There are over 1,228,173 children in U.S. military families today.

~I WAS ONE OF THEM.~
WHAT WE KNOW:

Teens of active duty military families move, on average, once every three years.

Military teens have difficulty making social adjustments when they move.

Because of these social difficulties, military teens can struggle academically as well as socially.

There is a lack of programs designed specifically for military teens to build the strong social networks necessary to confront these enormous challenges.

WHAT I’M DOING ABOUT IT:

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Introduction:

The purpose of this booklet is to begin a dialogue with administrators and teens within the military on-base school system. This dialogue is intended to inform the creation of a trans-media system for connecting and involving military youth with their peers to help them feel a stronger connection to their communities and schools.

I am currently developing that system, and need your assistance. I would like to set up meetings with different on-base school administrators and teenage students to discuss the issues that face this newest generation of military teens.
My father was military most of my life. By the time I was 15:

9 schools
8 homes
2 branches of the service
I wasn’t alone: PCS moves among all Army Children within the past 3 years (permanent change of station)

- 75.7% (1 PCS move)
- 22.2% (2 PCS moves)
- 5.9% (3 PCS moves)
- .3% (4 or more PCS Moves)

So what do the teens have to say?
According to a recent study performed by the military, some problems that highschool-age children who accompanied their parents on PCS moves have encountered:

- **44.0%** Difficulty making social adjustments (making new friends, etc.)
- **28.1%** Timing of the move had a negative impact on participation in school sponsored activities
- **28.7%** Fell behind in coursework because of moving
- **27.1%** Felt under-challenged because of the quality of education at the new school
- **25%** Lost credit (no credit given) for a course they had completed
“Typically, when teenagers move to a new town they have difficulty adjusting to their new situation, partly because the social climate in most high schools is not very welcoming.”

“So what is the problem? I mean, psychologically speaking, what are the issues?

“High school has always been dominated by cliques and these cliques are organized into a rough kind of hierarchy…” ‘Precisely where a student falls on the clique hierarchy determines his or her level of stress and degree of happiness.”

“Taken from “Nobody Left to Hate”, by Elliot Aronson, 2000”
“Survival needs and emotions take priority over new learning….This means that if a student is dealing with any issues in these areas, they will likely not be ready to learn.”

Emotional issues may include a pending move, a looming divorce, relationship problems, social conflict, etc.

*Taken from Ramapo College M.S.E.T. program web-site. Written by: Kathy Murray 2001*
NOW ENTERING?
My goal is to create a system that could help military teens better cope with these issues. A system that would give them the opportunity to share experiences with other military teens and members of their communities both locally and remotely. They could have an established social network no matter where they move.
As you can see, there are a few holes in my research.
1,228,173  holes
1,228,173  different experiences
1,228,173  unique perspectives
1,228,173  original ideas
1,228,173  potential friends
1,228,173  answers

Military Bases in the Continental United States
But with your help these holes can be filled.

Teens naturally develop methods for coping with the challenges of military life. I am interested in meeting with students and school administrators to discuss these methods and find out what is being done now and any ideas they may have about the future.

I would love to meet with you and listen to your unique point of view as an administrator, and would also be happy to answer any questions you may have about my thesis work. I look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Thank you for your time.

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