**Children in Military Families Exemplify Resilience and Strength**

By: Michelle Darrell

Each year in April, children of military families are celebrated across North America. This month long recognition, which was established in the United States in 1986, and designated April as the Month of the Military Child, has grown in acknowledgement and support over the past number of years in Canada and the US (Month of the Military Child 2019).

The incredible thing about children of military families, is that they are indeed incredible. Military children face a variety of circumstances that not only impact their day to day lives, but will have long lasting effects for their future. The unique experience of moving all over the world, including frequent, short moves, as well as work related absences, deployments and parental injuries as a result of service, both physical and emotional/mental, is just a part of the world they were born into. The resilience and strength of these children is inspiring (Month of the Military Child 2019).

Is there such a thing as a generalized or average experience for military children? No, simply because each family experiences its own individual version of this distinct reality. “ What there are is amazing little people with all different experiences and challenges and victories who have learned more than most about what is truly important in this world and how to make the best of those things, wherever you are and whenever you can be together” (Mills). They live with and accept this lifestyle in their individual ways and no one child’s experience is the same as another; that being said, shared similar experience is often the glue that brings military families together.

In a recent conversation with school aged children about their experience as a military family living OUTCAN, one child, age 6, said “it is a good experience because we get to explore and see cool places.” Another child, currently OUTCAN, age 8 says “it’s hard and I miss my friends but I get to see more of the world and have different experiences.” These two children, both saw the benefit of seeing and exploring different parts of the world despite the challenges of being far away from their “home”.

This April, take the time to listen to your children or the children in your military community. Listen to their perspective on their lifestyle. Reflect back on personal experience, as it is possible you were once a child of a military family as well. There are a lot of statistics out there about the impact of this lifestyle on children, but the remarkable thing is that the children of the CAF military community continue to succeed and flourish. (Rehman). Their achievements and sacrifices are more than deserving of recognition and honour.

References:

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