

HOW TO REACH OUT TO MILITARY CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Committee:

Children & Youth

Submitted by:

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Some ideas for reaching out to military children and youth:

1. Sponsor a "You're My Hero" event, similar to the Hero Award, but for military children.
 - Present them with certificates and medals.
 - Be creative.
 - Ask your Junior members to participate.
 - Use your public relations tools to inform the community. Refer to the Public Relations Toolkit at www.ALAforVeterans.org.
2. Host a movie and popcorn night for teens or a board game night.
3. Many military kids can't afford new prom dresses. Get the community involved in collecting and distributing gently used prom dresses.
 - Ask local radio stations and newspapers to donate time and space to help advertise your initiative.
 - Get local bridal shops involved.
 - Involve your high school counselors.
 - Your unit may also want to help with transportation expense, flowers, etc.
4. Contact your local homeless shelter. Ask if there are any veterans there with children.
 - Since one in five homeless are veterans, there is a good chance they will be living in local shelters. Find out what your unit can do to help the children.
 - VA hospitals have homeless coordinators and/or directors of voluntary services. Meet with them to establish a method in which the coordinator/director will coordinate with your unit whenever a homeless veteran with children is identified. Offer to provide school supplies for the child, through the homeless coordinator or director of voluntary services.
5. Maybe the best thing you can do is get your Legion Family together and brainstorm ideas that might work in your community. Sometimes, school-aged children might be your best link to finding military children in your community. Be creative.

No matter what you decide to do, plan a public relations campaign around your event. Consider having Auxiliary membership applications available. Community events provide the best opportunity to sign up new members.