

# Project Ruck Sack Children & Youth

*A Community of Volunteers Serving Veterans, Military, and their Families*

## PURPOSE AND GOAL

Project Ruck Sack assists ALA departments with active participation in the initiatives of the ALA Children & Youth Program. Project Ruck Sack gives departments the opportunity to make a positive difference for children by gifting them comfort items, toys, and supplies. The project encourages activism in ALA departments to support children in their communities and provides direction for members, units, and department leadership to engage in a project that benefits children and youth.

## IT'S TIME TO GATHER THE TEAM

Align key members of your department Children & Youth Committee, along with dedicated members and volunteers. You will need three key team members to successfully facilitate and launch this project.

1. Distribution: Assign a member to investigate and secure outlets to donate the sacks once they have been assembled. Places like Family Readiness Groups,



VA outreach centers, homeless/women's shelters where children may reside, and classrooms are options.

2. Public relations: Assign a member to manage communication to both members and external outlets. It will be important to reach out to members for participation and communicate about your good work to news outlets and the national ALA Children & Youth Committee.
3. Report: Assign a member to document the time, participation, and expense contributed to the project for reporting purposes. All contributions should be documented in the department's annual reporting.



## CHECK THE CALENDAR — IT'S A DATE!

Review the activity calendar for meetings, conferences, and conventions to determine the best opportunity to connect with members and volunteers for a service project. Pick a date to host your Project Ruck Sack event.

## GET THE GOODS

Assemble a list of items for members to collect and bring to the event (e.g., stickers, action figures, small plush toys, pin flags, LEGO, bracelets, patriotic dog tags, poppies, garden seeds like poppies, candy, and school supplies).

Check out places like Oriental Trading ([www.orientaltrading.com](http://www.orientaltrading.com)) or US Toy ([www.ustoy.com](http://www.ustoy.com)) for low-cost patriotic, leadership, and fun toys and favors which are great for this project!

## SPREAD THE WORD!

Plan ahead of your scheduled event and be sure to communicate about the project and all important details. Keep in mind the following when spreading the word to your team: Who, What, Where, When, Why, and Bring.

- Who: Department members, volunteers, friends, American Legion Family, and leadership.
- What: Activity to promote activism in the American Legion Auxiliary Children & Youth Program to help children with comfort items and supplies.
- Where: Project Ruck Sack for our department will be held [location].
- When: Project Ruck Sack for our department will be held [date and time].
- Why: Fun activity for the Department of [state name] to support American Legion Auxiliary Children & Youth initiatives and to help children in the community.
- Bring: Gather items from the suggested list and bring them to your event. Together as a team, members will pack the bags and donate to local children.

## TAKE PHOTOS, DOCUMENT, AND SHARE

Be sure to take pictures of your team in action working the American Legion Auxiliary mission and having fun. Document who was involved,

how many participated, and share to the official ALA Children & Youth Facebook group at [www.facebook.com/groups/ALAChildrenandYouth](http://www.facebook.com/groups/ALAChildrenandYouth). Send photos of your team in action to the national Children & Youth Committee chair at [Children&Youth@ALAforVeterans.org](mailto:Children&Youth@ALAforVeterans.org).

## DELIVER THE BAGS

You've assembled the team, hosted the event, packed the sacks, and now it's time to complete the project by delivering your bags to the kids. Help your assigned distribution team member(s) load up and head out. Make sure donations are delivered as promised and in a timely manner to recipients. The most important thing is that those who need your gifts receive them in good shape. Help get the sacks loaded into transport and distributed to your assigned outlets. Be sure to take pictures of your team in action.

## A FINAL WORD...

Project Ruck Sack is a great opportunity to get your department active and engaged in supporting the initiatives of the ALA Children & Youth Program. Using ingenuity, organization, and a commitment to program initiatives, your department can play a role in making a difference for kids. If you have questions or need help, reach out to the national ALA Children & Youth Committee at [Children&Youth@ALAforVeterans.org](mailto:Children&Youth@ALAforVeterans.org).

