

THE AMERICAN LEGION



# Children & Youth PROGRAMS



Since our inception, The American Legion realized a need to care for and to protect our nation's most valuable resources – our children. In 1925, our National Child Welfare Division adopted the “Whole Child” plan. This provides that “the child of every veteran should have a home, health, education, character and opportunity,” and is founded on three guiding principles:

- *To strengthen the family unit against the forces of today's complex society.*
- *To extend support to organizations and facilities providing services for children.*
- *To maintain a well-rounded program that meets the needs of today's young people.*

---

This publication was designed to provide a brief description of some key programs of The American Legion National Commission on Children & Youth. A complete list of standing resolutions, as well as additional information and promotional materials, may be found under the Children & Youth section of the Legion web page located at [www.legion.org](http://www.legion.org).



THE AMERICAN LEGION NATIONAL COMMISSION ON CHILDREN & YOUTH

## Children & Youth PROGRAMS

### FAMILY EMPHASIS

*The family is the cornerstone of American society; however, modern society places demands on the family that didn't exist in years past – demands that can deteriorate family strength and unity. The family emphasis programs of The American Legion National Commission on Children & Youth seek to promote the importance of family strength and integrity.*

### FAMILY SUPPORT NETWORK

The American Legion recognizes that families of deployed and activated military personnel face special difficulties and hardships. With the help of the Family Support Network they don't have to shoulder this burden alone. Families can connect to local American Legion Family members by requesting assistance through the nation-wide toll free number or electronic application. Legionnaires at the post level then provide assistance that can range from minor household chores and repairs, completing a Temporary Financial Assistance application, to connecting the family to existing local programs.

### TEMPORARY FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE (TFA)

TFA is the landmark program of the National Commission on Children & Youth and was established in 1925, as a form of direct aid to children. Through TFA, a Post can call upon the National Organization for cash assistance to help maintain the basic needs of veterans' children. Funds are granted to eligible families when it has been determined by investigation that the child is in need and that all other local resources have been exhausted or are not available to provide the required assistance. TFA can help families in meeting the costs of shelter, food, utilities and health expense items when the parents are unable to do so, thereby affording the child, or children, a more stable home environment.

The veteran does not have to be a member of The American Legion, but they must be eligible and there must be minor children in the home. Eligible children include biological children of an eligible veteran or children in the legal custody of an eligible veteran. TFA applications are obtained and must be submitted through the Department Children & Youth Chairman or Department Adjutant.



#### Family Support Network

1-800-504-4098

#### Electronic Application

[www.legion.org/fsn](http://www.legion.org/fsn)

#### Additional Information and Resources

[www.legion.org/support/fsninfo](http://www.legion.org/support/fsninfo)

#### Publications

Family Support Network Brochure (24-010)

#### Temporary Financial Assistance

#### Publications

Temporary Financial Assistance Brochure (24-008)

## Children & Youth PROGRAMS

### National Family Week

#### Publications

National Family Week Brochure (24-009)



### Operation: Military Kids

#### Web site

[www.usda-army-ydp.org/omk](http://www.usda-army-ydp.org/omk)

## NATIONAL FAMILY WEEK

A guiding principle of The American Legion's Children & Youth Programs continues to be maintaining the integrity of the family. To demonstrate our resolute belief of the importance of strong families, The American Legion National Commission on Children & Youth, by mandate, advocates the passage of federal legislation that would establish the Thanksgiving Holiday Week as *National Family Week*. All members of The American Legion Family are encouraged to initiate and engage in local activities during National Family Week that promotes, encourages, and celebrates the center of a healthy community: the family.

## OPERATION: MILITARY KIDS

When National Guard and Reserve parents are mobilized, their children suddenly have unique needs for special support and services. Operation: Military Kids exists to garner community resources to provide the needed support and to highlight the challenges these children face. The American Legion is a proud partner of this program and urges support from all levels of the organization to assist the children of our comrades while they serve our nation.

## CHILD HEALTH

*The American Legion believes that every child should have access to adequate healthcare. We have partnered with several organizations that share this philosophy. Our collective effort to increase the quality of life for children is making a difference in the lives of millions of children every year.*

## RONALD MCDONALD HOUSE CHARITIES POP TAB COLLECTION PROGRAM

This national fundraising project encourages the collection of aluminum pop tabs to support local Ronald McDonald Houses. This program helps with funds to provide housing for financially challenged families with seriously ill or injured children who must undergo medical treatment at a children's hospital.

## Children & Youth PROGRAMS

### CHILDREN'S MIRACLE NETWORK

Children need specialized care and equipment that only children's hospitals can provide. *Children's Miracle Network* hospitals provide state-of-the-art care, life-saving research and preventative education 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Every year, *Children's Miracle Network* hospitals treat 17 million children for every disease and injury imaginable, impacting the lives of more children than any other children's organization in the world.

The American Legion's ongoing commitment to improve the quality of life for our nation's children parallels Children's Miracle Network's own mission.

Supporting Children's Miracle Network hospitals in their efforts to provide quality health care to all children is the right thing to do and is a natural for The American Legion Family.

A corporate partner since 1998, The American Legion family has contributed nearly \$20 million for Children's Miracle Network hospitals to ensure that the best care is available whenever children need it.

### COVERING KIDS AND FAMILIES BACK-TO-SCHOOL CAMPAIGN

Annual Covering Kids and Families Back-To-School Campaign is a program designed to encourage the enrollment of uninsured children that are eligible for coverage through Medicaid or the State Children's Health Insurance Program.

### MERCY MEDICAL AIRLIFT

Mercy Medical Airlift (MMA) is a non-profit organization dedicated to serving people in situations of compelling human need through the provision of charitable air transportation. MMA is totally supported through charitable giving and the services of volunteer pilots and office assistants.



#### Children's Miracle Network

##### Publications

Children's Miracle Network Brochure (24-024)

#### Covering Kids and Families Back-To-School Campaign

##### Web site

<http://coveringkidsandfamilies.org/>

#### Mercy Medical Airlift

##### Web Site

<http://www.mercymedical.org>

**Gateway Drugs**

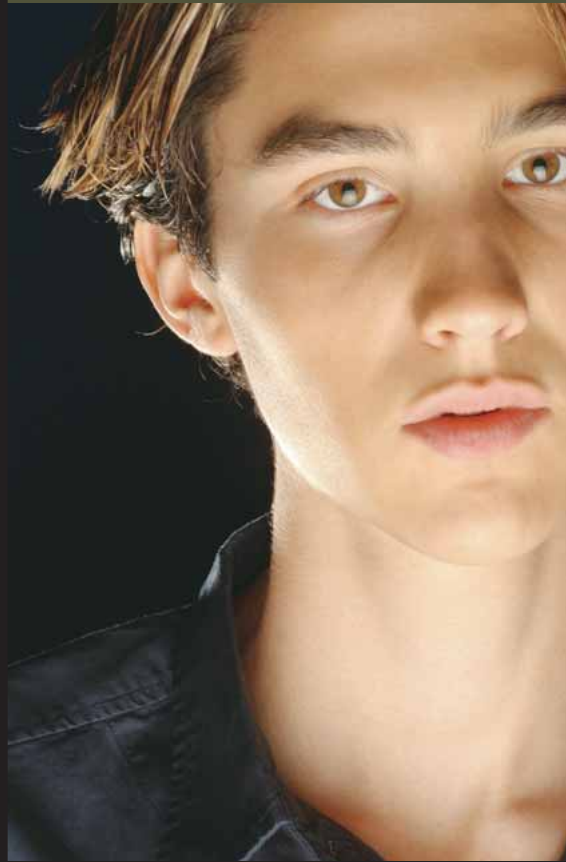
**Publications**

Gateway Drugs Brochure (24-006)

**Warning Signs**

**Publications**

Warning Signs of Youth Suicide Brochure (24-005)



## CHILD SAFETY

*The American Legion National Commission on Children & Youth believes that child safety is everybody's business. Prevention through education remains the best way to keep children safe. To promote child safety, the Commission publishes several useful brochures designed to educate children and parents and supports numerous national initiatives to keep children safe.*

### GATEWAY DRUGS

Alcohol, tobacco, inhalants, and marijuana are often readily available and considered to be the entryway to a life of drug dependency and delinquency. Gateway drugs are so-called because the use of these drugs often leads to drug abuse, addiction, and to the use of other drugs such as heroin, cocaine, and LSD. The Commission asks all members of The American Legion Family to educate parents and children in their communities about the dangers of gateway drugs.

### WARNING SIGNS

The National Commission on Children & Youth recognizes the serious, yet often overlooked, problem that continues to plague our nation's youth: Suicide. Suicide is a tragic and senseless act of desperation. It is a permanent solution to temporary problems. Our young people are now killing themselves at a record pace of over 100 per week. Suicide is never a pleasant topic, but one that must be brought out in open discussion to combat its devastating effects on our youth. As a responsible society, we must equip ourselves with the facts, dispel the misconceptions, and learn the warning signs of youth suicide.



## Children & Youth PROGRAMS

### HALLOWEEN SAFETY

As long as Halloween activities are sponsored and promoted in our various communities by duly appointed and elected officials, the National Commission on Children of Youth of The American Legion believes children and parents should know how to make this observance as safe as possible. This annual program continues to be one of our most popular.

### MISSING CHILDREN

The American Legion encourages Posts to provide or assist in making available child identification activities to give parents a means of providing this information to authorities should the need arise. In addition, all levels of the organization are encouraged to increase the public's awareness of child victimization and its detrimental effects on the children and youth of our society and to cooperate with credible organizations and agencies that seek to locate missing children in their states and communities.



### FIREWORKS SAFETY

Alarmed by the high number of injured children every year as a result of fireworks, The American Legion urges Posts and Departments to educate communities, parents, and children about fireworks safety. The American Legion advocates that children and families enjoy fireworks displays conducted by professionals as a means to protect children from injury.



### Halloween Safety

#### Publications

Halloween a Fun and Safe Night Brochure (24-012)



### **Child Welfare Foundation**

317-630-1202

American Legion Child Welfare Foundation, Inc.  
P.O. Box 1055  
Indianapolis, IN 46206

#### **Web site**

<http://www.cwf-inc.org>

#### **Publications**

Child Welfare Foundation Brochure (25-005)



### **The American Legion Endowment Fund**

317-630-1323

The American Legion Endowment Fund Corporation  
c/o The American Legion National Headquarters  
P.O. Box 1055  
Indianapolis, IN 46206

## **THE AMERICAN LEGION CHILDREN'S CHARITIES**

### **THE AMERICAN LEGION CHILD WELFARE FOUNDATION**

The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation, a 501(c)(3), is “dedicated to the betterment of all children.” Its purpose:

To contribute to the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual needs of children and youth through the dissemination of knowledge about new and innovative organizations and their programs.

To make wider, more effective use of the knowledge already possessed by well-established organizations to the end that such information will benefit youth and be more adequately used by society.

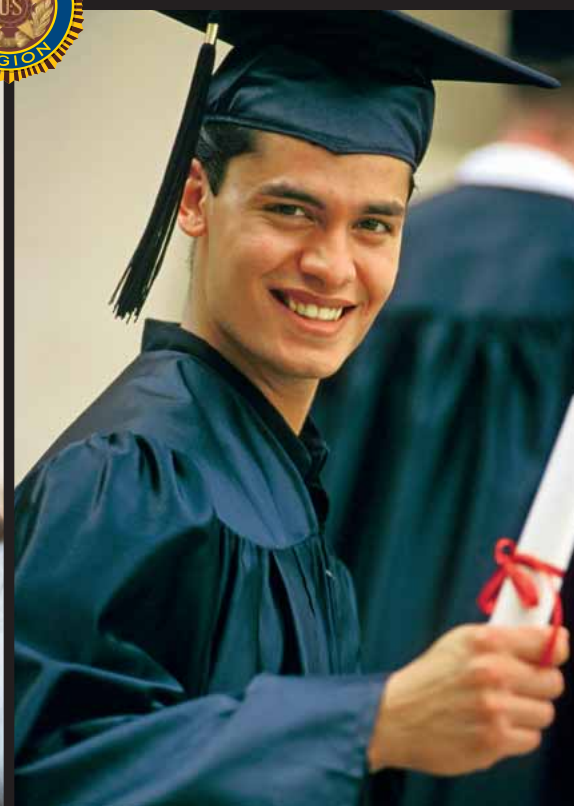
The Child Welfare Foundation accomplishes these goals each year by awarding grants to nonprofit youth-serving organizations for the explicit use of disseminating information that conforms to the Foundation's purpose. Since 1955, over \$8 million has been granted to help deserving organizations produce and disseminate current and valuable information.

### **THE AMERICAN LEGION ENDOWMENT FUND**

The Endowment Fund Corporation is a 501(c)(3) organization. Funds for the operation of the Temporary Financial Assistance program are provided from a share of the earnings of the Endowment Fund.

In 1925, World War I had been over for six years, but for veterans and their widows and children, the years had been a continuing struggle to adjust to the war's aftermath. The members of The American Legion, aware of the grave responsibility entrusted to them by those who had served, knew the time had come to take action. More than 900,000 Legionnaires, American Legion Auxiliary members, and other American citizens joined the campaign, raising nearly \$5 million and establishing The American Legion Endowment Fund.

Children & Youth  
**PROGRAMS**



**For more information or  
to request materials contact:**

The American Legion  
Americanism and Children & Youth Division  
P.O. Box 1055  
Indianapolis, IN 46206

**Web site**

[www.legion.org/childreneyouth](http://www.legion.org/childreneyouth)

**Phone**

317-630-1202

**E-mail**

[acy@legion.org](mailto:acy@legion.org)

THE AMERICAN LEGION