



Hero Packs

Hero Packs are backpacks that include a collection of family support materials, communication tools and fun items that military children can enjoy with their siblings, non-military parent or friends.

Presenting Hero Packs to kids is one way to show appreciation and hand deliver a salute to military youth for their strength and sacrifices while parents are deployed. Hero Packs are designed to say thanks to military kids and families, offer supportive information and provide items to aid in family connection and fun.

The Hero Pack project is a chance for groups of youth and adults to become involved in a valuable community service effort that also builds awareness and fosters community support for geographically dispersed military families.

In-Kind and Cash Donations:

Operation: Military Kids is a 501-C3 nonprofit organization. Your donations are tax deductible. Our tax I.D. # 87-60000528

Checks payable to Utah State 4-H OMK sent to:

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HERO PACKS



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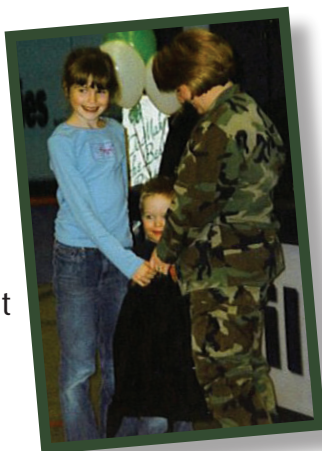


What is Operation: Military Kids (OMK)?

Utah Operation: Military Kids provides support to youth before, during and after the deployment of a loved one. When National Guard, Army, Air Force Reserve and other military parents living in civilian communities are mobilized, their children become military kids. They still look the same to teachers, friends and the rest of the community, but they are coping with sudden changes in their lives, and their families may not be sure how to access support services of the military.

Why Hero Packs?

Giving a child a Hero Pack is one way to recognize his or her courage and sacrifices while dealing with the reality of a parent serving in the military in a far-off land.



Who can build a Hero Pack?

Any individual or group that wants to get involved – Boys & Girls Club members, The American Legion, a local baseball team, 4-H members, a sorority or fraternity, a chess club from school, a church youth group, anyone!



Getting Started

1. Contact Rachelle Greenhalgh, the Southern Utah OMK 4-H Program Coordinator. You will then be provided with empty backpacks, parent pouches, and specific guidelines for filling them.
2. Think about what individuals, groups or businesses would like to participate.
3. Purchase Hero Pack supplies or obtain donations from local business (toy stores, bookstores, stationery stores, etc).
4. Get your group together to handwrite letters of appreciation and support to military kids, then fill the Hero Packs.
5. Once your group has finished packing the Hero Packs, return them to the OMK office or county Extension office. They will then be distributed to military youth in Utah.

Contents of Hero Packs

The contents of Hero Packs can vary, but usually include the following general items:

- **Backpack:** the backpacks can be purchased or handmade.
- **Connection/communication tools:** these are items that help kids stay connected with their deployed family member, and fun items that help kids feel safe and loved. Acceptable items include: stuffed animal, frisbee, disposable camera, photo album or scrapbook, journal, pen, stationery and prepaid phone calling cards.
- **Handwritten appreciation letters (the most important element of the pack):** individual letters are written to the child and to the deployed family member, thanking them for their service and sacrifices to our country.
- **Partner information for parents:** this brings awareness to Utah families of the support available to them during this stressful deployment time. These partners include but are not limited to



OMK, local 4-H Clubs, Boys & Girls Clubs of America, Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC) "Staying Involved In Your Child's Education During Deployment" booklet, and other organizations that may provide support.