

## **Operation Military Kids:** **Resources for Schools with Students from Military Families**

The Department of Public Instruction has partnered with the University of Wisconsin Extension Service, to create resources to help serve the unique needs of students from military families, through a project called *Operation Military Kids*. The resources identified here were developed through this partnership as a way to support the families of thousands of Wisconsin guard and reserve unit members scheduled to be deployed in the Middle East in 2009 and beyond.

**OMK “Graphic Novel/Comic Book”-** The department’s Health Education Consultant, Jon Hisgen, teamed with independent author Josh Crawley, and illustrator Jim Heffron, to create a 48 page graphic novel that depicts four military families experiencing issues associated with the various stages of deployment. This comic book format provides colorful and realistic scenarios that may be used to help students understand the dynamics and emotions experienced by families of military members. The scenarios are drawn from actual letters and stories written by affected elementary and middle school students. These stories may assist students that currently are, or in the future may be, experiencing similar challenges and emotions as well as help to build empathy and understanding among students without a family member in the military

**Teacher’s Classroom Activity Guide-**An eight lesson teacher or counselor’s guide, developed as a companion document to the OMK graphic novel/comic book, provides structured activities that can be used with the entire class, by individuals, or small groups. This unit of instruction, primarily developed for grades 5-8, may be used with students that are both older and younger than the target grades. Both content understanding and skill development are objectives of this unit of instruction. This resource can guide activities and discussions for classes in Health or Social Studies, as well as support work done in School Counseling programs. A series of interactive games, performance assessments, and informational lessons help build understanding, empathy, resiliency, and coping skills. The Activity Guide can be downloaded here through the following link: [www.uwex.edu/ces/4h/omk/school](http://www.uwex.edu/ces/4h/omk/school)

For more information on the OMK project and other resources available to support students of deployed members of the military, contact project director Laura Pettersen at [laura.pettersen@ces.uwex.edu](mailto:laura.pettersen@ces.uwex.edu) and visit [www.uwex.edu/ces/4h/omk](http://www.uwex.edu/ces/4h/omk)

