

Put on your purple and help celebrate Month of the Military Child

April is the Month of the Military Child. According to the Army's website (www.myarmyonesource.com), this awareness month was established to underscore the important role children play in the Armed Forces community.

The Army reports there are approximately 2 million military children, ranging in ages from newborn to 18 years old; 1.3 million military children are school-aged. In Abilene, we have 127 military children enrolled in grades K-12, and additional military children participating in our Pre-K programs throughout the district.

Care of military children sustains our fighting force, and strengthens the health, security, and safety of our nation's families and communities. So, we've been trying to say "thank you" in small ways throughout the month. For example, Parents as Teachers staff delivered gifts to the young children and families enrolled in their program earlier in April.

To further show appreciation for our military children, we are encouraging everyone in our school system to wear purple on April 30th as a visible way to show support and thank military children for their strength and sacrifices. ***Purple because it is the color that symbolizes all branches of the military, as it is the combination of Army green, Coast Guard blue, Air Force blue, Marine red and Navy blue.***

We appreciate the sacrifices of military families and their children in our district and throughout the nation, and I'd like to encourage those in the community to join our school children and personnel in wearing purple on April 30th.

DoDEA joins the Department of Defense and the military community in celebrating April as the Month of the Military Child. Throughout the month, DoDEA will encourage schools to plan events that recognize and show appreciation for our military children. We know that military children face many challenges that are unique to their situation, such as having a parent deployed for extended periods of time and moving frequently. Deployments and family separations can be stressful times for children.

DoDEA schools are part of the wide community support network available to families. Teachers, counselors, and psychologists guide honest and open discussions with students to help with easier transitions and adjustments, connected with military children. Our most important contribution is to remain focused on the educational mission and provide a stable environment for the children in our schools especially during these times of stress.

This year, we're inviting everyone to "Purple Up!" which is an annual campaign created four years ago by Operation Military Kids (OMK). OMK is an organization dedicated to military children. During the month of April they encourage community awareness and support of military children. OMK also asks the nation to join together for an event they call, "Purple Up! For Military Kids" and wear purple on a designated day in April.

We are encouraging everyone across the DoDEA school system to wear purple on, April 30th as a visible way to show support and thank military children for their strength and sacrifices. OMK chose purple because it is the color that symbolizes all branches of the military, as it is the combination of Army green, Coast Guard blue, Air Force blue, Marine red and Navy blue.

In 1986, when Secretary of Defense Caspar W. Weinberger designated each April as "The Month of the Military Child," could he have imagined how much his vision for celebrating the contributions and inspiration of military children would have played out 27 years later? In 1986, like today, military families rose to meet whatever was asked of them, but their children were not recognized separately. At that time, the assumption was that our military kids were dealing with the same challenges, successes, and disappointments that any other kid might encounter.

Because of Secretary Weinberger's proclamation, today we pause to officially recognize our military kids – for their accomplishments and resilience. The global conflicts since 9/11 have made it a new day – for so many military families and their children. In response to parents asking for help, the National Military Family Association launched the [Operation Purple® summer camp program](#) in 2004 to help reduce the stress military kids were experiencing. Stress from their service member parent or guardian being in a war zone, stress from the ever-present media

coverage, stress related to the separation from a loved one, and stress from feeling so alone.

These past ten years of Operation Purple camp have allowed more than 47,000 military children from across the Nation and world to have the chance to meet other kids like them in a camp setting where they can be celebrated for being a military kid. At camp, military children create a “Wall of Honor” so each child can talk about their special family member. They share the “top ten things” they love about being a military child or being at camp. They talk with each other about what bothers them and what makes them tick. All of these activities integrate into the usual camp fare of rock climbing, swimming, hiking, campfires, you name it.

Ten years have passed and we never expected to be in this market for this long. Thanks to the past generosity from Sears, Roebuck and Company, the Michael and Susan Dell Foundation, TriWest Healthcare Alliance, the Sierra Club Foundation, Goldman Sachs Gives, and countless individual donors, we have been able to serve our military kids. And while we didn’t expect to do this as long as we have, what we do know that we can’t leave just yet. Our kids are too important to our future – for all of us – whether we are connected to the military or to a civilian community.

As we celebrate our military children this April, the work continues. We want to use this month to not only acknowledge how strong military kids are, but to also focus on supporting them through the struggles they encounter due to the lifestyle that comes with being a part of the military. These kids are our future. Thank you, Secretary Weinberger, for bringing this awareness through the proclamation so many years ago. Now it is up to all of us to make sure we keep our military kids safe, loved and celebrated – not only in April but through the entire year!

To celebrate kids throughout this month, our Association will be featuring military kids on our Facebook page and website. We will post videos, photos, and quotes from military kids around the country.

[Submit yours today!](#)

On behalf of the National Military Family Association, we thank you and your children for their service and sacrifice. Together we’re stronger.

April has been proclaimed as the Month of the Military Child.

Whereas: Thousands of brave Americans have demonstrated their courage and commitment to freedom by serving the Armed Forces of the United States of America in active duty posts at home and around the world; and

Whereas: Approximately 5,000 of Wyoming's children and youth have been directly effected by the military deployment o a least one parent; and

Whereas: These children and youth are a source of pride and honor to us all, and it is only fitting that we take time to recognize their contributions, celebrate their spirit, and let our men and women in uniform know that while they are taking care of us, we are taking care of their children and youth; and

Whereas: The recognition of April as Month of the Military Child will allow us to pay tribute to military children and youth for their major contributions to the fabric and strength of our troops, families, schools, communities and our nation despite prolonged and repeated absences of one or both parents; and

Whereas: During the month-long salute to military children and youth for their character, courage and continued resilience, we encourage local communities to provide direct support to military children and families.

<http://www.myarmyonesource.com/chilyouthandschoolservices/monthofthemilitarychild/default.aspx>