



American Legion Training Newsletter

National Headquarters Internal Affairs & Membership Division

March—April 2020

Volume 4 Edition 2

Honor - Serve - Prepare

April is Children & Youth Month



By Herbert J. Petit Jr., (LA) Chairman
of Committee on Children & Youth

April is ...

If you stand before a meeting of American Legion Family members and say only two words, "April is," every member should finish the sentence in unison. April is Children & Youth Month! Spring is in the air and planning for youth activities is in full swing.

Originally designated as American Legion Child Welfare Month in 1938, April is a time to focus on efforts that address issues in the community where American Legion youth programs can make a positive impact. Three of those primary areas of concern are

child health, child safety and family support.

As one of the four pillars of The American Legion, Children & Youth support was identified as a foundation of The American Legion's commitment to God and Country during its founding in 1919. Our founders wanted to ensure the values of citizenship and civic responsibility were continued in every aspect of the American way of life after the Great War. In demonstrating our



commitment through Children & Youth programs, that founding vision has continued throughout the last century and will into our second century of service.

The Americanism Commission's standing Committee on Children & Youth is tasked with writing and implementing passed resolu-

tions that support programs and activities designed to improve conditions for our nation's youth, with special emphasis on caring for children of active-duty servicemembers and veterans.

The following are a few of the many ways The American Legion is caring for our nation's children and youth.

American Legion Legacy Scholarship. The American Legion Legacy Scholarship is awarded annually to children of post-9/11 veterans who were either killed on active duty or who have combined a VA disability rating of 50 percent or greater. Scholarship applications for the 2020 year are available now and due April 15. For more information, visit legion.org/scholarships.

Americanism programs. The 83rd annual American Legion National Oratorical Contest Finals will be held in Indianapolis April 17-19. Then departments across the country will host Boys State, Girls State, Legion Baseball, Junior Shooting Sports and Youth Cadet Law Enforcement programs starting in May. These programs bring vital information and opportunities to our youth and their futures.

...continued on page2

April is Children & Youth Month

(Continued from page 1)

TFA. The Temporary Financial Assistance (TFA) program, funded by The American Legion Veterans and Children Foundation, provides grants to help veterans with minor children in the home who may be experiencing a financial hardship. Members of The American Legion and active-duty servicemembers have access to this valuable resource.

TFA grant applications are available at department headquarters and must be endorsed by the department headquarters.

Since The American Legion preamble emphasizes our devotion to mutual helpfulness, every Legionnaire should educate themselves about TFA grants. There may come a time when a friend, neighbor or family member may need this assistance. Please visit legion.org/financialassistance for more information.

The local Children & Youth committees are instrumental in identifying the needs of youth today in their communities. Posts, districts and departments often work alongside each other to find new and innovative ways to engage the youth while protecting them from harm. If an issue arises and is becoming part of a growing problem, posts or departments may consider writing a resolution. When a post or district find a controversy in the community requiring more than a resolution or cooperation with local leaders, legislation may

be considered as a last resort. Working with the department legislative committee and with support from the department headquarters can determine the proper channels to pursue while ensuring any and all actions are in keeping with the overall mission.

Children & Youth chairman play an important role within their departments and detachments, and the people they serve. They serve as a liaison between the posts and department when it comes to children and youth matters; they are tasked communicating policy changes down to the local level on all matters relating to children and youth; they hold training on the process and procedures for the TFA grant application; they review TFA grant cases for approval within their department; they plan events throughout the year that coordinate with local communities to engage our nation's youth; and they are responsible for compiling all the children and youth programs and activities and dollars spent in support of the children and youth program throughout the year for their department's yearly reporting.

This allows the children and youth chairman to submit for the Meritorious, Distinguished Service, Special and 100% Reporting Citations from National Headquarters. Whether you are the Children & Youth chairman from The American Legion, the American Legion Auxiliary or the Sons of The American Legion, you are working together at the post, district, depart-

ment and national levels to support today's youth.

Finally, be sure to report all Children & Youth programs and activities in all reporting formats. Since The American Legion's congressional charter requires us to submit an annual report of activities and expenditures, part of the Children & Youth chairman's job is to provide posts with information pertaining to children and youth activities for the Consolidated Post Report. Gathering and submitting this information could result in awards at various levels, to include national recognition.

The Children & Youth Department Chairman Program Guide is available for download at legion.org/publications/160941/children-youth-department-chairman-program-guide. It's a great resource for planning and conducting Children & Youth programs.

Our nation's youth are tomorrow's future. This was evident to our founders back in 1919 when The American Legion was created and became a pillar for which it stands. The American Legion continues to do all it can to make sure "a square deal for every child."



2019 DMS expired lists available for download

For those 2019 DMS members who transfer and renew at the local post for the 2020 membership year, the department will receive \$5 per member. 2019 DMS transfers must be completed by June 1 for incentive eligibility.

How to download a list of DMS 2019 expired

1. Log into post MyLegion.org account.
2. Click Reports/Labels link on left hand menu (next page loads).
3. Click Post Reports Folder icon (next page loads).
4. Choose between “Find Members in My Area – By Distance Listing” and “Find Members in My Area – By ZIP” Report link (report page loads).

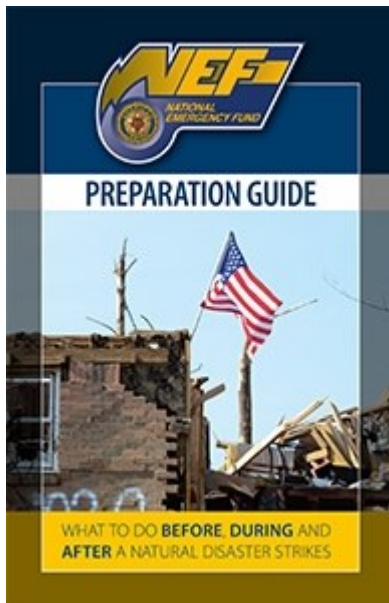
Criteria for “Find Members in My Area – By Distance Listing”

1. Select the ZIP code of your post or central area of search from ZIP drop-down menu; click off the list to load the next selection.
2. Enter the number of miles for distance from Post ZIP code in distance field; click off the list to load the next selection.
3. Select “2019” from the Last Paid drop-down menu; click off the list to load the next selection.
4. Select “Dept HQ Post #” from the Last Post drop-down menu; click off the list to load the next selection.
5. Click the View Report Button and the report will display.
6. The report can be downloaded by clicking on the disk icon in the header and selecting the appropriate format desired. Choose Excel for ability to filter results.
7. On the list the members in the incentive will have “Dept HQ Post #” in the List Post column of the report.

Criteria for “Find Members in My Area – By ZIP Listing”

1. Select appropriate ZIP codes or select all from ZIP code list drop-down menu; click off the list to load the next selection.
2. Select “2019” from the Last Paid drop-down menu; click off the list to load the next selection.
3. Select “Dept HQ Post #” from the Available Post drop-down menu; click off the list to load the next selection.
4. Click the View Report Button and the report will display.
5. The report can be downloaded by clicking on the disk icon in the header and selecting the appropriate format desired. Choose Excel for ability to filter results.
6. On the list the members in the incentive will have “Dept HQ Post #” in the List Post column of the report.

FIND IT ONLINE : myLegion.org is a FREE website designed to connect members of The American Legion to their post and department leadership.



Spring is a busy time for weather emergencies. Do you know what to do before, during and after a natural disaster strikes?

The National Emergency Fund (NEF) is available to American Legion and Sons of The American Legion members in good standing. Know how to help by downloading the NEF Preparation Guide at legion.org/emergency.

About this newsletter

This periodic and Legionnaire-driven newsletter, produced by the Internal Affairs & Membership Division, is designed to address best practices, ideas and training that every Legionnaire needs to know to engage our membership through effective training now and into the future.

Highlighting new training ideas and resources becoming available in 2020 and beyond, it will also feature essays from successful leaders and training ideas of posts, districts, departments and individuals throughout The American Legion.

Are you a trainer? A writer? We need your submissions! Send your training ideas and articles to train@legion.org.



Buddy Check tips



John Kilgallon, Department of Maryland, Laurel Post 60

By now you have heard about Buddy Checks – the calling on members to check in on them. During Springs Meetings last May, The American Legion's National Executive Committee passed Resolution 18, which calls for Buddy Checks to be conducted during the American Legion's birthday (March 15-17) and on Veterans Day (Nov. 11).

But posts are encouraged to conduct Buddy Checks any time throughout the year. A kit is available to help guide posts on Buddy Checks. The online resource contains Buddy Check tips and downloadable flyers, scripts and more. Visit legion.org/membership/buddycheck.

As you plan Buddy Checks, here's a few additional things to keep in mind:

Contact everyone. Besides contacting the members we seldom see at meetings or in the lounge, we should also focus on those who were active

but have stopped attending. The suddenly inactive member might have a family emergency or health issue, or some job-related problem. If we're going to dedicate ourselves to "mutual helpfulness" as our Preamble states, we should call that member the minute we notice their absence and see if they're okay. Maybe we can provide assistance. And even if we can't, that member will remember that someone called to let them know their Legion Family cares about them.

It's also possible that the suddenly inactive member had a bad experience at the post and is considering letting their membership lapse. Believe it or not, not everyone complains when they have a problem with an organization – some just quietly fade away. A quick phone call to let the member know that they've been missed might open up a dialogue on what went wrong and give you a chance to fix it.

Maybe the inactive member didn't have a problem, per se, but just felt ignored. It's a common issue in volunteer organizations that we energetically recruit new members, then forget to spend enough time integrating them into the group and making them feel truly welcome. The shy or retiring member may feel over-

looked if they aren't engaged in their first few meetings, and decide the Legion isn't for them. A Buddy Check might lead to a conversation that changes their mind.

Make Buddy Checks an official officer's duty. Normally, the post first vice commander is responsible for membership, so consider making it clear that organizing and tracking Buddy



Checks is part of the duties of that job. Encourage the chaplain to make Buddy Checks on inactive members too, as part of his or her outreach duties. Ask both officers to report their Buddy Check efforts at every post meeting. And encourage all post officers and executive committee members to make calls. This not only spreads the work around but also keeps your leaders connected with membership.

Conduct rehearsals. It's easy to get tongue-tied on a call, especially if you are trying to leave a voicemail that's about to cut you off at any moment.

...continued on next page



Veterans Strengthening America

Buddy Check Tips (continued)...

To help post members feel comfortable making Buddy Check calls, provide a sample phone script (found at legion.org/membership/buddycheck) and have them practice their delivery with another member.

Follow up. When you call a Legion member to ask how they're doing, you might receive a request for help. They may need to see the post service officer or chaplain, they may need help renewing their membership, or they may need a ride to the next few post meetings as they recover from an illness. Don't forget to follow up and get the member the help they need. Instruct your post members making Buddy Checks to note those member needs and report them to a single post leader who will keep a running list of what needs to be done and track them until completion. Discuss open items at post meetings.

Take credit for your work. Did you know that Buddy Checks are now a listed item on the Consolidated Post Report? If you conducted Buddy checks last year, check box 125 ("Participated in Buddy Check") and fill in the number of members contacted in block 126.

Remember why we do this. Buddy Checks may help with retention and renewals, but that's not the overall goal of them. In our time in the service, we took care of our battle buddies. The American Legion was founded to keep that comradeship alive after we return to the civilian world. We owe it to our members, even the ones we seldom see, to let them know we still care and that they are still valued members of the American Legion Family.



**Training at all levels of
The American Legion is
expanding and evolving as
new materials are being
developed and shared.**

***Check out new content at
legion.org/training***