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Helping Celebrate Military Family Month



Awareness to Action in Kansas Kits Available

MANHATTAN, Kan. -- Every day, you may encounter a member of a Kansas military family. This person could be a member of your church, a student in your school, or your neighbor.

Many don't even know those individuals are part of a military family. An effort is under way to help make community members aware of challenges confronting military families and how to provide support through a program called Awareness to Action in Kansas.

In November, organizations across Kansas are called to involve their members in projects that support military kids and their families, said Elaine Johannes, youth development specialist with K-State Research and Extension. Sponsored by Kansas Operation: Military Kids (OMK), "Awareness to Action in Kansas" kits provide ready-to-use resources that increase awareness of military family challenges, strengths and ways that communities "can lend a hand" during military deployments and return home.

"When we look at Kansas guard and reserve components, there are pockets in our state with only a few identified military families; perhaps a child is the only one in their school with a military parent. Imagine how isolated that child may feel. Kansans can connect with military families and show support through tangible deeds," Johannes said.

Kansas Operation: Military Kids is part of National OMK, a collaborative effort to support the children and youth of Active Duty, National Guard and Army Reserve member families.

"We are focusing the information and campaign to engage our civic groups: 4-H leaders, the faith community, members of service clubs such as Kiwanis and Rotary, to do ongoing, simple tasks that can be sustained for military families in their community," said Johannes. "We encourage members of community groups to get their organizations together to do something. There are lots of needs out there for our military families throughout the year, not just in November."

"The Web site at <http://www.KansasOMK.org> provides tools around awareness to action to help a community think about deployment issues," said Ann Domsch, coordinator of Kansas Operation: Military Kids. "Using these resources, you'll be able to give support and honor the sacrifices and contributions of military families throughout your community."

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K-State Research and Extension is a short name for the Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service, a program designed to generate and distribute useful knowledge for the well-being of Kansans. Supported by county, state, federal and private funds, the program has county Extension offices, experiment fields, area Extension offices and regional research centers statewide. Its headquarters is on the K-State campus, Manhattan.

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