



5-Year Impact Report

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May 2024

Enhancing Family Wellbeing,
One Activity at a Time

Introduction

Over the last 20 years, Our Military Kids (OMK) has provided more than 88,000 grants for extracurricular activities totaling \$32 million to children and teens in all 50 states, DC, and US Territories across two different programs. The Deployed Program consists of Reserve and National Guard families who experience a stateside activation or an overseas deployment. The Combat Injured Program consists of families whose service member or Veteran is in recovery for a post-9/11 combat-related injury. For both programs, children between the ages of 1-18 are eligible to receive multiple grants of up to \$300 to cover the costs of participating in an extracurricular activity of their choice, such as sports, music lessons, tutoring, STEM activities, or summer camp. Participation in these activities can have profound impacts on child and family wellbeing.

Every year OMK distributes an annual survey to grant recipient families to assess program impacts. Beginning with the 2020 survey of 2019 grant recipient families (2020 Survey), the OMK team has striven to keep core outcome metrics consistent across annual survey efforts. Every year since the 2020 Survey, questions assessing the following have remained the same:

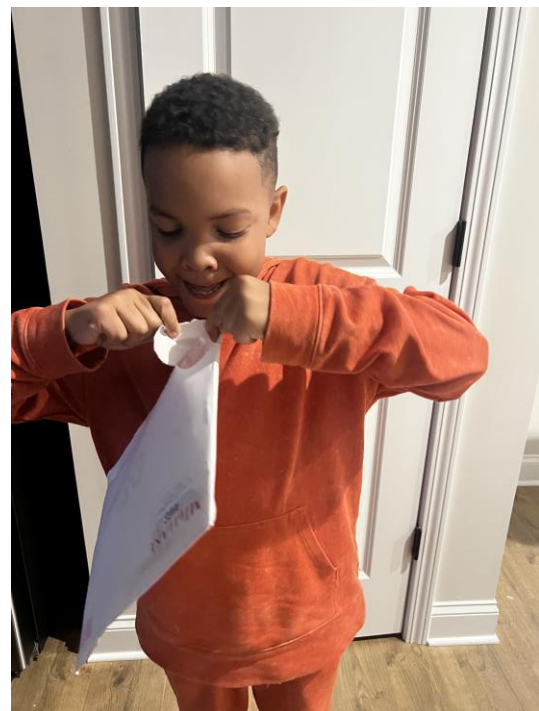
- academic impact due to deployment/activation or combat-injury recovery
- academic improvement after receiving OMK grant(s)
- psychosocial symptoms experienced due to deployment/activation or combat-injury recovery
- improvement of those symptoms after receiving OMK grant(s)
- overall family wellbeing
- service member morale

Additional metrics assessing further outcomes on both the child and family levels were added on the 2021 Survey. Representing the families and children in receipt of over 3,400 Combat Injured Program grants and over 7,000 Deployed Program grants, this 5-Year Impact Report illustrates how the outcomes experienced by families in both programs have stayed consistent across the last five years of data collection. Notably, although the COVID-19 pandemic impacted many extracurricular activities for children during 2020 and 2021, the pandemic did not impact the outcomes experienced by families receiving OMK grants.

Quotes included throughout the report are included as typed by survey respondents. Changes for improved context or clarity are denoted with brackets.

Piloting a Pre-Post Survey

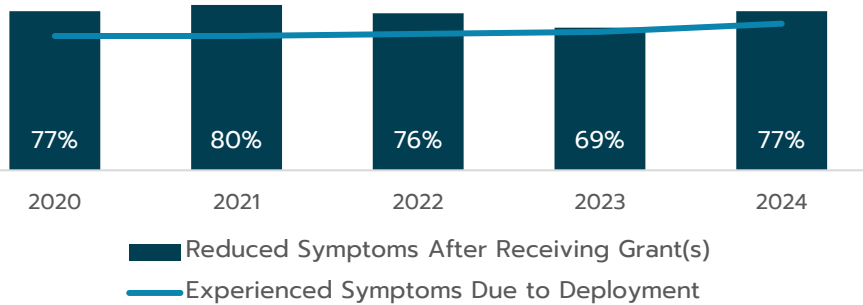
In an effort to more accurately measure family and child outcomes associated with OMK participation, OMK piloted a pre-post version of the survey (Pre-Post Survey) for 2023 grant recipients in addition to the standard annual survey. This pilot survey was funded through the NFL-BFW Salute to Service Grant. Families within both the Deployed and Combat Injured Programs were offered the option of filling out a survey covering: their family information; child academics and psychosocial symptoms; and both caregiver and service member morale at the time they were awarded an OMK grant in 2023. These families then received a follow-up comparative post-survey instead of the annual survey during the survey cycle in 2024. Where metrics align, the 2023-2024 pre-post data has been merged with data from the standard 2024 Survey. Pre-post specific findings are presented at the end of this report and represent 36 children across 19 Combat Injured Program families and 143 children across 76 Deployed Program families.



Deployed Program

Separation due to deployment or activation can have profound psychosocial impacts. Over the last 5 years, approximately two-thirds of children experienced at least one psychosocial symptom each year. Families repeatedly report, however, that participation in an OMK-sponsored activity improved symptoms for at least three-quarters every year except 2023, where two thirds experienced improvement.

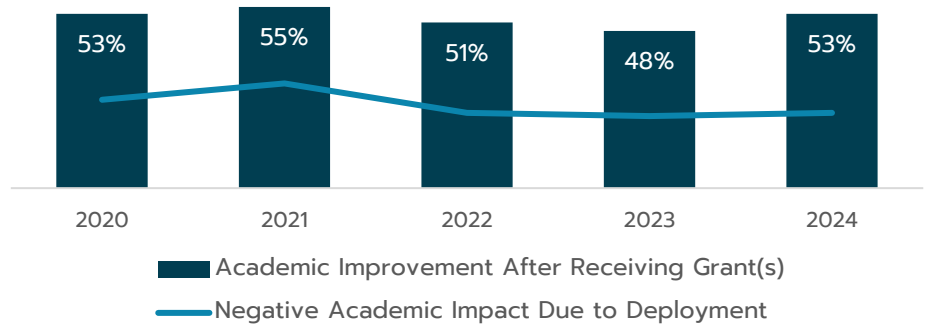
Experiences with Psychosocial Symptoms



“The camp and swimming lessons provided opportunities for social interaction and physical activity, which lifted their spirits, distracted them, gave them something positive to focus on and learn, and made the time go by faster.”

In addition to psychosocial symptoms, it is common for children with a deployed or activated parent to experience challenges in school. Every year since 2020, between 22% and 32% of grant recipient children experienced a decline in their academic performance as a result of their service member’s deployment or activation. Despite this, approximately half of all children experienced academic improvement after participating in an OMK-sponsored activity.

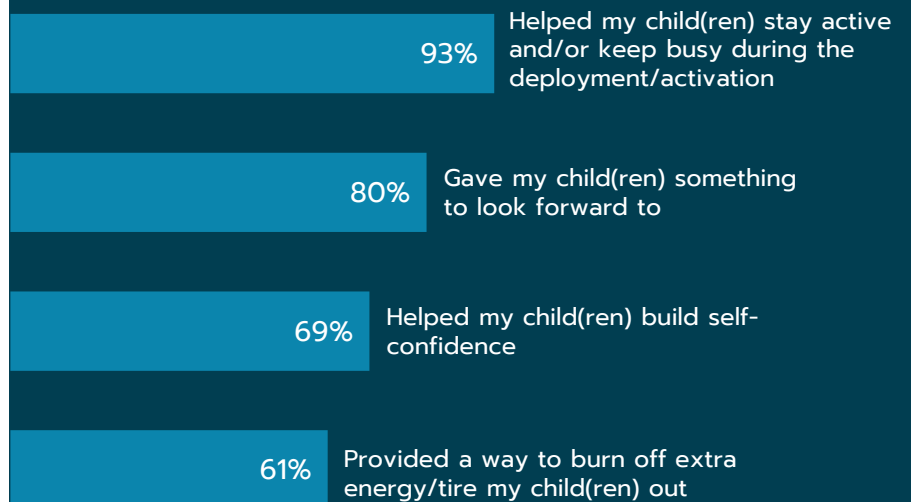
Academic Experiences



“Fencing motivates my children to achieve at higher levels in all facets of life. The sport teaches them discipline, gives them confidence, and teaches them the importance of delayed gratification.”



Top Additional Outcomes 2022-2024

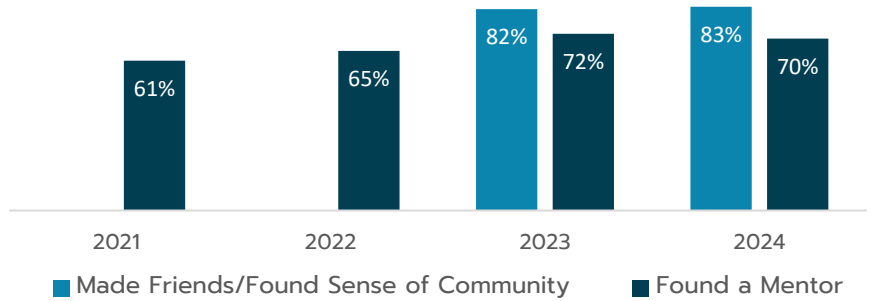


“When things are hard, their dad is deployed, nothing seems normal, and it's hard to make ends meet with time and finances, it was such a blessing to be able to enroll my children in activities we wouldn't have been able to do without the grant. It helped us keep a sense of normalcy!”



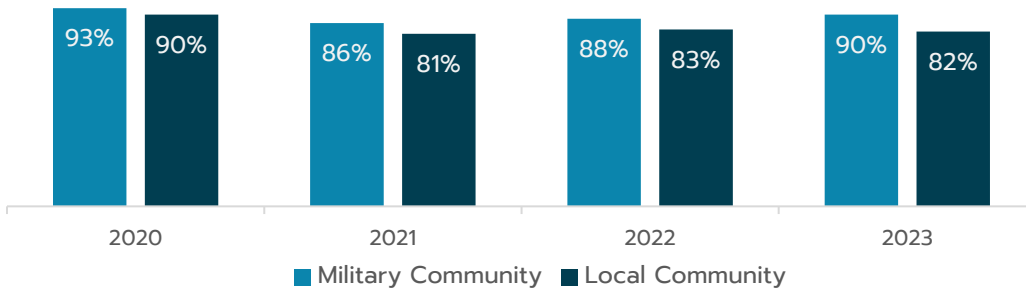
The majority of children every year were reported to have found a mentor figure, such as a coach, teacher, or role model, through their activity. On the 2023 and 2024 Surveys, families were also asked if their child had made friends and/or found a sense of community through their activity, with over three-quarters responding positively (two questions assessed friendship and sense of community separately on prior surveys).

Child Social Outcomes

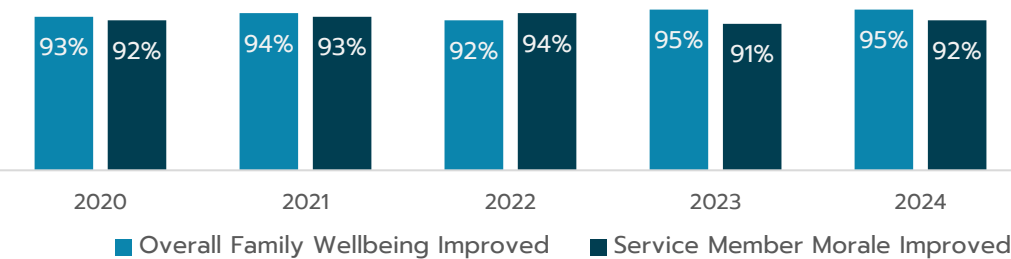


Receipt of an OMK grant and subsequent participation in the sponsored activity provides positive outcomes for the parents as well. The majority of parents/guardians reported that the grant made them feel more supported by and connected to both the military community and their local community. Further, through participation in the program, a large majority of families reported improvement in their overall family wellbeing, as well as their service member's morale. As with other outcomes, these have stayed consistent over the last 4-5 years they were assessed.

Feelings of Support & Connection to Military/Local Communities



Family Positive Outcomes



Deployed Program 5-Year Fast Stats

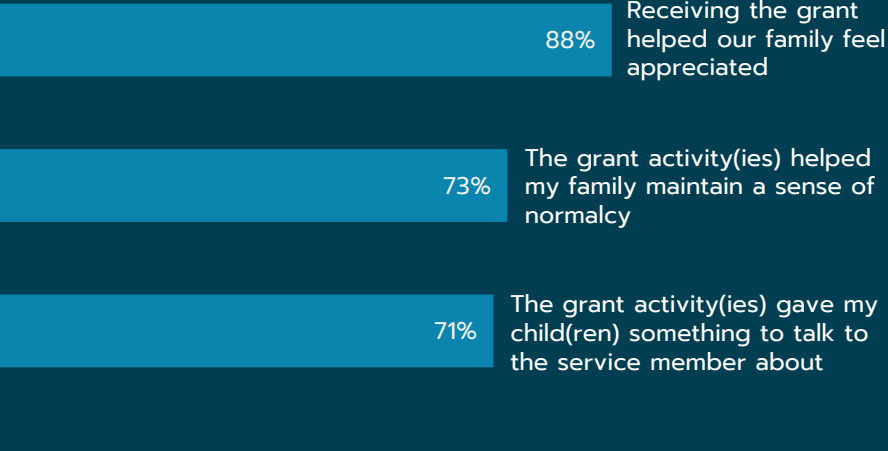
18,375 Grants
\$**4.3M** in funding

63% Sports
22% Fine Arts

10% Camp
5% Tutoring

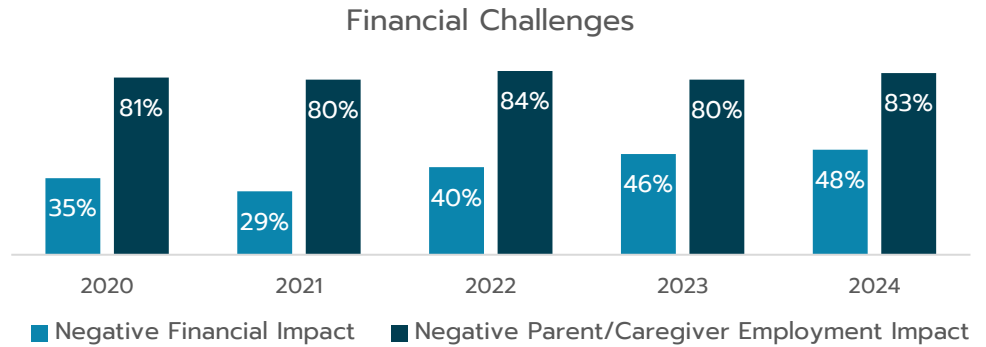
97.9 Net Promoter Score

Top Family Level Outcomes 2022-2024



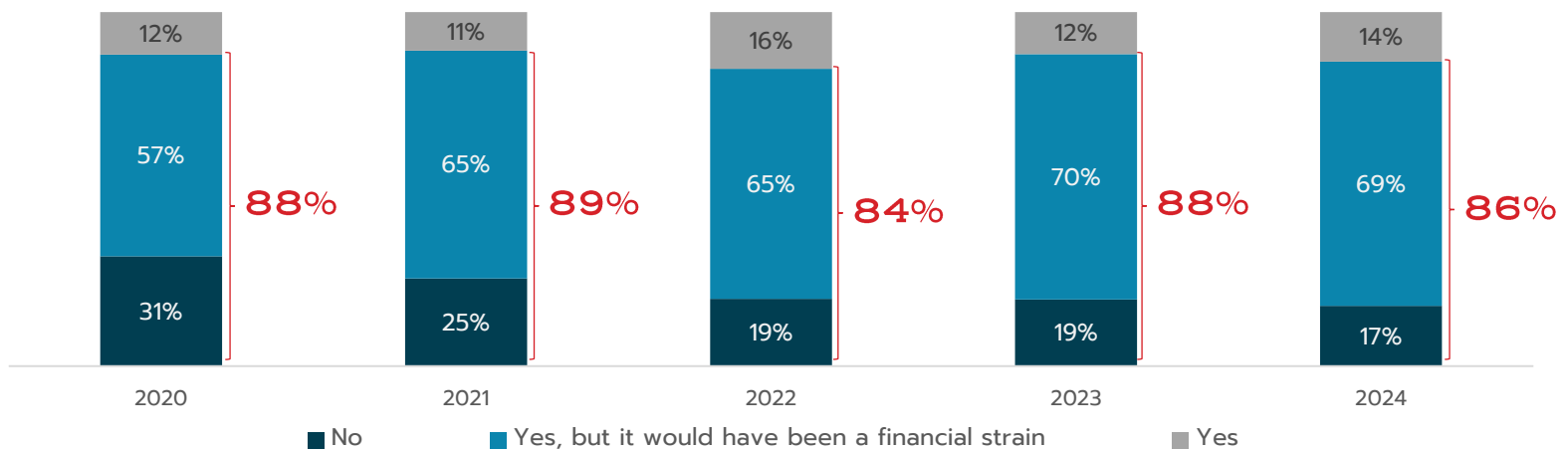
“Normally, when not on an activation, I work from home, and I am at every activity for my kids. This activation caused a huge financial strain due to the childcare cost. We don't normally need to pay. This grant was the reason I was able to put them in gymnastics and every week they look forward to Wednesdays because that's the day they go.”

Deployments and activations within the Reserve and National Guard community can have significant financial impact – civilian pay is often higher than the service member’s military pay, and the absence of the service member can negatively impact their spouse’s ability to work outside of the home, further impacting overall family finances. Most notably, while the impact on the non-service member to work outside the home has remained consistent, annual survey data shows an increase in negative financial impact year over year starting on the 2021 Survey.



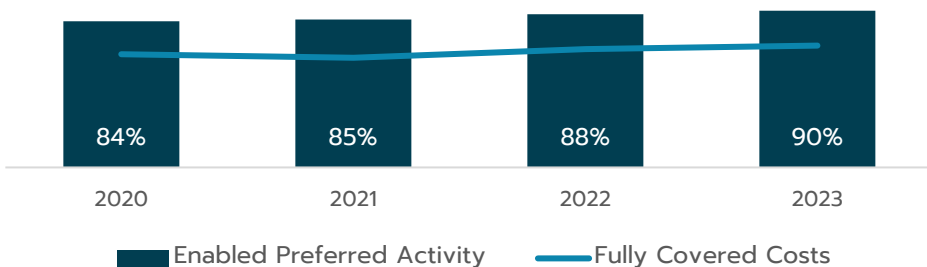
Ultimately, it is unsurprising that of the families who apply for assistance through OMK-sponsored activities, the majority would be unable to afford the activity without assistance or it would cause them financial strain to do so. Less than 1 in 5 families reported being fully able to afford their children’s activities on their own.

Ability to Afford Activity without OMK Assistance



Year to year, OMK grants fully fund the cost of approximately two-thirds of Deployed Program families. However, each year over 80% of families reported that the grant amount enabled their child to select their preferred activity.

Activity Cost Coverage and Selection



Further, the majority of families (71-74% each year) indicated that their child is likely to continue with their chosen activity even after it is no longer funded by OMK, indicating that participation in these activities, and the benefits they provide, will continue beyond OMK’s involvement.

“Attending space camp this summer was a huge confidence booster. He really wants to be an astronaut, and space camp helped to keep that passion for space exploration going for him.”

More than two-thirds of families consistently report that the OMK application process is easier than others they have experienced



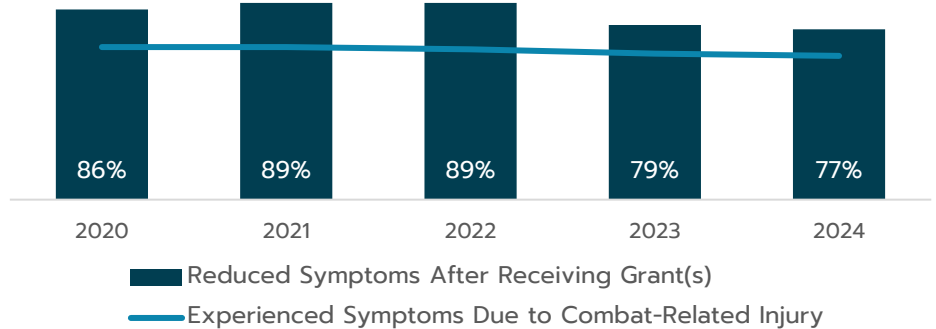
“My girls were so proud to be given the grant. While their dad is the ‘hero’ in their eyes, they felt appreciated as children who share their dad with the country during the time he is away from them.”

Combat Injured Program

Having a parent in recovery for combat-related injuries can impact children’s psychosocial outcomes. Each year, families reported that around two-thirds of children experienced at least one psychosocial symptom, with the most common being attention difficulties, crying or depression, and acting out or aggression. However, families attributed an improvement in psychosocial symptoms to OMK-sponsored activities for over three-quarters each year.

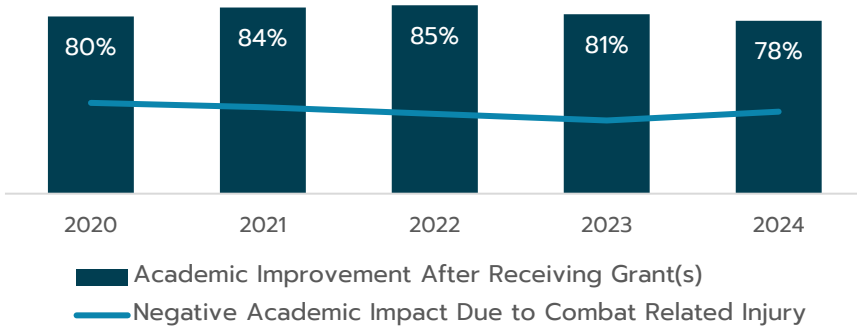
“The lessons helped my kids with exercise, discipline, focus, agility, strength, mobility, confidence, and self-control. It helped me by allowing me to be able to afford their lessons. The kung fu also brought them closer to me as a common interest.”

Experiences with Psychosocial Symptoms

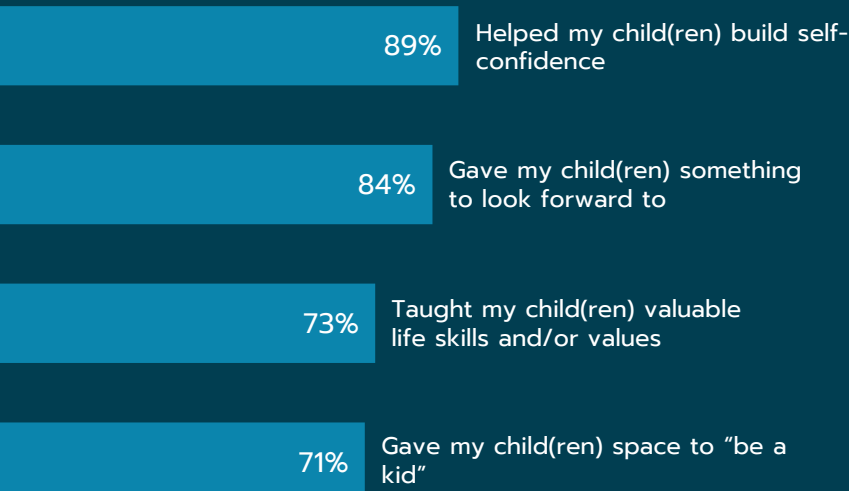


Between 33% and 41% of grant recipient children experienced a decline in their academic performance as a result of their parent’s combat-injury recovery each year. However, families reported that participating in an OMK-sponsored activity helped improve academic outcomes for over three-quarters of grant recipients.

Academic Experiences



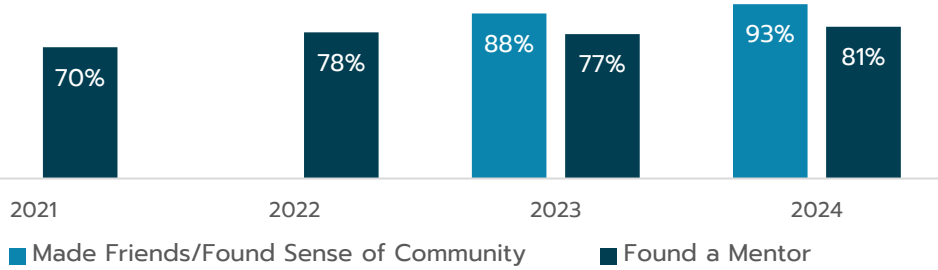
Top Additional Outcomes 2022-2024



“Our boy gets excited to go swimming! It's hard for him to maintain positivity (probably learned directly from me...) and it's so nice to see huge smiles on his face when he swims!”

Every year, the majority of children were reported to have found a mentor figure, such as a coach, teacher, or role model, through their activity. On the 2023 and 2024 Surveys, families were also asked if their child had made friends and/or found a sense of community through their activity (two questions separately assessed friendship and sense of community on prior surveys). The large majority of children were reported to have made these social connections both years.

Child Social Outcomes



Positive outcomes were not limited to children: 89% or more of families reported feeling supported by and connected to both the military community and their local community. Additionally, the large majority of families reported that their child(ren)'s participation in OMK-sponsored activities positively impacted both their overall family wellbeing and their Veteran's morale.

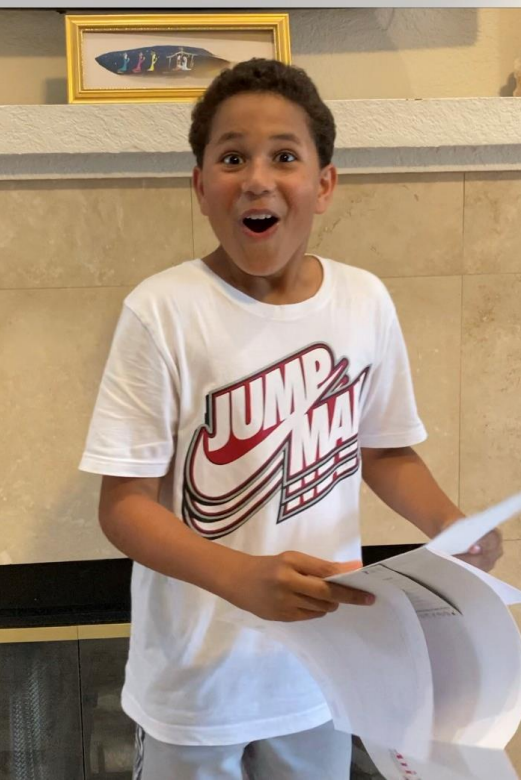
**Combat Injured Program
5-Year Fast Stats**

5,598
Grants | **\$1.6M**
in funding

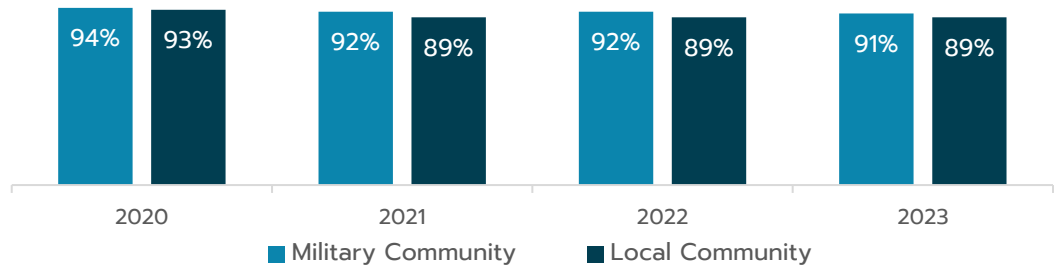
64%
Sports | **20%**
Fine Arts

8%
Camp | **9%**
Tutoring

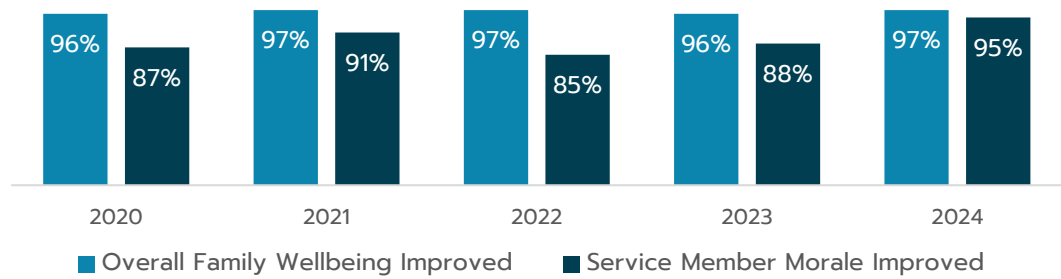
96.8
Net Promoter Score



Feelings of Support & Connection to
Military and Local Communities



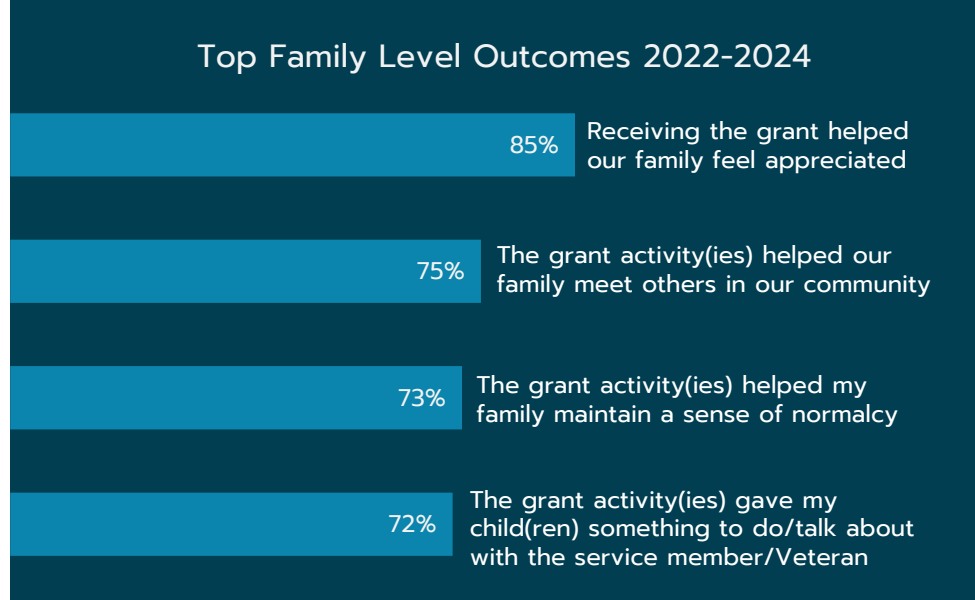
Family Positive Outcomes



“OMK allowed us to not have to worry as much about deposits for our kids. When I was medically discharged due to combat injury our family income dropped in half. My son had just turned 16 and started working two jobs to pay for his hockey fees. OMK allowed us to help in not feel to stressed about working and school he could focus on being a kid. We did what we were able to in order to keep them in a sport that has supported them during all our moves and was the one constant thing they had. OMK helped to [lessen] that financial burden this year and [we] can't thank you enough.”

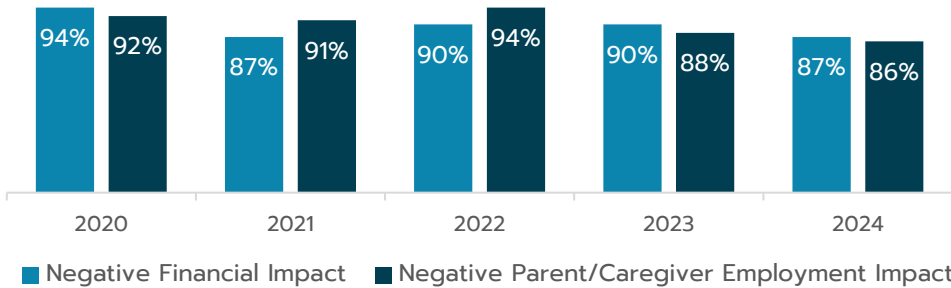
“Our recovery process has been long and draining. My kids have grown up with it, and they don't remember a time where daddy's ‘brain didn't hurt’. Because I'm not able to work due to my husband's injuries [...] there is no extra for activities that they want to participate in. The grant gave us the opportunity to say YES instead of having to say no, like usual.”

Top Family Level Outcomes 2022-2024



Recovery from combat-related injuries can have a significant impact on a family's finances. In addition to costs associated with medical treatment (and travel to medical treatment), an injury can prevent the service member or Veteran from seeking full-time employment. Additionally, in many cases these injuries can also negatively impact the ability of the veteran's spouse to work outside the home, particularly if the service member needs additional care. These financial impacts can be long-lasting. Each survey year, over 85% reported negative financial impacts and/or negative impacts on their spouse/children's caregiver to work outside the home.

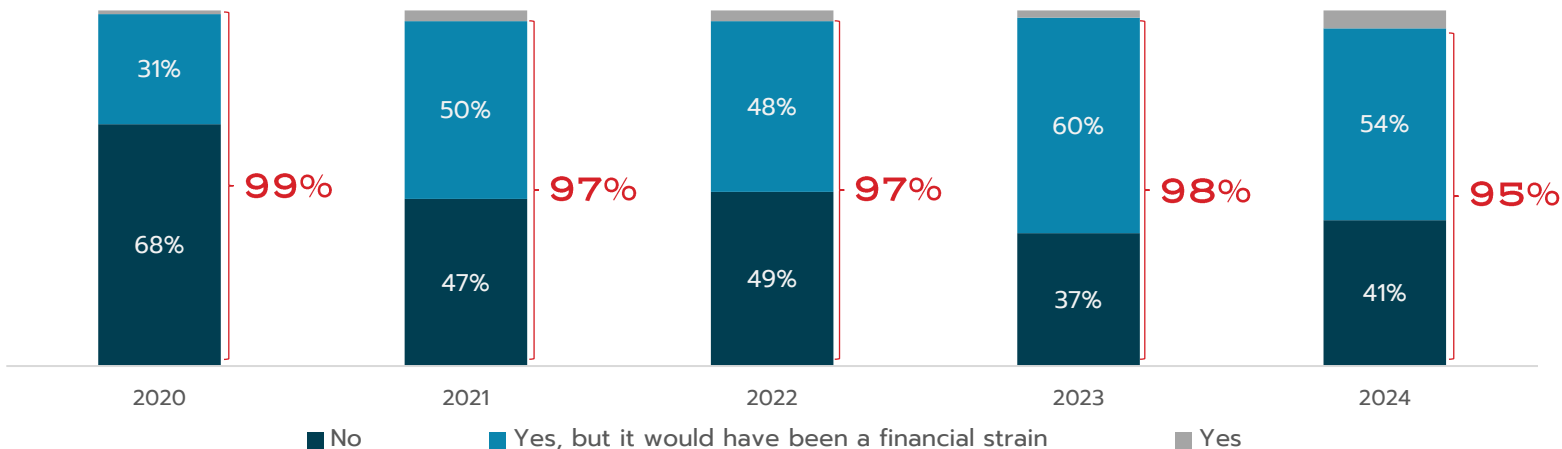
Financial Challenges



Based on this, it is unsurprising that without OMK assistance, the majority of these families report not being able to afford their child(ren)'s activity, or that paying for the activity would cause their family financial strain. Each year, 95% or more report not being able to afford these activities fully on their own.

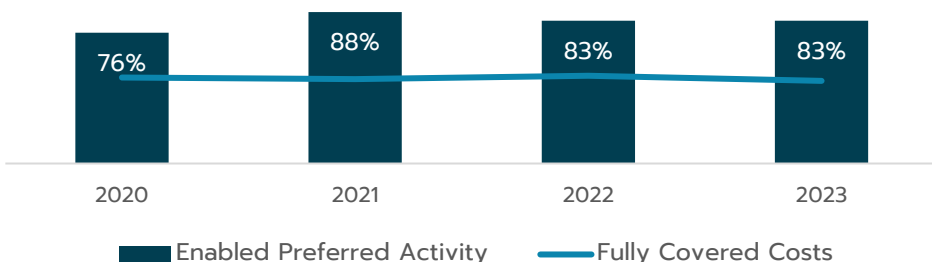


Ability to Afford Activity without OMK Assistance



Although year to year OMK grants only fully covered the costs of around half of the sponsored activities, over three-quarters of families reported that the grant amount enabled their child to select their preferred activity each year.

Activity Cost Coverage and Selection



“ The chance for my husband to see our kids involved in activities not only encourages him to leave the house but also brings him joy as he observes them having fun and being carefree. This directly enhances our family's happiness and well-being. ”

Finally, in the three years the question was asked, approximately half of the children represented used the grant to continue an activity they had already participated in before, indicating that, for many families, OMK support helps children stay in their normal activities and routines while their veteran is recovering.



Between 77% and 82% of families found the application process for OMK is easier than others they have experienced



“ The activities [...] has given my children a safe and fun outlet that they can have outside of our home and the demands of school. It has given them something to look forward to and grow in. It has gotten our family out of the house. It has opened the door for support from and communication with their dad. ”

Pre-Post Survey Pilot

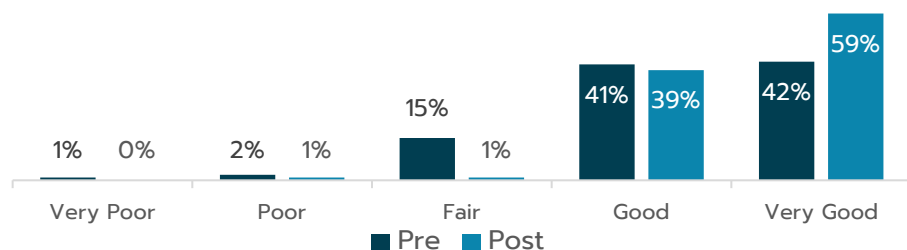
Participating families were asked to report on psychosocial symptoms experienced in the last three months on both pre- and post-program surveys. Within the Deployed Program, the number of symptoms children experienced significantly decreased between pre- and post-survey, with **82% of families reporting that OMK had a positive impact** on their child(ren)'s symptoms. Additionally, among those who completed both the pre- and post-survey, academic outcomes significantly improved, with **91% attributing the improvement at least partially to the OMK-sponsored activity**.

Experienced More than One Psychosocial Symptom



“As a military member, I often feel like we aren't given enough support. Programs such as the one OMK is doing is excellent support to my family. It has helped us feel valued and provided my daughter the chance to do an activity she loves.”

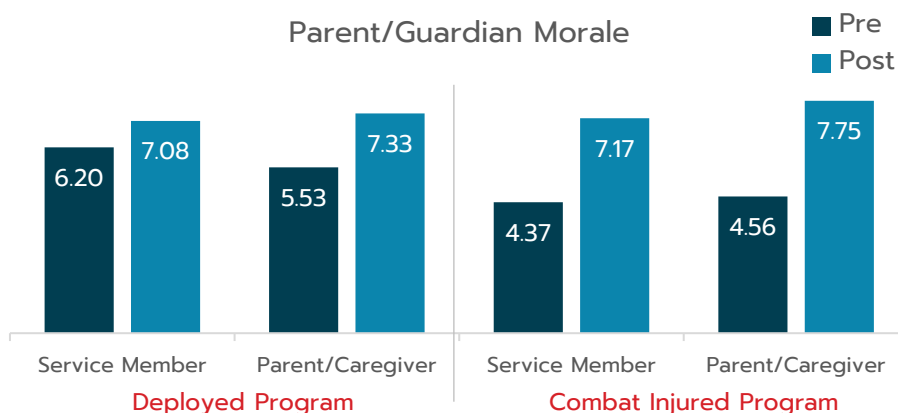
Academic Performance



The Pre-Post Survey also demonstrated significantly positive impacts for parents and guardians: both service members and children's other parent or caregiver reported significant improvements to their morale on a scale of 1-10 between the time of the pre-survey and post-survey.

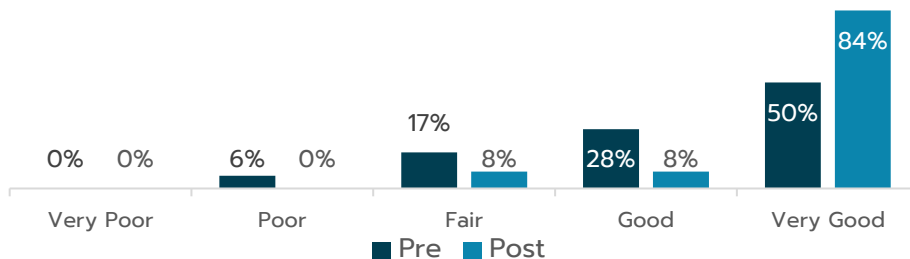
“The kids have been taking Jiu-Jitsu, which has increased their confidence and taught them about respect and doing the right thing. I believe they have learned to be more of a team player and other important life values that have helped them in school.”

Parent/Guardian Morale



Although Combat Injured Program children and families experienced similar changes in outcomes between pre- and post-surveys, none were statistically significant (likely due to the small sample size for this survey). Like in the Deployed Program, parent morale improved noticeably from pre- to post-survey. The percentage of children experiencing each symptom reduced from 50% at pre-survey to 31% at post-survey and, similarly to the Deployed Program, **84% of families felt that the OMK-sponsored activity had a positive impact** on these symptoms. Additionally, academic performance noticeably improved between the two survey instances.

Academic Performance



The consistency of OMK data across child and family outcomes for the last 5 years, paired with the promising findings of the pre-post pilot, provide a strong foundation to shift toward the pre-post format as the primary annual survey instrument in future years, leading to higher fidelity impact results.

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