

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Star Families Day at the Dutchess County Fair

Rhinebeck NY. This 2017 Dutchess County Fair was the inaugural year for the Star Families Day program. Powers Great American Midway, the Dutchess County Fair and 24 food concessionaires teamed up to treat Gold Star and Blue Star families to a day of free admission, rides and food, along with all the traditional Fair activities. The idea was the brainchild of Rich Wright of Sugar Shakers Concessions and the GreenZone Hero, a non-profit which recognizes businesses that honor our veterans and military and help those businesses succeed.

The Fairgrounds worked closely with local military agencies to identify and invite the families who have lost a loved one in combat or currently have a loved one deployed. By coordinating invitations through agencies who already work with the target population, Fair staff did not have to do the footwork to qualify requests.

The Fair created an electronic invitation for immediate Star family members from our county and sent it to the military agency for dispersal to their client base. Interested parties called the Fairgrounds then staff emailed the family a form for name, address and number of family members attending. Since our Fair runs the end of August, there was an August 1 deadline for responding.

Entry passes for the families were mailed, along with the Fair brochure, the list of food vendors' offers as well as the instructions for their arrival at the Fair. Families could choose any day to attend the Fair and checked in at the Administration Building when they arrived for their check-in packet. The packets contained special wristbands to identify family members to the Midway and the food concessions, a medal of thanks, lanyards, and a map of Fair food vendors.

While there were less than a dozen Star Families who attended this year, there was much positive reaction to the program. We heard enthusiastic feedback from families, vendors, Powers Midway and the members of the coordinating agencies. In reviewing the program, we anticipate higher participation both in number of Star families and number of concessions offers next year.

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