

NEWS RELEASE OCTOBER 7, 2002

The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation, in its 48th year, has awarded \$283,900 to 11 non-profit organizations. These grants, determined during the annual meeting of the Board of Directors, held at the Radisson Hotel City Centre in Indianapolis, Indiana on Sunday, October 6, 2002, have been awarded to support worthwhile projects and disseminate information about them to the general public and specific target groups. The following is a brief summary of the grants awarded for 2003:

Big Brothers Big Sisters of America of Philadelphia, PA were awarded \$40,000 for their project entitled “Big Brothers Big Sisters of America’s Volunteer Recruitment Campaign.” This grant will provide training kits, 30-second Radio Spots and Customer Service manuals.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of America has a dramatic growth plan—one that calls for BBBSA to match 1,000,000 children annually with a caring adult volunteer by 2010. That number is a significant increase over the 250,000 they expect to serve in 2002 and the 160,000 children served in 1999. In order to serve more children, BBBSA must recruit more volunteers. Toward this end, they are initiating a nationwide Volunteer Recruitment Campaign. The materials that will be produced for the campaign are designed to highlight the positive experience of being a mentor and to emphasize the power of sharing time with a child. Research has consistently shown that BBBS mentoring has a proven positive impact on the children in our program. By increasing the number of volunteers, BBBSA seeks to bring these positive impacts to many more of the at-risk children that we serve.

Cancervive, Inc. of Los Angeles, CA was awarded \$40,000 for their project entitled “Children with Cancer – You Are Not Alone.” This grant will fund three 15-minute educational videos that will be duplicated and distributed. The Sons of The American Legion and Eight and Forty sponsor this grant.

Cancervive, Inc.’s mission is to create and distribute a video tape that will help children adjust to a diagnosis of cancer and to identify the challenges that newly diagnosed children face. The tape will provide concrete strategies and motivate the child with inspiring stories of how others coped. It will create a supportive and educational tool for the ill child, family and peer group, to normalize the cancer experience.

Children’s Organ Transplant Association of Bloomington, IN was awarded \$40,000 for their project entitled “Saving Kids’ Lives Through Education, Registration and Communication.” This grant will distribute 250,000 donor registration cards while conducting bone marrow registration drives throughout the country. The Sons of The American Legion sponsor this grant.

There are more than 80,000 individuals, 15,000 of them children, listed on the United Network for Organ Sharing waiting list. More than 4,000 of our children die each year because they do not receive a life-saving organ or tissue transplant. The root cause of this ever-increasing waiting list is the lack of localized efforts to conduct registration drives and to distribute donor registration cards.

Cornelia de Lange Syndrome (CdLS) Foundation of Avon, CT was awarded \$26,500 for their project entitled “Find One Child – The CdLS Foundation Reaches Out.” This grant will fund the publication of Reaching Out in 2003, including an exclusive, one-time issue intended especially for new parents. The Sons of The American Legion and Eight and Forty sponsor this grant.

In an effort to promote awareness of Cornelia de Lange Syndrome (CdLS) and locate children, who are undiagnosed, CdLS is initiating a national campaign called “Find One Child.” They will utilize several tools to launch and sustain this campaign: “Reaching Out” – the foundation’s newsletter, and awareness flyers and posters. In addition, a special edition of “Reaching Out”, specifically designed for new parents of children with CdLS, will be sent to every member family and genetic centers across the country.

Foundation Fighting Blindness of Owings Mills, MD was awarded \$15,000 for their project entitled “Blind Children: Coping, Living, Thriving.” This grant will produce a new web site that will assure better legibility for the visually impaired.

A critical component of the Foundation’s mission is to provide information about inherited retinal degenerative diseases, and the resources to cope with vision loss. Their public education program is designed to promote self-empowerment to people affected by blindness, and to increase independence and mobility. It is critical to a child’s healthy development and self-worth that parents acquire the necessary tools to assist them with the needs of their children when a diagnosis has been made that their child is losing their vision, or in some cases, are already blind.

National CASA Association of Seattle, WA was awarded \$29,000 for their project entitled “Lighting the Way II: Stories of Children in Foster Care.” This grant will provide for the printing and distribution of 10,000 books, “Lighting the Way II,” which features powerful stories of children in foster care. The American Legion Auxiliary sponsors this grant.

The National Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Association speaks for the best interests of abused and neglected children who are involved in the juvenile courts. CASA volunteers help to ensure that these kids are placed into safe, permanent homes where they will have an opportunity to develop and flourish. Their ultimate mission is to provide a volunteer advocate for every abused and neglected child who needs one, and to help stop the generational cycle of abuse in our country.

National Foundation for Ectodermal Dysplasias of Mascoutah, IL was awarded \$6,000 for their project entitled “Kids Camps 2003.” This grant will help fund three, four-day, conferences for children with ED. The Kids Camps offer a full schedule of activities and supervision so that the youngest attendees will benefit from their participation

The NFED’s mission is to help those affected by the EDs lead a normal life span and nearly normal lifestyle. EDs are a group of genetic disorders affecting the development of the ectodermal skin area. The organization was founded to aid in the identification of those affected and offer support to their families and care providers.

National Rifle Association Foundation, Inc. of Fairfax, VA was awarded \$20,100 for their project entitled “NRA Youth Safety and Education Program.” This grant will distribute materials to individuals, clubs and organizations to educate young people in gun safety and expand safe shooting sports opportunities nationwide. The Sons of The American Legion sponsor this grant.

Established in 1990, The NRA Foundation, Inc. supports a wide range of firearm-related public interest activities of the National Rifle Association of America and other organizations that defend and foster the Second Amendment rights of all law-abiding Americans. These activities are designed to promote firearms and hunting safety, to enhance marksmanship skills of those participating in the shooting sports, and to educate the general public about firearms in their historic, technological and artistic context.

Osteogenesis Imperfecta Foundation, Inc. of Gaithersburg, MD was awarded \$34,200 for their project entitled “Osteogenesis Imperfecta: A Guide for Nurses.” This grant will produce 10,000 guides for nurses and provide up-to-date information about OI, making it easier for nurses to offer appropriate medical treatment and assistance to children, and training to their parents.

Sometimes referred to as “the brittle bone disorder,” there are an estimated 20,000 to 50,000 people in the United States living with Osteogenesis Imperfecta. OI is the result of a genetic mutation of collagen. The consequence is weak bones that fracture easily. A child with OI may suffer as few as ten or as many as several hundred broken bones in a lifetime. The most serious form of OI is frequently lethal to newborns.

Shwachman-Diamond Syndrome International of New Albany, OH was awarded \$8,100 for their project entitled “Shwachman-Diamond Syndrome International Quarterly Newsletter.” This grant will produce a quarterly newsletter that is distributed to SDS families and medical professionals throughout the United States. These newsletters are a source of comprehensive medical information and provide a sense of unity to all SDS families. The Sons of The American Legion sponsor this grant.

Shwachman-Diamond Syndrome (SDS) was first described in 1964. SDS is a chronic, and often fatal, disease that involves an inability of the bone marrow to function normally. This puts children with SDS at a greater risk of developing infections and a higher risk of contracting leukemia, bone marrow failure and other potentially fatal blood diseases. Due to its recent identification and lack of information in the medical community, children with SDS are often undiagnosed, misdiagnosed and inappropriately treated.

Songs of Love Foundation of Forest Hills, NY was awarded \$25,000 for their project entitled “Fifty Songs of Love.” This grant will produce and distribute fifty songs to terminally and chronically ill children. The American Legion Auxiliary sponsors this grant.

Songs of Love Foundation’s sole mission is to provide terminally and chronically ill children with their own unique and uplifting personalized “Songs of Love.” Since its inception in 1996, over 3,000 Songs of Love have been provided for seriously ill children. Health providers have overwhelmingly acknowledged the therapeutic benefit this service provides for their patients.