

# American Legion Auxiliary Programs Action Plan

## Children & Youth 2020-2021

The Children & Youth program emphasizes protecting, caring for and supporting children and youth, particularly those of veterans' and military families.

### Committee Members:

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### What can you do?

#### 1. Support Children and Youth in your community.

- **“Star Spangled Kids”**: This is an ALA program to educate children and youth on the history of the United States from the aspect of patriotism, Americanism and the U.S. Constitution.
- **Youth Hero Awards/Good Deed Awards**: This is a way the ALA can recognize youth in our communities who demonstrate good citizenship, either through a brave physical act or a good deed.
- **April is The American Legion’s Children and Youth Month**

### Ideas:

#### Member

- Offer to make a “Star Spangled” presentation to your local schools. Invite post members to help students learn how their military service was meaningful in defending the U.S. Constitution.
  - Refer to the Star Spangled Kids how to sheet on the National website.
- Contact local high schools to invite them to encourage their students to use their knowledge of the U.S. Constitution by participating in The American Legion Oratorical Contest.
  - Refer to [www.legion.org](http://www.legion.org) for information on the Oratorical Contest.
- Monitor newspapers, TV and neighborhoods for children and youth who have performed a heroic act of physical valor, such as performing CPR, helping evacuate in the event of a fire, calling 911 for an emergency, etc. Work with your unit to nominate them for a Youth Hero/Good Deed Award.
- Contact local schools, churches and youth groups to make them aware of the Youth Hero/Good Deed Awards. Make sure to leave unit contact information.
- Identify children in your community who may be or are facing hospitalization for the first time and who may benefit from a Josh and friends dog and book.

## **Unit**

- Create a Unit Citizenship Award for children and youth who have learned the ideals of the U.S. Constitution.
- Share a constitutional fact each month in the unit newsletter, the newspaper editorial and/or on social media.
- September 17 is Constitution Day (Citizenship Day). Host a party that revolves around the U.S. Constitution for children.
- Print and distribute pocket constitutions to schoolchildren.
  - Refer to the Star Spangled Kids how to sheet at the end of this program Plan for more information.
- Once a child has been identified as a Youth Hero/Good Deed applicant, complete the nomination form. See the Youth Hero/Good Deed nomination form at the end of this program Plan to submit the name of the child. Have the form signed by two unit members, and then submit the form to your department secretary.
- When a Youth Hero/Good Deed award has been processed by national headquarters, contact local media, community school leaders and the child's parents, and plan for a public presentation of the award.
- Plan a special celebration of children during the month of April in honor of Children and Youth Month.

## **2. Support military children and youth**

- Kids of Deployed are Heroes 2 (KDH2): This is a recognition program for military children who experience extended separation from their military parent or parents.
- April is the Month of the Military Child

## **Ideas:**

### **Member**

- Volunteer at a Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS) camp program.
- Volunteer at a Family Readiness Group event where KDH2 "I'm a Hero 2" buttons/stickers can be distributed.
- Wear purple on April 15 in honor of Purple Up! for Military Kids day.

## **Unit**

- Host a dinner, game night, community fair, etc. that will bring military and non-military families together.
- Host a KDH2 celebration with recognition buttons/stickers to let military kids know we appreciate their sacrifices.
  - Refer to the how to sheet at the end of this program Plan for more information.
- Plan a special celebration of military children during April in honor of the Month of the Military Child.
- Encourage members to wear purple on Purple Up! for Military Kids day (April 15).
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- Encourage members to wear purple on April 15 in honor of Purple Up! for Military Kids day.

### **3. Support veterans' children and youth.**

- Some of our homeless veterans also have children living on the streets with them.
- *Klinger, a Story of Honor and Hope* – Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS) is affiliated with the American Legion Family

#### **Ideas:**

##### **Member**

- Contact your local churches, homeless shelters and food pantries to identify homeless veterans' children. Ask what their specific needs are, and offer them your services as an ALA member.
- Contact your local news sources (newspaper, community television, community websites and social media accounts) and town council. Offer to give a presentation about you and your unit's work for homeless veterans and their children.
- Contact your voluntary services representatives at the Veterans Affairs Medical Center. Offer to work with them to help meet the needs of children of homeless veterans who come to the VAMC.
- Contact local schools to access their need for supplies and extra clothes for homeless children. Offer to supply items as needed.
- Volunteer at a TAPS camp program.

##### **Unit**

- Train members to be a resource for front-line agencies who receive requests for help.
- Contact local schools to assess their need for supplies and extra clothes for homeless children. Offer to supply items as needed.
- Contact your post service officer to offer help with the needs of children of veterans who need financial help. (The American Legion - Temporary Financial Assistance)
- Help raise awareness for the needs of homeless children in your community by sharing unit activities on the unit website, social media pages and newsletters.
- Purchase the book, *Klinger, a Story of Honor and Hope*, from TAPS with the companion plush horse for children who are grieving the loss of a military parent or loved one.

### **Children & Youth Reporting**

#### **Mid-Year Reports**

Mid-Year reports reflect the program work of units in the department. Each unit Children & Youth chairman is encouraged to submit a narrative report to department Children & Youth chairman MaryAnn Paul by December 15, 2020 and please copy your division C & Y committee member.

#### **Annual Reports**

Annual reports reflect the program work of units in the department, and may result in a national award for participants if award requirements are met. Each unit Children & Youth chairman is encouraged to submit a narrative report to department Children & Youth chairman MaryAnn Paul by April 15, 2021.

**As part of your narrative report, please include answers to the following questions:**

1. How did your units and members promote “Star Spangled Kids,” educating children and youth about the U.S. Constitution from the aspect of patriotism and Americanism?
2. How did your units and members promote the Youth Hero/Good Deed Award?
3. What success stories do you have regarding support for military or homeless veterans’ children?

**Children & Youth Department Awards:**

1. Each unit that submits a narrative report by April 15, 2021 will receive a certificate.
2. Each unit that submits a Youth Hero Award or Good Deed Award submission will receive a certificate.
3. The unit with the best overall year-end narrative will receive a plaque.

**Children & Youth National Deadlines and Submission Requirements:**

Taking the time to share a favorite story about the positive impact you or someone you know has had on our mission is worth doing! It helps us tell the world who we are, what we do, and why we matter. Just three simple steps to add your part to our national success story:

- 1) Please follow instructions as you fill out the National Report and Awards Cover Sheet found in the awards section of the Programs Action Plan.
- 2) Provide details/examples about the activity as outlined in the award’s materials and guidelines section.
- 3) Submit as indicated in the Annual Supplement to the Programs Action Plan.

National Report and Awards Cover Sheet, deadlines, and Children & Youth committee contact information may be found on the Children & Youth committee page on the national website, [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org).

**A. Award: Youth Hero**

- Award: Youth Hero Medal and Citation
- Presented to: Youth under 18 years of age who have performed heroic acts of physical valor; membership in The American Legion Family is not required
- Materials and guidelines:
  - Complete the Youth Hero and Good Deed Award Nomination Form and mail to your department secretary, who certifies, then mails the application to National Headquarters. (Please, **do not** mail applications directly to National Headquarters.)
  - The award certificate, signed by the national president and national Children & Youth chairman, and Youth Hero Award medal will be returned to the unit or department to be presented on behalf of the National organization.

- The department Children & Youth chairman should be notified of the award.

**B. Award: Good Deed**

- Award: Citation
- Presented to: Youth under 18 years of age who have performed specific good deeds and are great examples of community service in action; membership in The American Legion Family is not required
- Materials and guidelines:
  - Complete the Youth Hero and Good Deed Award Nomination Form and mail to your department secretary, who certifies, then mails the application to National Headquarters. (Please, **do not** mail applications directly to National Headquarters.)
  - The award certificate, signed by the national president and national Children & Youth chairman, will be returned to the unit or department to be presented on behalf of the National organization.
  - The department Children & Youth chairman should be notified of the award.

**C. Unit Award: Most Outstanding Unit Children & Youth Program**

- Award: Citation Plaque
- Presented to: One unit in each division (5)
- Materials and guidelines:
  - Narrative not to exceed 1,000 words. Include specific examples of how your unit worked the Children & Youth program, including supporting military children and the Star Spangled Kids program.
  - May include pictures, news articles, news releases, etc.

**D. Department Award: Best Department Children & Youth Program**

- Award: Citation
- Presented to: One department in each division (5)
- Materials and guidelines:
  - Narrative not to exceed 1,000 words. Include specific examples of how your department worked the Children & Youth program, including supporting military children and the Star Spangled Kids program.
  - May include pictures, news articles, news releases, etc.

**How To Sheets**

- How to Promote “Star Spangled Kids”
- How to Conduct a “Kids of Deployed Are Heroes 2” Program
- How to Reach Out to Military Children and Youth

**Additional Resources You Can Use**

1. “I’m a Hero 2” stickers template and instructions can be found on the Children & Youth program page at [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org).
2. Your national Children & Youth committee members (see Children & Youth program page on the national website or Annual Supplement for contact information.)
3. The national Children & Youth Committee Facebook group, search “ALA Children

and Youth”

4. The American Legion Children & Youth programs: [www.legion.org/programs](http://www.legion.org/programs)
5. The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation: [www.legion.org/cwf](http://www.legion.org/cwf)
6. Josh and Friends (American Legion Family alliance): [www.joshandfriends.com](http://www.joshandfriends.com)
7. Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (an American Legion Child Welfare Foundation grant recipient for *Klinger*): [www.taps.org](http://www.taps.org)

