

BEYOND RECRUITMENT

Army recruiters are working in schools to improve student health, education and more

Pat Tungate

When Staff Sargent Nicholas Otto and Sargent Stephen visit high schools, they bring with them a number of opportunities for students.

During a visit at Union Grove High School, they set up stations in the school's gym that included a STEM-based

Meals Ready to Eat (MRE) presentation that demonstrates the engineering and science process behind high-pressure processed

foods. Another station allowed students to sign up for the Army's March 2 Success Program that provides students and teachers with a free online SAT/ACT prep program. And another station in the high school gym was set up for students to participate in the Army's Pathways to Success Program, which promotes

health, fitness, and strength among high school students.

Today's Army recruiters are equipped to do more than enlist people into the Army. These highly trained soldiers serve as mentors, tutors, assistant coaches and teaching assistants. They enhance

active and educational event that promotes health, fitness, and strength among high school students and sets them on a path to success. The program is designed to produce an experience that motivates students to make healthy decisions and garner the strength to overcome hardships.

Soldiers from the local Army recruiting office such as Staff Sargent Otto and Sargent Mullins set up interactive stations to chal-

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llege students physically and mentally with an emphasis on education. During the past two years, the Milwaukee Army Recruiting Battalion has hosted this event at Omro, Stevens Point, Fond du Lac, and Union Grove High Schools.

One aspect the Army has focused on is student health. The Army's Pathway to Success Program mentioned above is a multi-faceted, inter-

“This event hits on cognitive, physical, and social learning aspects





Grove High School.

The March 2 Success station, mentioned at the beginning of the article, introduces students and teachers to a free online SAT/ACT prep program. This web-based program provides materials designed to improve scores on state standardized test (for all states), SAT, ACT, and ASVAB. The program includes an opportunity for educators and parents to monitor the student's progress.

"Some students get an idea that if they don't study, they can go into the Army, but the Army is interested in education," said Jan Omermik, a teacher at Stevens Point High School. "This event is more informational; not recruitment. I'm thrilled to see how education is stressed."

that we try to do with students," said Joe Sagen, a Fond du Lac physical education teacher. "It's a good thing because it affirms what we are doing as teachers."

Presentations from drill sergeants, medical personnel, military working-dog handlers, and self-defense experts demonstrate the basics of

their profession allowing the students to get a hands-on glimpse into those specific career paths.

"It was a great opportunity to connect students to real-world careers and at the same time remove the stigma that all anyone in the Army does is carry rifles," said Tom Hermann, principal at Union



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Aside from the Pathway to Success program, Army recruiters can provide career guidance through the use of the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB). This program was originally designed as a military entrance vocational aptitude battery to measure acquired abilities and to predict an applicant's future academic and occupational success. Today, the program incorporates a Career Exploration Program that provides tools designed to increase a student's self-knowledge and understanding of how that information could be linked to civilian and military occupations.

Recently Staff Sergeant Nicholas Dimicelli along with Sergeants Katie Tess and Stephen LaBadie from the Greenfield Army recruiting center conducted a Suicide Prevention and Awareness presentation at South Milwaukee High School for 1,200

students, staff and faculty. The presentation was well received by all grades; however, the freshman and sophomores were more intuitive in asking many questions during and after the presentation.

"The opportunity was very rewarding and a number of students asked for one-on-one counseling afterward," said Dimicelli.

Additionally, Army Clubs have popped up in numerous high schools across the United States. The programs aim to connect students with mentors and role models, teach students the skills they need to tackle the challenges of life, and shape the development of America's youth to be the leaders of tomorrow. These

clubs are student-led under the guidance of a faculty advisor and military liaison.

Recruiters are part of the communities they serve. You can find them serving through coaching and mentoring youth programs in schools, churches, sports, scouting, and other youth groups. They can be found in schools at all levels from guest appearances in marketing classes, physical educational courses, and performing "Pathway to Success" programs. If you need a force multiplier, ask your Army recruiter. ■

Pat Tungate is an Education Support Specialist with the US Army.



Supporting Military Children

In an effort to provide awareness and support to children with a parent or guardian in the armed forces, the U.S. Army in collaboration with communities across the country runs a program called "Operation: Military Kids" (OMK). Regardless of whether families are experiencing deployment for the first time, the second time or another in a series of multiple deployments, OMK's goal is to connect military children and youth with local resources in order to achieve a sense of community support and enhance their well-being.

In 2011, more than 103,000 youth participated in experiences conducted by State OMK Teams in 49 states and the District of Columbia. More than 900 community members representing over 43 national, state and local organizations, worked together utilizing core OMK program elements to help school-age children and youth through the deployment of a loved one. Through OMK, military youth:

- Meet other youth who are also experiencing deployment.
- Participate in a range of recreational, social and educational programs.
- Gain leadership, organizational, and technical skills by participating in the Speak Out for Military Kids program or Mobile Technology Lab programs.
- Receive assistance with school issues by connecting with Army Child, Youth and School Services School Liaisons.
- Attend single day, weekend or even longer residential camps.

For more information, visit operationmilitarykids.org. The WASB proudly supports the efforts of Operation: Military Kids.