

Youth Program Director

(extracted from Supreme Pub 962-2010)

Building Leaders for the Future

Today's youth, the leaders of tomorrow, are looking for challenges, for responsibility, for faith and trust. Yet, despite their commitments and dedication, the youth of the world are often condemned because of the uncontrolled actions of a minority of young people. As Knights of Columbus, it is our responsibility to provide youth with the means and the opportunities to become personally committed and involved in meeting the challenges of our times.

There is a great deal more all of us can do to improve our youth programs. Recruit more men from the council to work with young people. These adult leaders will help to mold the youth of today into the influential citizens of tomorrow. Exert positive and constructive influence on young people by becoming involved with them. Pay more attention to what they are saying.

Demonstrate your support by sponsoring a Columbian Squires circle, aiding the Big Brothers/Big Sisters program, promoting the Boy Scouts, or helping to combat drug and alcohol abuse. Numerous other avenues are always open in helping to build leaders for the future.

COLUMBIAN SQUIRES

- Sponsor a **Columbian Squires circle**. As the official youth organization of the Knights of Columbus, the Columbian Squires is deserving of primary consideration in any council's youth program. Development of leadership skills in Catholic young men is the main objective of the program.

In the Columbian Squires, Knights serve as counselors to Squires circles in order to draw out the leadership talent of the circle's young men. The satisfaction the counselors receive from seeing Squires develop into mature, responsible Catholic leaders and prospective Knights makes every effort on behalf of the Squires worthwhile. Squires conduct widely varied activities of community and Church service, social events and membership recruitment efforts. Squires can advance through higher levels of achievement, involvement and training.

Columbian Squires circles are sponsored by either a Knights of Columbus council or a Fourth Degree assembly. Basic requirements for a circle are at least one enthusiastic, dedicated counselor and 10 Catholic young men of Squires age. The official age range for Squires membership is 10- to 18-yearsold. Currently, there are more than 1,400 Squires circles, with more than 25,000 Squires and 2,000 Squires counselors throughout the United States, Canada, Mexico, the Philippines, the Bahamas, the Virgin Islands, Guam and on U.S. military bases abroad. Since 1925, the Columbian Squires program has had a rich tradition of leadership development of our most vital resource — our young people. Consider sponsoring a Squires circle. Contact your state youth director or state squires chairman, or the Supreme Council Department of Fraternal Services and request a Columbian Squires Inquiry Kit or use form #2935 at www.kofc.org/forms.

To encourage your council's participation in the Squires program, plan a Columbian Squires informational night. Invite the state Squires chairman, the state youth director, counselors and Squires from nearby circles to address the council on the benefits and operation of the program. Be sure to reserve a copy of the Supreme Council production, *Something More* (#R88LP) describing the Squires program for showing at your informational night. *Something More* can be ordered from the Department of Fraternal Services.

YOUTH GROUPS

- Look into the **youth activities** that are the most needed or have the greatest chance for success where you live. Many youth groups either exist in your area or could potentially fill a specific need in your community.

- Volunteer your council's manpower for the operation of the **Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) or Catholic Youth Ministry (CYM)** program in your area. Contact your diocesan youth director with suggestions for programs or offers of support.
- Promote council and community support for the **Big Brothers/Big Sisters** program in your area. Big Brothers/Big Sisters offers unique one-to-one services to single parent youths. The program matches volunteers with children who can benefit from the friendship and guidance of a Big Brother or Big Sister. Knights and family members may be interested in volunteering as Big Brothers or Big Sisters, or councils may want to help the organization with fund-raising, promotion or program development. Each year in early spring, the national Big Brothers/Big Sisters organizations coordinate local bowl-a-thons to raise funds ("Bowl for Kids' Sake" in the U.S. and "Bowl for Millions" in Canada). This is one area where councils can make a real contribution. For information on the Big Brothers/Big Sisters program, the local agencies and areas of involvement, write: Big Brothers/Big Sisters International, 1315 Walnut St./Suite 704, Philadelphia, PA 19107, (215) 717-5130. The Web site is www.bbbsi.org.
- Knights of Columbus councils are strong supporters of **scouting programs for boys and girls**. Consider sponsoring a scout troop or recruiting capable scout leaders. Adopt a project to enrich the quality of local scout activities. Examples include camporees, aquatic meets, scout shows, camp development, etc. Donate capital and operating funds to make scouting activities more attractive. Enlist the support of council members who can supply technical advice which scouts need in developing projects. For more information about scouting, contact the Boy Scouts of America, PO Box 152079, Irving, TX 75015, www.scouting.org; or Girl Scouts of the U.S.A., 420 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10018, telephone (212) 852-8000, ww.girlscouts.org. In Canada contact: Scouts Canada, 1345 Baseline Road, Ottawa, ON K2C 0A7 or telephone: (613) 224-5131, www.scouts.ca; or Girl Guides of Canada, 50 Merton Street, Toronto, ON M4S 1A3. Telephone: (416) 487-5281, Web site www.girlguides.ca.
- Learning by doing is at the heart of the **4-H Club program**. Members take an active part in learning and the program builds young leaders. Council members can assist by serving as adult leaders and offering support and assistance in the many varied projects and activities conducted in the 4-H program. Contact National 4-H Council, 7100 Connecticut Avenue, Chevy Chase, MD 20815, telephone: (301) 961-2800 or www.fourhcouncil.edu.

ATHLETICS

- Arrange a council contest in the **Knights of Columbus Free Throw Championship** basketball program for boys and girls between the ages of 10 and 14. Shoot-offs are conducted at the council, district, regional, and state or provincial levels to determine winners. The results from the state or provincial contests are forwarded to the Supreme Council office where international winners are determined. To help your council conduct its Free Throw contest, a pre-packaged kit containing promotional material, entry forms/score sheets, participant and winner certificates, is available free of charge from the Supreme Council office. The coupon for ordering the *Free Throw Kit* (#FT-KIT) is found in the *Council Report Forms Booklet* (#1436), on the Order's Web site, or by calling (203) 752-4270. Kits should be ordered by Nov. 1 to ensure receipt in time for council competitions to be held in January.
- Arrange a council contest in the **Knights of Columbus Soccer Challenge** program for boys and girls between the ages of 10 and 14. This competition is conducted at the council, district, regional, and state or provincial levels to determine winners. The results from the state or provincial contests are forwarded to the Supreme Council office where international winners are determined. To help your council run the Soccer Challenge Championship, a prepackaged kit containing promotional material, entry forms/score sheets, participant and winner certificates is available free of charge from the Supreme Council. The coupon for ordering the *Soccer Challenge Kit* (#SC-KIT) is found in the *Council Report Forms Booklet* (#1436), on the Order's Web site, or by calling (203) 752-4703. Kits should be ordered by July 1 to ensure receipt in time for council competitions to be held in September.
- Ask those **former baseball, football and basketball "stars" in the council to volunteer their services as coaches and managers** of Little League, Pee Wee basketball, midget football, etc.
- Inaugurate a **Knights of Columbus Junior Golf Tournament** to be held annually.

- **Honor outstanding students, athletic leaders and team captains.** Present scholarships, trophies or certificates.
- **Furnish tickets and transportation for youth groups to athletic events.**
- Remember to **promote some of the less publicized** sports such as archery, badminton, table tennis, etc.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

• Take part in the **Knights of Columbus Essay Contest** on “The Responsibility of the Catholic Citizen in a Free Society.” The essay contest is open to all Catholic students graduating from elementary schools (8th graders) and high schools (12th graders). Participants prepare compositions based on a theme taken from Church writings. Essays should be between 500 and 750 words in length. Winners will receive their awards either at graduation, at an awards ceremony or at a similar function arranged by the school and sponsoring council. Judging is done on a 100-point scoring system. Certificates for first, second and third place winners, and certificates of participation for all entrants are included in the *Essay Contest Kit* (#EA-KIT). It is recommended that councils consider monetary awards in the range of \$100 to \$350 in Savings Bonds or the cash equivalent to the first place winner. Conducting this contest in the Catholic schools will help strengthen the bonds between the Order and Catholic schools. The goodwill generated can be a springboard to additional programs in service to the school. It can also help in recruiting faculty and administration members — as well as fathers of the participants — into your council. In addition, it can assist recruiting down the road as participants turn 18 and remember their participation in the Knights of Columbus Essay Contest.

• Numerous **scholarships for members and their dependents** are sponsored by the Supreme Council. Among the scholarships are: Francis P. Matthews and John E. Swift Educational Trust Scholarships, Fourth Degree Pro Deo and Pro Patria Scholarships, John W. McDevitt (Fourth Degree) Scholarships, Fourth Degree Pro Deo and Pro Patria (Canada) Scholarships and graduate fellowships.

Knights of Columbus Fourth Degree Pro Deo and Pro Patria Scholarships — A total of 62 Catholic college scholarships (which are not limited to Fourth Degree members), each in the amount of \$1,500 per year, are available to members and sons and daughters of members or deceased members of a council in the United States entering their freshman year. Twelve scholarships are available at The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., and 50 are available to students attending other Catholic colleges in the United States. Four of the scholarships are designated for Columbian Squires. These scholarships are awarded based on academic excellence and are renewable.

Knights of Columbus Fourth Degree Pro Deo and Pro Patria (Canada) Scholarships — Twelve scholarships (which are not limited to Fourth Degree members) at colleges or universities in Canada are available to Canadian members, sons and daughters of Canadian members or deceased Canadian members entering their freshman year at a Canadian university. Scholarships, each of \$1,500 per year, are awarded based on academic excellence for one year and are renewable.

John W. McDevitt (Fourth Degree) Scholarships — These academic-based scholarships (not limited to Fourth Degree members) of \$1,500 each are administered in conformance with the rules governing the Fourth Degree Pro Deo and Pro Patria Scholarships and are available to members, wives, widows, and sons and daughters of members deceased members who were in good standing at the time of their death.

Francis P. Matthews and John E. Swift Educational Trust Scholarships — A scholarship fund has been established to provide scholarships to the children of a member in good standing who, while serving in the military forces of his country in a combat zone, is killed by hostile action or wounded by hostile action resulting within two years of permanent and total disability, and for children of a member in good standing who, while in the lawful performance of his duties as a full-time law enforcement officer or firefighter, died as the result of criminal violence directed at him. The scholarship includes the expense of tuition up to \$25,000 per year for undergraduate studies leading to a bachelor’s degree at a Catholic college.

Knights of Columbus Graduate Fellowship at The Catholic University of America — The fellowships are for work in the fields offered in the Graduate School. The fellowships cover tuition and an allowance for living expenses, and may be renewed annually up to three years.

Bishop Charles P. Greco Graduate Fellowships — Bishop Greco Graduate Fellowships are available for full-time graduate study leading to a master's degree in a program designed for the preparation of classroom teachers of people with intellectual disabilities. The maximum grant is \$500 per semester (\$2,000 total), renewable upon evidence of satisfactory performance and subject to the discretion of the Committee on Fellowships. The applicant must be a member of the Knights of Columbus in good standing, or the wife, son or daughter of such a member or deceased member.

Refer to the booklet, Financial Aid to Education (#951) for more information about any of these programs, or write directly to the Department of Scholarships, P.O. Box 1670, New Haven, CT 06507-0901.

- Establish one or more **scholarships to Catholic high schools or universities**.
- Present a **Knights of Columbus award for scholarship** to be given at commencement ceremonies.
- Plan an **“Open House” for high school students and ask recent college graduates who are members of your council to talk about their college experiences, cost of education, recommended courses, etc. Provide information on careers and scholarships.**
- Sponsor a **“College Fair”** for prospective college students. Invite representatives of surrounding colleges to talk with high school students, distribute literature, answer questions, etc.
- Hold a **“Career Fair”** for high school and college students. Invite representatives of different career areas to give a presentation about the career paths they've chosen and the opportunities each offers.
- Conduct a **Spelling Bee** contest for elementary school-aged boys and girls.

YOUTH WELFARE

• Participate in the **Knights of Columbus Substance Abuse Awareness Poster Contest**. The contest's goal is to encourage the creation of thought-provoking slogans and visuals by young people for their peers to promote awareness of the dangers of substance abuse. You can order Substance Abuse Awareness Poster Contest Kits, which contain all the materials needed for your council to participate, by using the coupon found on page 5 of the *Council Report Forms Booklet* (#1436), on the Order's Web site, or by calling (203) 752-4625.

Entries in the contest must fall under one of these topics: Alcohol Awareness and Abuse, or Drug Awareness and Abuse. Each poster must include a slogan reflecting either of the topics and an original visual image. Posters may only be entered under one topic. Categories will be broken down by age: ages 8 to 11 and ages 12 to 14. Entries will be judged at local, district, state and international levels. International winners will serve as the basis for substance abuse awareness materials produced and distributed by the Supreme Council.

Your council should begin promoting the contest at the start of the school year so students can work on posters during the fall months. Council judging should take place in January. District/regional and state competitions should take place in February or early March. The deadline for receipt of state level winning entries at the Supreme Council office for the international competition is March 31. International winners will be announced in May. Contact schools (public, private and parochial) in your community to organize and conduct a Substance Abuse Awareness Poster Contest. Besides creating awareness among young people of this problem, it will also give your council the opportunity to look at programs that provide alternatives to drug and alcohol use. Young people should be among the judges picked for the contest and play a vital role throughout your council's participation.

- Coordinate a communitywide **education program on teenage alcohol and drug abuse**. Distribute informational literature. For more information, contact the National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Dependence Information, at 800-729-6686, or the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, 22 Cortlandt St. #801 New York, NY 10007-3128/www.ncadd.org. In Canada contact Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse, #300, 75 Albert St., Ottawa, ON K1P 5E7 (613) 235-4048.

- Benefit children and youth by participating in **America's Promise — The Alliance for Youth**. America's Promise works collaboratively with individuals, organizations and communities, mobilizing people from every sector of American life to build the character and competence of young Americans by fulfilling "Five Promises" to them: 1) ongoing relationships with **caring adults**—parents, mentors, tutors, coaches, 2) **safe places** with structured activities during nonschool hours, 3) a **healthy start** and future, 4) **marketable skills** through effective education, and 5) **opportunities to serve** or give back through community service. America's Promise is a national network making good on these promises! To get involved or for more information, visit their Web site at www.americaspromise.org or call 888-55-YOUTH.

- Work to reduce teenage drunk driving. **Invite a speaker from Mothers Against Drunk Driving, Alcoholics Anonymous or the local or state police** to participate in a council-sponsored alcohol abuse seminar.

- Volunteer the support of your membership to **develop more medical and psychiatric counselling facilities in your community**. Spearhead a drive in your community to establish a drug crisis clinic, "Safe House" or teen center where teens can get positive reinforcement about refraining from the use of drugs and alcohol.

- Educate and enable young people to reject illegal drugs by participating in the **National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign**, sponsored by the Office of National Drug Control Policy and the Partnership for a Drug-Free America. The campaign Web site, www.theantidrug.com, contains numerous tips for parents and other caregivers in helping young people say no to drugs.

- **Become a foster parent**. Through organizations such as Save the Children, Foster Parents Plan and others, you or your council can become the hope of a poor child. Ask your diocesan office to recommend a program.

- Participate in local civic campaigns that **raise funds to help sick and disabled children**. ALSAC, the fund-raising arm of St. Jude Children's Research Hospital; the Muscular Dystrophy Association; the Easter Seals Foundation; the Juvenile Diabetes Foundation; and other childhood disease research organizations need constant fund-raising support. Contact local chapters and offer the help of your council.

- **Educate adults in the local community, your parish, schools and other forums about the media's influence on children's values, attitudes and behaviors** by utilizing the "Unplug Your Kids" video produced by the National Institute on Media and Family. For more information on ordering a video or on the institute's other programs call (612) 672-5437 or visit www.mediafamily.org.

- **Support abused and neglected children**. The Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) program trains volunteers to speak for the best interest of abused and neglected children in court. CASA volunteers are assigned to a case by a judge. They conduct research, interview people involved and make recommendations on what is best for the child. Councils interested in aiding CASA through providing financial aid and/or volunteers or obtaining more information on the program can write to: National CASA Association, 100 West Harrison, North Tower; Suite 500, Seattle, WA 98119, call (800) 628-3233 or go to www.nationalcasa.org.

- Order and distribute the free informational pamphlet, "**Think You Know Something About Child Abuse**," available from the Prevent Child Abuse America to help educate your community about the horrors abused children face. This and other publications relating to parenting, child abuse and child abuse prevention are available by contacting Prevent Child Abuse America, 500 North Michigan, Suite 200, Chicago, IL, 60611, Web site: www.preventchildabuse.org, telephone: (312) 663-3520. In Canada 235-4412, Web site: www.cwlc.ca.

- Keep children safe through participating in **Project KidCare® or Child Find Ontario**. For more information contact Polaroid at (800) 552-0711, and press 1 (from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Eastern time). For more information on Child Find Ontario please call (905) 712-3463.

RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES

- Conduct a **retreat for Catholic high school students**. Conduct a weekend “Day of Recollection” for teenage students.
- **Provide facilities and a priest for Catholic children at summer camps.**
- Plan a “**Mission Night**” and invite high school boys and girls to attend. Arrange for representatives from the mission societies — priests, brothers and sisters — to speak to the group about their missionary work.
- Ask that youth groups sponsored by your council **plan an annual fund-raiser for a local Catholic project, the missions, or vocations.**
- Observe **World Youth Day**. This special day was established in 1985 by Pope John Paul II and continued by Pope Benedict XVI, inviting the youth of the world to discover the Church and their role in the mission of the Church. In celebration, plan a prayer service, a youth rally, a discussion group or a special Mass. World Youth Day is celebrated on different dates in different countries. If possible send a group of young people to the international World Youth Day when it occurs.
- Promote a “**Youth for Missions**” project. Seek volunteers from the ranks of high school seniors to spend a vacation week working at a nearby mission.

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

- **Arrange a series of film showings** that are both educational and enjoyable.
- Provide youth with a **well-rounded program of social activities** — dances, field trips, dinners.
- Sponsor a “**Family Night**” in the council quarters.
- Open the council home for a **nonalcoholic reception after the local high schools’ proms and graduation ceremonies**. Provide music, food and soft drinks as well as the opportunity to stay up all night, but no alcoholic beverages.
- Sponsor **parties for young people** centering around themes or activities that will appeal to the age group — pizza parties, skating parties, sleigh rides, etc.