



Wisconsin | Campus Compact

Best Practices in UWEX Service-Learning

Military Kids

4-H Youth Development Programs

When National Guard, Army Reserve and other military parents living in civilian communities are mobilized, their children suddenly have unique needs for special support. Now they are “military kids” but they still “look the same” to teachers, friends and the rest of the community. Their lives are turned upside down!

In an effort to reach out to these children, students from the University of Wisconsin-Platteville, Grant County 4-H members and the Wisconsin National Guard collaborated with the Community University Partnership to offer the first area Military Kids Program. The program was part of the National Guard Family Weekend. The children who participated in the weekend program either have a parent currently deployed, that will be deployed in the near future, or who has just returned from deployment.

One hundred military kids, ages five to seventeen years old, received “Hero Packs” at the end of their program. Within the hero-packs are letters, disposable cameras for pictures to be sent to the parent, stationary, teddy bears, and more. Over 200 students from UWP and local 4-H clubs wrote the letters to be included in the packs and local student organizations on campus gathered to assemble the packs for the kids.

In addition to the many students and organizations who helped with the preparation, twelve UW-Platteville and high school 4-H members were trained as counselors and worked with the kids. The program included discussions on coping skills, crafting memory boxes for the kids to save and share with their parents when they come back home, and beginning journals and scrapbooks. They also shared their program with the participating parents.

As new troops are continually being deployed, this is only the beginning of a long, on-going effort.

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