

April is... Children and Youth Month

Spring is in the air. The days are getting longer, and organized events and activities begin to fill people's calendar. April is Children & Youth Month at The American Legion. Celebrated since 1938, April is the perfect time of year for posts, units, squadrons, departments and detachments to focus on the children and youth in their communities.

American Legion posts are encouraged to participate in "April Is Children & Youth Month" and create meaningful children and youth-themed community events and activities throughout the month, or the year. For example, since Easter is later than previous years – April 17 – it provides an opportunity for Legion Family members to host an Easter egg hunt, dye eggs, or conduct similar community outdoor events that celebrate spring. You also can host an arts and craft day, community picnic with relay races and face painting, an e-sport (electronic video game) tournament or help plant a community garden. And take advantage of the nature in your area by organizing a hike, fishing trip, or even a campout.

Other ways to celebrate April Is Children & Youth Month is to:

- Organize a meeting at the post that engages Legion Family members with local families to discuss issues that may be affecting youth in the community and provide ideas to resolve the issues. Then take those ideas to your community leaders.
- Host a community festival or information fair and ask local children and youth-oriented businesses and organizations to participate. Offer positive, family-friendly activities, entertainment and resources from the local businesses and organizations that can provide information to families about the services they offer.
- Host a youth summer activity open house. April is when many parents start looking into summer camps, organized sports and other summer activities. So have an open house where these types of organizations in the community can come to talk about the programs they offer.
- Invite a subject-matter expert on child safety, health and education to present at a post meeting.
- Reach out to your local schools to volunteer. Your team of Legionnaires may help teach flag etiquette in a classroom or help with a school landscaping project.
- Organize a community dinner at the Legion post as an opportunity to raise funds for Children & Youth programs. These donations can go toward The American Legion Veterans & Children Foundation, which supports our Temporary Financial Assistance program that provides immediate assistance to eligible military and Legion members with

children in the home who are facing a hardship. Or help support the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation, which provides grants to nonprofits that contribute to the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual welfare of the children and youth of this country.

Remember to invite local leaders and officials to support your event and engage the media in publicity and promotion. Communities need to see how The American Legion is impacting the community with services that are available and to hear why young people matter so much to Legionnaires. Allowing children and families an opportunity to come together with other families, organizations, local leaders and people who can help them thrive is an important contribution to our communities.

Every American Legion post can be that beacon of light for their community. Legion posts are not just for the veteran, but for the whole family and community. It is a place where our members can teach youth how to be an American citizen all the while engaging in family-friendly activities. It's where families go to feel a sense of community and give back to those that gave us our freedom. Every post is made up of people that comes from different backgrounds and ideologies, but one thing remains the same – youth are our future, let us teach them well.

Don't forget to capture your post, unit and squadron's activities and events on the Consolidated Post Report or Children and Youth Report. Show the department, detachment and national organization how your post has been able to have an impact on the youth in your community.

For further ideas on how to promote April as Children & Youth Month in your community, download or print the [April Is Children & Youth Month](#) brochure.