Back to School Crafts

Going back to school can be a lot of fun when kids have some unique home-made school supplies to show off. Anything from pencils to backpacks can be decorated to express each student’s individuality. Here are a few ideas to help kids get started on their masterpieces. Don’t forget to add some red, white, and blue for some patriotic fun!

- Turn an old coffee can or peanut butter jar into a rustic pencil holder. Just glue twigs and leaves collected from a yard to create a feeling of autumn for any desk.

- No backpack would be complete without some personalized key chains. Attach lanyards made during summer camp or create a new key chain using beads and string. Consider making a few extra key chains to give to friends during the school year.

- Making a book cover out of a brown paper grocery bag can be an easy way to get creative. After wrapping the book in the paper bag, use markers, crayons, glued fabric scraps, glitter glue, or stickers to give each book a stylish look. Have a fashion forward math book with some glittering numbers on the front.

- A popsicle stick picture frame would be a great addition to any locker. Glue craft popsicle sticks together to create the frame and add magnets to the back. Add a picture of friends or family to keep a smile going throughout the day.

- Make lunch time a fun time by redecorating a lunch bag. Use fabric paints to decorate an existing lunch bag or an old canvas tote. Don’t forget to add a name so everyone will know who has the coolest lunch box.

Upcoming Events

- Free Admission to Museums—May 31-Sept. 6
- Training to Support Military Youth—Sept. 27-28
When there is a great big group, you know there is going to be great big fun! From August 20-22 teens from all over New Jersey gathered at Turkey Swamp. Everyone was excited to make new friends, develop their leadership skills, and have some fun camping in platform tents. Some highlights of the trip included boating on the lake, participating in a team scavenger hunt, and singing campfire songs. Participants also created beaded key chains to give to military kids as a community service project. The weather was perfect for the three days and everyone had a great time. Pictures of the trip can be found at http://morris.njaes.rutgers.edu/OMK.html. This has been a popular summer camping trip for a number of years and there is already excitement building for next year’s adventure.

**Teen Leadership Camp-out**

**Upcoming MCEC Training**

The Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC) invites school administrators and educators, counselors, and psychologists to attend a two day workshop event titled “Supporting Children of the National Guard and Reserve Institute”. From September 27-28 participants will learn about the effects of the military deployment cycle on families, how to support families, and gain strategies for raising community awareness and support. Details and registration materials can be found at http://www.militarychild.org/education/guard-and-reserve-institutes/.

**Free Admission to Museums**

Thinking of taking a day trip to a museum before Labor Day? The American Association of Museums, in conjunction with the National Endowment for the Arts, is offering free admission to various museums across the United States this summer to active duty military personnel and their immediate families. There are 15 participating museums in New Jersey and many more in New York and Pennsylvania. For more information visit http://www.nea.gov/national/bluestarmuseums/index.php.
Books for Military Families

There are many books available to military families that can help youth understand their feelings on deployment. Be sure to check these books out for some great stories.


- In *Red, White, and Blue Goodbye* by Sarah Wones Tomp a young girl’s reluctance to be separated from her Navy father is expressed through her climbing in his duffle to go along as well as hiding his boots under her pillow. After she and her mom finally wave goodbye, the return to their “too-quiet house” where she paints a picture to send to her dad.

- Parents may wish to check out *Heroes at Home: Help & Hope for America’s Military Families* by Ellie Kay. This guide for military families by the wife of an air force pilot offers practical advice on how members can cope with the frequent moves and separations that are part of military life.

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**Creative OMK**

Do you have something to share about military life? OMK News wants to hear it! Send us your drawings, poems, stories, or anything else you can come up with that share your thoughts or experiences with deployment or military life. For more details, visit [http://morris.njaes.rutgers.edu/OMK.html](http://morris.njaes.rutgers.edu/OMK.html).

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**I’ll Try to Understand**  
by Ananeis Field (age 15)

I see your eyes filled with pain.  
As you cry it begins to rain.  
I can’t say I know your pain.  
Honestly, I don’t.  
But leave you like the others, I won’t.  
Through your pain I’ll hold your hand.  
Through your pain I’ll try to understand.

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Drawing by Rachel Wittel (age 11)
Stay Tuned this Fall!

Operation: Military Kids has a lot of ideas in the works for this fall. For teens and adults interested in helping military families, OMK will be offering a babysitting workshop as well as training for Yellow Ribbon events. OMK also has some exciting ideas to celebrate November, the month of the military family. How does a poster contest sound? Be sure to watch for upcoming events in future OMK News issues or online at http://morris.njaes.rutgers.edu/OMK.html.

National 4-H Week
October 3-9, 2010

Since 1995, 4-H National Headquarters has worked in partnership with Operation: Military Kids to extend 4-H to U.S. military families worldwide. 4-H is were young people explore, learn and discover in a safe environment. In 4-H, youth find their true passions, gain confidence and give back to their community. To celebrate the 4-H movement, join in the fun during National 4-H Week from October 3-9, 2010. Visit www.4-h.org to learn more about 4-H and how to get involved.

Thank you!

• Kate Everett, Alison Lewis, Tamara Pellien, Buddy Nemitz, Macy Compton, Amber Hoolihan, and Tracy Connell for chaperoning the Teen Leadership Camp-out
• Monmouth County Park System for their hospitality during the Teen Leadership Camp-out.
• Morris, Ocean, Somerset, Sussex, and Middlesex counties for displaying OMK at their annual 4-H Fairs.
• Michele Bibus and James Stonmore for teaching the “Wind, Weather and Wildlife” and “Robotics” workshops at Picatinny.
• The Cape May School District Superintendent, Victoria Zelanak, for working with OMK to host school celebrations for military kids.

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