Army Reserve Child, Youth & School Services

September 2015

CYSS CONNECTIONS

CYSS Mission: To support readiness and quality of life by reducing the conflict between military mission requirements and parental responsibilities

Monthly Highlights:

National Suicide Prevention Month

National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

07 September	Labor Day
11 September	Patriot Day
17 September	Constitution Day

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Volunteering: How Can I Make A Difference?

The problems of the world, or even your community, might seem gigantic. You might even feel like there's no point trying to do anything. Honestly, how can one young person really make a dent in everything that needs to be done out there? Well, think about standing in a completely dark room with no lamps or light switches. You light a candle, and suddenly there's a little light, and the darkness doesn't seem quite as bad. Then, slowly, people join you, until there are a hundred people with a hundred candles. Now the room is bright and the darkness is gone! Volunteering is like this. One single person can make a difference, so what kind of volunteering should you do?

Josh F. from the 412th TEC, sweeps the sidewalk during a service learning project with Teen Council.

Look for a need in your own community. Army Reserve (AR) youth are faced with unique challenges of becoming suddenly military and are often times not surrounded by other military youth they can identify with. Volunteering with the Teen Council, being appointed to the AR Teen Panel, or becoming a Family Programs youth volunteer can impact the lives of AR youth just like you. For example, at the recent Joint Command Teen Council training, members spent an afternoon discussing AR issues affecting their quality of life. They felt there should be a better way to connect with other military teens, and proposed creating a mobile app version of the Military Kids Connect website with features such as a benefits list and instant messaging. They are making an impact through volunteerism. No matter where you are or where your community is located, there is a CYSS specialist and community partners ready to find opportunities for you to serve others.

Think about what catches your attention. What do you want to be when you grow up? The answer to this question will help point you to a volunteer cause or group you'll like being part of. For instance, if you want to grow up to be a doctor or nurse, you can look for a youth volunteer program at a local hospital. If you like business and organizing things, you can become a fundraiser for a worthy charity. CYSS prides itself on creating opportunities for youth to be empowered and develop into the best versions of themselves. If you haven't had an opportunity to participate in our Youth Enrichment Programs because of time or distance, remember that our program always includes great opportunities online via webinars. Check out www.arfp.org/cyss for a listing of webinar opportunities.

Kaneasha J. from the 80th TC and Jessica I. from the 364th ESC, paint a fence during a Teen Council service learning project.

Think about your strengths. Try to find a volunteer position that will let you make the most of your talents and abilities. For instance, if you're a great speaker, you could use your voice and thoughts to educate others about a problem you care about. Remember, sometimes it can be even more rewarding to find a volunteer position that involves skills that we don't often use. This lets us gain experience, learn new things, and improve ourselves! Unsure about your strengths? Connect with your CYSS specialist to find out about regional Youth Enrichment Programs to discover new interests and opportunities to grow in your strengths. You can find contact information on the last page of this newsletter. Start volunteering today and make a difference.

Compiled from http://pbskids.org/itsmylife/emotions/volunteering.

This information has been provided by Army Reserve Child, Youth & School Services.
For more information on resources and programs, please visit:
www.ARFP.org/CYSS

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at 866-345-8248 or visit: www.ARFP.org

Preparing for Life after High School

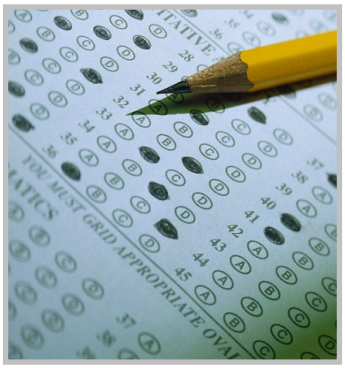
Compiled from mappingyourfuture.org, dosomething.org, parentfurther.com, and campusexplorer.com by Virginia Brannan and Shiann Arnold, Contractors: Odyssey Marketing Group.

Some teens may know exactly what career they want to pursue, where they want to go to college, what courses to take, and how they are going to pay for school. Many teens, however, are unsure and may need more information and guidance in order to make these decisions. That's okay too. Most likely, you will be heading toward higher education of some kind, regardless of what you want to be. It's never too early to start preparing; even high school freshman can begin work. The following steps are broad topics that can help jumpstart your preparations for life after high school.

Step One: Make a Plan

The first step in looking toward the future is to make a plan. Early in your high school career is the perfect time to start exploring future career options. Finding a career path involving work you love, not just one you will make a lot of money doing, will set you up for success. Now is the time to consider taking a comprehensive career aptitude inventory or ASVAB test. These tests will help identify your interest areas and skills and determine what careers may be right for you.

After finding your potential paths, it's up to you to do the research to see what is required and might be right for you. There are many online resources such as the US Department of Labor sponsored sites www.careeronestop.org and www.bls.gov/ooh. You can also "shadow" someone in the recommended fields and start exploring your options. This means observe the work in action of someone currently in the field. Ask them questions, understand what education and training is required, and imagine yourself doing the job. Also, take elective courses in high school and get involved in extracurricular clubs to gain insight into different careers.



Step Two: Prepare for College

Volunteer with AR Family Programs or your local community starting early in your school career. Use tips from the cover page of this newsletter to identify organizations that you can work with. Volunteering for one cause or organization for a long time can distinguish yourself from the competition. Becoming involved with CYSS provides the perfect opportunity to establish volunteer longevity and experience many opportunities. Next, the ACT or SAT is required by most colleges, so be sure to find out which test is preferred by the schools you are considering. Taking these tests early allows you time to retest if you need to raise your score. You should take standardized entrance exams in the spring of your junior year and/or fall of your senior year. Take challenging courses throughout high school in order to do well on testing and to prepare yourself for college-level work. Also, International Baccalaureate (IB) and Advance Placement (AP) courses help you earn college credit while you're still in high school, and CLEP tests can be taken at some colleges to earn credit for what you already know. Earning credits before attending college can save time and money.

Step Three: Find a College

How do you decide which school will be best for you? It's a good idea to attend a college fair early in the process (ask your school counselor for more information) to visit with college admission representatives and get a feel for what is available.

Programs Offered

Choose a school that offers the program, or "major" you need for your career path. If you are unsure what field you would like to study, consider a school with many options so you can take a variety of classes. Research the quality of the school by looking at ranking, reputation, and starting salaries of graduates. You can find this information online and by contacting the admissions office.

(Continued on next page)

(Preparing for Life after High School—continued)

Cost and Type

Most students qualify for some type of financial aid, so don't be too overwhelmed by the initial sticker shock of college. However, cost is an important factor to consider when choosing the best school to fit your Family's situation. The type of school you choose will have a heavy influence on the overall cost to attend. You must also be sure to choose the right kind of college based on your goals – two-year, four-year, community, private, technical, military, etc. Learn the differences such as public/state school versus private, liberal arts colleges, or religious affiliation.

Size and Location

Colleges come in all types and locations to fit the personalities of any student looking to attend. There are large universities with a student enrollment of 50,000 that offer diverse programs and activities, masters programs as well as doctorates. There are small colleges with less than 2000 students enrolled offering only undergraduate courses where the professors will know your name. Then you can find anything in between those two! You must consider if you want to be close to home, commute to school, or move far away. Pay attention to where the school is located. Could you survive in the cold and snow of upstate NY if you grew up in the sunshine of Florida? Do you want a school in the heart of downtown, or would you prefer a rural village? Learn more about the feel of the school by visiting campus or taking an online virtual tour.

Step Four: Apply for College

Fall of your senior year is the time to apply for admission to college. Narrow your choices to no more than three or four, review the testing requirements, know the fees and deadlines, and gather application materials before you start. Also, familiarize yourself with the online Common Application since more than 500 colleges and universities used this method for the 2014-2015 admissions cycle. Attention to detail is a must. College admissions boards care about your grades, so no matter what, be sure to keep up with your schoolwork. However, they also want to see that each prospective student is well-rounded. They will look at more than just your academic record. Your extracurricular activities and community service will also play a role in your college admissions. Boards also want students that will bring something to the college campus. A dedicated volunteer who wants to continue working for their cause in college is definitely a desirable candidate. Don't wait until senior year to get involved. The more time you dedicate to community service, the better you'll look on college applications. Volunteering shows college admissions boards that you have organizational, leadership, and teamwork skills. Connect with the CYSS specialists listed at the end of this newsletter and start building your resume today. You can also check out www.arfp.org/cyss for opportunities.

Step Five: Pay for College

Paying for college can be an obstacle for many teens. To determine what resources you will need, determine your "cost of attendance" such as tuition, room and board, transportation, books and supplies, and personal expenses. Review your school's website and schedule a visit with the college's financial aid office for more information. You will need to complete the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) in January of your senior year (it cannot be completed before that time). The school's financial aid office will determine your aid eligibility based on your FAFSA. Apply for financial aid as early as possible, and investigate all possible resources such as grants, scholarships, Post 9/11 GI Bill, loans, and work-study programs. Your high school counselor and the college financial aid office are good places to start. Be careful about loans or credit cards, and try to keep debt to a minimum and make a realistic plan for repayment.

Plan to join us on October 3rd for the CYSS webinar, College Readiness & Financial Aid Workshop. Contact Valerie Morgan, Contractor: Odyssey Marketing Group at valerie.m.morgan5.ctr@mail.mil or (504) 558-5603 to register, or contact the staff listed on the last page of this newsletter for additional assistance.

Online Tutoring and Homework Help

Academic tutoring is a traditional strategy that has helped students increase their knowledge and understanding of school matter subjects for centuries. Today a student can find academic help with a few clicks of the mouse. Like many things in the modern world, the internet has changed how tutoring is delivered. It is a service that can now be accessed on demand from any location with an internet connection. It is a great benefit for military youths who often move from school to school. Tutoring can help fill the gaps in the academic shifts between different schools. There are also a number of excellent online instructional videos that are free of charge. The purpose of this article is to look at a few tutoring services and other resources that military students can utilize.

Tutor.com for US Military Families
Provides paid online professional tutoring services and homework help to military Families grades, K-12. Includes more than sixteen subjects, including test prep, proofreading, math, science, English, and social studies.
www.tutor.com/military

Khan Academy
Offers practice exercises, instructional videos, and a personalized learning dashboard that empower learners to study at their own pace in and outside of the classroom. Partners with NASA, The Museum of Modern Art, The California Academy of Sciences, and MIT to offer specialized content.
www.khanacademy.org

Our Military Kids Grant
This service offers grant money for tutoring services, sports, and arts. You can apply by visiting their website,
www.ourmilitarykids.org/how-to-apply/eligible-program-activities

Professional Tutors of America
Professional Tutors of America is a veteran-owned company with 30 years of experience. They offer online tutoring with a one-on-one professional in all subject areas. They offer discounted rates and free tuition assistance for military families. There are regulations and restrictions, so call to talk to a representative for more information.

Children of the following groups may receive free academic tutoring assistance:

- Fallen Service Members of Iraq and Afghanistan wars: Children of Fallen Soldiers
- Deployed National Guards and Reservists
- Wounded Warriors of OEF/OIF with at least 30% service connected disability

www.professionaltutors.com/military or (800)TEACH US

Learn To Be
Provides no-cost tutoring services through a customized, online classroom environment. Students can request sessions in math, sciences, and language arts between 9:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m. Pacific Time.
www.learntobe.org or (310) 765-2600

The Department of Veterans Affairs
The (VA) provides tutorial assistance for students using GI Bill benefits. You can view their website for further details,
www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/tutorial_assistance.asp.

TutorVista.com
Tutor Vista is an online tutoring service that offers a military discount. They have 24/7 personalized tutoring in math, science, and English. You can call or go to their website for more information.
tutorvista.com or (866) 617-6020

Tutor Club
Tutor Club in an on-site tutoring service with locations nationwide. They specialize in reading, math, writing, study skills, and SAT preparation. They offer a military discount and guarantee results.
www.tutoringclub.com or (888) 868-8867

Discovery Education
Discovery Education offers free resource for students. The resources are in the form of videos and cover core subject material. They also offer a step-by-step math site. Go the website below and click on "student" under free resources.
www.discoveryeducation.com

Tutor Chat Live
Provides real time online tutoring for households with income under $35,000/year. There is no preset curricula or time limits for sessions. Tutors are prepared to assist and guide students with homework questions.
Tutorchatlive.org

Homework Help Websites

Hippo Campus - Over 5000 academic instructional videos that cover 13 subjects. www.hippocampus.org

Purdue OWL (Online Writing Lab) - Writing and grammar resources for students in all grades. owl.english.purdue.edu

Brightstorm - Offers instructional videos that are short, detailed, and easy to understand. You can find the videos on YouTube.
www.brightstorm.com

This information has been provided by Army Reserve Child, Youth & School Services.
For more information on resources and programs, please visit:
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Operational Security (OPSEC) and Social Media

Social media has changed how we communicate. Daily interactions with friends and family, happy birthday wishes, or communication during deployment now drive the majority of people to Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, or another form of social media. For some demographics, social media is the primary method of communication. Teenagers will often post information online rather than call a friend and share the news verbally.

What does OPSEC have to do with social media?
Status updates, posting photos and videos, groups, pages, and messages all seem innocent at first glance. Today's military Families are kept far more informed than in the past, but have less training on OPSEC. Much of the information Families have about troop movement, unit locations, and unit activities is classified information, but not everyone is aware of the dangers of sharing that information on social media.

Be mindful of the following:

- Facebook posts and other social media comments about a service member's activities (troop movements, homecomings, Family Days) violate OPSEC, and may put you or your Soldier in a vulnerable situation. This type of information on social media may be a signal to others that you are home alone, or endanger Soldiers by revealing mission operations, locations, and/or troop movements.
- Be aware of the geotagging feature that is automatically turned on in some smartphones and digital cameras. The Army warns users that geotagging is the equivalent to adding a 10-digit grid coordinate to a photograph telling where it was taken, which could reveal sensitive information about a location.
- Even if your privacy settings make your information visible to friends only, any digital information can be copied, pasted, and distributed in ways you didn't intend. Any photo posted online may eventually appear in an online search for images.
- If you have children or teens online, make sure they understand how to maintain privacy online. Encourage them to attend a Command/FRG sponsored OPSEC briefing or review online publications such as Blue Star Families "Social Media Guide for Military Families."

When in doubt, the Army has resources available to help you navigate social media: www.army.mil/media/socialmedia. Army Families are encouraged to use social media to get out the message of your command, inform the public of Army activities, or stay connected with loved ones. But be mindful of revealing sensitive information. You can also plan to join CYSS at the upcoming webinar, Social Media Best Practices, (Webinar time: 7:30 Eastern / 6:30 Central / 5:30 Mountain / 4:30 Pacific & Arizona) on October 10th by registering with Tyler Mitchell, Contractor: Odyssey Marketing Group at tyler.g.mitchell.ctr@mail.mil or (317) 377-2173.

Compiled from Blue Star Families, "Social Media Guide for Military Families," www.facebook.com/BlueStarFamilies, http://bluestarfam.org, and www.military.com by CYSS specialist Vicki Buck, Contractor: Odyssey Marketing Group.

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COMMAND/UNIT UPDATES

THE SPOTLIGHT

Joint Teen Council Training a Success

Kaneasha, Jai, Samantha, and Zachary act in a skit highlighting the benefits of teen volunteerism.

Members of the 412th TEC Teen Council participated in a week-long joint command training in Alexandria, VA on 27-31 July 2015. The members from the 412th were part of a larger group of 28 total teens who spent the week together.

Major components of instruction were teen resilience, communication, and leadership. The Army offers similar training to Soldiers at all levels, as well as to Families, so Army Reserve Family Programs CYSS has embraced this opportunity by offering training to our youth. It is an essential tool to prepare them to deal with the challenges associated with life as an Army Reserve teen. One of the goals of the teen curriculum is to translate the skills that are currently trained to Soldiers and spouses into an adolescent appropriate curriculum. The intent of this program is to provide Army Families with a common language around resilience and performance skills that can facilitate discussion about day-to-day challenges. Reserve life can be tough, and this curriculum provides valuable intellectual thinking skills to Army Families in managing adversity and challenges.

Sears paints a wooden fence during the service learning project at the Fisher House.

The teens also had the opportunity to get to know each other better through team building activities and a service learning project. Teen council members traveled to one of the original Fisher Houses which serves Walter Reed and Bethesda Medical Centers. Fisher House is best known for a network of comfort homes where military Families can stay at no cost while a loved one is receiving treatment. teen council members helped to beautify and clean up the property as a service to those Soldiers and Families using the home. The group then traveled to Ft. Myer to view a presentation of Twilight Tattoo. Twilight Tattoo is an hour-long, live-action military pageant featuring Soldiers from the 3rd U.S. Infantry Regiment (The Old Guard) and The U.S. Army Band, "Pershing's Own." Immediately following, Twilight Tattoo, participants in the Joint Teen Council Training also had the honor of meeting Lt. Gen. Talley, Chief of Army Reserve, Commanding General United States Army Reserve Command (USARC).

Teens council members meet Lt. Gen. Talley following Twilight Tattoo presentation at Ft. Myer

The teen council members spent Thursday discussing issues affecting Reserve youth and their quality of life through the Teen Issue Forum. Members felt that there should be a better way to connect with other military teens. They proposed creating a mobile app version of the Military Kids Connect website, and add other features such as a benefits list, the ability to create a voluntary account, and instant messaging. It was an energizing session, and the council looks forward to continued work on the proposal.

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COMMAND/UNIT UPDATES

THE SPOTLIGHT

JOIN US TEEN COUNCIL

Up for a challenge? Ready to build your resume, have fun and make a difference? Accept the challenge and have your voice heard by representing the 412th TEC children and youth! The 412th TEC Teen Council is looking for youth between the ages of 13-17 to serve as leaders within the command and their community!

The Teen Council's goal is to empower youth with the core values of leadership, service and resiliency. They aim to promote high standards of learning through curricula, resources and activities. Each well-qualified candidate is chosen based on a thorough selection process evaluating their experience, dedication and willingness to speak on behalf of AR children and youth.

Through this opportunity, youth will gain public speaking and leadership skills, work on professional and personal development skills, experience workshops on communication, and develop effective strategies and implement solutions for issues they face as Army Reserve youth. It's a great way to connect with youth from your command and across the country. Don't miss out on this experience...contact us today! Any of the specialists listed on the back page are ready to speak with you.

BASIC RESPONSIBILITIES

- Serve a two-year term
- Attend up to four meetings annually/travel paid for face-to-face meetings
- Provide at least four hours/month with military and/or community activities
- Work with fellow teens to develop innovative opportunities
- Attend local/regional command youth events as assigned
- Inform Army Reserve leadership about the needs of youth

BASIC QUALIFICATIONS

- 412th TEC connected youth
- A member in good standing in the military and community
- Enrolled in the 8th-11th grade for the 2015-16 school term
- Maintain a grade point average of 2.5 or higher

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Community Events
SEPTEMBER 2015

Please note that events listed in this newsletter, with the exception of AR CYSS events, are not endorsed by the Army Reserve and are provided only for community awareness.

What's Happening in Your Neck of the Woods...

Name of Event	City	State	Dates	Age Group	POC/Website
Starting Strong: Back to School Basics Webinar	Online	All	8 September	All	Valerie Morgan Contractor: Odyssey Marketing Group (504) 558-5603 valerie.m.morgan5.ctr@mail.mil
Teen Resilience Training	Fort Belvoir	VA	26 September	9th-12th grade	Jasmine Hart Contractor: Odyssey Marketing Group (703) 806-5308 Jasmine.d.hart.ctr@mail.mil
College Readiness & Financial Aid Webinar	Online	All	3 October	All	Valerie Morgan Contractor: Odyssey Marketing Group (504) 558-5603 valerie.m.morgan5.ctr@mail.mil
Social Media Best Practices Webinar	Online	All	10 October	All	Tyler Mitchell Contractor: Odyssey Marketing Group (317) 377-2173 tyler.g.mitchell.ctr@mail.mil
Trunk or Treat	Rock Island	IL	21 October	All ages	http://www.riamwr.com/event/trunk-or-treat-2/
Extreme Wilderness Survival Outdoor Ex-pedition	Land between the Lakes	TN	23-25 October	14– 18 years of age	Kelly - (859) 873-3271 kelly@lifeadventurecenter.org

YOU MAY ALSO BE INTERESTED IN CHECKING THE FOLLOWING LINKS REGULARLY FOR EVENTS IN YOUR AREA:

CYSS Events: www.arfp.org/cyssstatecamps.php
4-H: www.4-h.org
YMCA: www.ymca.net/

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Resources and Web Links

For Deployed, AGR, Wounded, Ill, Injured or Fallen Soldiers

Army Fee Assistance is provided by General Services Administration (GSA,) working with those who serve in the military find and afford child care that suits their unique needs. Through the fee assistance program, Families are eligible to receive monthly fee assistance to help offset the cost of child care in their communities.
Visit: http://financeweb.gsa.gov/childcare_portal

Army Respite Care will provide the family between 8 to 16 hours of hourly child care each month for each of the eligible children. Parents can use this time to run errands, attend appointments, or just take some well-deserved time out for themselves. The Army recognizes the challenges and extraordinary stress the parents and their Families may be experiencing, and wants to help support them in meeting their unique child care needs. Eligibility: Deployed; Temporary Change of Station; Unaccompanied Permanent Change of Station; Temporary Duty; Wounded, Ill or Injured Status; Survivors of Fallen Warriors.

Our Military Kids provides grants for K-12 youth dependents of overseas deployed National Guard and Reserve personnel or severely injured Service Members. Visit: www.ourmilitarykids.org/

For Various Duty Statuses

Army Reserve Family Programs provides programs, training, services, resources, youth programming and camping opportunities to Army Reserve Families. Visit: www.arfp.org/

Military OneSource provides an online library, web resources, and non-medical counseling to military Families.
Visit: www.militaryonesource.mil/

Military Kids Connect (MKC) is an online community of military children (ages 6-17 yr. olds) that provides access to age-appropriate resources to support children from pre-deployment, through a parent's or caregiver's return.
Visit: http://militarykidsconnect.t2.health.mil

Zero to Three has information and resources for parents of infants and toddlers. A new phone app, Babies on the Home Front, provides Military and veteran parents with strategies for enhancing everyday moments with their child.
Visit: http://zerotothree.org/

Military Child Education Coalition Military (MCEC) is a non-profit organization focusing on academic and school-related needs of military-connected youth. Visit: www.militarychild.org

National Military Family Association has programs that provide military Families with camps, family retreats, and healing adventures during deployment, reintegration, and coming together after an injury.
Visit: http://www.militaryfamily.org/

America's Tooth Fairy has several signature programs engaging caring dental professionals in providing donated services and oral health education and supporting initiatives that expand access to care for children in need.
Visit: www.ncohf.org/

Give an Hour is dedicated to meeting the mental health needs of Troops and Families, provides counseling to individuals, couples and Families, and children (on-line request for assistance). Visit: www.giveanhour.org

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The mission of Army Reserve Child, Youth & School Services is to support readiness and quality of life by reducing the conflict between military mission requirements and parental responsibilities.

Family Programs Director
Brenda McWilliams
412th Theater Engineer Command
1265 Porters Chapel Road
Vicksburg, MS 39180
Phone: 601-631-6160
Email: brenda.s.mcwilliams2.civ@mail.mil

Contact **Ms. McWilliams** for assistance with:

- Family Support Services
- Family Programs Training
- Family Readiness

Family Programs Coordinator
Belinda Parker
412th Theater Engineer Command
1265 Porters Chapel Road
Vicksburg, MS 39180
Phone: 601-631-6182
Email: belinda.k.parker.civ@mail.mil

Contact **Ms. Parker** for assistance with:

- Family Programs Training
- Policy and Guidance
- Command Consultation
- Teen Council

Youth Services Specialist (YSS)
Sheena Caston
Contractor: Odyssey Marketing Group
412th Theater Engineer Command
1265 Porters Chapel Road
Vicksburg, MS 39180
Phone: 601-631-6188
Email: sheena.r.caston.ctr@mail.mil

Contact **Ms. Caston** for assistance with:

- Command/Unit Support
- Weekend Events and Activities
- Child Care Resources
- Youth Programming
- Teen Council

Youth Service Specialist (YSS)
Jessica Gilmore
Contractor: Odyssey Marketing Group
412th Theater Engineer Command
1265 Porters Chapel Road
Vicksburg, MS 39180
Phone: 601-631-6190
Email: jessica.m.gilmore8.ctr@mail.mil

Contact **Ms. Gilmore** for assistance with:

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- Weekend Events and Activities
- Child Care Resources
- Youth Programming
- Teen Council

412th Theater Engineer Command

www.facebook.com/412TEC

If you are not part of 412th TEC, or do not reside in MS, contact one of the CYSS staff members above and we will connect you with the YSS or SSS in your area.

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