

**American Legion Auxiliary
Department of Wisconsin
Children & Youth Program**

**Plan of Work
2008-2009**

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INTRODUCTION

Children, our “greatest natural resource”, our HOPE for the future, the smallest fish in our “Oceans of Love to Our Veterans”, are worthy of our best effort to the Children & Youth Program. Since the C & Y Program has so many facets each Unit needs to be aware of them, and then choose the ones to work on. Educating Unit members about C & Y Program details will take place at the Fall Forum paper fair and workshop, through Unit mailings, through articles in the *Wisconsin*, and with resource pamphlets. ALA members will worthily be Honoring Our Promise Everyday of serving veterans, their children, and their communities while working to improve the lives of our young people. Units may choose to work with their Posts and Squadrons, truly working together as a Legion Family to accomplish the goals of the C & Y Program.

I AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY ACTIVITIES

A. Youth Hero Award Program and Good Deed Award

The Youth Hero Award is to recognize and reward today’s youth, under the age of 18 years, who perform a heroic act of physical valor. Unit members are encouraged to read the local newspapers or listen to local radio and television stations to learn of these youth. Units should send proper paperwork to the department secretary and also notify the department C & Y Chairman of the impending award. Good Deed Awards are to recognize youth who do not meet the set criteria of a physical act of valor, but are great examples of community service. Once a youth qualifies for either of these awards, the Unit should plan an event to present the award(s). Be sure to send press releases to local media reporting the award event.

B. National Children and Youth Month (April)

Throughout the month of April work as a Legion Family promoting activities that highlight the health and welfare of children within your local communities. Units may also collaborate with other non-profit agencies or schools to sponsor programs for children. Unit members may seek to volunteer and support community programs already in place that teach and protect children. Some ideas are hosting a safety forum or sponsoring a spring bicycle safety event. Units may work with local police, sheriff, and fire departments. Perhaps visit local schools or work with the school nurse to provide clothing, toiletry items, and school supplies to needy children. Units, Posts, and Squadrons can host chemical awareness forums working with local law enforcement agencies explaining how to recognize chemical and alcohol abuse signs. Suicide prevention might be a topic as Units work with local counselors or non-profit agencies, such as Boys and Girls Clubs, Big Brother/Sister Programs, and Crisis Line. Be creative. Plan a unique event for the month of April.

C. Children’s Miracle Network

The American Legion Family is a sponsor of Children’s Miracle Network Hospitals that provide excellent medical care, life saving research and preventative education to help millions of kids overcome diseases and injuries of every kind. The three member CMN hospitals in Wisconsin are: Children’s in Milwaukee, St. Joseph’s in Marshfield, and Gunderson in La Crosse. Partner with one of these CMN Hospitals and get involved in events and activities within the Children’s Miracle Network. Units may work with Posts or collaborate with other non-profit agencies to raise funds for a CMN Hospital or simply make a donation. Send donations to department earmarked for CMN.

D. Health & Safety Programs

Because the health and welfare of children is a major concern, Wisconsin Units will work in collaboration with the Legion, SAL and community non-profit agencies promoting programs and activities that promote a healthy community for children. Brochures might be ordered and placed in medical waiting rooms, school libraries, or other places throughout the community to promote safety for children. Examples of some programs are: good nutrition, safety in the home and outdoors, bike and fire safety, missing or abused children, youth suicide, and drug abuse. Units might work with other agencies to host community wide “Children’s

Fairs”, safe Halloween parties, teen dances, etc. Perhaps members can work with local Police and Fire departments promoting safety, or work with teenagers training them to be mentors by example to the younger children in the community.

E. Collaboration with other ALA Programs

Wisconsin Units will work in collaboration with Community Service, Education, Junior Activities, National Security, Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation and the new Support Military Families Program (with chairman, Karen Degner) to promote programs for the betterment of our youth. We can offer assistance to local youth groups and service organizations to host events and parties for children (Halloween, Holiday Parties, dances, etc.) When volunteering in schools distribute information on essay contests, Girls State and the Americanism youth Conference. Encourage Junior members to work side-by-side with you in mentoring their peer groups. Work closely with National Security, VA&R, and Support Military Families chairmen to assist local families in need concentrating on things that can be done to improve the lives of children.

F. Spinoza Bears, Josh Dogs, Pediatric Heart Pillows

Units will continue to purchase these cuddly critters and comforting pillows to serve the needs of children and youth. Order forms for these items are available from Department, on the website, or from the C & Y Chairman. Any donations for these items will be appreciated. Smaller donations will be added together to purchase either the regular Spinoza Bear for ill children or the Military Bear for children with deployed parents. The Josh Dogs are for children facing surgery. The Pediatric Heart Pillows are for children or teens having heart surgery. Every Unit is challenged to make donations toward these items this year.

II DIRECT AID AND SERVICE TO CHILDREN OF VETERANS

A. Provide financial assistance to children of veterans within your local communities.

Members will assist military and veterans families in need or crisis, giving special emphasis to National Guard or Army Reserve families with deployed family members. Collaboration with the Legion, SAL, County Service Officers, the Support Military Families Program, and other local organizations or agencies will be necessary in order to identify those in need and to utilize the AL’s Temporary Assistance Fund Program at the department level.

B. Give special emphasis to National Guard and Army Reserve families with deployed deployed family members.

Members might offer to watch the children of activated servicemen while the parent that is at home goes shopping or even to a night out with friends. Local Family Support Networks or the Chairman of the Support Military Families Program can let the needs of families with deployed soldiers be known. Inform and link up children with activated parents to Operation: Military Kids (OMK). Ask schools in your community what needs the children have; school supplies, winter scarves, coats, mittens, etc.

III WORKING WITH THE AMERICAN LEGION (TAL)

A. Resolution No. 30, Operation: Military Kids

This is the US Army’s collaborative effort with America’s communities to support the children and youth of National Guard and Army Reserve Soldiers impacted by the Global War on Terrorism. The American Legion Family is an OMK National Partner. Every Unit needs to be involved with this program! Raise community awareness of “suddenly military” kids. Work with other groups to make a positive difference in the lives of these children. One idea is to offer monetary support so these children can attend summer and day

camps or participate in school activities. Another idea is the Hero Packs. These are backpacks for children of deployed parents. Stuff these packs with a stuffed animal, journal, note pad, and disposable camera, Legion Family brochures and anything else to assist children to keep in touch with deployed parents. Distribute these packs before their parents are deployed. Encourage children of deployed parents to participate in The American Legion and ALA youth activities: Boys/Girls State, Americanism Youth Conference, Americanism Essay contests, Poppy Poster contests, and essay contests. Units are encouraged to work in collaboration with the new Support Military Families Program under the chairmanship of Karen Degner to support local "Military Kids".

B. National Children & Youth Conference

Indianapolis, Indiana was the site of the second National Children & Youth Conference, September 19-21. Legionnaires Barbara Belmont, District 6, and Deborah Logerquist, District 2, attended from the Wisconsin Department. Ask these individuals for new information on the Children & Youth Program. A great resource person is former Department President, Rose Wenger, 2008-2009 Central Division Chairman of the C & Y Program. She attended the Conference in Indianapolis.

C. Supporting Children & Youth Legislation

Work together with the American Legion and SAL to support any legislation that will positively affect the health and welfare of our children. Actively pursue and provide advocacy for these issues.

D. Supporting family unity – National Family Week

The National Family Week premise is: *Children live better lives when their families are strong.* National Family Week will be celebrated November 23-29, 2008, the week of Thanksgiving. Encourage and celebrate the center of a healthy community: the family. The American Legion Family stands for a strong America. Units are encouraged to plan an event during National Family Week to bring families together.

IV THE AMERICAN LEGION CHILD WELFARE FOUNDATION (CWF)

A. Education of members and public about CWF

All Units need to educate every member and the public on the CWF operations so they can promote the program to other non-profit organizations to help increase contributions. Units who have never donated to the CWF before are asked to donate at least \$4 this year, and increase their donation in the following year by at least \$1, and continue increasing in \$1 increments each year, for progressive giving. Units who already give are asked to increase their donation this year by \$4. At a Unit meeting educate your members on the CWF. Have fun fundraisers at Unit meetings, something as simple as donating a quarter for every shoe size. Request CWF coin containers to collect donations.

B. Promoting CWF to grant seekers and providing guidelines

Units are asked to refer local "grant seekers" to the CWF Web site to locate the areas of their interest and application guidelines.

C. Annual Awards for Outstanding support

Units are encouraged to support the AL and ALA at Department level in qualifying for the special awards by making contributions to CWF as outlined above.

V LIAISON TO THE CHILD WELFARE FOUNDATION

A. Representing the Auxiliary by participating with and supporting the CWF

Units are encouraged to contact our Liaison to Child Welfare Foundation, Pearl Behrend, for ideas and information. Pearl has been the Liaison for many years and is an excellent resource.

B. Educating members about CWF

Learn about and contribute towards the financial, physical, mental, emotional and spiritual welfare of children through the dissemination of knowledge about new and innovative as well as well-established organizations and programs designed to benefit youth in your local community. Unit members are encouraged to make a donation to the CWF to honor an outstanding Unit member or in memoriam.

VI CHILDREN & YOUTH AWARDS

A. “Best Overall” Program – Department Award

An award will be presented to the department chairman in each division conducting the Best Overall Promotion of the Children & Youth Program. Entry must be in narrative form not to exceed 1000 words and must include a completed copy of the Annual Department report form. Mail this form to the Divisional Chairman by June 1. Award Entry Form #1 is to be used.

B. “Outstanding” Promotion of Supporting Activities – Unit Award

An award presented to the unit Children & Youth Chairman in each division who promotes the Most Outstanding Program promoting any or all of the identified ALA activities. Entry must be in narrative form not to exceed 1000 words and must include a completed copy of the Annual Unit report form. Department C & Y Chairman judges unit entries and selects a winner and forwards the entry to the National C & Y Vice Chairman by June 1. Award Entry Form #2 is to be used. Mail to Department C & Y Chairman Theresa Schindler, W10241 Bitner Avenue, Owen, WI 54460 no later than May 1, 2009.

Youth Hero Award – Local/Unit and National Level

An award for a youth, under 18 years of age, who performs a heroic act of physical valor. Nominations are to be completed at Unit level and mailed to the Department Secretary, who certifies and mails the application to National Headquarters. (No application should be mailed directly to National Headquarters.) National President will sign the Award Certificate and it will be returned to the Unit to be presented on behalf of the Unit and the National organization. Department C & Y Chairman should be notified of the award.

Good Deed Award – Local/Unit and National Level

An award for a youth, under 18 years of age, who do not meet the Youth Hero Award criteria, but who are great examples of community service. This award is submitted on the same nomination form as the Youth Hero Award. The nomination form for both these awards is available from the C & Y Department Chairman, or from the Department Secretary, or online.

CHILD WELFARE FOUNDATION AWARDS BY THE AMERICAN LEGION

Legacy Award: A plaque presented at National Convention to the top Department based on combined total contributions of the American Legion Family and Eight & Forty contributions to The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation during contribution year (June 1, 2008 through May 31, 2009).

Garland M. Murphy, Jr. Award: A plaque presented to one department from each organization of Legion family with the greatest contributions to The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation during contribution year (June 1, 2008 through May 31, 2009) Plaques awarded at their National Convention.

Excellence Award: A plaque presented to one of ten departments from each organization of Legion family with the highest per capita contribution average for the contribution year (June 1 2008 through May 31, 2009). Citations mailed to the runners-up.

“Heritage Circle” Gift Club: A plaque presented to Departments of The American Legion Family and Eight & Forty for their cumulative donations during the contribution year June 1, 2008 through May 31, 2009 Plaques will be mailed September 1, 2009. Benefactor - \$5000 Patron - \$2500 Sponsor - \$1000

Meritorious Achievement Award: A plaque presented to the top department in each organization with the highest increase in per capita giving to The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation during contribution year (June 1, 2008 through May 31, 2009). Plaques will be mailed September 1, 2009.

“Children First” Gift Club: A plaque presented to organization (Post, Unit, Salon and Squadron) for their cumulative donation made during the contribution year (June 1, 2008 through May 31, 2009).
Guardian - \$1000 Advocate - \$750 Caretaker - \$500

“Cornerstone” Gift Club: A pin awarded to individuals for their cumulative donations made during the contribution year (June 1, 2008 through May 31, 2009).
Foundation Ambassadors - \$1000
President’s Circle - \$500 Foundation Partners - \$250 Century Club - \$100

VII CHILDREN & YOUTH RESOURCES

Children's Miracle Network
4525 South 2300 South, Suite 202
Salt Lake City, UT 84117
801-278-8900
www.childrensmiraclenetwork.org/amlegion

The American Legion
Children & Youth Programs
317-630-1369
www.legion.org/cwf

National Foster Care Month
www.fostercaremonth.org

JoshCo, LLC
P.O. Box 23815
Knoxville, TN 37933-1815
Phone/Fax: 1-877-455-2365
info@JoshAndFriends.com
www.joshandfriends.com

Children's Organ Transplant Association (COTA)
www.cota.org

Badger Care (covering uninsured children)
www.coveringkidsandfamilies.org

Songs of Love Foundation (songs for ill children)
www.songslove.org

Month of the Military Child (April)
www.monthofthemilitarychild.com

Legislative Issues concerning children
Rose Wenger 608-325-6364
rfwenger@tds.net

Helping America's Youth
www.helpingamericasyouth.org

Teens, Crime & the Community
www.nationaltcc.org

Mothers Against Drunk Driving
www.madd.org

Operation: Military Kids
Community & Family Support Center
Attn: Operation: Military Kids
4700 King St., 4th Floor
Alexandria, VA 22302
www.operationmilitarykids.org

National Family Week
(November 23-29, 2008)
www.nationalfamilyweek.org

Youth Hero & Good Deed Award Forms
www.legion-aux.org
Go to "Programs" and click on C & Y

"Make Halloween A Safe and Fun Night"
Brochure (stock #24-012) Designed for Children
Available from The American Legion
www.legion.org

National Center for Missing and Exploited Children
www.missingkids.com

Wisconsin Alliance for Fire Safety
Burn Camp in East Troy, WI
www.wafs.org

National Liaison to the Child Welfare Foundation
Pearl Behrend 262-634-2732
www.amlegionauxwi.org

Spinoza Bears and Puppets
www.spinozabear.com

Support military Families
Karen Degner
MDEGNER@wi.rr.com

National Family Partnership
www.nfp.org

Join together (substance abuse programs)
www.jointogether.org

PRIDE Youth Programs (drug prevention)
www.prideyouthprograms.org