



# **Our Military Kids Deployed Program Survey Report**

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## Executive Summary

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The purpose of this annual survey is to gauge the effectiveness of Our Military Kids' extracurricular activity grants in mitigating stress and other negative symptoms in children of National Guard and Reserve service members during deployment. No other third-party studies pertaining to extracurricular activities have focused solely on National Guard and Reserve families.

Online surveys were sent to 1,700 families of children who received grants between October 1, 2017 and July 30, 2018. Families had two weeks to complete the survey; they were contacted and reminded by OMK staff three times. Survey questions were crafted to shed light on the program's impact on the 2,768 children who received grants, as well as its peripheral impact on family members. The responses were provided in summary by Survey Monkey in PDF and the complete data was provided in Microsoft Excel. Data analysis was completed using Excel. The response rate was 64% (1092 responses).

Items on the survey were worded as direct questions, and addressed the following topics:

### **Effects of Deployment on Family;** key findings include:

- More than 71% of families noticed an increase in the stress or anxiety level of their children because of the most recent deployment.
- Acting out/aggression and attention difficulties were the top symptoms observed in children ages 4 -15 and crying and/or depression and social withdrawal were the most prevalent symptoms in children ages 16 – 18.
- While 35% of families reported dealing with financial difficulties because of the deployment, 43% said the deployment affected the ability of the child's other parent or caregiver to work outside the home.

### **Impact of Our Military Kids Grant;** key findings include:

- 69% of respondents reported seeing improvement in their children's school performance.
- 94% saw a decrease in negative symptoms.
- 95% reported that a grant improved the morale of the service member.
- 96% reported that a grant had a positive impact on the entire family.

### **Service Member Demographics;** key findings include:

- 60% of respondents were Enlisted.
- 82% have more than 10 years of military service.
- 30% live more than 50 miles from a major military base.

- 81% have 2 or more children.

**Deployment Demographics;** key findings include:

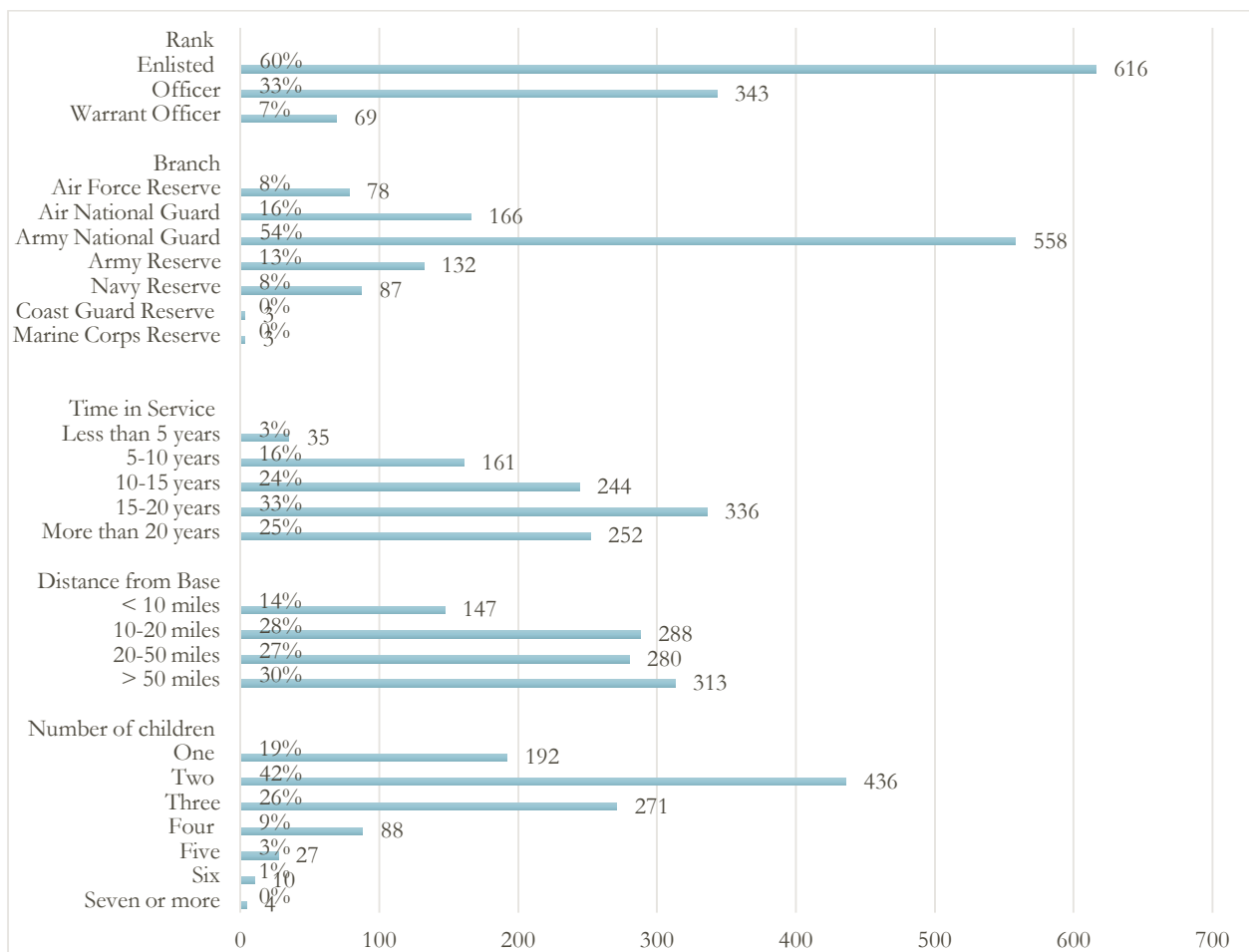
- 43% have deployed 3 or more times.
- 77% deployed between 6-12 months.
- 32% deployed to Kuwait.
- 17% deployed to Afghanistan.

## Demographics

The percentage of respondents are broken out by service member demographics and deployment demographics.

Service member demographics include:

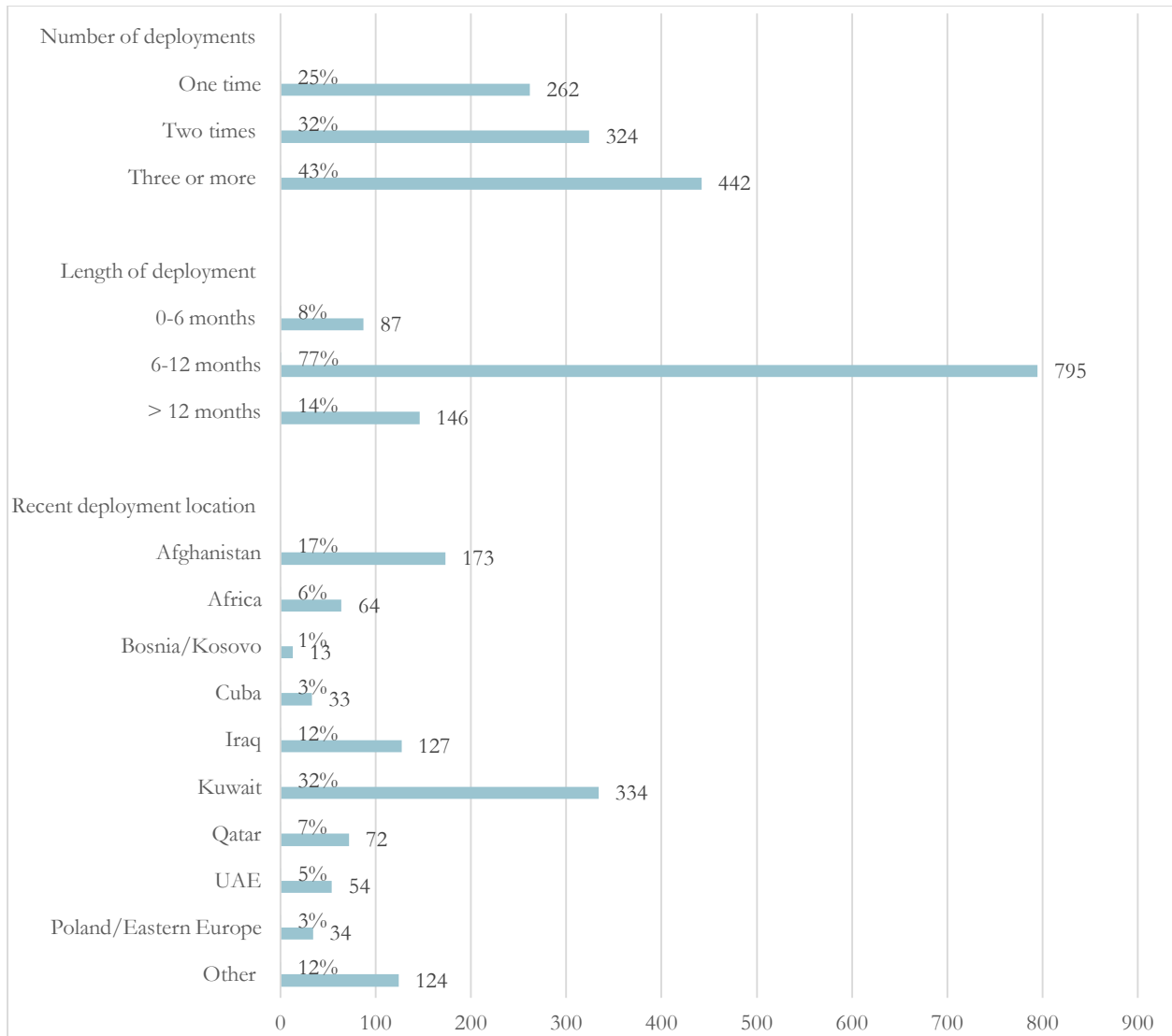
- Rank of service member
- Branch of service
- Time in service
- Distance service member lives from major military installation
- Number of children (ages 3-18) in the home during the most recent deployment



Deployment Demographics include:

- Total number of times that the service member has deployed, to include the deployment that made their child eligible for their grant

- Length of most recent deployment
- Location of most recent deployment

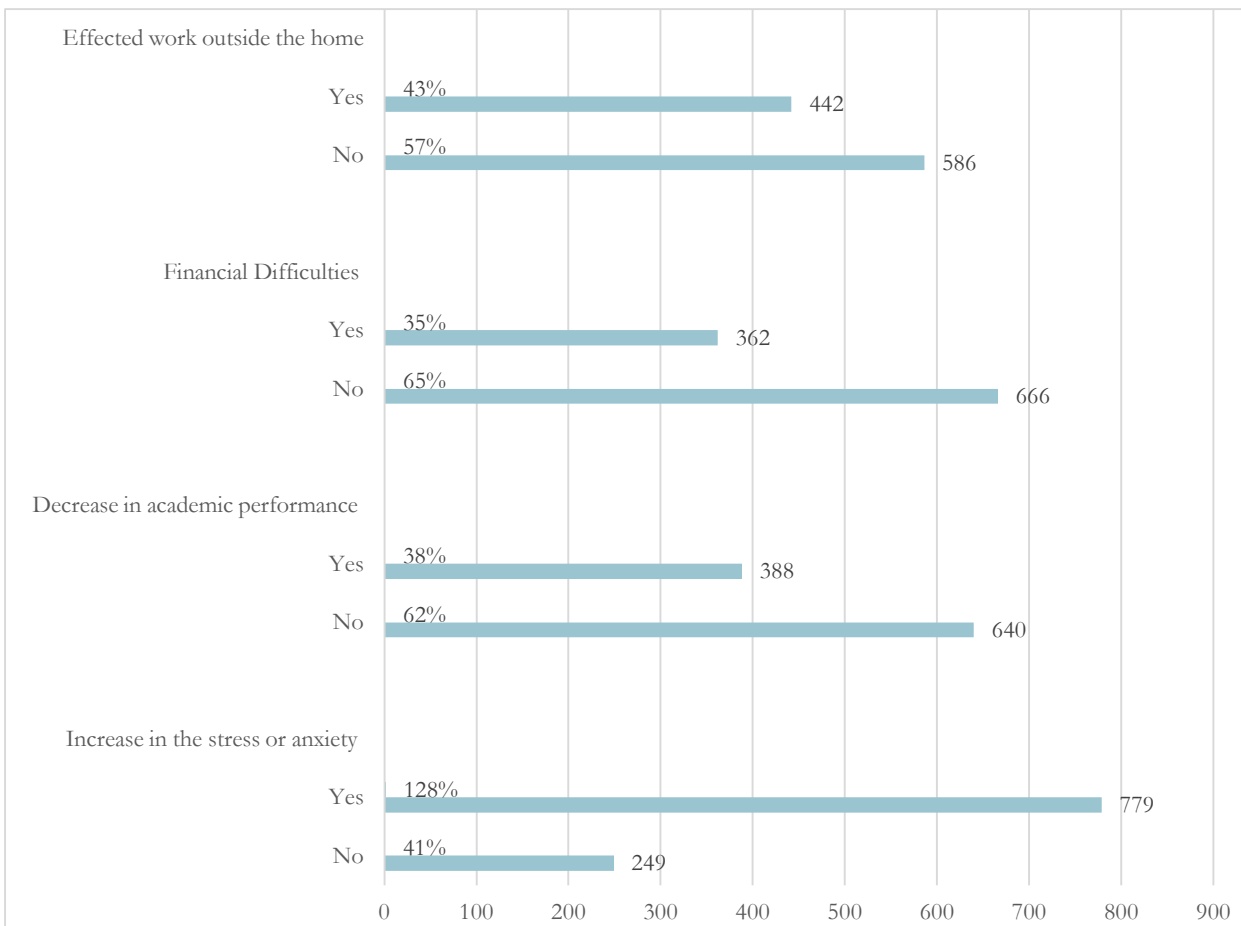


## Effects of Deployment on Families

Respondents were asked the following questions regarding the effects of the most recent deployment on their family and children:

- Has the deployment of the service member affected the ability of the child's other parent or caregiver to work outside the home?
- Has your family dealt with financial difficulties because of the service member's deployment?

- Have you noticed any decrease in your children's academic performance because of the service member's deployment?
- Have you noticed an increase in the stress or anxiety level of your children because of the most recent deployment?



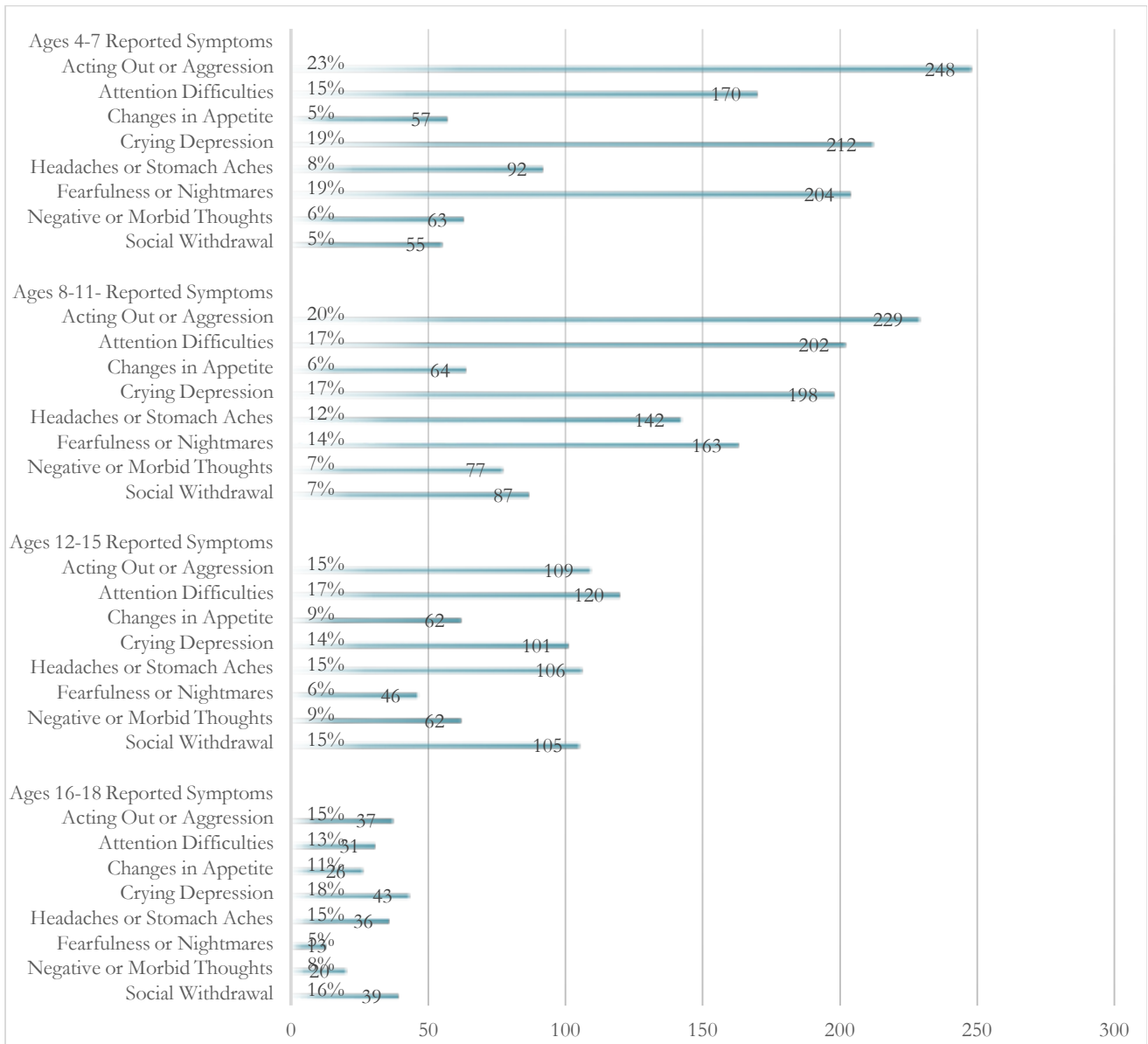
Broken down in age groups of:

- 4-7
- 8-11
- 12-15
- 16-18

Respondents were also asked if any of the following symptoms were observed because of the most recent deployment:

- Acting out or aggression
- Attention difficulties
- Changes in appetite

- Crying and depression
- Headaches or stomachaches
- Fearfulness or nightmares
- Negative or morbid thoughts
- Social withdrawal



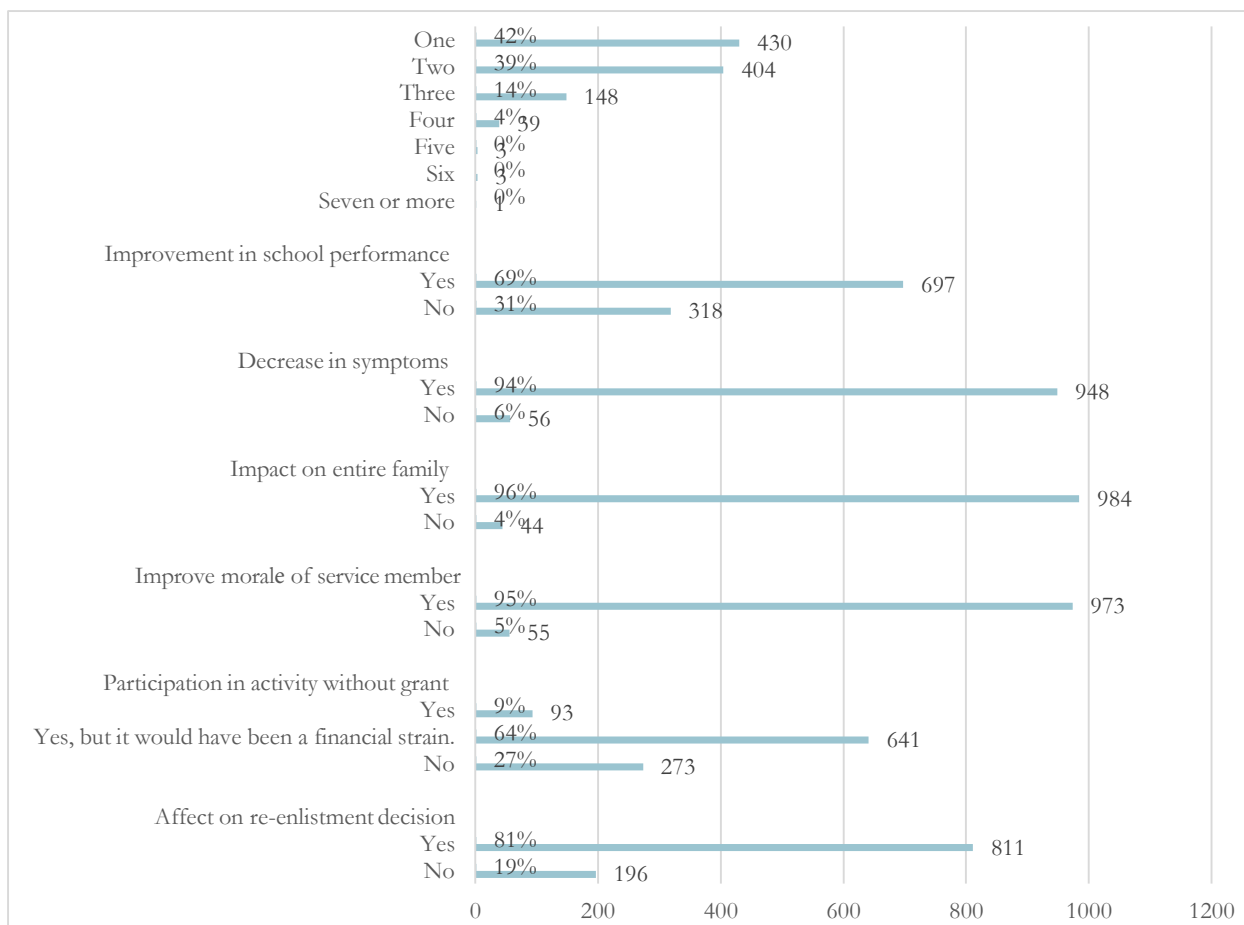


## Impact of Our Military Kids Grants

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To better understand how Our Military Kids' grants are impacting grant recipients and their families, respondents were asked the following questions regarding the effects that the most recent deployment had on their family and children:

- How many of your children have received at least one grant from Our Military Kids?
- Did participation in the Our Military Kids sponsored activity improve your child(ren)'s performance in school?
- Did participation in the grant activity positively impact your child(ren) and some or all of your child(ren)'s symptoms?
- Did your child(ren)'s participation in the Our Military Kids sponsored activity contribute to the overall well-being of your entire family?
- Did your child(ren)'s participation in the Our Military Kids sponsored activity contribute to improved morale for the service member during his/her deployment?
- Would you have been able to enroll your child(ren) in the extracurricular activity without an Our Military Kids Grant award?
- Would availability of this program be considered a valued benefit when making a re-enlistment decision?



Respondents were also asked to share examples of how grant awards from Our Military Kids have helped them, their families and their children. For many of these families, the opportunities provided by Our Military Kids allowed these children to engage in empowering activities during a critical period of their lives. Some of their responses are included below.

*“Seeing my children happy playing baseball when I’m on deployment was the biggest morale boost, and Our Military Kids program made it easy.”*

*“My son was so proud to receive this grant and this program made him confident inside and out. He is now training harder to make his father and the military proud.”*

*“As a newly working mother of four, it eased the stress of the deployment financially and emotionally for our family. The children were able to participate in activities we couldn’t have done as easily without the grants. It made my job as a single parent a little easier, having the kids involved in activities, and it gave them something to be proud of while updating their deployed dad on their activities.”*

*“Overall, it’s isolating not having a supportive military command when your spouse is a military reservist. The grants helped provide activities that brought our family into the community a bit*

*more. Those activities gave us a positive, structured focus, so that we weren't merely focused on the deployment countdown calendar.”*

*“Our Military Kids was a lifesaver for our boys since it was summer and nearing the end of my husband's deployment. They were really starting to feel the pains of the deployment and dad being away. Being able to participate in these activities kept them occupied, allowed them to interact with peers and friends, and they looked forward to sharing what they learned with dad! Thank you!”*

*“My son had been depressed and anxious since my husband left. He enjoys soccer and we knew that staying busy helped with the morale in the family. When he made the travel soccer team, and then received the military grant to help pay for it, he really felt proud to be a military son and could not wait to start the soccer season. He was very humbled that he was chosen to receive this special grant.”*

*“OMK allowed all 3 of my children to attend the summer camps they love. This was a huge benefit to the whole family, especially since I had to transition from full-time employment to part-time, due to the emotional stress the deployment caused for the kids. Thank you so much!”*

*“My daughter absolutely glows while cheering! She was chosen as a captain of her squad and her leadership role really helps give her the confidence she needs while her dad is away. It also keeps her busy and focused on something she loves.”*