

APRIL IS CHILDREN & YOUTH MONTH

CHILDREN ... OUR MOST PRECIOUS NATURAL RESOURCE

is The American Legion's national theme for "April Is Children & Youth Month." We encourage your use and support of this theme in the promotion of all your Children & Youth programs.

As Americans, we need to remember amid the problems we face daily with the environment, crime, unemployment and financial uncertainty, the one constant that will make or break this nation is our young people. They are our future. Our hopes and dreams for a better tomorrow rest in their hands.

The American Legion has been actively involved with children's issues since the early 1900s. In many instances, we have been the driving force on the federal, state and local levels representing their interests and voicing their concerns.

In 1938, April was formally designated as Child Welfare Month (now called Children & Youth Month) and has continued on an annual basis. During this special time, we urge each of you to show your community that The American Legion family is committed to Children..Our Most Precious Natural Resource!

WHAT CAN I DO?

Answer: Get Involved!!

Each year at our spring meetings, the National Commission on Children & Youth selects several areas of concern, which directly affect our nation's young people. They may include:

Child Health

- Children's Miracle Network Hospitals
- Immunization Programs
- School Nutrition Programs
- Teen Pregnancy Prevention Programs

Child Safety

- Child Pornography
- Drug Abuse Prevention
- Drug Trafficking
- Alcohol Abuse Prevention
- Child/Sexual Abuse and Neglect
- Teen Suicide Prevention

Family Support

- National Family Week Activities
- Day Care Safety
- Foster Care
- Temporary Financial Assistance
- Missing and Exploited Children

New members, as well as not-so-new members, are encouraged to become active in these, or any other worthwhile programs for youth. Such participation will perpetuate our goal of "A Square Deal for Every Child" and strengthen our total commitment.

REPORT IT!

Following the observance of Children & Youth Month, the Children & Youth Chairmen need to turn their attention to the annual reporting of expenditures and activities. Be sure you have an accurate record of all money spent for the benefit of children and youth by your post/unit during the current year, as well as the number of children provided services and assistance. Shortly after the first of the year, American Legion Departments receive copies of the Consolidated Post Report (CPR) for later distribution to the posts. This form has been developed to gain much needed information about the Legion's total program. It is the responsibility of the Post Children & Youth Chairman to report his/her program activities to the individual designated in the post to complete the Consolidated Post Report. The CPR can be done online, by the post adjutant, at myLegion.org.

For more information:



THE AMERICAN LEGION

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WHERE DO I BEGIN?

For a start, consider the following:

- Obtain a speaker on one of our areas of concern or other pertinent topics.
- Conduct a community project with and for children.
- Form a Community Committee on Children & Youth to discuss current problems, generate possible solutions and then take action.
- Sponsor a carnival or show featuring young people to raise money for a community project.
- Feature a youth panel at a local school where participants can discuss some of their concerns.
- Use videos, if applicable, enlisting the aid of an individual familiar with the subject matter to both present it and be available to answer questions following the viewing.

Use these suggestions, or develop your own projects, but get involved. Remember...the only limitation you have for youth programs and activities is your own imagination!!



“EXTRA, EXTRA ... READ ALL ABOUT IT”

You should publicize whatever program or activity you use. Have the mayor or other local official issue a proclamation declaring April as Children & Youth Month. The post commander should issue a news release proclaiming April as Children & Youth Month and list what the post will be doing for their annual observance.

Remember, programs affecting the children and youth of your community are news!! Invite the news media to your activities and keep them informed.

SUGGESTED NEWS RELEASE: CHILDREN & YOUTH MONTH

The American Legion will observe Children & Youth Month during April, Commander (full name) of (Name of Post) Post No. announced today. Participating with Post No. in this observance will be the members of the American Legion Auxiliary (and/or the Sons of The American Legion).

The observance here in (community) will be one of many throughout the nation as over 13,700 Legion posts and over 9,500 Auxiliary units plan special events to emphasize the Legion’s continuing concern for the well-being of the country’s children and youth.

For more than eighty years, The American Legion and its affiliate organizations have donated countless hours of volunteer effort and millions of dollars in support of programs and activities for the benefit of children and youth, Commander (last name) reported. Since the beginning of these programs in 1926, The American Legion and its affiliates have reported expenditures of over one half billion dollars.

The national theme of The American Legion’s Children & Youth Month is “Children...Our Most Precious Natural Resource.” Over the years, the Legion has developed many programs to serve the youth of this nation. By providing a solid foundation and adequate opportunities for children to realize their future, we are helping to ensure our own.

Commander (Last Name) listed three major areas of concern on which The American Legion is focusing its attention on a national basis: Child Health, Child Safety and Family Support.

Locally, The American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary have made meaningful contributions to the well-being of the children and youth of (community) through programs and endeavors such as (List examples of post and unit projects and contributions on behalf of the children and youth of the community).

LEGISLATIVE ACTION

Legislation to improve conditions for children is a focal point of The American Legion’s Children & Youth program. By working on behalf of sound legislation, the Legion, in accordance with mandated positions, strives to bring into enactment the laws necessary to meet the needs of all children.

Whether the legislation involves a local matter, pertains to a problem of a particular state or is an item of national concern, it requires the efforts of all interested in the well-being of children and youth if it is to become law.

Most state assemblies begin their sessions early in the year. This is the best time to present legislators with any new legislation or changes needed in current laws.

Within each community, there is a great deal of local legislative action, which deserves continued attention: city ordinances affecting children and youth, appropriations for schools and school budgets, immunization, child abuse and neglect statutes, juvenile courts, local public welfare departments, playgrounds, traffic regulations and other such matters relating to the health and welfare of children.

There is a great need for informed public participation in local government matters. And when it comes to local matters affecting our children and youth, The American Legion should make itself heard.

