

Children and Youth

Program Engagement Plan
2025-2026

What is the Children and Youth Program and What is Its Purpose?

The purpose of the Children & Youth Committee is to work collaboratively with The American Legion to promote programs that protect, care for, and support children and youth, especially those of our military and veterans.

- The Children & Youth program emphasizes protecting, caring for, and supporting children and youth, particularly those of veterans' and military families.
- To recognize and reward the positive actions of our children and youth, the American Legion Auxiliary has two special national awards bestowed to youth nominated by units: the Youth Hero Award and the Good Deed Award.
- Kids of Deployed are Heroes 2 (KDH2) is an initiative honoring military children who may be experiencing a separation from one or both parents, whether deployed to a war zone, having a short tour or on an extended temporary duty assignment.
- The American Legion Auxiliary Children & Youth program strives to support and promote the Children & Youth program of the American Legion.

Duties of the Unit Children & Youth Chairman

- Make sure the pledge of care and protection for children of veterans is carried out through service work, or through direct cash assistance to needy families if necessary.
- Provide leadership for the unit on all matters pertaining to children.
- Cooperate with other responsible organizations and agencies of the community whose work is in the interest of children.
- Submit mid-year and annual reports of C&Y activities and plans, to the membership of the unit, and to the district or department C&Y chairman.

How can you work the Children and Youth program and be successful? Here are just a few ideas but please do not limit yourselves to these. Our members have such great ideas

I cannot wait to see what you come up with!

Encourage local high school students to participate in the Oratorical program. School debate teams are a great place to start. Mention that a lot of scholarship money can be earned.

- Monitor your local newspapers, TV, and radio stations for news about young people who performed acts of physical valor. Schools and churches are another source for good news.

Youth Hero/Good Deed Awards- Created in 2002 by the National Children & Youth Committee, these awards are presented annually throughout the year to recognize the heroism and helpfulness of youths under age 18. In the past three years alone, more than 1,000 Youth Hero and Good Deed awards have been presented to deserving youth. Nominations are accepted by local ALA units. If you know of someone deserving of one of these awards, submit a nomination.

● Award Criteria

- **Youth Hero Award**- Youth Hero Award winners receive a medal and a certificate.
- May be a Junior Auxiliary member or someone eligible for membership, but eligibility is not a criterion for consideration.
- Demonstrates a physical act of valor (Heimlich, CPR, first aid, rescuing from fire or water peril.)
- Serves as an inspirational role model for the organization and the community.

○ Good Deed Award

- May be a Junior Auxiliary member or someone eligible for membership, but eligibility is not a criterion for consideration.
- Donates time and/or money for a worthy cause (such as troop support, raising money to help homeless veterans, a food drive, etc.).

Kids of Deployed are Heroes 2- Kids of Deployed are Heroes 2 (KDH2) is an initiative honoring military children who may be experiencing a separation from one or both parents, whether deployed to a war zone, having a short tour or on an extended temporary duty assignment. Recognition buttons or stickers with "I'm a Hero 2" can be distributed to these kids to recognize their sacrifices.

• **What can you do?** Host an event to recognize these military children Be sure to include the Legion family, especially your Juniors. Have a supply of the "I'm a Hero 2" buttons or stickers ready to hand out. You might also want to have on hand the "Proud Parent/Grandparent of a Military Child" button.

- Coordinate with family readiness groups for button distribution during family days.

- Coordinate with Legion family members on local community days/fairs, etc.

- Have an activity day/dinner for military families at your post home. • KDH2 buttons may be ordered through a commercial vendor or made yourself. You can download a file for KDH2 with instructions. There is an order form for the "Proud Parent/Grandparent" buttons.

- April is the Month of the military Child (#momc)

- April 15 is Purple Up Day for Military Children

- The Department will have a fundraising item for sale with profits to benefit The Child Welfare Foundation.

You can also join the Children and Youth Facebook page at:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/ALACHildrenandYouth>

Collaborations-More information can be found at www.alaforveterans.org visit the My Auxiliary members portal → Sign-in → Committees → Children and Youth. (If you need help logging in, please let us know. We are happy to help!)

Additional Resources on the National Website

- Youth Hero/Good Deed Award information nomination form & media release template.
- I'm a Hero 2 sticker template.
- Kids of Deployed are Heroes 2 information and printable certificate.
- Proud Parent of a Military Child Button order form.
- ALA Halloween coloring book.
- Military child's table setting ceremony.
- Youth programs brochure.
- Child Welfare Foundation information.

Important Due Dates

- Year-end Unit reports are due to the District Chairman by April 15th.
- Year-end District reports are due to the Department Chairman by May 1st.

Personal Chairman Award:

Awarded to the District submitting the most Youth Hero OR Good Deed Awards.

Please include pictures with your reports. Please send pictures directly to me but remember they must be in their original form and of the highest resolution possible.

National Awards:

Available for Units that have an outstanding Children and Youth program. Visit www.ALAForVeterans.org for more details or let me know you are interested. I am happy to help how I can with your submission.

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