

## CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Mary Bartlett, Chair

3345 Goble Drive, Maiden, NC 28650 704-472-5355

[Mgbartlett2003@gmail.com](mailto:Mgbartlett2003@gmail.com)

Phyllis Richardson and Sybil Leary – Members

Our Children and Youth Program is built on the pledge to maintain the integrity of the American family. Not a child living and certainly no veteran's child should be without the necessities of life required to make a good citizen.

The mission of the Children and Youth Committee is to work collaboratively with the American Legion to direct and sponsor programs and services that provide care and protection for our nation's children, especially those of our military and veterans.

### **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 an ALA program to recognize youth who demonstrate a heroic act of physical valor or who exemplify community service in action.

“Josh Dogs”: an American Legion Family alliance, GI Josh is a plush dog with accompanying storybook used to help ease separation fears for the military child.

“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.
- Contact 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 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 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 school children.

1. 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 members and then submit the form to your department secretary.
- When a Youth Hero/Good Deed award is approved then contact local media, community school leaders and the child's parents, and plan 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 recognition program for military children who experience separation from their military parent or parents.
  - GI Josh: An American Legion alliance, GI Josh is a plush dog and accompanying storybook used to help ease separation fears for military children.
  - April is the Month of the Military Child.

**Ideas:**

- 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 (including siblings).
- 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.
- Support GI Josh – identify military children who may have a parent or sibling deploying.
- Plan a special celebration of military children during the month of April in honor of the Month of the Military Child.
- Encourage members to wear purple on April 15 in honor of "Purple Up!" for the Military Kids Day.
- 3. Support veteran's children and youth.  
 "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 local schools to access need for supplies and extra clothes for homeless children. Offer to supply items as needed.
- Volunteer at a TAPS camp program.

**Unit:**

- Train unit members to be a resource for front-line agencies who receive requests for help.
- Contact local schools to access 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 push horse for children who are grieving the loss of a military parent or loved one.

