



## Youth Leadership Group Stays in Step with One Call Now Messaging App

# Miami Valley Young Marines

Miami Valley Young Marines is a youth development organization that teaches boys and girls, age 8 through high school, leadership, teamwork and self-discipline—while promoting healthy, drug-free living. The Dayton, Ohio, area organization is one of more than 280 **Young Marines** units, with 9,600 youth and 2,500 adult volunteers in 46 states, the District of Columbia, Germany and Japan.

The 40 youth and 10 adult leaders of Miami Valley Young Marines take seriously the organization's mission: "Strengthening the lives of America's youth." This has not escaped the attention of the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD).

In 2017, the DOD chose Miami Valley Young Marines—out of all the military-affiliated youth organizations around the world—to receive the DOD's prestigious Fulcrum Shield award. The honor, presented at the Pentagon, recognized them for more than 2,000 hours of community service in promoting drug demand reduction among peers and others in the Dayton area.

This was just the latest of several awards the unit has received, says Keagan Miller, unit commander of the Miami Valley Young Marines. For instance:

- The Division Enrique "Kiki" Camarena Award presented by the Young Marines and the Drug Enforcement Administration for drug demand reduction efforts
- The Marine Corps League Unit Commendation
- The Regimental Unit of the Year and Division Unit of the Year
- The Young Marines' Distinguished Unit Citation

Recognition like this results from the group's rigorous schedule of community service, team building and leadership activities, platoon meetings and drills, and camping experiences.

### Uprooting the Phone Tree

The organization used to keep members and their parents updated on upcoming events—and schedule changes—through a phone tree.

"We'd call the platoon leader, and they'd call all their members," Miller says. "It took a lot of time, and a lot of people don't answer their phones. Then you have to relay back to make sure the message got through."

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### THE CLIENT

Miami Valley Young Marines of the Dayton, Ohio, region is part of the national Young Marines youth development and service program. The organization teaches boys and girls—age 8 through high school—leadership, teamwork and self-discipline, to help them grow into responsible citizens who enjoy and promote a healthy, drug-free lifestyle.

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### THE CHALLENGE

The Young Marines program maintains a full schedule of community service, team building and leadership activities, platoon meetings and drills, and camping experiences. Keeping members and parents up-to-date with this busy agenda was a time-consuming challenge.

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### THE SOLUTION

At the suggestion of a volunteer adult leader, the Young Marines tried out One Call Now. That was 12 years ago. And the Young Marines leaders continue to rely on the One Call Now messaging app to send email, voice and text messages, "all in one burst," to keep members and their parents well informed about all upcoming activities, says Keagan Miller, unit commander. Young Marines uses the One Call Now subgroup function for sending messages to targeted groups.

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### THE RESULTS

Parents and members get the information they need in a timely fashion through One Call Now messages. Every message is sent out with a link to the group's events calendar, which provides parents easy access to what they need to know. This means happier parents. And leaders who receive fewer calls from parents asking for event information.

## CLIENT CASE STUDIES *continued*

Tired of the inefficiency, one of the Young Marines' adult leaders suggested to Miller the One Call Now messaging app.

Miller wondered about the messaging app: "Is it worth the value it's going to give us?" Then he decided, "Let's give it a year." He adds, "We've had it 12 years now."

### Supporting the Mission

The reason: "Now our messages go out in one burst." Plus, he knows that everyone gets the messages.

To cover the range of Miami Valley Young Marines parents' and members' communication preferences, Miller uses One Call Now to send voice, email and text messages.

Miller uses One Call Now to:

- Update parents on event planning
- Remind Young Marines youth about upcoming activities and what they need to wear or bring to meetings, events, service activities or camping trips
- Make schedule changes
- Notify parents of last-minute changes, such as a delayed return from an overnight trip. "So, your bus on the way back breaks down and the parents need to be relayed the new time that they're going to pick up their kids," Miller says.
- Send a weekly email, "which serves as a mini-newsletter that tells about all the plans that week." The email allows Miller to provide more detail about events. "So many rely on the email."

And in every email through One Call Now, Miller links to the Young Marines event calendar. "I was getting lots of calls from parents about event information." Now the information is always just a click away.

### Targeting the Message

Miller appreciates One Call Now's ease of use and flexibility. The app allows him to readily create separate contact lists for subgroups within the membership.

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One Call Now is America's largest group messaging provider. The company's SaaS-based solutions equip organizations with fast, reliable tools for sending critical information and alerts to many contacts at once across multiple devices, including text message, phone call, and email. Businesses, schools, churches, and organizations depend on the One Call Now application to deliver both critical and routine messages quickly and reliably with only a few clicks. More information can be found at [www.onecallnow.com](http://www.onecallnow.com).

## CLIENT CASE STUDIES *continued*

This way he can target messages specific to each group. Miami Valley Young Marines is organized in two platoons. The platoons participate together in many events and activities, but they also meet separately.

Messages about platoon-specific events go out only to members of the platoon—not the entire membership

Miller also has created a contact list of older Young Marines who have leadership roles. He's set up limited accounts for these leaders, so they can send messages to members in their units—for instance, to remind them about an upcoming uniform inspection.

“One of the purposes of our organization is to teach youth leadership, so this feature helps put more responsibility on their shoulders,” Miller says.

One Call Now's subgroup function also comes in handy for events that involve only part of the membership. For such events, Miller sets up a temporary subgroup contact list.

“Like when the bus broke down, we alerted only the parents with kids on the trip,” Miller explains.

So, back to Miller's initial question about One Call Now: “Is it worth the value it's going to give us?” He now says, “I didn't realize how much it would be helping us.”

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