

## A TIME FOR GRATITUDE

\*A definition of gratitude for children—to appreciate the person or thing that did something good for you or made you happy.

\*A definition of thankful for children—wanting to thank the person or thing that did something good for you or made you happy.

When children are raised knowing how to feel and express gratitude, they usually grow up to be well-rounded individuals with a greater level of mindfulness, self-esteem, empathy, and meaningful relationships with others. It is a good time to reflect on how to help our children show gratitude and thankfulness as we enter the season of giving. While we do not need a particular holiday to show thankfulness, conveying gratitude should be practiced daily, no matter how big or small.

How do we foster gratitude in children? Be a role model and teach them about gratitude. Support your child and help them understand as well as to take ownership of their strengths and talents. Create positive and safe environments for them to explore their abilities where they can grow from both their successes and their failures. Help them achieve intrinsic goals by pursuing goals that help the community and promote growth. Encourage them to help others by lending a hand to someone who is in need, being thoughtful, thanking others, volunteering, and donating. Help them to find meaning and causes that matter to them which will give them a deeper sense of gratitude.

Be a good leader. Reach out to our youth and engage them in activities that give back to our Veterans, their families, and the community, teach them to respect and take pride in our country. And by all means utilize the free resources that are available in MALTA. R.A.P. cards can be printed out on cardstock and given anytime you see a child showing patriotism, thanking a Veteran, placing their hand over their heart correctly, showing respect to our American Flag, etc. The fillable Patriotic Youth Award can also be printed out to honor youth for their patriotism and/or support of Veterans, service members, and their families.