

## Young Members...Our Future!

by Diana Sirovina, National Poppy Chairman

Back in 1977, an artist named George Benson recorded a song that contained these powerful lyrics...*children are our future teach them well and let them lead the way...*

Each time I hear that song, it reminds me that to keep our organization alive and strong, we need to get our young members involved, and teach them our mission and traditions, so they will become our future leaders. Having them participate in our Poppy Program is a great way to do that!

## Getting Our Young Members Involved

Units are always looking for ways to make their poppy distribution days more successful. There is no better way than to get our younger members involved. People just can't resist those adorable kids!

It would be ideal if units had a Miss Poppy, but we know that for whatever reasons, it's not always possible. What about our younger members of the Sons of The American Legion? We know they would like to be involved but they don't always know how. Because of all of that, we need to look at other ways to get these younger members to be part of the program. Why not welcome them to be POPPY AMBASSADORS?

So, what exactly is a POPPY AMBASSADOR? Quite simply, they are a member of The American Legion Auxiliary or Sons of The American Legion, ages very young to age 17. When you begin your POPPY AMBASSADOR program, a few things to consider might be no requirement for scrapbook, etc., no specific costume. A unit may provide a tiara or hat and/or sash if they wish. Units can decide for themselves when and where these POPPY AMBASSADORS will participate. There are parades and ceremonies, National Poppy Day, local poppy distributions, and much more. The possibilities are endless. No matter what, your young members will certainly remember the experience!

This is also an opportunity to assist our young members in participating in the Junior Patch Program, to earn their Poppy patch. Check with our Junior Activities program for details.

Think about those song lyrics as you teach those young people to be proud Legion Family members. We know that our young members are the future of our organization, so it's important that we get them involved at a young age. Making our young Auxiliary members and Sons of The American Legion members POPPY AMBASSADORS would go a long way in getting these members involved in a fun way, while teaching them the importance of this great program.