

YOUTH ACTIVITIES



Joe Akers
4215 N Major Drive, Apartment 506
Beaumont, TX 77713
254-633-7460
vfwa1806.pjakers@gmail.com

NEWS FLASH! READ IT HERE! WE HAVE A NEW PROGRAM OF YOUTH ACTIVITIES

With our youth, we need to plant the seed of Americanism early to watch the youth branches sprout into honoring our country, their families, our military, our Veterans, and our communities. And just like the STRONGEST tree needs sunshine, ample water, and nutrient rich soil to grow, our nation's YOUTH need a key ingredient to grow... and that ingredient is FUN! Therefore, all youth activities **must** incorporate an emphasis on having fun, while participating in the activities.

Youth Reading to our Veterans & Veterans Reading to Youth

September 6, 2024, is National Read a Book Day. If possible, celebrate that day by hosting Veterans and children at your Post. Another big reading day in the classroom is Dr. Seuss Day, happening on March 2, 2025. Check with your schools and ask if Veterans are allowed to go into the classroom, so the students can read to them and vice versa.

By planting the seeds, our Auxiliaries can help our youth grow from their roots to their branches, and extend service to our Veterans by:

1. Auxiliaries participating with **Youth Reading to our Veterans & Veterans Reading to Youth**
2. Auxiliaries sponsoring and working with a youth group
3. Auxiliaries showing the youth Patriotism through Literacy
4. Auxiliaries getting the youth to participate in the Illustrating America Art Contest
5. Auxiliaries using the R.A.P. cards
6. Auxiliaries participating in the statewide project, "Victory Garden Planters"
7. Auxiliaries doing the promotions each month

Sponsoring and Working with Youth Groups

There are many youth groups in today's world that you can sponsor and work with. Here are some examples and how to work with them:

1. Sporting activities
 - Bring drinks and snacks for both teams
 - Buy a team's uniforms
 - Sponsor a team by running a concession stand, buying advertisement, or holding an after-game dinner or party
2. Scouts
 - Donate flags for the scouts to put on graves
 - Hold a flag retirement
 - Join them on camping trips, or help an Eagle Scout with a project
 - Hold an event for the Boy and Girl Scouts
3. Special Olympics
 - Be a Helper by donating equipment and encouraging the participants
 - Be a mentor by attending their events, getting to know them and their families and acknowledging their accomplishments
4. Church Youth Groups
 - Organize a fishing, hunting or camping trip
 - Get your Chaplain involved

Youth Groups Supporting our Veterans Citation

There are so many ways the Youth of tomorrow can support our Veterans. Whether it is a Veteran in their family, or one they meet, we need to show them how they can help support the Veterans. Here are a few ways:

1. Here are some organization(s) that can help connect youth with Veterans
 - a. The Gary Sinise Foundation
 - b. Fisher House Foundation
 - c. Give an Hour
 - d. Operation Gratitude
 - e. There are so many more out there!
2. Hold and Honor event

Patriotic Youth Award

The Patriotic Youth Award is designed to recognize individual youth for their patriotism and/or support of our Veterans, service members, and their families. A fillable, printable version of The Patriotic Youth Award is available in MALTA Member Resources under Youth Activities.

R.A.P. Cards (Random Acts of Patriotism)

The R.A.P cards are handed out to youth for doing something Patriotic. So how can you do more with them? Here are some other ways to get more youth in that Patriotic mind set:

1. At an event that you are helping with or holding for the youth
 - a. Ask them if they know the pledge of allegiance. If they do, give them a card
 - b. Ask them if they know what the Flag stands for. If they do, give them another card
 - c. Keep asking different questions about Patriotism and every correct answer earns them a card
 - d. For reading books about America and Patriotism
2. Use the cards as a point system
 - a. Set a date to reward the youth that have received cards
 - b. Set an award system (examples)
 - i. 100 cards = a movie ticket
 - ii. 75 cards = a new book
 - iii. 50 cards = a small notebook or bookmark
 - iv. 25 cards = a visit to the treasure chest

Remember that the youth love to be rewarded. So have fun and get creative. They are looking to you as their role model.

The Card template is located in MALTA Member Resources, Youth Activities.

Patriotism through Literacy

In today's world books are becoming digital in our schools. We need to bring back tangible, hand-held books. We need to start introducing American figures, icons and our flag to our youth at a young age by reading to them. As they get older, allow them to read to our Veterans and their family members.

With the decline in people entering the profession of education, we need brave mentors to step up and promote literacy, through reading with our youth.

1. Veterans Reading to Youth & Youth Reading to Veterans
 - a. Talk to your Post to locate those interested in being a mentor
 - b. Hold a story time for youth on a weekday (if possible)
 - c. Hold a weekend event to allow our youth to read to the Veterans.
2. Have our youth groups show their appreciation, by going to the VA Hospital Nursing Homes to read to the Veterans
 - a. First, ask the VA what the age limit is, and if you can have our youth come and read the Veterans

- b. Ask the Nursing Homes if they can have a story time with all residents, and see if any of them would like to read to the youth
- 3. Go to the Fisher House, if there is one near you
- 4. Hold a book day
 - a. Have books of Americanism to hand out
 - b. Check out Amazon for books sold in bulk
 - c. Ask libraries if there are any Americanism books they are getting rid of
 - d. Contact Scholastic books to see if they will donate books
 - e. Ask friends, neighbors, family members, and others you know if they can donate
- 5. Donate unused books to
 - a. Home schoolers
 - b. Daycares
 - c. Communities Take a Book, Leave a Book libraries
 - d. Big Brothers and Big Sisters Clubs
 - e. Shelters (homeless, woman's)
- 6. Volunteer
 - a. Ask local libraries to set up a Patriotic display on special days
 - i. 4th of July
 - ii. Veterans day
 - iii. Peral Harbor Day
 - iv. Memorial Day
 - v. Flag day
 - b. Read at the library
 - i. Story time
 - ii. On special American Reading Days
 - iii. Youth Reading to Veterans & Veterans Reading to Youth
- 7. Invite an author of an historical fiction or creative nonfiction to a book reading, and discuss their book

Important dates to readers:

- 1. March 1, 2024 Reading Across American Day
 - 2. March 2, 2024 Dr. Seuss Birthday, World Book Day
 - 3. March 16, 2024 National Freedom of Information Day
 - 4. April 2, 2024 Children's Book Day
 - 5. April 4, 2024 National School Library Week
- *Please look up other days to celebrate reading

For examples of books to read to youth, go to MALTA Member Resources, Youth Activities, Patriotism through Literacy list.

Illustrating America Art Contest

Open to any student in grades K-8, by the March 31, 2025 deadline, who is enrolled in public, private or parochial school, or home study program in the United States, its territories and possessions, or dependents of U.S. military or civilians personnel in overseas schools. Although U.S. citizenship is not required, students must be lawful U.S. permanent residents or have applied for permanent residence (the application for which has not been denied) and intend to become a U.S. citizen. Foreign exchange students and students aged 15 or older are ineligible. National grade division winners of previous grade divisions are ineligible for the same grade division of which they are a previous National winner.

Entries will be judged on patriotic theme and technique. The contest consists of three grade divisions: K-2, 3-5, 6-8. The Department first-place winner in each grade division will be forwarded to Auxiliary National Headquarters.

There are National Awards for first, second and third place in each grade division. The first, second and third place entry in each grade division will be displayed at National Convention. Please see the student brochure and entry form in MALTA Member Resources or on the VFW Auxiliary website for more details on requirements and contest rules.

State of Texas Awards:

1st Place - \$100

2nd Place- \$75

3rd Place - \$50

Deadlines:

Entries received by:

Local Auxiliary - March 31, 2025

Department - April 15, 2025

National Headquarters - May 5, 2025

Contest Rules:

- Art must be two-dimensional.
- Art must be on canvas or paper.
- Watercolor, pencil, pastel, charcoal, temper crayon acrylic, pen, ink, oil, marker, or other media may be used
- Submit canvas entries on a stretched frame or canvas board.
- Other entries, if matted, must be matted in white or reinforced with heavy paper.
- The art should be no smaller the 8"x10", but no larger the 18"x24", not including mat.
- **Coloring sheets, digital art and photography are not accepted.**

Involve Youth in ALL Auxiliary Programs

Youth play such an important role in our future. Encourage involvement for all ages in all Auxiliary Programs. Even a young person can find their place to serve when they are presented with a variety of opportunities.

Teach youth about Auxiliary efforts to:

- Respect and take pride in our country
- Serve hospitalized Veterans
- Elect leaders who appreciate our military
- Pass legislation that secures benefits for our Veterans.
- And many other worthy efforts!

Project Examples:

- Visting and volunteering in VA and non-VA facilities
- Raising funds for a community Veterans Memorial
- March in patriotic holiday parades
- Volunteer to help Veterans, service members, and their families with yard work or household repairs
- Send a card or small gift to the VFW National Home to support families.
- Plan a card and letter writing campaign in local schools, to send mail to our troops overseas or to Veterans in VA facilities.
- Organize an assembly/collection/delivery event for care packages to troops.
- Teach computer skills to Veterans.

Make Your Auxiliary Accessible to Today's Youth

It has never been easier to communicate your cause, and events to the world. Social Media, as teaching and information tools, have natural collaborative elements allowing our youth to view and comment on each other's activities. They are posting on Facebook, instantly sending pictures on Instagram, and subscribing to YouTube channels. If you don't know what any of this is – LEARN! Some popular Social Media platforms are Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, LinkedIn, YouTube, and Pinterest. Get online and see what's new! Visit MALTA Member Resources for publicity tips, social media guidelines and other helpful information.

**“Thankful & Grateful for the Sacrifice”
“From Our Roots to Our Branches, Extending Service to Our Veterans”**

Statewide Project

“Victory Garden Planters”

“Plant a Victory Garden: Our Food Is Fightin: A Garden Will Make Your Food Rations Go Further.” (source from nps.gov). The Victory Gardens were started during WWII to help the home front be certain they and their families had enough food to eat. Today, with the prices of food, we should think about starting our own Victory Garden to help cut the cost of our food bills. I know not everyone can have one, so to show the youth that planting something and taking care of it teaches them Responsibility, Learning Patience, and Respecting theirs and other’s things. So, encourage your youth to make a Victory Planter, for youth from K-8.

Here are the parameters for the Victory Planters

- (1) Must not be more than:**
 - (a) 2- 4” Planters (terracotta planters work best)
 - (b) 4- 2” Planters (terracotta planters work best)
 - (c) 1 Plant saucer for a 4” planter
- (2) Must be decorated in Patriot colors**
 - (a) They can be painted
 - (b) They can have stickers on them
 - (c) They can have hair
 - (d) They can use markers
- (3) Must have a fake plant in the top**

The awards will be judged in 3 divisions: K-2, 3-5, 6-8. Each District may send one Victory Planter in each division. Each entry will need to have the Name of the youth that created it, (First and Last), the name and number of the Auxiliary that sponsored the entry, as well as the District number.

AWARDS

- 1. Most outstanding activity and/or event of Youth Reading to our Veterans & Veterans Reading to Youth**
 - a. Plaque – 1st place winner in each membership division**
 - b. Citations – 2nd and 3rd place winners**
 - Entry form required and available in MALTA-Member Resources-Youth Activities-Award Forms. VFW Auxiliaries must send the required entry form to their Department Youth Activities Chairman by March 31, 2025, for judging. The Department Youth Activities Chairman must sign and send a copy of the completed Department winning entry form to the National Veterans & Support Ambassador by April 30, 2025, for judging
- 2. Victory Planters Award**
 - a. Plaques – 1st place winners in each membership division
 - b. Citations - 2nd and 3rd place
- 3. Most Outstanding Promotion of the Illustrating America Art Contest**
 - a. Plaques – 1st place winners in each membership division
 - b. Citations - 2nd and 3rd place

Let’s Have a Great Year!!

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YOUTH MID-YEAR & YEAR-END REPORT

- Must be received by your District President by December 10, 2024/April 10, 2025
- District President must forward to Department Chairman by December 20, 2024/April 20, 2025

AUXILIARY _____ NUMBER _____ DISTRICT _____

YOUTH GROUPS

1. Number of youth groups that Auxiliaries worked with during the current Program Year? _____
2. Number of youth that Auxiliaries worked with during the current Program Year? _____
3. Number of Youth Groups Supporting Our Veterans Citations awarded? _____
4. Number of Auxiliaries that participated in Patriotism through Literacy? _____
5. Number of books donated in participation of Patriotism through Literacy? _____

ILLUSTRATING AMERICA ART CONTEST

1. Number of Auxiliaries that promoted the Illustrating America art contest? _____
2. Number of students that submitted art entries to Auxiliaries for judging? _____
3. Number of art entries submitted to the Department from the Auxiliaries for judging? _____
4. Number of Auxiliaries that hosted an awards ceremony to recognized awardees and participants in this contest? _____
5. Total dollar amount and/or value of awards presented by Auxiliaries, Districts, and Departments? _____

Auxiliary Chairman: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

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