

**Boys & Girls Clubs of America**

# **GREAT THINK**

## **Creating Great Futures for Military Families and Youth**

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Boys & Girls Clubs of America's Great Think series is designed to facilitate innovative public-private collaborations that ensure great futures for America's youth, especially those who need us most. The children of military families are some of our nation's most resilient, yet vulnerable youth, who have made tremendous sacrifices on behalf of our country. BGCA's Military Great Think – the nation's first – convened thought leaders to examine the challenges facing military youth and to propose measures that the public, private, and non-profit sectors can take to help these children cope with the unique pressures of their circumstances and reach their full potential.



Visit [bgca.org/greatthink](http://bgca.org/greatthink) to download the full white paper.

Moderated by CNN White House Correspondent Dan Lothian, the Great Think featured a panel discussion and roundtable session in which participants proposed recommendations focused on three key issues:

## REINTEGRATION AND RESILIENCY

- To effectively serve military youth, we must first account for the needs and challenges of the entire military family.
- Programs must begin ahead of deployment and continue through the reintegration process, focusing on strengthening communication and relationships among family members.
- Improving resiliency among military children and their family members can help achieve these goals.

## PREPARING MILITARY YOUTH FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS AND WORKFORCE READINESS

- On average, military children move six to nine times before the end of high school, which can make it difficult for them to stay on track to graduate on time, prepared for college, the military or a career.
- After-school providers should integrate aspects of school curricula into their programming to reinforce lessons learned in the classroom.
- We must expand science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) learning, both in and out of school, and leverage the expertise of veterans and military spouses to improve STEM offerings for military children.

## OUTREACH TO MILITARY FAMILIES: CREATING A PUBLIC/PRIVATE DELIVERY SYSTEM

- In our current policy environment, programs and resources are at risk of budget cuts if they go underused. This is a significant challenge given that 70 percent of military families live in civilian communities.
- An outreach strategy with a call to action for military families around readiness and resiliency should be developed. Topics could include mental health, workforce readiness, and family well-being.
- Public and private entities must establish collaborative partnerships to more effectively connect families with services. A first step includes developing a centralized delivery system to expand awareness of and access to the resources available to military families.

As a result of the Military Great Think, BGCA will form a Military Family Advisory Board to create an actionable, outcome-driven plan to execute these recommendations. BGCA encourages all participants to continue to provide feedback, and to invite other interested parties to join the discussion.



### PANELISTS

#### Sloan D. Gibson

President, United Service Organizations (USO)

#### Kenneth R. Ginsburg, MD

Children's Hospital of Philadelphia

#### Lydia Marek, PhD

Human Development Research Scientist, Virginia Tech

#### C. Glenn Mahone, Jr.

Vice President, Communications, Aerojet Rocketdyne

#### Glen Walter

President and Chief Operating Officer, Coca-Cola Refreshments

#### Gregory R. Young

Navy Child and Youth Program Director, Navy Installations Command



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