

# Children & Youth

2010-2011 National President's Theme: The Power of One  
2010-2011 Department President's Theme: It is Great to be an American

## **Plan of Action: Children & Youth Committee**

Purpose: To protect, care for and support children and youth, particularly those of veterans' families and military families.

## **Committee Contact Information**



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# Children & Youth

## Department Objectives

1. **Objective:** Develop, implement and monitor programs and activities that contribute to the physical, mental and emotional health and wellness of children and youth of military families.

### Action Steps:

- a. **ALA KIDDS—Kids in Danger of Depression and Suicide—is an Auxiliary project that builds referral networks of public and private support at the community level for the social and mental well-being of military children. Potential activities that units may undertake:**

Convening ALA KIDDS community groups that meet to identify ways to better address the needs of military children. Meeting participants could include:

- Give an Hour or other mental health organization volunteers
- Military parents
- Representatives from Boys and Girls Clubs
- Big Brothers and Sisters (BBBS)
- School counselors, teachers, or other representatives
- Guard/Reserve Family Readiness Group representatives
- Operation Military Kids representatives
- Any other individual, group, or organization with a stake in military child wellness

Developing and implementing KIDDS public awareness events to raise community knowledge and support of military children. Events could include the following:

- Participation in National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day in May (link in resources section)
- Community events and gatherings that bring together military and non-military families, such as unit-hosted dinners, game nights, community fairs, charity walk/runs, etc.
- Public awareness information campaigns, including newsletter stories, news releases, discussions on social networking sites (i.e., Facebook, Twitter, blogs, website postings), etc.

- b. **Hosting family resources and services fairs to introduce military families to mental health and social support services in their community, as well as military family support and Juniors program of the Auxiliary and Legion. Participants could include the following:**

- Give An Hour
- Big Brothers/Big Sisters
- Boys and Girls Club
- Operation: Military Kids
- Faith-based organizations

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- c. Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America Military Mentoring Program – The Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America (BBBS) Military Mentoring Program (MMP) offers one-to-one mentoring to children and youth of military families. Potential activities that units may consider:**
- Work with the local BBBS organization to create educational or recreational group event for unmatched military children.
  - Support the military mentoring program of the BBBS by sponsoring, organizing or delivering a REACH activity to youth enrolled in a BBBS. REACH activities are structured group activities that BBBS agencies organize and deliver for their youth. The activities focus on developmental goals in five areas: Recreation, Educational & Career, Arts & Culture, Civic Engagement, and Health & Fitness.
  - Recruit Auxiliary and Legion members to do community-based (one-to-one) and school mentoring for military children and youth.
  - Invite your local BBBS to a Legion Family event to explain how members can become BBBS mentors.
  - Offer opportunities for members who want to do a volunteer project but can't attend meetings.
  - Reach out to other service organizations to better serve the unmatched military children and youth populations.
- d. Boys and Girls Clubs of America (BGCA) Military Programs – BGCA provides services to military children and youth at youth centers on military installations and through outreach to traditional community centers. Potential activities that units may undertake with a BGCA military club or traditional club include the following:**
- Initiate joint service projects for Juniors and BGCA military children; peer mentoring with Junior members and BGCA military children.
  - Sponsor or organize educational or recreational events for BGCA military clubs or traditional clubs.
  - Market Auxiliary and Legion scholarships and Americanism opportunities to BGCA military children and youth.
- e. Operation: Military Kids (OMK) – OMK supports military children and youth through community awareness, community capacity building and outreach support services. Potential activities that units may undertake with OMK include the following:**
- Sponsorship or organization of a youth outreach service program.
  - Promotion of the Speak Out for Military Kids project.
  - Assemble Hero Packs at Junior meetings and/or Girls State session. This is a hands-on expression of support for military families, children and youth.
  - Sponsorship of an OMK camp in your department.
  - Raise community awareness of the needs of military children and the need for communities to build their capacity to deliver outreach services. Applicable community partners might include BGCA and BBBS.

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2. **Objective:** Department or Unit Innovative Activity – Auxiliary Departments and Units, along with their Legion Family may undertake a military Children & Youth program or activity other than a national Auxiliary-supported program/activity. The program/activity should have military children and youth as its target population. The Department or Unit should demonstrate that the program/activity is innovative in nature or responsive to an explicit unmet need among military children and youth. Some state programs to reference include the following:
  - Army Reserve Enrichment Camp
  - American Legion Children’s Home in Ponca City, Oklahoma
3. **Objective:** Support the implementation of Children & Youth programs of The American Legion.

**Action Steps:** Visit [www.legion.org/youth/publications](http://www.legion.org/youth/publications) for information on Gateway Drugs, Suicide Warning Signs, Halloween Safety and Missing Children.

## Programs and Activities

### April is Children & Youth Month

During this time, The American Legion Family emphasizes its commitment to our nation’s children. Visit [www.legion.org/documents/legion/pdf/cybroch\\_aprilmonth.pdf](http://www.legion.org/documents/legion/pdf/cybroch_aprilmonth.pdf) for more information.

### Youth Hero Award – Local/Unit and National Level

A national award for youth, under 18 years of age, who perform 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. (Applications should not be mailed directly to National Headquarters.) The 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 Children & Youth Chairmen should be notified of the award. Recipients are awarded a certificate and Youth Hero Award Medal.

### Good Deed Award – Local/Unit and National Level

An award for 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.

## Children & Youth Awards

1. “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 1,000 words and must include a completed copy of the annual Department report form. Mail this form to your Divisional Chairman by June 1.
2. **On the Department level**, a 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> place award will be presented to units with outstanding C & Y service, based on year-end reporting. Certificates of participation/appreciation will be given to each reporting Unit.

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## 3. “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 1,000 words and must include a completed copy of the annual Unit report form. Entries are due to the Department Chairman by May 1, 2011. The selected entry will then be forwarded to the National Chairman for consideration. Use Award Form Cover #1.

## **Resources**

1. Operation: Military Kids (American Legion Family National Partner)  
[www.operationmilitarykids.org](http://www.operationmilitarykids.org)
2. Big Brothers Big Sisters: [www.bbbs.org](http://www.bbbs.org)
3. Boys & Girls Clubs of America: [www.bgca.org](http://www.bgca.org)
4. The American Legion Children & Youth Programs: [www.legion.org](http://www.legion.org)
5. The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation: [www.legion.org/cwf/](http://www.legion.org/cwf/)  
See program page on [www.legion-aux.org](http://www.legion-aux.org) for additional resources.