



Marine Corps League Auxiliary, Inc.

Operation Little Angel Program Participation and Planning Information

This document is a point of reference for MCLA Units and Departments to plan their level of participation in the MCLA Operation Little Angel Program (OLA) in their local and state communities. Planning in small manageable stages is a key to success. This information covers stages from small to large to enable your focus choice.

Vision: (The result of our actions.)

For children in crisis who have been legally removed from their home due to neglect or illegal activity, comfort survival needs will be provided. This will be accomplished through a working relationship with local MCLA Units and official agencies that service children in crisis in local communities throughout the United States.

Mission: (How to accomplish the vision.)

This program, sponsored by the Marine Corps League Auxiliary, a non-profit organization, develops an ongoing program with a legal agency to provide emergency comfort needs through a process that works best with that agency and the local community. This process can involve contributions from local corporations, retail stores, service organizations, as well as individuals. Ultimately, procurement of 501c3 grants will enhance your program.

National Goals:

- Support Marine Corps League Auxiliary Unit and Department participation in the Operation Little Angel Program to meet the above vision and mission in local communities throughout the United States of America.
- Promote MCLA Units soliciting local non-profit grants of money from corporations or foundations receiving a 501c3 tax deduction through the Marine Corps League Foundation. 100% of the donation goes to the local Unit to use in the community where the funds are collected.
- Facilitate an annual support event at every national convention where collections of monetary and tangible supplies sent or brought by Units throughout the nation are given to a local agency in the community of the national convention. The local agency meets the requirements in the OLA vision and mission statement.

Participation in the MCLA Operation Little Angel Program: There are two ways to participate. See A and B below. Many do both.

A. Participation in the OLA Annual Support Event: The MCLA Unit contributes to Operation Little Angel annual support event at the MCL-MCLA National Convention to benefit the children in crisis in the local community.

A1. Plan how to contribute: Discuss with your Unit and/or Department the opportunity to participate and how and what to contribute.

A2. Mail or ship contributions in June: The MCLA OLA contact person and address will be posted in the April MCLA newsletter and on the MCLA Website.

A3. Tangible item list on the MCLA Website and in the National MCLA newsletter: Units or Departments who want to send tangible items for the support event at the National Convention, watch for the OLA list of needs and further explanation in the April edition of the MCLA National newsletter and on the MCLA Website.

B. Participation in an OLA Program in your Unit and/or Department:

The local MCLA Unit creates a relationship with an official local agency that serves the needs of children in crisis explained in the vision and mission statements. The Unit plans ways to meet the emergency comfort needs of children using that local agency as the conduit. The Unit delivers the contributions to the point of contact at the local agency. We suggest that you not advertise your vision and mission to the public or people may approach you with needs outside the scope of this program.

B1. Clarify the need in your local community: Contact local agencies that are qualified to know the needs in your community. Contact and ask questions of the police, child protective services, child and family services. Let them know your serious desire to help.

B2. Choose one agency that meets the qualifications in the vision and mission statements: Invite a representative to your MCLA Unit meetings. Have questions ready. Get their contact information. At the Department level there are directors of Child Protective Services who may be willing to address the concerns for the children in crisis at a Department staff meeting. Arrange for them to speak to your group. Provide them with a few basic questions like:

- a. Is there a need in this community to help children who are legally removed from their homes due to police action, violence, or neglect?
- b. Which agency has direct contact with these children?
- c. What are the most immediate needs for the children?
- d. What are the ages ranges most in need?
- e. What would be the most helpful method for us to provide you with the items you need?
- f. What are some examples of situations you have experienced that show children's needs?
- g. What are some guidelines, restrictions, and concerns that you may have regarding a relationship where we provide needed items and funds?

B3. Decide which needs and age ranges you want to address first:

- a. Create a list of needs that you can print and distribute with the ages for each column. (The National OLA committee has an example posted on the MCLA Website.)
- b. Starting out small will bring you success from which to build.

B4. Decide your short term and long-range goals:

- a. 3 month goal
- b. 6 month goal
- c. 1 year goal
- d. 2 year goal

B5. Decide the tasks that will need to be done and who will be willing to do them:

- a. Plan a fund-raiser for seed money to begin.
- b. An OLA Chairman is helpful.
- c. Often the MCL Detachments, Devil Dogs, and area Marine Coordinating Councils will contribute.

- d. Many large retail stores have a grant or contribution request form for non-profit groups. Wal-Mart is an easy one to start with. They have been most generous in New York and Washington. Members going in pairs and in uniform may achieve better results. They will request the 501c3 tax ID number to prove that the program is non-profit. Just call or E-mail the OLA co-chairs.
- e. Write letters to service organizations in the community. Follow up with a visit to explain the letter and the need.
- f. Write letters to large corporations like Colgate for toothbrushes etc.
- g. When money and supplies start coming in, who will purchase, store, and deliver the supplies to your agency point of contact?

B6. Create an information letter explaining the needs:

- a. From the information you have gathered, create your letter of introduction. Your target audience will be community businesses, corporations, service organizations, and foundations who make it known that they want to help the local community. Often you will see signs posted that they contribute to non-profit organizations that serve the community. Home Depot and Wal-Mart are examples. In the letter explain the exact needs in your community; list the supplies that will be purchased with the contributions. Note that all contributions will be used locally.
- b. Use your letter of introduction as a basis for all communications and as handouts.
- c. Keep it to one page with the list of needs on the back.
- d. Be sure to include your Unit name and address for those who want to send checks right away.
- e. Send thank you letters with the amount included for tax purposes. Suggest that they write on their tax form Marine Corps League Foundation – Operation Little Angel Program.

B7. When you are ready to go to corporations, go to the National MCLA Website and download the form that explains the process for 501c3 donations: <http://www.nationalmcla.org/>

- a. Create a list of corporations and organizations to visit.
- b. Send a letter of introduction first and call for an appointment.
- c. Visit the corporations in teams of two with a scheduled appointment to meet with their community outreach director or whoever may handle charitable donations.
- d. Present the case and explain the process.
- e. Have the OLA corporation form ready, but you fill it out. Contact the OLA National Chairman for 501c3 tax number.
- f. Keep in mind that many corporations and organizations complete their allotment of donations in the fall for that year. Your next chance will be a year away.
- g. You may plan to have a local brochure listing the benefactors who donated from each year.
- h. There may be a way for matching funds to match what your Unit earns.

B8. There is always a need for blankets. Enlist creative hands.

- a. Contact retirement centers for quilting or crochet groups willing to make the blankets.
- b. Find an artist or graphic artist to design a poster.
- c. Ask talented members to write and print instructions for making quality blankets (fleece).
- d. Ask talented members to write and print instructions for making quality afghans.