

## Children & Youth



### It's Spring!

Spring is the time of new beginnings and renewal! Now is a good time for reminders about some of the core programs in Children and Youth.

Giving awards to deserving members of your community is one of the core programs of the American Legion Auxiliary. There are two awards that are available: the **Youth Hero Award** and the **Good Deed Award**.

**Looking Forward!** April is a big month for us in Children and Youth. What do we have to look forward to?

It's **National Children and Youth Month, Month of the Military Child, Purple Up! Day, and Kids of Deployed Are Heroes 2 (KDH2)**.

Wow! That's so much to talk about, and we need to work the programs we have now to prepare for a great April. This is the season where we have programs to make a difference in your communities.

The Month of the Military Child started in 1986. It is a nationwide initiative to recognize the special sacrifices that children of serving military members go through, such as moving frequently or missing a parent for extended times during deployment.

Who thinks April 15th is tax day? Well, it is. More importantly, it's **Purple Up Day!** Purple represents the combined colors associated with all branches of the U.S. Military (Army = green, Navy = blue, etc.). We encourage people in our communities to wear purple to honor the approximately 1.6 million children in serving military families.

April is also the time when the ALA can recognize children of deployed parent(s) with KDH2 buttons and stickers. You can visit your local base and schools near bases and work with community leaders to make children feel special and let them know they are special. They are indeed heroes too.

Please spend some time talking to Units and make sure these resources are available to them. Let them know that we have ways to help families beyond doing fundraising at a post once a year for a "sub-for-santa" or similar projects.

We have special, time-honored traditions in the American Legion Auxiliary. We can make children and youth feel special by recognizing them for their heroic deeds, their inspired service in our communities, and the special sacrifices that military families make.

I look forward to hearing about the successes you are having throughout our region.

Thanks again for all that you do!

**Mike Rasmuson**  
Children and Youth, Western Division Chair  
utahalamike@gmail.com



## Youth Hero Award

Award winners receive a medal and a certificate. Youth Hero Awards reward and recognize children and youth in our communities that have done the following:

- Demonstrates an act of physical valor.
- Served as an inspirational role model for the organization and the community.

**Examples:** Performing the Heimlich Maneuver, rescuing someone from drowning, getting help and assisting first responders in dire situations, etc.

Applicants do **NOT** have to be a member of the American Legion Family. They must be nominated by an Auxiliary Member.

## Good Deed Award

Award winners receive a certificate from the National organization. This award recognizes individuals that have done the following:

- Demonstrates leadership serving the community by planning, organizing, and executing a service project for Veterans, serving military and/or their families.
- Nominations are submitted by members and their local ALA units.

**Examples:** Planning and preparing a Veteran's Day dinner, arranging that instead of receiving birthday gifts for themselves they give to a Veteran-oriented charity, sending care packages to serving military members, etc.

Applicants do **NOT** have to be a member of the American Legion Family. They must be nominated by an Auxiliary Member.

You can follow this link to nominate a member of your community:

[https://legion-aux.formstack.com/forms/youth\\_hero\\_good\\_deed\\_award\\_nomination](https://legion-aux.formstack.com/forms/youth_hero_good_deed_award_nomination)

If someone you nominate does not receive an award from our National organization, you can still recognize them with a certificate from your Department, District, or Unit.

This can also be an activity that attracts new members to the Juniors or young Sons in the American Legion Family.



## YOU MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Unit members are the heart of every Children and Youth program. The difference is not made at the national level alone, it is made in communities, in schools, at local bases, and inside our Units. When members take time to nominate a young hero, recognize a child of a deployed parent, wear purple on April 15, or present a simple certificate of appreciation, they send a powerful message that someone sees and values these young people.

Every phone call to a school, every conversation with a military family, every award presented at a meeting strengthens our mission. Small actions by Unit members create lasting impact for children and youth who may never forget that the American Legion Auxiliary stood beside them.

You do not need a large budget to make a difference. You need awareness, initiative, and heart. When Units work these programs intentionally, we do more than check a box, we build community, honor sacrifice, and inspire the next generation.