

TITLE SLIDE

Good afternoon. Thank you for allowing me a few minutes on today's agenda. I'm here for a three reasons:

- To thank the American Legion family for their generous support of the Child Welfare Foundation
- To provide, for those who may not know, a few facts about the Foundation
- And finally, to give you a glimpse into the wonderful, world of CATs, our Children's Action Team members, and invite you to become a Foundation Advocate in your Department.

Unfortunately, not all American children grow up inside the comfortable definition of normal childhood development. For thousands, each day is a challenge marked by pain, prayer and perseverance. Many of these youngsters require specialized care. To overcome their obstacles, they need help from you and the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation.

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Foundation dollars helped young people with autism, osteogenesis imperfecta, and hydrocephalus. They warned parents about the deadly dangers of Reyes Syndrome, educated doctors and parents about gastrointestinal disorders in infants, and provided care for children with lung and respiratory diseases. Through Foundation grants, you encouraged families whose children are challenged by craniofacial abnormalities, spinal tumors and the devastating brain disorder of Huntington's.

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Your donations produced fun activity letters for kids with cancer and found flights for pediatric patients needing air-medical transportation. You provided hope for children with Down Syndrome through an exciting new approach to treatment called nutritional intervention. Children with juvenile diabetes, multiple sclerosis, and retinal degeneration, have greatly benefited from your kindness.

The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation was developed as a repository of funds by individuals who wished to contribute to the betterment of children in this country.

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In 1952, Department Commander Dr. Garland D. Murphy, Jr., of Arkansas came forward with an offer to make a valuable contribution to The American Legion if we could figure out some way that his gift could be used solely for children. Thus, after much study and discussion, the idea of a foundation was born.

On October 15, 1953, the National Executive Committee approved the establishment of the Foundation and entered into a trust agreement with Dr. Murphy. Legal work was completed, and on July 9, 1954, The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation was duly incorporated under the laws of the State of Indiana.

As a separate corporation from The American Legion itself, the Foundation has a broad charter to contribute to the welfare of children through channels which in the past were seldom available to the established American Legion program. It is governed by nine Board of Directors, who are appointed by the National Executive Committee upon nomination by the National Commander.

The Foundation has two primary purposes:

- To contribute to the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual welfare of children and youth through the dissemination of knowledge about new and innovative organizations and/or their programs; and
- To make wider, more effective use of the knowledge already possessed by well-established organizations to the end that such information can be more adequately used by society.

In 1955 the Foundation awarded its first three grants totaling \$22,500.00 to three organizations: The Delinquency Control Institute, the National Association for Retarded Children, and the National Society for the Prevention of Blindness.

Since then, the Foundation has granted over nine million dollars to non-profit youth-oriented organizations, providing them a means to educate the public about the needs of children across this nation.

In October of 2007, the Board approved grants to 18 non-profit organizations in the amount of \$530,700 for projects to be completed in calendar year 2008. The projects funded through these grants impact children throughout the United States and beyond.

The Foundation receives hundreds of requests for funding each year. The Board of Directors, prudent stewards of your trust, carefully reviews each application during their October meeting and allocates grants based on the presented need. Millions of America's children have been touched through grants provided by your Foundation.

Unfortunately, many worthwhile proposals do not receive the dollars they desperately need due to insufficient funds. Last year alone, the Board was forced to turn down 200 projects totaling over five million dollars. These programs could have enriched the lives of thousands of our nation's special children. While their needs are great, there remains hope. Your caring donations can make the difference.

During the 2007-2008 Contribution Year, donations exceeded \$698,507 with over \$332,425 of that amount coming to us from the Sons of The American Legion. Members of the American Legion family are the prime contributors to the success and growth of our Foundation. Your support allows our Foundation to continue funding projects that improve the quality of life for our nation's children.

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Just imagine...if all of our local level organizations would commit to writing a check annually to the Child Welfare Foundation for just \$50.

This would result in well over \$1 million being generated each year for the Foundation. This would ensure a steady growth in our principal and greatly enhance our grant giving capabilities. Think of the thousands of children whose lives could be touched; whose lives could make a difference; and in some cases, whose lives could be saved.

Your charitable donations make a definite difference in the lives of all children. Remember, because the Legion takes care of the Foundation's overhead expenses, Every Penny Goes To Programs For Kids. Few, if any, other foundations can make this claim.

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Recognition is extremely important. After all, everyone wants to be acknowledged, if they have done an outstanding job. The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation, Inc. presents special awards annually for outstanding support of our programs designed to help children. Awards are based on our contribution year (June 1 of the current year through May 31 of the following year).

Department Children & Youth Chairmen are responsible for promoting the Foundation. Your role in this effort cannot be overemphasized. The mission of the Foundation depends heavily on your efforts. One of the best ways to promote the Foundation is through our CATs.

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CAT is an acronym for Children's Action Team. As CATs, you and your associates, are representatives of, and advocates for, the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation in your Department.

Since the vast majority of donations come from the memberships of the Legion, Auxiliary, Sons of The American Legion and the Eight & Forty. You need to encourage individuals, Posts, Units, Salons, Squadrons, Districts and Departments to make contributions on a regular and annual basis.

In raising funds, the only limitation you have is your imagination!

If your Department has a newsletter that goes out to your members, put an article in it about what you are doing to support the Foundation. Make it a challenge. Suggest that your District leadership do the same.

Enlist the support of your Commander and Adjutant. Set up a small display at Post, District and Department meetings. Hold a fund raising dinner, golf outing or sports tournament with the proceeds going to benefit the Foundation. Find local merchants willing to donate merchandise and hold a raffle or silent auction.

While attending various functions around your state, be on the lookout for children and youth organizations that may need assistance from the Foundation. Tell them a little about us and give them our address.

If they are going to write us for an application, ask them to mention your name in the correspondence so we may keep track of the application that result from your efforts.

CATs enjoy a special status with the Foundation structure. When you visit the Foundation's website (www.cwf-inc.org), there is a "CATs Only" page accessible by password. When prompted, if you type in the word "catinfo" you will be taken to pages designed especially with you in mind.

It is our sincere hope that through your dedicated efforts, the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation will become a familiar name in your Department to be supported by members on an annual basis.

I will conclude with one of my favorite short stories.

A circuit preacher and his young son traveled the countryside on horseback. When they approached a small town the preacher would offer to preach a sermon at the small church in exchange for what the congregation could afford to pay. At one such small church, the preacher and his son entered the church and the preacher casually threw a quarter into the poor box.

After a fine sermon, one of the congregation stood and thanked the preacher and said, "We're a small church and we can afford to pay you only what's in the poor box." He opened the box and dropped the contents into the preacher's hand...a quarter.

As the preacher and his son were riding away, the preacher was grumbling about the meager pay. The son listened for a bit and said "Dad, if you wanted more out, why didn't you put more in?"

It just goes to show – We always get out of life pretty much what we put into it!

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I am proud to serve as the Executive Secretary of an organization that touches the hearts of so many. With your on-going support, the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation will continue to be a force for change in the lives of children everywhere.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, the staff, and all the children throughout this great country of ours, I Thank You!