



Continuing a legacy of service

Dear American Legion Family members and friends,

The American Legion Riders are at a crossroads in their inspiring annual fundraising drive.

After this year's Legacy Run, we expect the overall total raised by the Riders to exceed \$18 million for the American Legion Legacy Scholarship, including a record \$1.3 million last year. Thanks to the commitment of the Riders and our Legion Family, the scholarship fund has reached a point where it can sustain itself through the foreseeable future. This year's Legacy Run will be the final one in direct support of the scholarship that has provided life-changing funding for hundreds of college students who lost a parent or who is the child of a veteran who received a 50% or greater Department of Veteran Affairs service-connected disability rating since 9/11.

I am so pleased that American Legion Riders will continue to support children in need. As they say, "We ride for the kids."

Let's be clear that our commitment to fallen and disabled veterans has not changed. We are simply shifting resources to focus on another great cause, the **Veterans & Children Foundation (V&CF)**.

That shift has been made possible due to the extraordinary dedication of and amazing generosity shown by American Legion Riders and supporters since our very first Legacy Run in 2006. Year after year, the Riders raise the bar and set new records, which has helped make the American Legion Legacy Scholarship Fund self-sustaining.

I have no doubt their generosity will continue throughout this year's run and into the future.

Starting in 2024, the annual fundraising motorcycle ride will shift gears to the V&CF. The foundation funds two significant areas for The American Legion:

- Emergency grants for military families under the Legion's **Temporary Financial Assistance (TFA)** program. Military families with minor children at home can apply for the grant when they are hit with unexpected financial crises. In just the last decade, The American Legion has allocated more than \$6 million in TFA grants.
- Training for more than 3,000 accredited American Legion service officers who provide free assistance to approximately 750,000 veterans at any one time, all the time. American Legion service officers are directly responsible for veterans' disability compensation of more than \$16.3 billion per year.

While the mission of The American Legion Riders is changing, their dedication to supporting children will remain a constant.

"The Legacy Run, really, is about continuing our legacy of service to others, to our veterans and their children," said **Riders Chairman Mark Clark**. "So, it's really about the legacy we leave, more than it is attached to any one thing. I have always believed that the national Legacy Run should represent the fundraising priorities of our national leadership. They've come to us and asked us for help, and I think the Riders can rally behind that, and they'll be excited for the opportunity to ride for another cause, having been so successful supporting the Legacy Fund. I think they'll be excited and see another opportunity for us to do something great with the Veterans & Children Foundation."

The Legacy Scholarship has its own legacy of sorts. Throughout the years, it has helped students like **Colton Clay of Colorado Springs, Colo.** "This scholarship is special because it helps honor my dad and his service and sacrifices that he's made. It's awesome that I'm able to represent him going forward through this scholarship," says Colton, the son of retired Army Lt. Col. Christopher Clay, an American Legion member.

Chairman Clark is excited not just for the future but the final drive for the Legacy Scholarship. In fact, he has set a goal to break \$1.5 million in donations during this year's campaign.

Let's all rally behind the Riders. You can **make a donation** to support this year's ride, **register to join the Legacy Run** or if you live along the route, come out and cheer them on.

National Commander

Vincent J. "Jim" Troiola