

## ACTIVITY IDEAS FOR CHILD WELFARE BOARDS

The following is a compilation of activities performed by county child welfare boards around the state. Each community has different needs and different resources to meet those needs so not all activities are appropriate for all boards. Some activities require status as a nonprofit corporation or may be prohibited by a board's bylaws. Most boards have limited funding and must prioritize services provided. Boards may opt to partner with other organizations in their communities such as Community Partners, Child Advocacy Centers, and Court-Ordered Special Advocates to sponsor events and pool resources. This list is provided to prompt discussions of possible activities but is not to be considered all-inclusive. Creativity and collaboration is encouraged as you seek to serve the vulnerable children and families in your counties.

### ***Activities Assisting Families and Children***

- **Provide school supplies, backpacks, and school clothing to foster children at beginning of school year.**
  - ✓ Hold special drives in their communities to collect supplies and clothing in addition to using available funds.
  - ✓ Make supplies available to all children in need, not just foster and kinship care children.
  - ✓ Hold back to school parties when children and their caregivers enjoy food and activities while caregivers select clothing and pick up supplies.
  - ✓ Arrange for beauty/barber college to provide free haircuts.
  - ✓ Arrange for shoe store like Payless to provide gift cards.
- **Help with graduation celebrations.**
  - ✓ Provide gift cards to graduating seniors.
  - ✓ Purchase senior rings.
  - ✓ Establish scholarship in memory of former board member.
  - ✓ Hold hope chest luncheons where members and others from the community provide gifts for independent living.
  - ✓ Sponsor "Glamour Gals" and "Prom Princess" luncheons for junior and senior girls to be pampered before prom nights.
  - ✓ Collect prom dresses and jewelry to provide to foster youth for their proms; make arrangements with local dry cleaners to clean donated dresses if needed.
  - ✓ Provide prom tickets, etiquette classes, and other gifts to make prom night special for foster children.
- **Provide gift and activities for holiday celebrations.**
  - ✓ Host Halloween carnivals for foster children.
  - ✓ Set up Angel Trees/Empty Stockings with wish lists in department stores, banks, etc. to solicit donations for children in care.
  - ✓ Hold Breakfast with Santa or other Christmas celebrations for foster children.
  - ✓ Provide Easter baskets for foster children.
  - ✓ Provide a "shop" for caseworkers to select gifts for foster children. (Toys are sorted into age-and gender-appropriate types).
  - ✓ Host swim parties or other summer celebrations for foster children.
- **Pay special expenses for foster children.**
  - ✓ Pay expenses for summer camps and conferences.

- ✓ Pay expenses/uniforms associated with extracurricular activities such as sports, band, drill team, and scouts.
- ✓ Pay driver's education fees.
- ✓ Provide funding for foster parents to take foster children with them on vacation.
- **Assist with miscellaneous activities**
  - ✓ Assist Preparation for Adult Living staff with teen conferences.
  - ✓ Provide meals and/or child care for Family Group Decision-Making Conferences and Circles of Support meetings.
  - ✓ Provide snacks and/or child care for foster parent trainings.
  - ✓ Provide backpacks with nonperishable food items for children at risk of not being fed to take home over the weekend.
  - ✓ Provide reunification baskets to parents enrolled in the drug court program when they are reunified with their children.
  - ✓ Provide keepsake photos, teddy bears, and food for adoption day events.
  - ✓ Provide funding or in-kind contributions for printing and mounting of the children's photos and other materials for Heart Galleries.

### ***Public Awareness and Advocacy***

- **For schools**
  - ✓ Make presentations to teachers and students about reporting child abuse.
  - ✓ Sponsor poster, poetry, and essay contests on topics such as "What I can do to prevent child abuse."
  - ✓ Provide child abuse awareness bracelets to teachers.
  - ✓ Give teachers goodie bags to build relationships and raise awareness.
  - ✓ Provide blue ribbon lapel pins to teachers.
  - ✓ Provide students with printed wrist bands, coloring books, and bookmarks.
  - ✓ Place inserts in junior high and high school report cards.
  - ✓ Sponsor a penny drive where students donate pennies to benefit Rainbow Room or other CWB services.
  - ✓ Have school group such as 4-H Club put together gift bags for youth in care.
  - ✓ Sponsor a program on the prevention of bullying.
- **For general public**
  - ✓ Arrange for PSAs and newspaper articles on child abuse and/or foster care.
  - ✓ Make presentations and provide informational handouts to businesses and community organizations.
  - ✓ Set up candy baskets throughout town with message mints.
  - ✓ Hold car seat clinic at EMT facility.
  - ✓ Sponsor a balloon release – one balloon for each child abused in county or for each child death in state.
  - ✓ Ring a bell for each child in foster care in the county.
  - ✓ Host a candlelight vigil.
  - ✓ Distribute blue ribbons to churches.
  - ✓ Have booth at local fairs and festivals; hand out public awareness items.
  - ✓ Participate in local parades.
  - ✓ Provide handouts on military bases.
  - ✓ Make arrangements to have child abuse reporting/awareness information placed on billboards, possibly at no charge when not rented.
  - ✓ Obtain proclamations for Child Abuse Prevention month from mayor.
  - ✓ Sponsor a "Go Blue Day" – everyone encouraged to wear blue; decorate offices with blue balloons and banners; tie blue ribbons in trees.

- ✓ Distribute wooden nickels with hotline number.
  - ✓ Host town meetings to explain programs and get community input on children's issues.
  - ✓ Sell clocks with the hotline number and give others away to school personnel, churches, and judges. (The sales pay for the total cost of the clocks AND raise community awareness.)
  - ✓ Host conferences that provide training and/or raise awareness.
  - ✓ Provide materials such as "Look Before You Leave" campaign packets and prevention calendars for hospitals to give to new mothers.
  - ✓ Maintain a Web page.
  - ✓ Arrange for a press conference in association with Child Abuse Awareness Month.
  - ✓ Sponsor "Hug a Child Week" during Child Abuse Awareness Month.
  - ✓ Display white crosses with a banner stating, "Each cross represents a child's death from child abuse in Texas last year."
  - ✓ Hang a banner across a main street with child abuse prevention message.
- **For county commissioners and other state and county officials**
    - ✓ Host luncheon and provide update on board activities and county statistics.
    - ✓ Provide annual report of board activities and county statistics.
    - ✓ Outline funding needs for upcoming year.
    - ✓ Provide blue ribbon lapel pins to county officials.
    - ✓ Meet with legislators, particularly prior to session, to provide information on needs of children in community

### ***Recognition Events***

- **For CPS staff**
  - ✓ Assist with employee of the month award by providing a gift certificate and pin for winners.
  - ✓ Sponsor CWLA membership to allow access to training opportunities.
  - ✓ Obtain donations for office renovations.
  - ✓ Assist with painting offices to make them more child-friendly.
  - ✓ Host an appreciation luncheon at a restaurant and provide door prizes.
  - ✓ Hold an appreciation breakfast or lunch at the DFPS office.
  - ✓ Provide candy and/or health snacks for offices.
  - ✓ Write encouraging notes.
  - ✓ Make goodie bags for caseworkers.
  - ✓ Provide "survival kits" to caseworkers containing articles to ensure safer removals in unsanitary conditions.
- **For foster parents**
  - ✓ Arrange for a night out – dinner and a movie with child care.
  - ✓ Provide gift cards, for example for groceries at holidays.
  - ✓ Host a foster parent banquet with special entertainment.
  - ✓ Host a fish fry or barbecue for foster parents and CPS staff; invite prospective foster parents, county commissioners, etc.
  - ✓ Arrange for donation of tickets to athletic event such as college basketball or football game.
  - ✓ Recognize "foster family of the month" with newspaper article.
- **For others**
  - ✓ Present appreciation baskets to local law enforcement officers.
  - ✓ Host volunteer appreciation event and provide certificates.

## ***Fundraising Activities***

- Bake sale, especially before Thanksgiving or Christmas
- Salsa festival or other local festival
- Spaghetti dinner fundraiser
- Raffle for an automobile, bicycle, television, quilt, or other items
- Golf tournament
- Race or walk with participants soliciting pledges
- Rodeo (Sell ads for program and concessions)
- Havana Nights event
- Rummage/garage sale
- Sale of T-shirts and caps with slogan "Kids, you just can't beat 'em"
- Ticket sales to school play in collaboration with high school group
- Collaboration with local restaurant to donate a percentage of sales for the day
- Collaboration with civic organization to raise/contribute funds
- Portion of ticket sales from designated game of local ice hockey or other sports team
- Cookbook compilation and sale
- "Sponsor" a foster child with an annual donation of \$250 (Fill needs not met by other sources such graduation items, camp fees and other extras.)
- Drop boxes at local businesses to collect Rainbow Room items or school supplies
- Mail-out soliciting donations
- Donors names printed on ornaments placed on tree in courthouse lawn
- Cut-out paper hands placed in various businesses where the public can make donations in memory or honor of loved ones
- Host a "Breakfast with Santa" fundraiser for all children in the community (Charge for photos with Santa and for pancakes.)
- Toy walk at local festival (Children pay a quarter to walk in a circle of chairs until music stops; then they sit. A number is drawn, and child in that chair selects a toy from a tub full of used toys.)
- "Have a Heart for Kids" fundraiser asking donors to "brown bag it" and place the cost of a meal in decorated bags in employee lounges and local businesses.

**For more information about any of these initiatives, contact Carolyn Bivens, TCCWB Executive Director, at 512-484-8598 or [carolyn.bivens@tccwb.org](mailto:carolyn.bivens@tccwb.org). She can provide you with contract information for the board that sponsored the activity.**