

Minutes of the  
National Commission on Children & Youth  
May 4-5, 2009

The National Commission on Children & Youth met at the Sheraton City Centre Hotel, Panorama A, 21st floor in Indianapolis, Indiana on Monday and Tuesday, May 4 – 5, 2009. Chairman Dennis R. Boland (FL) called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. Robert Johnson (MD) gave the invocation and Chairman Boland led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Robert K. Caudell (IN), Deputy Director, Americanism and Children & Youth Division, called the roll. The members in attendance were:

Dennis R. Boland (FL)	John E. Konkel (NY)
Kenneth A. Bonde (WI)	Charles E. Langley (MS)
Warren N. Cuffee (DC)	Bob Legan (AR)
James A. Delaney (IN)	Anthony Lori (NJ)
Paul A. Erickson (CO)	Jon K. Marsh (OR)
Richard H. Farmer (VT)	Peggy Moon (MN)
James B. Ford (ID)	Herbert J. Petit, Jr. (LA)
Elmer Fuhrhop (OH)	Michael W. Phelps (KY)
Gary W. Gifford (MD)	James E. Prendergast (TX)
Mervin G. Gunderson (MT)	Donald Suchy (NE)
Ronald D. Haygood (AL)	Frances A. Swensen (KS)
Glenn A. Hickman (OH)	Ronald G. Tolrud (SD)
Michael H. Hogan (IA)	John F. Warden, Jr. (NV)
Jerry W. Howard (VA)	Don Weible (ND)
Robert M. Johnson (MD)	Lloyd H. Woods (ME)
John W. Knox (MI)	

Guests included: Linden Dixon (VA), Sylvia Beals (MT), Rosalie Walters (LA), and James Gelwicks (CO). Additional staff members present included Jason R. Kees (IL), Assistant Director, Americanism and Children & Youth Division, and Barb Hey, Secretary.

Chairman Boland asked Chairman Emeritus Elmer Fuhrhop for comments. Mr. Fuhrhop told the Commission members that the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation was going to be honored by National Reye's Syndrome on June 6<sup>th</sup> and he would be there to accept the award as well as Mr. Caudell. He thanked the Commission members for all they had done in the past year and asked that they continue to get the word out on our programs for the welfare of children.

Chairman Boland introduced Charles E. Langley (MS), National Executive Committeeman and Chairman of the Children & Youth Liaison Committee. Mr. Langley delivered greetings and expressed his pleasure in serving with the Commission.

Chairman Boland introduced Kris Nelson (MN), National Children & Youth Chairman, American Legion Auxiliary, who in turn introduced Peggy Thomas (VA) as the incoming National Children & Youth Chairman. Ms. Nelson commented on the Legion's children and youth programs and agenda, and highlighted the Auxiliary's program on Youth Hero Awards.

Chairman Boland introduced Marcy Schmidt, Le Chapeau Nationale, and Marge Sheridan, La Secretaire-Cassiere Nationale, Eight & Forty. Le Chapeau Schmidt thanked the Commission and staff for the wonderful job they were doing. She told the Commission that the Eight & Forty had raised \$13,000.00 for the National Jewish Medical and Research Center for Immunology and Respiratory Medicine which was their project for the year.

Chairman Boland introduced Bill Towns (OH), National Children and Youth Chairman of the Sons of The American Legion (SAL) who addressed the Commission on behalf of SAL National Commander Tom Cisna. Mr. Towns emphasized that the Sons stand ready to do their best to assist any of the Legion's programs when needed.

Chairman Boland introduced William Pease, Director, Americanism and Children & Youth Division. Following brief remarks, Mr. Pease thanked the Commission members for all they continue to do on behalf of our nation's children.

A motion was made by Jerry Howard and seconded by Peggy Moon to accept the minutes of the Fall Meeting on October 13-14, 2008, as written.

The Commission heard four presentations.

#### Child Exploitation on the Internet

Federal Bureau of Investigation Special Agent Emily Odom gave a presentation about child exploitation and the Internet. With the advent of cell phone cameras, social networks and the Internet, child predators have more tools to identify and locate possible victims. Agent Odom discussed ways parents can reduce the chances of their child falling victim to a cyber predator. There are some very important things that children need to keep in mind when they are on their computer at home or at school.

- First, remember never to give out personal information such as name, home address, school name, or telephone number in a chat room or on bulletin boards. Also, never send personal pictures to someone you chat with on the computer without your parent's permission.
- Never write to someone who has made you feel uncomfortable or scared.
- Do not meet someone or have them visit you without the permission of your parents.
- Tell your parents right away if you read anything on the Internet that makes you feel uncomfortable.
- Remember that people online may not be who they say they are. Someone who says that "she" is a "12-year-old girl" could really be a pedophile adult.

Finally, another resource to help keep your children safe on the Internet is [A Parent's Guide to Internet Safety](#). Additional information is available at the FBI's website [www.fbi.gov/becrimesmart.htm](http://www.fbi.gov/becrimesmart.htm).

#### Court Appointed Special Advocate Association

Michael Piraino, CEO, National CASA Association; Leslie Dunn, Indiana State Director, GAL/CASA; and Frank West, CASA volunteer and Legionnaire addressed the Commission. Mr. Piraino described the need for additional Court Appointed Special Advocates stating that at any given time there are approximately 510,000 children in the foster care system. Mr. Piraino thanked the Legion for its continued support of the CASA program. Legionnaire and CASA volunteer Frank West described the role of the CASA volunteer and what type of person is needed to fill that position.

### Special Olympics

Mike Furnish, President and CEO Special Olympics Indiana, and Andrea Boling, Special Olympics athlete, addressed the Commission. Mr. Furnish thanked the Legion for its continued support of Special Olympics (Res. No. 33-Support for Special Olympics, 2007 NEC Fall). Mr. Furnish stated that children with intellectual disabilities who participate in Special Olympics develop improved physical fitness and motor skills, greater self-confidence and a more positive self-image. They grow mentally, socially and spiritually and, through their activities, exhibit boundless courage and enthusiasm, enjoy the rewards of friendship and ultimately discover not only new abilities and talents but “their voices” as well.

Andrea Boling described for the Commission how participation in Special Olympics has changed her life. Chairman Boland presented a framed certificate of appreciation to Ms. Boling to thank her for her presentation.

### Operation: Military Kids

Darin Allen, Program Coordinator, U.S. Army Child, Youth and School Services thanked the Legion for its continued support of Operation: Military Kids (OMK). OMK is the U.S. Army's collaborative effort with America's communities to support the children and youth impacted by deployment. Since its founding in 2005, OMK has touched more than 65,000 military youth and provided information to 7,200 community members across the United States.

Through a network of community partners, OMK provides youth program opportunities for school age, middle school and teenaged youth and connects them to support resources where they live. Through OMK, military youth can:

- Participate in a range of recreational, social and educational programs.
- Gain leadership, organizational, and technical skills by participating in the “Speak Out for Military Kids” program or the Mobile Technology Lab (MLT) programs.
- Receive assistance with school issues.
- Attend one-day or weekend camps.
- Meet other youth who are also experiencing issues related to parental deployment.

When a family member is activated or deployed, the Legion recognizes that the whole family is serving. Your Commission encourages all members of The American Legion to partner with their local OMK activities to ensure that military children in their communities are afforded the aforementioned services and recognition of their own sacrifices.

Mr. Kees gave his report on The American Legion’s Temporary Financial Assistance Program (TFA) and said that it continues to provide for the basic needs of children of eligible veterans through cash grants, made possible through the generosity of The American Legion Endowment Fund Corporation. TFA assisted 1,462 children throughout the United States maintain shelter, utilities, food, and clothing with over \$705,756 in cash grants during 2008. For the first quarter of this year, the Legion has provided over \$124,742 to 257 veterans’ children.

The Temporary Financial Assistance program continues to be one of our best-kept secrets. Through TFA, a post can call upon the National Organization for cash assistance to help maintain the basic needs of veterans’ children. Remember that a veteran does not have to be a Legionnaire, just

Legion eligible. Children of veterans are still in need. Please encourage your Department to make adequate use of this program for the benefit of all.

Mr. Kees updated the Commission on the Family Support Network and the important role The American Legion has in assisting our comrades currently serving on active duty and their families. Last year the Family Support Network fielded 2,750 requests for assistance and information at the National Headquarters alone. For the first quarter of 2009, the Legion has already received 568 calls for assistance, averaging over 47 requests per week.

Mr. Kees reported that due to the restructure of Children's Miracle Network, The American Legion has a new designation as a Fund Raising Partner. This in no way changes the intent of the Legion's mandate to raise funds and awareness for children's hospitals.

The third annual National Children & Youth Conference will be held on September 18-20, 2009 at the Sheraton Hotel in Indianapolis. This conference will educate Legion representatives from 52 Departments on current children's issues and the programs of the National Commission on Children & Youth. Conference participants will learn practical implementation strategies for conducting children and youth programs and conferences within their Departments. This year we are adding a new Children & Youth Chairman Orientation. As our children and youth programs work best due to a concerted effort from all members of the Legion family, please encourage the children and youth representatives from your Auxiliary and Sons of The American Legion to consider joining us for a number of informative sessions.

Chairman Boland proposed the following Areas of Concern for the 2009 – 2010 program year: Child Health, Family Support, and Child Safety. Elmer Fuhrhop moved to accept the list presented by the Chairman. Peggy Moon seconded and the Areas of Concern were approved. The staff was charged to develop, revise, and distribute support materials as appropriate.

The Board of Directors of the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation met in regular session at the Sheraton City Centre on Sunday, May 3, 2009. The following officers were elected: Dennis R. Boland (FL), President; Peggy Moon (MN) Vice-President; Roger N. Messier (VA), Secretary; and Robert Turner (GA), Treasurer. The administrative personnel appointed by the Board were George A. Buskirk, Jr. (IN), Assistant Treasurer and Robert K. Caudell (IN), Executive Secretary.

The Board of Directors invites all Legion family members to visit the Foundation's web site to learn more about the good work of their Foundation.

Established in 1954, the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation was developed as a repository of funds from individuals who wished to contribute to the betterment of children in this country. Its foremost philanthropic priority is to provide other nonprofit organizations with the means to educate the public about the special needs of children across this nation.

Charitable donations from Legion family members make a definite difference in the lives of all children. Remember, because The American Legion generously takes care of the Foundation's overhead expenses, every penny goes to programs for kids. Few, if any, other foundations can make this claim.

The web site includes specific information for grant seekers on deadlines, submission criteria and grant limitations, as well as useful links to assist them in their search for organization funding. The

“Donate Now” button allows visitors to evaluate contribution options and provides the ability to donate online via a secure server. Publications, to include annual reports, audits and fact sheets, are now available for member download. A special, password-protected, micro site for Children’s Action Team (CAT) members permits them to examine current award year contribution reports and download CAT publications.

Three resolutions were brought before the Commission for consideration:

- Children’s Organ Transplant Association. Don Suchy (NE) made a motion to approve the resolution and Don Weible (ND) seconded.
- Support for the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. Robert Johnson (MD) made a motion to approve the resolution and Bob Legan (AR) seconded.
- Reiterate Support for Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) Program. Robert Johnson (MD) made a motion to approve the resolution and Elmer Fuhrhop (OH) seconded.

All three resolutions were approved and are attached to the minutes.

Chairman Boland presented \$292.00 to CWF.

Chairman Boland asked for new business. None was offered. Chairman Boland asked if there was any other business to be discussed. He thanked the Commission for a productive meeting and expressed his appreciation for the dedication and hard work of all.

Chairman Boland adjourned the meeting at 3:45 p.m.

## **CHILDREN & YOUTH CONFERENCE PACKET**

The second National Children & Youth Conference will be held September 18 – 20, 2009 at the Sheraton Indianapolis City Centre Hotel in Indianapolis, Indiana. This informative meeting will provide attendees, from The American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary and the Sons of the American Legion, the opportunity to exchange ideas and learn more about our outstanding programs.

### **HOTEL & MEETING SITE INFORMATION**

The Annual Children & Youth Conference will be held at:

**Sheraton Indianapolis City Centre Hotel**  
**31 W. Ohio Street**  
**Indianapolis, IN 46204**  
**Phone: (317) 635-2000**

Enclosed you will find the housing form that must be completed and returned **no later than August 14, 2009** to:

**The American Legion**  
**ATTN: Barb Hey, ACY**  
**P.O. Box 1055**  
**Indianapolis, IN 46206**

To avoid duplication, roommates should only submit one housing form. Reservations received after August 14, 2009 are subject to availability and prevailing room rates.

Your reservation must include the credit card type, number and expiration date, or a check or money order. Attendees will be required to provide acceptable credit card information upon check-in at the hotel.

All hotels require one night's room and tax deposit. Rates do not include 16% state/local tax. If room is not canceled by verbal or written communication to the hotel, first night's room and tax may be charged to the individual.

### **REGISTRATION FORM**

Registration is free and open to all interested American Legion Family members, but all registrants are required to submit a completed Registration Form. All other costs associated with attending the Annual Children & Youth Conference including, but not limited to: travel, lodging, and meals are the sole responsibility of the attendee.

### **AGENDA**

Registration/ check-in for the conference will be held on Friday, September 18, 2009 from 3:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. at the Sheraton Indianapolis City Centre Hotel. The opening session will be held from 7:00 – 7:30 p.m. with a host bar reception immediately following. Saturday's general session will be from 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. A patriotic memorial service will be conducted at 7:30 am on Sunday. A continental breakfast will follow and the general session will reconvene at 9:00 am. **The conference will conclude no later than 11:00 a.m. on Sunday.** Please keep this information in mind when planning your travel arrangements.

Please mail reservation forms to: The American Legion, ATTN: Barb Hey, P.O. BOX 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206 by August 14, 2009. This form may be copied and must be completed for each room reserved for the conference.

**We strongly urge you to confirm your reservation with the hotel approx. 2 weeks after returning it!**

Type of Room	# of Rooms	Rate							
King (1 bed)		\$98.00	Check in is 3:00 p.m.; Check-out Noon Roll-a-ways \$20.00 per night and the hotel has a limited amount. Self-parking is \$22.00 per night Valet Parking is \$24.00 per night						
Double (2 beds)		\$98.00							
Executive King (King bed with a Sofa Sleeper)		\$108.00							
<b>The Sheraton is a smoke free hotel.</b>									
Department of _____ Name _____ Address _____ _____ Telephone no. (____) _____ Arrival Date _____ Arrival Time _____ Departure Date _____ Roommate Name _____ Roommate's Arrival/Departure _____			<p><b>Rates do not include 16% state/local tax. Reservation cut-off is August 14, 2009 weeks prior to arrival. Reservations received after cut-off date subject to availability. All hotels require one night's room and tax deposit. If room is not canceled by verbal or written communication to the hotel, first night's room and tax may be charged to the individual.</b></p> <p>_____ Guarantee by using one of the following</p> <table> <tr> <td>American Express</td> <td>Discover</td> </tr> <tr> <td>MasterCard</td> <td>Visa</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other</td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>Card# _____</p> <p>Expiration Date _____</p> <p>Signature _____</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Check/money order enclosed in the amount of \$ _____                      (one night's deposit – made payable to hotel)</p>	American Express	Discover	MasterCard	Visa	Other	
American Express	Discover								
MasterCard	Visa								
Other									

**\* NOTE: THIS FORM MUST BE COMPLETED FOR EACH ROOM RESERVED.**



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**ORDER FORM**

\_\_\_\_\_ Please send our quota of *Make Halloween a Safe and Fun Night* to our Department. (If fewer brochures are needed, please indicate.)

SEND THESE MATERIALS TO:

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Name and Title)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Street Address)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(City, State, ZIP Code)

Return this form to:

**The American Legion  
National Commission on Children & Youth  
P.O. Box 1055  
Indianapolis, Indiana 46206**

**PLEASE ORDER BEFORE SEPTEMBER 1**

*DUPLICATE AS NECESSARY*