

**Department of North Carolina**  
**American Legion Auxiliary Programs Action Plan 2018-2019**  
**Children & Youth**

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The mission of the Children & Youth Committee is to work in collaboration with The American Legion to maintain the integrity of the American family, to insure that each child has the necessities of life needed to make a good citizen. This mission is accomplished by sponsoring & providing programs & services for the care & protection of all our nation's children.

### **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.
- **Josh dogs**: An American Legion Family alliance, GI Josh is a plush dog and accompanying storybook used to help ease separation fears for the military children.
- **April is The American Legion's Children and Youth Month**

#### **Ideas:**

- 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 at the end of this program plan for more information).
- 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.

- 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.

(Refer to the Star Spangled Kids how to sheet at the end of this program Plan for more information.)

Plan a special celebration of children during the month of April in honor of Children and Youth Month.

### **. 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.
- GI Josh: An American Legion Family alliance, GI Josh is a plush dog and accompanying storybook used to help ease separation fears for the military children.
- 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.
- Give a GI Josh to the child of a deployed service member.
- 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 nonmilitary 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.
- Support G.I. Josh – Identify military children who may have a parent or sibling deploying.
- 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).
- Team up with other community groups that are also concerned with the special needs of military children (i.e. Give an Hour, Military Parents, Guard/Reserve Family Readiness Group representatives, etc.).
- Plan a special celebration of military children during April in honor of the Month of the Military Child.
- 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:**

- 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.
- Team up with other community groups that are also concerned with the special needs of veteran's children. (i.e. TAPS)
- Share information and ideas, including activities units are providing, on the department's website, social media pages and newsletters to help children of veterans.

### **4. Support The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation**

The American Legion CWF was established to provide funds received from individuals who wished to contribute to improving the lives of the children in this country.

## **Children & Youth Reporting\***

### Mid-Year Reports

Mid-Year reports reflect the program work of units in the department, and are intended as an opportunity for mid-year correction. Each department Children & Youth chairman is required to submit a narrative report to the division Children & Youth chairman, plus copy the national Children & Youth chairman.

### 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 department Children & Youth chairman is required to submit a narrative report to the division Children & Youth chairman, plus copy the national Children & Youth chairman. Members and units should follow their department's protocol and deadlines.

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

1. How did your units and department 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 department promote the Youth Hero/Good Deed Award?
3. What success stories do you have regarding support for military or homeless veterans' children?

### **Children & Youth Awards 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.

**Deadline for submission: May 15, 2019**

**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)