

# Even in the Military,

## 4-H EMPOWERS KIDS

### to Find Their Strengths



Tessman, UA Cooperative Extension agent for 4-H Youth Development in Cochise County.

Because 4-H programs emphasize personal responsibility and leadership, they help military children take control of their lives. "In the military, young people have few things that are within their control, Tessman says. "They don't live in a place that they chose. Their parents move not when they want to move, but when the military says they move. Young people are uprooted all the time, in new schools, far away from family and friends. 4-H empowers kids to make decisions."

At Luke Air Force Base, Oreo the rabbit has given young people who cannot typically have pets an opportunity to collectively care for one, says Grady Lester, the 4-H and open recreation coordinator at Luke. "We started sending the rabbit home with kids and it has really taught them about responsibility."



Lisa Lauxman

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#### I Pledge

*my Head to clearer thinking,  
my Heart to greater loyalty,  
my Hands to larger service,  
and my Health to better living,  
for my club, my community,  
my country, and  
my world.*

BY KIMI EISELE

**O**n an Air Force base in Arizona, a furry rabbit named Oreo is teaching young people about responsibility. But Oreo, named for its black ears and tail and white body, isn't merely a beloved pet. He's just one element in a wide-ranging effort to bring programs and activities to young people living on U.S. military installations

through the Arizona 4-H Military Partnership.

The Partnership supports University of Arizona Cooperative Extension staff to train military personnel in 4-H principals that offer consistent and meaningful youth development on military bases, says Lisa Lauxman, acting assistant director for the UA

College of Agriculture and Life Sciences' 4-H Youth Development Program.

Since military families move so frequently, young people are routinely separated from family and friends. Such disruptions can affect their mental health, education, and social lives. "The purpose and intention of the

Partnership is for youth of military families to feel like they belong when they go to military installations anywhere in the world," Lauxman says.

Now in its third year, the Partnership has led to the creation of 20 Military 4-H Clubs with more than 300 youth participants. The main areas of emphasis for the Partnership have been staff development and communication, training and curriculum support at installations, and equipment. The Partnership has so far trained 72 staff members to provide consistent programs and services for Army, Air Force, Reserve, and National Guard youth.

The 4-H programs currently exist at Luke and Davis-Monthan Air Force bases, Yuma Proving Ground, Fort Huachuca, as well as overseas bases in Osan, Korea and Kadena, Misawa, and Yukota, Japan.

At Fort Huachuca, almost a dozen 4-H clubs meet every Thursday and cover such activities as photography, arts and crafts, technology, community services, chess, Spanish, woodworking, and theatre arts. Programming there has gone "far above and beyond what the Army requires," says Darcy



Darcy Tessman organizes programs that emphasize personal responsibility and leadership so children can feel connected.



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