

# Community Program Director

(extracted from Supreme Pub 962-2010)

## Shaping the World Around You

Wherever we live, whether Ontario or Mindanao, we all have our own perceptions of “community.” Usually, these perceptions are formed by the concrete reality of the world immediately around us. It may be a bustling metropolis, a town, a tiny village, a large county, a broad rural area. It is the place we call home — with all its good and bad features, its beauty and ugliness, its strengths and weaknesses. Every individual has a voice in shaping the world around him, and every individual can make that voice heard. Make your voice heard in your community. Do more than throw up your hands in despair over what’s wrong with the world. Your community offers limitless opportunities for action that can be seen, felt and judged for its true worth. Look for something that’s needed and workable in your community — fight poverty, aid individuals with mental retardation, plant a tree, sponsor a blood pressure screening, support law enforcement, campaign for every baby’s right to life, help the aged — whatever your community needs, your members are interested in and your council’s resources allow. No matter what you choose . . . get involved!

## COATS FOR KIDS

- For more information call (203) 752-4616

## FOOD FOR FAMILIES

- **Feed the hungry** by collecting food for a food pantry or preparing and serving a meal at a soup kitchen.

## VOLUNTEERISM

- **Volunteer.** There is a growing need for volunteers to find and implement solutions to society’s problems. These volunteers make an important difference in our world. Rally other organizations in your community to work with your council in addressing community problems.

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- Observe the National Fraternal Congress of America’s **Join Hands Day**, which is celebrated annually in the United States on the first Saturday in May (for more information visit the Web site [www.joinhandsday.org](http://www.joinhandsday.org)). Urge the mayor or some other public official to issue a Join Hands Day proclamation. Publicize fraternal activities sponsored by your council.
- **Recognize outstanding volunteer efforts** within your own council. Following a council event, present a certificate of appreciation to those members who made the activity a success by donating their valuable time and talents. Certificates of Appreciation (#1579, E, F, S, 25¢ each) are available from the Supreme Council Supply Department.
- **Celebrate National Volunteer Week** each April in the United States. This is a valuable opportunity to offer volunteers in your council and community some well-deserved praise. Look for more information about National Volunteer Week activities by calling the Points of Light Foundation at 1-800-VOLUNTEER. Their Web site is [www.pointsoflight.org](http://www.pointsoflight.org).

- Make a difference in your community. Participate in “**Make a Difference Day**” — a national day of community service. Knights and family members should join thousands of other volunteers across the United States who will plan and carry out projects in their communities on the fourth Saturday in October. Awards for the best volunteer projects on “Make a Difference Day” will be given by *USA Weekend*, the national magazine that sponsors “Make a Difference Day.” Information is available through the “Make a Difference Day” hotline: (800) 416-3824 and on the Web site [www.makeadifferenceday.com](http://www.makeadifferenceday.com).

## HUMAN NEEDS

- **Assist those in need of housing.** A roof over one’s head is a fundamental right. Raise money to support homeless shelters and low-cost housing. Help renovate and repair buildings to house the needy. Support efforts to help the homeless help themselves, find jobs and take their place in society.

- **Defeat hunger** — an ever-present reality for millions around the world. Food banks and soup kitchens rely on volunteer manpower. Donate your council’s services. Also donate food or conduct food drives in your council and community. Start a community garden, with all the produce grown to be donated to local community groups or agencies helping the needy. Remember, people are hungry every day of the year; not only at Thanksgiving and Christmas.

- Support groups that **deliver meals to homebound people** such as Meals on Wheels programs. For more information contact the group providing the service in your local community.

- Tell the public about what the Knights are doing for people with intellectual and physical disabilities. Order a copy of the *Guidelines for Reporting and Writing about People with Disabilities* brochure produced by the University of Kansas Research and Training Center on Independent Living. This brochure provides a clear set of guidelines to assist in the choice of language and portrayal when writing about people with disabilities. For information on purchasing copies of this brochure, write to: Research & Training Center on Independent Living, University of Kansas, 4089 Dole Center, Lawrence, KS 66045.

- Help **meet the psychological and recreational needs of the aged.** Visit and offer encouragement to residents of homes for the elderly. Organize and get commitments from your council members and their families to make regular visits to elderly people in rest and long-term care centers. You can also sponsor recreational, social or religious events for older people at your council home.

- Give people with disabilities other than blindness the ability to live independently by supporting **Canine Companions for Independence.** This group trains dogs to perform more than 50 different commands to assist people. For more information write to Canine Companions for Independence, 2965 Dutton Ave., PO Box 446, Santa Rosa, CA 95402-0446, or call: (800) 572-2275 or [www.cci.org](http://www.cci.org).

- **Support groups** that assist senior citizens, the frail and homebound elderly, people with Alzheimer’s disease and the people who care for them. For more information contact the American Association of Retired Persons (888) 687-2277 or [www.aarp.org](http://www.aarp.org); the Children of Aging Parents (800) 227-7294 or [www.capsrcaregivers.org](http://www.capsrcaregivers.org); the National Council on Aging Inc. (202) 479-1200 or [www.ncoa.org](http://www.ncoa.org); the National Adult Day Services Association (800) 558-5301 or [www.nadsa.org](http://www.nadsa.org); the National Family Caregivers Association (301) 942-6430; the Canadian National Advisory Council on Aging (613) 957- 1968; and the American Health Assistance Foundation (800) 437-2423 or [www.ahaf.org](http://www.ahaf.org).

- **Recycle all the items that you can.** Collect newspapers for reuse in pulp-making; save deposit bottles and aluminum cans for redemption; contribute toys, furniture and clothing to charitable organizations instead of throwing them away.

- **Adopt a highway.** Many states and provinces have Adopt-A-Highway programs through which community groups accept responsibility for a short stretch of highway (usually half a mile to two miles) and agree to keep the roadside free of litter. The Adopt-A-Highway program is coordinated by each participating state or jurisdiction’s highway department, so contact that office to find out more about the program or find out how to institute it in your area.

## PUBLIC SAFETY

- Host a **Blue Mass to honor law enforcement officials, firefighters and paramedics**. The event should include a time for fellowship with the “blue knights” and programs explaining to them the spiritual and material benefits that come with membership in our Order. Use this Mass as an opportunity to present your council’s “Firefighter of the Year” and “Police Officer of the Year” honor to deserving individuals. Be sure to consult their chaplains and pastors when planning this event.
- Sponsor a **poster campaign in schools on public safety**. The Supreme Office annually conducts a drug and alcohol abuse awareness poster contest. For more information call us at (203) 752-4154.
- **Invite the local police chief and/or officers to your meetings to tell you their views of the problems** they face and of the support they get, or fail to get, from the public. Strive to improve working conditions for police officers.
- Set an example for others by **obeying all laws**, individually and collectively.
- **Honor local law enforcement officials, firefighters and paramedics**. “Certificates of Merit” (#1454, E, F, S, 25¢ each), for presentation to community servants, are available from the Supreme Council Supply Department.
- **Take a stand against drunk driving** — the number one killer on highways — and work toward getting the drunk driver off the road. To find out more about what your council can do, contact your local or state police department or the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, 22 Cortlandt St., Suite 801, New York, NY 10007-3128, (212) 269-7797/www.ncadd.org. In Canada contact: Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse, #300, 75 Albert Street, Ottawa, ON K1P 5E7, (613) 235-4048 or www.ccsa.ca/ccsa.
- Knowing the proper way to ride escalators, elevators and moving walks can help prevent serious accidents and injury. **The Elevator Escalator Safety Foundation**, a nonprofit organization, is dedicated to educating the general public on this issue. The group’s two main education programs are Safe-T Rider for second-grade children and A Safe Ride ® for adults with special emphasis on seniors. According to the foundation, both of these groups are the most at risk for injuries — young children because they may not know any better and seniors who may not be as physically adept as when they were younger. To obtain these free materials contact the foundation at (888) RIDE-SAFE (800-949-6442 in Canada). Their Web site is www.eesf.org.

## HEALTH SERVICES

- Focus public attention on **heart disease** — a leading cause of death, but a disease for which the risk can be decreased. Bulletin boards, newsletter articles and public forums should highlight National Cholesterol Education Month in September. A high blood cholesterol level is one of the three major modifiable risk factors for heart disease. Also encourage people to learn cardiopulmonary resuscitation — the procedures for use in case of cardiac emergencies. Your local heart association, Red Cross or other health authorities may be able to help you plan appropriate public information events, or for other ideas write: National Cholesterol Education Program, P.O. Box 30105, Bethesda, MD 20824-0105/(301) 592-8573. In Canada, write: Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada, 222 Queen St., Suite 1402, Ottawa, ON K1P 5V9/(613) 569-4361 or www.heartandstroke.ca.
- Do everything possible to help the sick. **Visit patients in the hospital or provide transportation for family and friends to visit**. Help a hospital patient take care of those things he or she can’t — at home or at work, with children or relatives, with merchants or creditors. Provide the same types of services for homebound patients.
- Implement programs to highlight **National High Blood Pressure Education Month** in May. High blood pressure is especially dangerous because it has no clear signs or symptoms. It doesn’t make you feel dizzy or nervous. It can, however, cause heart disease, kidney disease and stroke. Educate your community. Conduct high blood pressure awareness programs and blood pressure screenings. Set up information programs with local medical and health officials or write for more information to: National High Blood Pressure Education Program, P.O. Box 30105, Bethesda, MD 20824-0105/(301) 592-8573 or www.nhlbi-nih.gov. In Canada contact: Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada, 222 Queen St., Suite 1402, Ottawa, ON K1P 5V9/(613) 569-4361 or www.heartandstroke.ca.
- **Aid people with vision loss/low vision** by suggesting they contact The National Eye Institute at www.nei.nih.gov.

- Gather council support in the **battle against cancer**. Help the American Cancer Society to help others. One way of doing this is by promoting the “Great American Smokeout” held annually in November, and in Canada, “Weedless Wednesday” held in January. Further information can be obtained by contacting the American Cancer Society, at (800) ACS-2345 or [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org). In Canada call: Canadian Council for Tobacco Control at (800) 267-5234 or [www.cctc.ca](http://www.cctc.ca).
- Establish a **low cost or no cost clinic** in an area where poverty affects the health care of the poor in your own city. If such a clinic already exists, volunteer your services or recruit volunteers to keep the clinic adequately staffed.
- **Join the fight against AIDS** in your community. Raise money for AIDS research. Help care for AIDS patients — who often suffer as much from public response to their illness as from the disease. Local AIDS support groups may be in contact with patients who are not hospitalized. Offer your support to such groups, helping to see that people with AIDS have a place to live, decent meals and companionship. Sponsor AIDS education programs.
- Take action to **prevent drug and alcohol abuse**. Substance abuse has reached epidemic proportions, but knowledge is a powerful weapon against drugs and alcohol. Get the facts and spread them throughout the area — to parents, children, professionals, educators and all members of the community. Free informational materials are available from the National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information, by calling: (800) 729-6686 or [www.ncadi.samhsa.gov](http://www.ncadi.samhsa.gov). In Canada contact: Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse, #300, 75 Albert Street, Ottawa, ON K1P 5E7/(613) 235-4048 or [www.ccsa.ca](http://www.ccsa.ca). Ask for literature and distribute it in the community, in schools, through the media — any way you can. Identify available resources — existing programs, health care services, etc. — and offer the assistance of the Knights of Columbus in these projects.
- **Support hospice in your area**. A hospice program gives to patients in the final stages of serious illness the chance to live out their lives in a comfortable environment, surrounded by family and friends. Hospice gives comprehensive care to both the patient and his loved ones. Hospice programs are constantly in need of compassionate volunteer assistance. Locate such a program in your community and offer the services of your council: helping to raise funds, care for patients, etc.
- Increase public **awareness that clinical depression is a treatable medical illness** and motivate people with the illness to seek treatment. Clinical depression strikes millions of adults each year and costs billions of dollars in worker absenteeism, lost productivity and health care. While effective therapy and medication are available, only one-third of those with clinical depression seek treatment due to fear, ignorance, misinformation and stigma. Contact your local mental health association and participate in community education events and activities.
- **Volunteer at veterans hospitals and health care facilities**. The Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS) coordinates volunteer efforts at all of the United States’ 200 veteran facilities. All types of volunteer services are needed. Contact the Veteran Affairs Voluntary Service Office 1167, Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue, NW, Washington, DC, 20420 or call (202) 273-8952 or [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov) for more information about local facilities or the VAVS in general. In Canada, contact the Regional Veterans Affairs Office for more information or [www.vac.go.ca](http://www.vac.go.ca).

## DECENCY

- Get involved in **stemming the flood of pornography** engulfing our communities. It is essential that concerned citizens be aware of the magnitude of this problem and become part of the solution.
- **Report violations of community standards** to those responsible for enforcing the law. Every citizen complaint must be investigated. Complaints to the authorities are the most effective single action a citizen can take.
- Make direct **personal complaints or petition-type complaints to store owners or theater operators who display or sell obscene materials**.
- Send letters to newspaper editors, radio and television station managers, **objecting to offensive advertising for “R” and “X”** rated motion pictures.
- Contact **Morality in Media**, 475 Riverside Drive, Suite 239, New York, NY 10115, 212-870-3222 or [www.moralityinmedia.org](http://www.moralityinmedia.org), or Canadians Addressing Sexual Exploitation, Parkway Postal Outlet, Box 62569, 85 Ellesmere Road, Toronto, ON M1R 5G8 (416) 412-6065 or [www.c-a-s-e.net](http://www.c-a-s-e.net) for information, research materials, advice or direct assistance.

- Urge members in United States councils to **use Postal Form #2201** to stop pornography from being delivered to their homes or families. The form is available at any U.S. Post Office.

## HONOR COLUMBUS

- Honor our Order's patron. In 1492 Christopher Columbus led Europe to a New World. In 1493, he first set foot in Puerto Rico, and in the years following explored much of coastal Central and South America. **Commemorate the accomplishments of the Order's patron**, paying tribute to the man who expanded the known world and brought Christianity to new peoples.
- Schedule a community or cable public-access station showing of ***Christopher Columbus: Faithful Christ Bearer***, a production of the Supreme Council office. This 16-minute VHS video chronicles the life of Columbus and accurately portrays him as a bold explorer and a devout man of faith. The production is available free of charge except \$3 for shipping and handling from the Supreme Council office.
- Sponsor a **youth essay or poster contest** with the theme "The Spirit of Discovery" or a similar theme.
- Contact local civic or service organizations and **plan Columbus Day events together**. Offer your support or manpower for Columbus Day activities currently conducted in your community.
- **Purchase books, recordings or videos on Columbus** and donate them to your parish or school library.
- Organize **wreath-laying ceremonies at a local Columbus statue** or launch a campaign to have a statue erected as part of Columbus Day activities.
- Petition your city council or county board to **have a park, a street or a municipal building named in honor of Columbus**.
- **Invite Hispanic and Italian-American societies** in your community, who may be celebrating Columbus' heritage and the origins of his voyage, to participate in your activities.
- Sponsor programs to learn about and highlight the contributions to our society by the original settlers of the Americas — **Native American cultures**. Learn about the traditions and histories of the "New World's" original inhabitants. Hold a fund-raiser to benefit Native American Catholic missions.
- Ask your local library to feature a **display of books and materials about Christopher Columbus** in the month prior to Columbus Day.
- **Explore the history of the Order**. Use Knights of Columbus books, audiovisuals and brochures to learn how and why the Order was founded, and discover the events and people that have charted its course. Present the findings at an open house program, a meeting or other council event.
- Contact your mayor or city council to **adopt a special proclamation in honor of Columbus** and his discovery of the New World.
- Organize a **Columbus Day harbor or river cruise/dinner** in your area.