



*Operation Military Kids and Georgia 4-H Present:*

# ***Hero Packs***

Operation Military Kids (OMK), a partnership including Georgia 4-H, the Boys' & Girls' Club, Army Child and Youth Services and the Military Child Education Coalition, builds a network of support in Georgia to educate citizens on the impact of deployments on communities, families and youth as well as provides educational and support programs for children and youth of soldiers in our own backyard.

When the Department of Defense mobilized the National Guard and Reserves the youth in these families often appear the same as non-military families. However, these youth deal with new pressures and stresses often unnoticed by teachers, 4-H agents and staff, friends and other community members, causing them to need additional support and contact with others in similar situations. OMK also raises awareness for supporting these youth and families among business leaders, teachers, 4-H staff and other community members.

One way OMK provides this support is through the packing and distribution of Hero Packs. Hero Packs are assembled and distributed by non-military volunteer organizations. These Packs include a backpack with items to deal with the stress of missing a loved one and to communicate with that loved one such as a disposable camera, an ink pen, stationary, a stuffed animal, books, a journal, a friendship bracelet, etc. The Hero Packs also contain handwritten letters to the youth thanking them for their service and sacrifices. "Kids Serve Too!" The Hero Packs also include a 'Parent's Pouch' with information about support for spouses of deployed soldiers and opportunities for military youth available locally through 4-H and the other OMK partners.

Families of deployed military members may still request Hero Packs by visiting the Georgia 4-H website at <http://www.georgia4h.org/omk/>. For questions regarding local distribution, please contact your local County Extension Office at 1-800-ASK-UGA1. For questions about the Operation Military Kids program please contact the State 4-H Office at (706)-542-4444 or [oper4h@uga.edu](mailto:oper4h@uga.edu).

***“Kids Serve Too!”***



# Georgia Hero Pack Request Form

Please complete this form and submit to Marcus Eason ([marcuse@uga.edu](mailto:marcuse@uga.edu)).

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State:

Installation:

Military Unit and Branch of Service supported by this request:

Number of Standard Hero Packs Requested:

Number of Young Hero Packs Requested:

Date Hero Packs are Needed for Packing Event:

Date and Type of Event:

Point of Contact:

Address for shipment:

Phone Number at Shipping Location:

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## The following information is required for the allocation of Hero Packs:

The OMK Hero Pack Initiative

(Hero Pack Guide available at [www.4-Hmilitarypartnerships.org](http://www.4-Hmilitarypartnerships.org))

consists of three elements: an appreciation element, a content element, and a support element. Your Hero Pack Request must address all three elements.

### I. Appreciation

*The Hero Pack as a whole serves as a salute and token of thanks to a military child experiencing the deployment of a parent. Hero Packs include a handwritten letter of thanks and appreciation from a local civilian youth, a collection of family support materials, communication tools, and fun items the recipient can enjoy with their siblings, remaining parent, or friends. It is the intent of the Hero Pack Initiative for non-military youth to hand deliver/present the backpacks to the recipients.*

Use the space in the box below to explain each of the following:

- How will these Hero Packs be presented to the military children identified above? In what setting?
- What civilian youth will be involved in the presentation? How many civilian youth do you anticipate participating?
- How will Local, State and National Partners be included?

## **II. Content**

*Local civilian youth and/or community organizations solicit items including family support materials, communication tools, and fun items then pack collected items into Hero Packs.*

Use the space in the box below to explain each of the following:

- How do you plan to fill the Hero Packs? Include information on items that address support, communication and fun; all three areas must be represented. How were items obtained? Who will screen the handwritten letters of support?
- What items/information do you plan to include in the parent pouches? Provide a list with brief description.

## **III. Support**

*OMK Partners work together to create networks in communities across America to support geographically dispersed military families. After completing the Hero Pack assembly process it is important to spend a few minutes talking with the civilian youth and/or community organization about the importance of supporting military children and their families and discuss additional ways they may provide support personally or as a group in their community in an on-going manner.*

Use the space in the box below to explain each of the following:

- Which community youth group / organization will be involved in assembling the Hero Packs? How many youth and adults might participate?
- How will you incorporate military learning and appreciation activities to civilian groups / organizations during the assembly process?
- How will this Hero Pack experience build community (especially local) support for military youth?