

Children and Youth Program

Mid-year report

Joanne Mangis, Chairman

The purpose of the Children and Youth Committee is to work in conjunction with the American Legion to promote programs that protect, care for and support children and youth, especially those of our military families.

In the past 5 months, many of our units have been diligent in holding training events for our youth as well as fund raisers to support children and youth programs.

Some highlights of those events are:

- Christmas in July event was held at Unit 35 and resulted in \$2400 being donated to the City of Chandler for their back to school drive.
- Unit 39 hosted a chili cook off to help support Post 39 Christmas for kids program and raised over \$8k.
- Unit 86 – Heber/Overgaard – Participated in the community Shop Hop where kids visited businesses in town doing crafts and collecting treats!
- Unit 39 presented Gilbert Fire Department with a check for \$6,000 to support back to school shopping with a firefighter.
- Jr Auxiliary member Taryn Pfaff dropped over 4 bins of tabs to the Shriners on behalf of the juniors and all the members of American legion Post 39 in Gilbert. The Shriners will use the money from the tabs to support families at the Shriners Children Hospital.
- Unit 117 Junior Department Secretary Jocelynn wrote numerous messages to soldiers in cards being delivered.
- Unit 86 Heber/Overgaard (and Post 86 Legion Family) hand delivered donations to The American Legion's Legacy Scholarship which provides college funding to children of post-9/11 veterans who died on active duty, or those who have a combined VA disability rating of 50 percent or greater.
- Auxiliary Unit 59, and Post 59 Commander, delivered school supplies to Manzo school.
- Unit 117 the Legionnaires and Auxiliary had the privilege of educating the children that attend Kaleidoscope school, in North Phoenix, about the Military and the American flag.
- They also volunteered at Arizona Helping Hands, a non profit organization and the largest provider of essential needs to children in foster care in Arizona.
- Many of our units and departments held family picnics, Halloween gatherings and have fully stocked food pantries to help families in need.
- Unit 35 Aux will be participating with Post 35, Post 91 and Post 44 riders for the annual Toys for Tots event on 11/26 and is currently participating in the fall Matthews Crossing Food Drive challenge with Post 91.

Future plans are to stress the importance of recognizing our children and youths thru our programs such as Youth Hero and Good Deed awards and the Youth Caregiver certificate program.

Some resources that are available to support our events and programs can be located at ALAforVetrans.com.

I look forward to working with all units to promote and support our children and youth and will be adding suggestions and resources in the monthly bulletin to make our program successful.

Thank you