

*American Legion Auxiliary
Children & Youth*



*Western Division
2021-2022*

January - National Mentoring Month

Greetings,

I hope the New Year will be as fruitful and rewarding as the past years. May our teamwork lead us to new heights! Happy New Year!

Through quality education programs, community initiatives, and personal involvement, mentors help our children succeed in life by teaching them to make sound decisions, to work hard, and to care for their neighbors in need. A mentor's involvement in a child's life can brighten that child's future, while helping maintain healthy families and promoting more vibrant communities. Research shows that most children who have been mentored improve their school attendance and performance, are more likely to go to college, and are less likely to use drugs or alcohol. The American Legion Family recognizes the important contributions made by the hundreds of thousands members and the nation who work to strengthen our communities by giving their time and effort to serve as a mentor and role model for our children and youth.

Mentoring programs attempt to foster a relationship that is too often missing from the lives of disadvantaged children and youth. In view of both the power and the limitations of mentoring programs, it is important to understand how mentoring occurs naturally. We can examine mentoring in four contexts: classrooms, youth development organizations, work and service-learning, and faith-based organizations. Available evidence indicates that such mentoring adds to young people's intellectual, psychological and emotional, social, and, to a lesser extent, physical assets.

As Auxiliary members, we have the opportunity to mentor children and youth in various ways. Some examples are Boys and Girls Scouts, Boys and Girls Club of America, Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivor (TAPS), Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC) and several others. Mentoring goes beyond offering information, support, and resources, it appears to be related to positive outcomes for mentors as well. As a volunteer of our organization, we at times find ourselves overwhelmed with the amount of need that is required and shy away from reaching out to our children and youth. We need to remember that the change we want to see begins with you/us in being that change, one person can and does make a difference. Encourage the units within your department to seek out the various organizations that offer mentoring for the children and youth in their community.

Along with this brief message are some brochures for "food for thought" to share with your department chairman. Keep your eyes and ears open for children and youth who are doing great deeds in our communities and submit them for a Good Deed Award and/or a Youth Hero Award. They are out there, we just need to seek them out. Give them a shout out and recognize them. New this year is the Youth Caregiver Certificate of Appreciation. With the pandemic, many young children are assisting with care for those family members and/or friends by providing home health care or assistance as needed, they too need to be recognized for their efforts. Local and Social Media is a great resource in seeking these individuals out.

The National Children and Youth Chairman is asking for all departments, if possible, to donate to the Child Welfare Foundation (CWF). Assist your units by giving them fundraiser ideas. Here are some thoughts: use a Pringles Chip can, wrap the attached brochure around the can, and pass out at unit monthly meetings. Have a designated fundraiser for CWF such as Taco Tuesday. At the upcoming Mid-Winter Conferences, pass that Pringle chip can around. Be creative!

January is

Teen Driving Awareness Month is observed every year in January to spread awareness about teen driving and the risks associated with it. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that every day, six teenagers between the ages of 16 and 19 die in car crashes. This roughly equates to 2,100 teenagers dying every year. We can certainly play our part in preventing such cases. Teen Driving Awareness Month is celebrated as a full month every year to spread awareness about the issue.

National Volunteer Blood Donor Month is observed every year in January. It is a part of the campaign by the American Red Cross to encourage blood donations. While donating blood is a form of charity, unfortunately, there are very few charitable people who volunteer for a blood donation. So this month, be a hero and donate blood, be a hero and save a life.

Martin Luther King Jr. Day on January 17, we celebrate the birthday of civil right's leader, Martin Luther King Jr. Each year on the third Monday of January we observe Martin Luther King, Jr. Day and reflect on the work that still needs to be done for racial equality.

On January 24, celebrate National Compliment Day by going all out with praise. The power of a compliment is pretty remarkable: either giving or receiving one can boost your happiness and confidence — making the act a win-win. You never know when someone could use some good vibes, so spread the positivity by giving someone a reason to smile!

Thank you all for what you do and let's move the Western Division up in numbers for the amount of Youth Hero and Good Deed awards awarded. Yes, you can!

Respectfully,

Theresa E Montoya