



## **2015 National Guard Military Child of the Year Zachary Parsons**

As president of the Missouri National Guard Teen Advisory Council, current high school junior Zachary Parsons, the 2015 National Guard Military Child of the Year, continues to enlighten elected officials to the inherent challenges of being a military child in general and in being the child of a wounded National Guard soldier in particular. Zachary also is president of his 4-H club, president of the Johnson County 4-H Council, West Central representative on the 4-H State Council, a 4-H representative on the University of

Missouri Extension Council, a Missouri United Way fund-raiser, and a member of the National Honor Society.

"I was extremely proud to be the first representative of the National Guard for the MCOY award," said Zachary, who visited the White House this summer as a part of a Washington Focus trip. "I was happy to act as a voice for National Guard kids everywhere. Many [people] do not understand that we go through a totally different set of obstacles that prove to be just as difficult as those of other military kids. I was extremely proud to represent my dad's branch at a higher level."

He has continued his community service through the summer. "I volunteer with United Way," he said, "and continue to collect shoes for my Soles4Souls community service projects. I was also involved in a project called Project Smile, where I helped construct and donate 45 tie blankets to the local emergency room. I find service to be extremely important, and I will continue to help others in need all my life."