



**AIR CADET
CHARITY**



**DREAM.
DARE.
DO.**

Our Impact 2025

www.aircadetcharity.org.uk



Scan to follow our impact in real time.



Who We Are

Established in 1960, the Air Cadet Charity (formerly the Air Training Corps General Purposes Fund) is a grant making charity that supports the Royal Air Force Air Cadets (RAFAC) across the UK.

We remove financial barriers to ensure every cadet can access life-changing opportunities that develop skills, confidence and resilience.

Our aim is to ensure that young people have equal access to opportunities, activities, and support to ensure their time within the RAFAC organisation allows them to develop their full potential.

Welcome

2025 was a defining year for the Air Cadet Charity. As an independent entity, we focused on turning support into real opportunity for cadets across the UK. This report shows how targeted investment can change what young people believe is possible.

During the year we committed a total of **£1.09m** to national programmes and local grants, reaching over **50,000 cadets**. That support translated into new skills, higher confidence, greater resilience, and stronger squadrons.

A major focus was improving access to aviation experiences. We purchased **13 sit-in, motion-enabled flight simulators** for use regionally, alongside the launch of a laptop and Xbox simulators programme available to all **874 Air Training Corps squadrons**. We are also funding an exciting **national drone equipment and training programme** due to launch in 2026 and are proud to have worked with The Air League to explore powered flying opportunities.

Looking ahead, **Adventure Training** will remain a priority, building resilience, confidence, and teamwork. Through a new partnership with the RAF Charitable Trust, we are also sharpening our focus on **STEM and Sustainability** helping cadets develop technical and critical thinking skills. In addition to pursuing military careers, many cadets move on to apply these skills across multiple civilian sectors, benefiting society as a whole.

Our work also supports the Commandant Air Cadets' Strategic Defence Review target to **increase cadet numbers by 30% by 2030**. Growth of this scale requires a renewed focus on the amazing adult volunteers who are the backbone of the organisation – this is a key part of our mission in 2026.

Behind all this delivery is a strengthened organisation. We welcomed **seven new trustees with a wide range of skills and experiences**, bringing the Board to 12, and expanded our staff to **three full-time and three part-time roles**, ensuring focus on the beneficiaries we support, strong governance, operational capacity, and responsible use of charitable funds.

This year has been a transformative chapter for us as an independent charity. We reaffirmed a simple belief: **every cadet deserves the opportunity to thrive**. But the work is not over. With your support, we can **Dream. Dare. Do.**, empowering every cadet to turn opportunity into achievement, and shaping the next generation of confident, capable, and responsible young people.

Mark Osman
Chair of Trustees



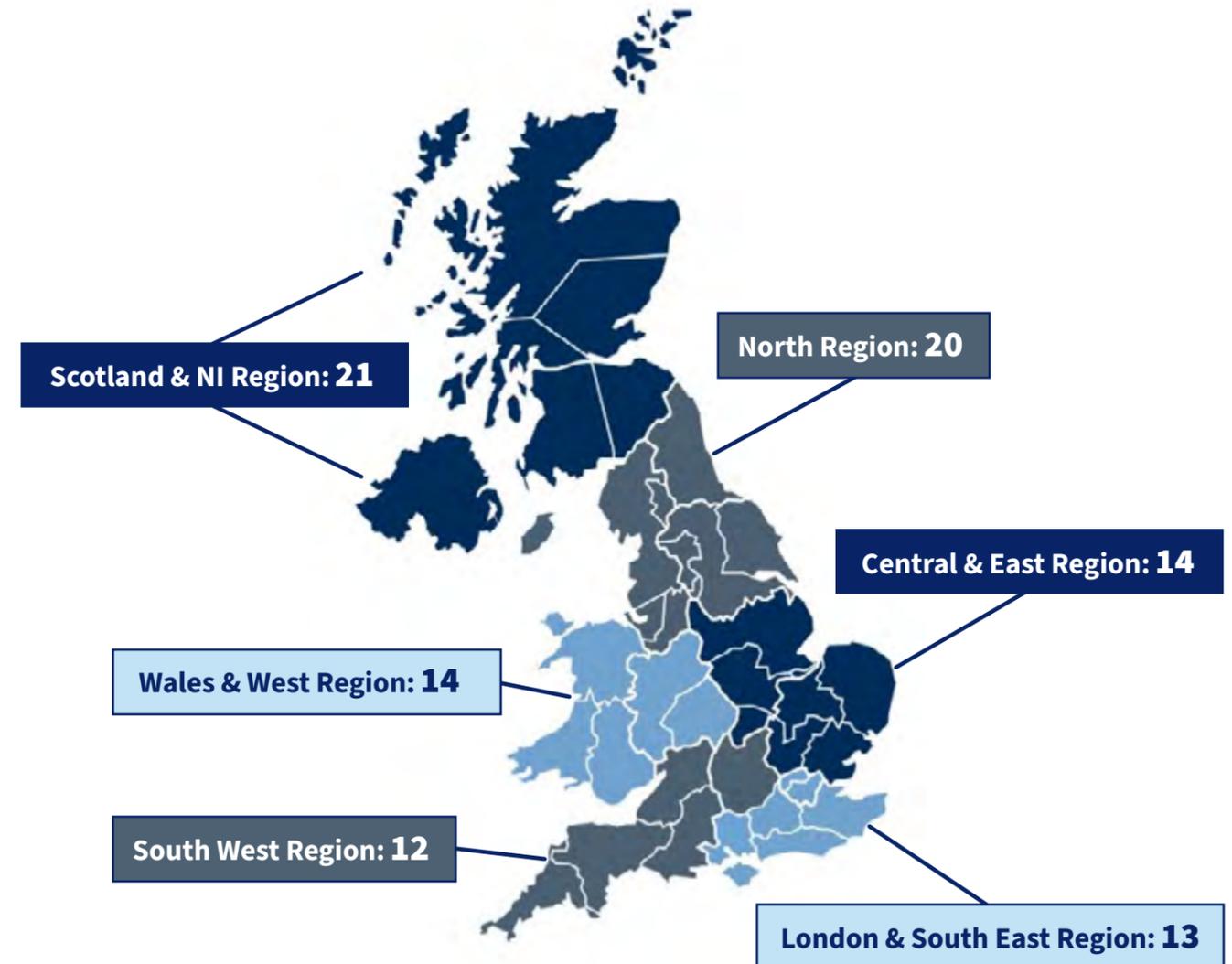
Who We Support

★ The RAFAC organisation consists of **over 50,000 cadets** aged 12-19.

★ **9,664 Cadet Force Adult Volunteers** (CFAVs) support the cadets by delivering a wide range of activities and opportunities.

★ There are **874 ATC squadrons** and **225 Combined Cadet Force (RAF) sections** at a grassroots level, supported by **34 wings** and **six regions**.

In 2025, we awarded **94 grants** to the six regions of RAFAC:



In 2025 we...

Committed **£1.09m** to national programmes and local grants.

Funded **21** Headquarters and national grants.



Launched a dedicated immersive technology grant programme to help all Air Training Corps squadrons purchase flight simulator and Esports equipment.

Extended our partnership with Lockheed Martin who donated nearly **700** Prepar3D flight simulator licenses, valued at \$172k.

Sponsored the National Air and Space Camp 2025.



Established our first charity partnership with the RAF Charitable Trust, to deliver the RAFAC STEM Programme 2025.

Enabled the purchase of **13** motion-enabled flight simulators with **£239k** of funding, expanding high quality aviation training across RAFAC.

Approved **16** Air Cadet Development Scheme applications.

Funded a specialist Remote Pilot Aircraft System (RPAS) training programme.

Awarded **£20k** to each region to support sporting opportunities.

Supported **94 squadrons,** wings and regions with grants.

Purchased personal accident insurance for all cadets, CFAVs and civilian committee members, as well as funding insurance for overseas trips.



“The continued growth of the Air Cadet Charity has delivered outstanding impact across squadrons, wings and central teams. I am grateful for this support, which has strengthened opportunities for cadets and volunteers and aligns closely with our shared mission to inspire, develop and empower the next generation. The charity’s empathetic, consultative approach ensures resources reach where they are needed most, supporting leadership, adventurous training, academic achievement and our unique aviation offer. It has been a brilliant year, and with new trustees joining, I am confident our partnership will continue to make a real difference.”

Air Commodore Al Lewis
Commandant RAF Air Cadets



The Charity

- ✦ **Provides financial support**, through grants and bursaries, to assist regions, wings, squadrons, cadets and CFAVs.
- ✦ **Funds opportunities**, expeditions and equipment.
- ✦ **Enables access** to life-changing experiences.
- ✦ **Supports adventure**, education, sport, and personal growth.
- ✦ **Strives to remain accessible** to the entire RAFAC organisation.

Grant Programme

The Charity distributes grants across multiple categories, in line with the needs of cadets, CFAVs and the vision of RAFAC.

Key funding areas include:

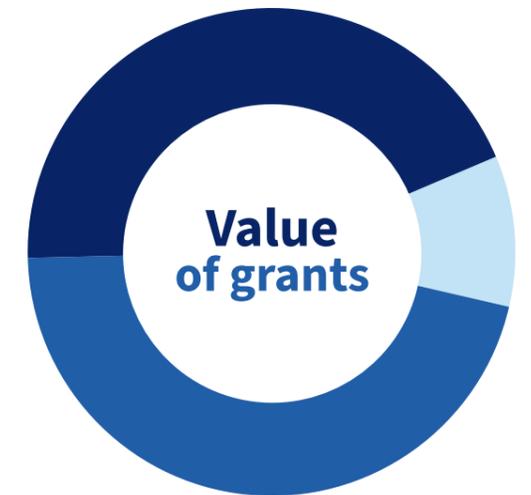
- ✦ **Aviation** including support for a RAFAC Drones initiative.
- ✦ **Adventure Training** such as UK and overseas expeditions, water sports, specialist instructors and equipment.
- ✦ **Exploiting Technology** funding laptops, VR headsets, addressing digital poverty.
- ✦ **Immersive Training** with the use of virtual reality technology for simulation and experiential learning.
- ✦ **Enhance Education** supporting BTECs, SQAs, EPQs, sustainability qualifications, Crest Awards and music and the arts.
- ✦ **Improve Employability** via the Air Cadet Development Scheme, bursaries for training, courses, Duke of Edinburgh Award.
- ✦ **Health, Wellbeing and Sport** providing funding annually to all 6 regions, supporting cadet participation in sporting events and RAFAC sports leadership.
- ✦ **Welfare** through personal accident insurance for all cadets and volunteers of the Air Training Corps, overseas trip insurance, Wi-Fi support for events and remote activities.

Where Funding is Directed

The following pie charts show where our grants and funds were allocated in 2025:



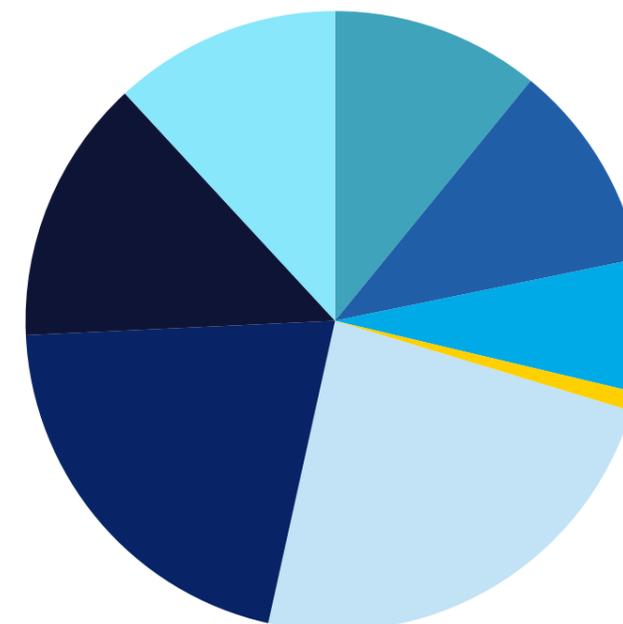
- Restricted*: 13
- HQ/National: 21
- Squadrons/Wings/Regions: 94



- Restricted*: £81,661 - 10%
- HQ/National: £390,793 - 46%
- Squadrons/Wings/Regions: £374,336 - 44%

*Restricted funds are donations or grants given for a specific purpose set by the donor. They are held separately and can only be used for that purpose.

Funds distributed according to our different funding areas in 2025:



Area	Amount	% of total
Aviation	£95,085.00	11%
Adventure Training	£92,118.15	11%
Exploiting Technology	£58,519.50	7%
Immersive Training	£8,774.16	1%
Enhance Education	£199,154.87	24%
Improve Employability	£176,133.65	21%
Health, Wellbeing and Sport	£115,685.46	14%
Welfare	£101,319.20	12%
Total	£846,789.99	



A grant awarded to 2416 (Newtown) Sqn, funded a Sphero BOLT Power Pack, providing STEM activities within the Squadron, Sector and Wing.

“The kit has been a great addition, sparking real enthusiasm for STEM and giving cadets hands-on skills in a fun, accessible way. It has helped boost confidence and teamwork, especially amongst younger cadets.”

Pilot Officer (RAFAC) Howells



A grant allowed 12 cadets and two adult volunteers from Cumbria and Lancashire Wing to take on an epic tall ship adventure aboard the James Cook, sailing from North Shields to Aberdeen. All 14 achieved the RYA Competent Crew Award and five cadets completed their Gold Duke of Edinburgh award Residential section over the course of the trip.

“I’m currently keeping lookout; it’s my favourite thing to do. You get to see wildlife - puffins, seals, dolphins, jellyfish. Great! Great fun!”

Sergeant (RAFAC) Smith

“We would like to thank the charity for giving us access to this equipment, which is of benefit to both cadets and staff.”

Squadron Chairperson McGunnigle

We provided funding for a defibrillator, a 'Choking Charlie' and various other training aids to 1777 (Dumbarton) Sqn.

15 cadets have since passed the Essential First Aid course, and 12 completed their Bronze Youth First Aid training.

197 (Devonport) Sqn benefitted from a grant which funded three new Quest 3 VR headsets. The new equipment was used to complete the Bronze Space course, where cadets virtually explored the inside and outside of the International Space Centre, as well as utilising the 'Keep talking, nobody explodes' leadership training software - a bomb defusal scenario which encourages communication and teamwork.



RAFAC STEM Programme 2025

In July 2025, at the Royal International Air Tattoo, the Air Cadet Charity launched a partnership with the RAF Charitable Trust to fund a STEM initiative across RAFAC. The total cost of £84,900 was split 50:50.

Delivered by RAFAC, the programme will enable:

- ★ **Level 2 Sustainability Qualification (GCSE A*-C Level):**
 - 500 cadets
- ★ **CREST Awards - helping young people develop essential STEM skills to unlock their potential:**
 - 3,000 Discovery Level
 - 1,500 Bronze Level
 - 240 Silver Level
 - 120 Gold Level
- ★ **Bronze level LEGO education coding resources for SPIKE Prime.**

The Level 2 Award in Sustainability educates cadets and volunteers across the organisation and supports the RAF's mission to achieve **Net Zero by 2040**.

Feedback from the 2023 cohort, prompting the partnership between the Air Cadet Charity, RAF Charitable Trust and RAFAC:

- **100%** of candidates would recommend the course.
- **94%** believe all cadets should understand sustainability within the organisation.
- **100%** want to learn more and support the RAF's Net Zero mission.
- **100%** are interested in a Level 3 Award.

Candidates reported:

- **An increased awareness** of global sustainability goals.
- **Personal lifestyle changes** (reducing waste, conserving energy, recycling).
- **Plans to implement sustainability** initiatives within squadrons.
- **A sense of pride and reassurance** in the RAF's ethical leadership.

100% of participants expressed a desire to learn more.



National Air and Space Camp: Industry Day 2025

More than 2,000 RAF Air Cadets attended the 2025 National Air & Space Camp (NASC) Industry Day, for which the Air Cadet Charity was the main sponsor. Cadets received welcome packs with charity-branded kit including t-shirts, caps and water bottles, before exploring a packed programme of STEM learning and aviation insight, including the hugely popular F-35 Lightning flight simulators provided by the charity.

“Today was very helpful and has shifted my views on what I do post sixth form.”

Cadet
209 (West Bridgford) Squadron

“My first event as a cadet with my squadron. I really enjoyed today. I am neurodiverse and sometimes struggle to focus – but today I have been able to enjoy myself.”

Cadet
2030 (Birmingham Airport) Squadron

The afternoon concluded with spectacular flying displays from aircraft including the Typhoon, Chinook, Battle of Britain Memorial Flight and Red Arrows alongside a popular ground showcase of historic and modern supercars. The event reflects the charity's mission to inspire and raise aspirations through real hands-on experience. We look forward to connecting with more people at NASC 2026!

Throughout the day, cadets took part in interactive exhibits covering engineering, robotics, satellite communications, gliding and aviation technology, while speaking directly with professionals from the RAF, Armed Forces and UK aerospace sector. The charity also funded the 100-seat 'Inspire Stage' – a mobile auditorium, which hosted career talks from industry and military executives; all livestreamed to provide accessibility for those who couldn't attend in person.





Equipment and Innovation

The programme uses a fleet of versatile DJI drones, with a new digital Drone Logbook enabling real-time monitoring, ensuring safety, compliance, and streamlined administration. The Charity has earmarked a further £52k to complete this project in 2026, in addition to the initial cost of funding over £157k for drones, specialist training, insurance, software and peripheries.



The Charity's total investment of £209k will enable this project to complete in 2026.

Developing Drone Capability

With funding from the Air Cadet Charity, 2 Flying Training School developed an exciting Remote Pilot Aircraft System (RPAS) training programme for RAFAC. Cadets and CFAVs can access progressive, Civilian Aviation Authority (CAA) aligned training, starting with the nationally recognised Drone and Model Aircraft Registration and Education Service (DMARES) qualification.

This training will lead to record numbers of RAFAC personnel holding Flyer IDs, which permit them to operate drones safely.

Building the Foundations

The focus over the past two years has been on establishing governance, infrastructure, and training frameworks.

Key achievements include CAA approval of the RAFAC Operating Manual, development of the Training Manual, and creation of a Progressive Training Syllabus covering four levels:

Blue: Introductory training, leading to DMARES Flyer IDs, and experience flying.

Bronze: Indoor flying and VR training.

Silver: Outdoor flying and A2 Certificate of Competence (A2 CofC).

Gold: General Visual Line-of-sight Certificate (GVC).

These training courses were available to air cadets from 1 December 2025 (Blue) to June 2026 (Gold). Initial Flying Supervisor courses have developed a qualified instructor cadre to deliver training nationally, with more joining the team each month.



Looking Ahead

With frameworks and instructors in place, the initiative will expand across regions in 2026, providing cadets with unique STEM and digital aviation opportunities.

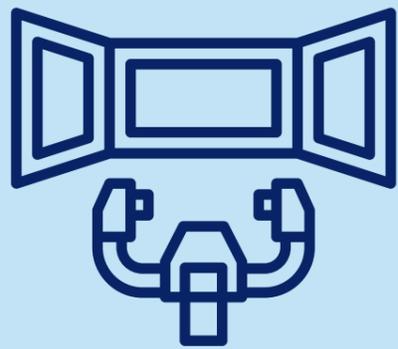
“ I am very grateful to the dedicated team of Cadet Force Adult Volunteers, led by Wing Commander Bateman (Officer Commanding 692 RAFAC RPAS Squadron), who have done all the hard yards to make this concept a reality for our air cadets and, of course, the Air Cadet Charity, without whose generous support this capability would (quite literally!) not have got off the ground.”

Group Captain Dale

Commandant 2 Flying Training School and Accountable Manager for the RPAS project

Immersive Technology

Lockheed Martin donated over 700 licenses worth over \$172k.



Aviation opportunities sit at the heart of the RAF Air Cadet experience. In line with our mission to ensure access for all, the Air Cadet Charity launched a dedicated immersive technology grant programme in December to help all ATC squadrons purchase flight simulator and Esports equipment.

This initiative aims to ensure that every cadet, regardless of location or resources, can experience the thrill of virtual flight and competitive aviation-themed training.

The Charity was delighted to partner with Lockheed Martin to offer even more virtual opportunities to RAFAC. We are extremely grateful for Lockheed Martin's generous donation of 700 Prepar3D flight simulator licenses, valued at \$172k. This cutting-edge software will revolutionise RAFAC's aerospace education program, providing invaluable training and inspiration for the next generation of RAF leaders and aerospace professionals.

This brand new initiative launched on 1st December 2025.



“ Thank you for a truly wonderful [industry] day. I won't forget it and hope that I will be part of the RAF in years to come. Thank you.”

Cadet (RAFAC)
5F (Northampton) Squadron



What's Next?

Our goals for 2026:

Sustainable Funding

Align our funding priorities with the Strategic Defence Review to support the growth and sustainability of the RAFAC organisation.

Squadron Resilience

Enhance squadron resilience and accessibility by providing funding for digital resources and reducing participation barriers through targeted grants and strategic initiatives.

Digital Aviation

Provide nationwide access to immersive flight simulator technology and Esports.

Growing Engagement

Increase awareness of the Charity's impact and inspire greater participation from cadets, volunteers and supporters through effective marketing and engagement.

Flying Opportunities

Collaborate with the Air League to fund flying scholarships, helping even more cadets take to the skies.

Standardised Equipment

Support squadrons in purchasing standardised first aid and AT equipment packages, enabling them to deliver higher quality, safer training while reducing the burden of personal cost on cadets.

Strategic Partnerships

Diversify our funding streams by strengthening current partnerships and forging new collaborations to maximise opportunities and impact for RAFAC.

Volunteer Support

Explore the best ways to support adult volunteers, laying the groundwork for a potential CFAV bursary programme in 2027.

How You Can Help

The Air Cadet Charity thrives because of committed partners like you. Your support delivers vital funding that opens doors to inclusive opportunities - building confidence, developing leadership, and empowering cadets and volunteers with skills they will carry for life. When you get involved, you're not just giving - you're investing in futures.

Amplify Our Voice

Help us reach more people by following and engaging with the Air Cadet Charity on social media. You can also sign up to our newsletter via our website.

Share Your Story

Your experience matters. If you have benefited from the RAFAC organisation or our charity's support, we want to hear from you. Real voices telling personal stories are powerful in demonstrating our impact and encouraging others to join our mission.

Become a Corporate Partner

We invite organisations who share our vision to join us. Partnering with the Air Cadet Charity sends a clear message of support for youth development and helps prepare tomorrow's workforce. Together, we can build a stronger future.

Scan the QR code to donate today

and ensure the next generation of cadets across the UK can access skills and opportunities that last a lifetime.

We're building confidence, purpose, and belonging for every cadet. These achievements show what's possible when communities and partners back the next generation. With your support, we'll keep opening doors and inspiring futures that take flight.

Follow us



Donate Here



Mission

To ensure that cadets and volunteers within the RAFAC organisation have equal access to opportunities, support, and activities to enable them to thrive.

To support the progressive development of self-confidence as a foundation for leadership, decision-making, and resilience.

To encourage young people to act responsibly, make considered choices, and uphold their duties with integrity.

To develop cadets' interpersonal competencies - such as empathy, cooperation, and social awareness - that are essential for both personal development and future employability.

Core Values

-  **Committed**
 We are dedicated to supporting the growth and success of cadets, staying focused on their development through consistent and purposeful action.
-  **Inclusive**
 We ensure all cadets have equal access to opportunities, actively removing barriers and promoting diversity across everything we do.
-  **Responsive**
 We listen, adapt, and act on the evolving needs of cadets and volunteers, providing timely and relevant support.
-  **Transparent**
 We operate with integrity, clarity, and openness, building trust through honest communication and clear decision-making.
-  **Innovative**
 We embrace new ideas and approaches, funding creative solutions that enhance the cadet experience and keep us future focused.





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Air Cadet Charity CIO is a registered charity in England and Wales.
Charity number: 1160910





**AIR CADET
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Dream. Dare. Do.



Cadet stories & photos



Partners, funders & big wins



Community updates

