

Fall 2022

Volume 8, Issue 1

THE FOXHOLE

Your Source For Alabama National Guard Child & Youth Services



November is
Month of the Military Family

Month of the Military Family Feature

Meet the Bray Family



**Matthew, Polly, Katie,
and Tom Bray**

We are thankful for the Bray family and the many ways they serve. LTC Matthew Bray and MAJ Polly Bray both currently serve in the Alabama Army National Guard. Together, they have a combined 47 years of military service! Their children, Katie and Thomas, are both on our Alabama National Guard Youth Council. Katie is currently serving as our Youth Council Secretary. Thomas is one of our new incoming members this year. We celebrate and support them during this Month of the Military Family (and all year long)!

What is the most rewarding part of being a military family?

"Our family loves to travel together. We enjoy adventuring through this great nation and even spent two weeks traveling through Europe. The military offered us (Matt and Polly) many opportunities to travel for work which inspired us to plan trips to share with Katie and Thomas the places we had enjoyed. We always have a list of places to go next. When we are not traveling, we enjoy spending time on Smith Lake wakeboarding, waterskiing, and floating. There is always another work requirement that will separate us, so we plan family trips and time at the lake to keep us together."

Meet the McGriff Family

We want to celebrate the McGriff Family! ISG Tyree McGriff has served 17 years in the Alabama Army National Guard. He and his family (spouse, Tina, and children, Tyree, Micah, and Alani) have been involved in numerous CYS program activities from State Symposium, to Yellow Ribbon, Virtual Camps, Sports Camps, and more. In celebration of Military Family Appreciation, we thank you McGriff Family for all you do and for all you give!

What is the most rewarding part of being a military family?

"The most rewarding part about the military is providing a means for my family and ensuring success for future generations."

-ISG Tyree McGriff



**Tyree, Tina, Tyree, Micah,
and Alani McGriff**



We want to feature you!

We want to recognize our Alabama National Guard families during Month of the Military Family. We are so thankful for your families and want to feature you on our social media pages throughout the month of November. Sign up today at <https://www.cognitofrms.com/alngyouth/monthofthemilitaryfamilyfeature>.

*One family submission will be randomly selected for a special surprise.

Alabama National Guard Youth Council



Four Youth Council Members were selected to attend a Regional Youth Symposium held in Sunset, South Carolina. Samuel Spangler, Mackenzie Huey, Alycia Haynes, and Corinne Carson represented our Alabama National Guard Youth among 30 guard teens from the southeastern region. Other states in attendance were Mississippi, Georgia, Tennessee, Kentucky, Florida, South Carolina, and North Carolina. During this three day event, teens participated in camp fire discussions, a best practices workshop, training, and a multitude of outdoor activities including waterfall hikes, axe throwing, zip lining, crossbows, giants ladder, swimming activities and more.

The Region 4 Symposium brings National Guard Youth together from across the Southeast to find commonality within each other, to promote making right life decisions, and to celebrate military youth and their resiliency.



Our 2022-2023 Youth Council year has begun! We welcome aboard SEVEN new members and welcomed back eight returning members. On October 24th, we held our first quarterly meeting via Zoom. We discussed the youth council mission, goals, and expectations as well as presented the teens with further opportunities for engagement. Our Youth Council Officers led the teens in discussion and teambuilding activities.

WELCOME

New Members:

Thomas Bray
Arianna Carter
Katlyn Gibson
Tanner Griggs
Callie Haynes
Anastasia Jones
Jacob Stallworth

Returning Members:

Katie Bray	Alycia Haynes
Grace Calfee	Mackenzie Huey
Corinne Carson	Sam Spangler
Jackson Griggs	Braxton Strickland



2022-2023
Youth
Council
Officers:

President: Alycia Haynes
Vice President: Sam Spangler
Secretary: Katie Bray
Historian: Mackenzie Huey

Alabama National Guard Junior Youth Council

Apply Now for Junior Youth Council 2022-2023!

Are you a **6th- 8th grader** who would like to connect with other military youth? We would love to have you join our Junior Youth Council for Alabama National Guard dependents. Don't miss out on this opportunity to learn leadership and resiliency skills, meet new friends, and have some fun! Sign up today at <https://www.cognitoforms.com/alngyouth/junioryouthcouncilapplication>.

“ Our first Junior Youth Council meeting will be held virtually on 21 November 2022. Please join us! ”



New Junior Youth Council (JYC) member, EdenLynn Terry, with former JYC member, Callie Haynes

Homework Help



Tutor.com offers on-demand, 24/7, online tutoring and homework help at NO COST to Service Members, Spouses, AND their dependents. DoD civilians are also eligible to receive these free services.

Learners can get 1-to-1 help from an expert tutor—anytime, on any internet-connected device, from anywhere in the world. Visit <https://military.tutor.com/home> to find out more information.



Tutor.com for U.S. Military Families is funded by the U.S. Department of Defense Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (MWR) General Library Program and Coast Guard Mutual Assistance.

Events and Resources



Operation Toy Soldier

Operation Toy Soldier helps our families who may need assistance during the holiday season by providing Christmas toys under the tree. Open to Alabama National Guard Soldiers & Airmen, Wounded Warriors & Gold Star Families.

Register online by **DEC 5th** at

<https://www.cognitofirms.com/alngyouth/toysoldier2022>.

For more information or questions, please reach out to ALNG Family Programs at 1-800-231-2846.

Month of the Military Family Camp in a Box

November is Military Family Appreciation Month—a time when we honor and recognize the unique sacrifices and challenges family members make in support of their Service Members. Sign up for a family camp in a box to celebrate this month! This camp in a box will focus on communication and connection. One box per family. Register today at **<https://www.cognitofirms.com/alngyouth/familycampinabox>**. Limited number available. Family box will be customized by ages of children.



Military Child of the Year Award Nominations

Nominations are open for Operation Homefront's 2023 Military Child of the Year® Awards, deadline of DEC 4th. This prestigious award will recognize 7 outstanding young people ages 13 to 18. Each of them will represent a branch of the Armed Forces — the Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard, National Guard, and Space Force — recognizing them for their achievements while facing the challenges of military family life. Nominate a Military Child today at **<https://operationhomefront.org/military-child-of-the-year>**. Recipients of the MCOY awards will receive \$10,000, a laptop computer, and a trip to DC for a special awards gala.



RESILIENCE

Growing our Gratitude Together!

Gratitude is the act of showing appreciation and being thankful. Research shows that people who practice gratitude – who think about the good things in their life – are healthier and happier!

Gratitude helps:

- Improve social connections and relationships
- Protect from stress and increases resilience
- Boost energy levels
- Increase self-esteem
- Adds a sense of meaning

Use the worksheet on the next page as an opportunity to grow your gratitude as a family. This "Seven Days of Gratitude" worksheet can help your family create a daily habit of finding things to be grateful for. We know these kinds of daily practices are what truly makes an impact to our mental health. Consider talking about it as a family over the dinner table.

Let's grow our gratitude together!

(Information adapted from the On Our Sleeves movement at <https://www.onoursleeves.org/>)



Thomas Bray

newly selected ALNG

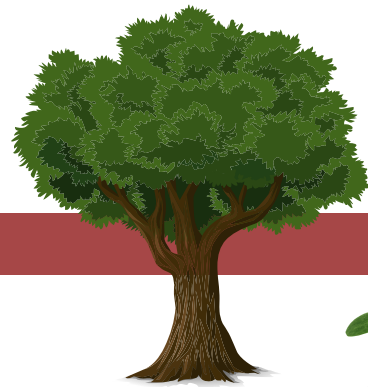
Youth Council Member

"My resiliency has given me the ability to overcome both obstacles in school and in my life. For example, last year I broke my wrist and was unable to practice swimming for over a month towards the end of my swim team's long course season. Once cleared to resume practice, I trained hard and achieved a personal record in multiple events at the final meet of the season."

Thomas working together with other ALNG youth to complete team building exercises during our State Symposium held in August 2022.

RESILIENCE

Growing our Gratitude Together!



Giving Thanks

Write what you are thankful for each day and share with your family members.

Today I am thankful for...

Monday: _____

Tuesday: _____

Wednesday: _____

Thursday: _____

Friday: _____

Saturday: _____

Sunday: _____

ON OUR SLEEVES

The Movement for Children's Mental Health

Contact Us

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Kelli



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Kate

Find us online & on social
media for upcoming programs,
events, and resources:



www.arngcys.com



@ALNGYOUTH



@alnationalguardyouth



If you have participated in CYS programs throughout this past year, we need your feedback.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Soldier-Parent23>



Help us, Help you!

We want to better serve you! Help us improve the programs and services available through Child and Youth Services. Please take a few minutes to complete the following survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/N-Assess-23>. The responses we receive help us work to ensure programs, services, and resources support and meet the unique needs of all military-connected families.