



Alaska National Guard Child & Youth Program
49000 Army Guard Road
Suite D-101
JBER, AK 99505

March 5, 2026

City of Kotzebue
Vice Mayor Ernie Norton
PO Box 46
Kotzebue, AK 99752

Dear Mayor Norton,

We are Molly McBride and William Russell, President and Co-President of the Alaska National Guard Child & Youth Program (AKNG CYP) Youth Council. We are reaching out to you today to request that you show your support for military kids by making a public announcement proclaiming April as the Month of the Military Child, and ask you to participate in **Purple Up Day!** on April 9, 2026, which is a day dedicated to supporting Military Youth throughout the United States and Territories.

This year, our Youth Council is composed of 14 dedicated members who strive to be an active member of their community. Current members hail from Anchorage, Wasilla, Eagle River, and Fort Greely, and serve as a voice for military youth across Alaska. We host both overnight and day camps, leadership retreats, special activities and events throughout the state, ensuring support to and connection between National Guard youth and families.

Our parents are National Guard service members and have been deployed multiple times over the years. We have grown up with the AKNG CYP and it has become a second home to us. Attending camps, making new friends with other National Guard youth, and learning lifelong resiliency skills have been the highlights of our childhood summers. As we've grown, so has our desire to help others in similar situations to ourselves. We've become leaders within the program, allowing us to share our passion and experiences with other National Guard youth.

According to Military One Source data from 2024, there are 3,221 Army and Air National Guard Service Members in Alaska, 48% of whom have children. In FY24, a total of 1,316 youth ages 6-18 attended our camps and events.

National Guard children often struggle to find kids who relate to their unique situation, seeing that most Guard families live off base and are disconnected from provided resources and their military communities. This can create a feeling of isolation that is detrimental to youth. National Guard youth deserve to be recognized because of the myriad of unseen sacrifices they make for their parents to serve this country.

This April, we ask you to help support military youth across the state by making a proclamation declaring your support for Month of Military Child (MOMC). On April 9th, groups and communities throughout the state and country are encouraged to take part in **Purple Up Day!** by wearing or displaying purple. The goal is for military kids to see that they are supported and loved by their local and state-wide communities.



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Attached is a flyer promoting **Purple Up Day!** Please consider taking part in this annual display of support. Your support matters!

This link provides more information on Month of the Military Child:

<https://www.dodea.edu/dodeaCelebrates/Military-Child-Month.cfm>

For more information about the AKNG CYP, please contact our Lead Coordinator, Suzie Mauro at suzanne.m.mauro.ctr@army.mil or 907-428-6243.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Molly McBride
President, AKNG CYP Youth Council

William Russell
Vice President, AKNG CYP Youth Council

Purple Up Day

April 9, 2026

**Wear purple on April 9th
to show support for our
military kids!**

There are over **17,000 kids** in Alaska
whose parents serve in either
Active Duty or the National Guard!

