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**When you support
Extension, military
families engage in
opportunities to
build and improve
family resilience
throughout the
deployment cycle
and beyond.**



COOPERATIVE EXTENSION EXTENDING KNOWLEDGE *Changing Lives*



Military members and their teen children enjoy whitewater rafting at Military Teen Adventure Camp.

Extension Provides Educational Programs for Military Families to Build Resiliency

Military families live in every Kentucky county. Extension Military Family Programs partner with local, state and national entities to plan, deliver, and evaluate activities to enhance quality of life throughout the deployment cycle.



“The time I was given to attend a trip like this with just [my son] was one I will never forget. I was able to see my son’s strength, kindness, leadership, and best of all just seeing him being carefree. The kids and parents on this trip were able to connect with one another from the first day. Everyone spoke with everyone, no one felt left out.”

Military Teen Adventure Camp Parent Participant

The Extension Military Families Program through UK Family and Consumer Sciences commenced in 2006 through a small grant partnership between the Army and the USDA. Since then, partnerships have been formed with military and non-military entities across the state and country to develop programs and grounded in research to improve the lives of military families. Two collaborative programs developed through these partnerships that have been recognized nationally for their focus on the military family as a system: Military Teen Adventure Camps and Military Family Camps.

Evaluation data consistently reveal that Extension Military Family Programs assist military families to more successfully cope with deployment and reintegration by: 1) connecting military families to needed resources and supports; 2) helping service members more effectively reconnect with their children; 3) improving healthy parent/child relationships and family communication skills by providing programs that involve the entire family; and 4) improving the sense of connectedness for geographically dispersed military families by providing opportunities for interaction, community resources, activities involving multiple local/regional/state organizations, and introducing military families to Extension programs.

Military Teen Adventure Camps aid military parents and their teens in reconnecting and building teamwork skills after deployment through high adventure experiences (whitewater rafting, rock climbing, wilderness survival, snow skiing and more). Data from 28 families during the first year of the program consistently revealed a correlation between parent/child campfire programs during these camps and a decrease in post-camp reports of adolescent anxiety and



Families prepare for ziplining at Military Teen Adventure Camp.

depression and parental anxiety. Adolescents displayed a better sense of self-confidence and in their ability to conquer challenges that life throws at them.

Military Family Camps help families reconnect and build resilience skills together. Family camps have been developed for active status military families and for specific populations, such as:

- Wounded Warrior families,
- Special Ops,
- Families with young children,
- Children of Fallen Warriors.

Five skills are targeted during the Military Family Camps, which include communication, self-efficacy, competence, relationships, and resilience. Data from 8 years of family camps have revealed consistent improvements on all five skill areas. Families reveal the most marked improvements on communication and resilience skills.