains child and student programs to include art contests early literacy space camp and scholarships.



ZERO TO THREE

<http://www.zerotothree.org/>

Zero to Three is a national, nonprofit organization that informs, trains, and supports professionals, policymakers, and parents in their efforts to improve the lives of infants and toddlers. Their mission is to promote the health and development of infants and toddlers.



<http://www.militaryscholar.org/>

The 'Scholarships for Military Children Program' was created in recognition of the contributions of military families to the readiness of the fighting force and to celebrate the role of the commissary in the military family community.

The "Heroes' Legacy Scholarships" program honors not only those who have fallen in battle, but all who have died or have become disabled through their active military service since September 11, 2001. The program is open to their dependent unmarried children under age 23. The scholarship grants for this special program are principally underwritten by the author's after tax proceeds from the book "Of Thee I Sing. A Letter to My Daughters" written by President Barack Obama.

Scholarships for Military Spouses. The National Military Family Association recognizes the unique challenges today's military spouses face in pursuing additional training or education. They are here to help ease the financial obstacles that accompany pursuing a higher education.



Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP)

The EFMP includes personnel, medical, and family support functions. Enrollment is a major component of the program and is mandatory for all military personnel who have a family member with a medical or educational disability.

The materials found at Military HOMEFRONT are designed to give service members and their families critical information and resources related to EFMP. Be sure to visit the EFMP ToolBox at

[http://www.militaryhomefront.dod.mil/portal/page/mhf/MHF/MHF\\_HOME\\_1?section\\_id=20.40.500.565.0.0.0.0](http://www.militaryhomefront.dod.mil/portal/page/mhf/MHF/MHF_HOME_1?section_id=20.40.500.565.0.0.0.0)



**Our Military Kids** provides support in the form of grants to the children of National Guard and Military Reserve personnel who are currently deployed overseas, as well as the children of Wounded Warriors in all branches. The grants from **Our Military Kids** pay for participation in sports, fine arts, camps, and tutoring programs that nurture and sustain children while a parent is away in service to our country or recovering from injury.



**MovingOut MovingUp MovingOn**

Moving can be really exciting but can also be pretty hard. If you worry about losing old friends, dread starting over at a new school, or wonder what you will ever find to do there then this is the site for you. This site was designed for elementary, middle and high school students. There is a link for each school group and one just for parents. The information covers topics specific for military youth, like dealing with deployment and moving to a new location. Yet there are also everyday youth topics, like dealing with divorce, getting enough exercise, and making money. So even if you have moved before check out the answers to the questions about being the new kid in school, opening a bank account and help with your homework!!!



[www.militaryonesource.com](http://www.militaryonesource.com)

Education, relocation, parenting, stress-you name it- Military OneSource is here to help you with just about any need. Available by phone or online, this free service is provided by the Department of Defense for active-duty, Guard, and Reserve service members and their families. This service is completely private and confidential, with few exceptions. If you have a concern start solving it today using Military OneSource.

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<http://www.va.gov/kids/>

VA Kids, K-5th

Kids Learning about VA

VA Kids, 6th—12th Grades

Honoring America's Veterans



What's up with "NON-RECRUITS IN BIG BOOTS?" Military children are not recruited to be military brats; they just are. Try this newspaper for the kids to send to their deployed parent. Go to <http://www.operationwearehere.com/BratTownBugle.html>



<http://www.operationwearehere.com/index.html>

Operation We are here's mission is to create an awareness of the challenges of the military community and to provide a comprehensive list of resources for the military community and its supporters. Resources include: organizations that support, counseling, crisis numbers, encouragement, military life information and kids info.



<http://www.deploymentkids.com>

Get the right time for a timeline, make homemade postcards on 'In Touch' at deploymentkids.com. Use a distance calculator and get time zones at 'Where in the World'. Get free downloads for "Thank You" and "I am so proud" cards. Print out and color an American Flag on 'Downloads'. Learn more about journaling or get ideas for "Home & School". Go to 'Playtime' to find fun facts about bubble gum or learn the military alphabet. You can even take a look into National Geographic.

### BABY BRAIN MAP



The Baby Brain Map reveals the secrets of how early care enriches development. Go to Zero to Three at <http://www.zerotothree.org/baby-brain-map.html> to see what we know about the brain development from conception to 36 months.



### Wisconsin Youth Attend Minnesota Teen Summit

Think:

Teen Advisory Committee, welcome dinner, guest speakers, morning Physical Training, Military 101 along with a Team Building workshop and you have the Minnesota Teen Summit. That and more is what two Wisconsin Youth Delegates discovered when attending the summit in late June. Guest speaker Michael Cuestas was a great success with Wisconsin. His 'The Choice is Yours' theme spoke of leadership choices, respect and trust earned-not given, just to name a few.

Darlene Wetterstrom, Military Family Life Consultant, discussed the many thoughts in the brain and the fact that 90% of communication is non-verbal. Addressing anxiety, stress/overload and a lack of communication gave all the delegates more to think about.

The Wisconsin Youth Delegates felt that the Community Service for "Feed My Starving Children" was motivating and fun. By assembling dry soup blends to give to hungry needy families, they realized that giving back to the community gave them a sense of satisfaction, they felt that they were really making a difference.

Wisconsin will host a Teen Summit in 2012, so stay tuned!!!

