

**Youth Activities Program  
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**PROGRAM GOALS**

**Sponsoring and Working with Youth Groups  
Youth Groups Supporting Our Veterans Citations – Patriotic Youth Award  
Patriotism through Literacy – Illustrating America  
Get Excited for the Red, White, and Blue - National Anthem Contest**

The youth of today are America’s future leaders. We, as an organization, need to teach them what it means to be involved, patriotic and an American. They need to learn about service, dedication, traditions, and sacrifices that are made every day by those who have served and are serving now. When working with the youth, it is important to consider their safety and their needs. You can do this by looking at the “10 Tips for Working with Youth”, which can be found in MALTA under Resources – Youth Activities.

**Sponsoring and Working with Youth Groups**

- Auxiliaries can sponsor any youth groups, engaging them in any one of our programs, including activities to honor our veterans or assist our service members and their families. Many youth-focused organizations and college-bound seniors require various types of community service or activities to earn merits or units for credit. In our Youth Activities Program, we have something for every age group. Within our schools and the community, we can support, sponsor and work with the following:
- The Scouts
- Church Youth Groups
- Boys & Girls Clubs
- School-Sponsored Groups – i.e., Future Farmers, ROTC.

High school students can use volunteer hours for college applications: some require letters of recommendation. Scouts can earn points toward merit badges.

How do we get the youth involved?

- Placing flags on graves – Memorial Day (This can also be reported under Americanism.)
- Helping serve meals and clean up at Veterans Dinners.

- Feeding the homeless, helping with clothing and toiletries distribution.
- Helping box up and hand out food at distribution locations for those in need.
- Organizing assembly, collection and delivery of care packages for the Troops by assisting your local Blue Star Mothers.
- Starting a Community Garden to help Seniors and families in need grow fresh vegetables and fruits.

### **Youth Groups Supporting Our Veterans – Patriotic Youth Award**

Always remember to act responsibly and respectfully around the youth. After they have helped, recognize them for a job well done by presenting them with one of our Patriotic Youth Awards. A fillable, printable version of the **Patriotic Youth Award** can be found on MALTA Member resources under Youth Activities.

The **Youth Groups Supporting Our Veterans Citation** can also be found in MALTA Member Resources under Youth Activities. It is important that we recognize and tell the students how much we appreciate them for all their hard work and dedication.

### **Patriotism through Literacy**

Our children learn to read at an early age, and many students have nightly reading assignments daily. Reading has many benefits such as improved grammar, writing skills, improved focus, concentration, helps children to understand as well as share the feelings of others while stretching the child’s imagination.

This is our opportunity to help teach and educate students about patriotism, the flag, and our country. We can teach them by going online and logging in to MALTA members resources under Youth Activities: we have the ‘Patriotism through Literacy’ list of books, which is 3 pages long and is even divided up into grade levels. The list includes Creative Non – Fiction, Educational / Americana& Historical Fiction, Historical Fiction, and Non- Fiction / Memoir. Check with your local library to see if they have the books in stock. If not, maybe your Auxiliary can do a book drive asking for books from the list, or vote on your Auxiliary floor to purchase and donate books on the list to the schools or the libraries, and even the local shelters.

Benefits of Patriotism through Literacy:

- By teaching student’s various times in American history, it helps to expose students to different experiences that promote empathy, reflect on hardships, struggles, and overcoming obstacles.
- Spending time in the community with the students by hosting a day of reading where veterans read to the students, or the students can read to the veterans. The veterans can reflect and share the stories that may be like what they are reading about.

The month of November would be a good time to help promote the reading program. Check with your local schools about setting up reading days.

- Volunteer to read at your local library. Read a historical or creative non-fiction book to the students. Set up a day and time in the month of February around Presidents Day. Set up a day to read every month.
- Before visiting a VA or nursing home, see if the staff would set up an area for the children to read to the veterans or the veterans read to the children.
- Volunteer to help tutor students with their reading skills by reading stories that teach patriotism, the flag, and about our country.
  - ➔ Your auxiliary can create and host a read – a – thon using R.A.P. Cards as the point system for earning small award prizes (stickers, pins, books, etc.).
- September 6, 2024, is National Read a Book Day. Celebrate that day by hosting veterans and children to your Post. Maybe have members dress up in historical costumes, such as Uncle Sam, Betsy Ross, or President Lincoln...maybe have some books on hand to give out to the children.
- March 2, 2025, is Dr. Seuss Day. You can volunteer to read a book at your local elementary school to the students. You could also dress in character if you are reading a book about someone special.

### **Illustrating America**

We all love it when our children or grandchildren bring home that fridge-worthy “masterpiece” that immediately goes up on the fridge. We can help to promote and nourish their artistic talent even more by promoting the Illustrating America Program which is open to any student in grades K – 8 by the **March 31, 2025**, deadline who is enrolled in a public, private or parochial school or home study program in the United States, its territories and possessions; or dependents of U.S military or civilian 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 Illustrating America contests may enter the subsequent grade division but are ineligible for the same grade division of which they are a previous National winner.

Entries will be judged on patriotic themes and technique. The contest consists of three grade divisions: K- 2, 3 – 5, and 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 the National Convention. Please see the student brochure and entry form in the MALTA member resources or on the VFW Auxiliary website for more details on requirements and contest rules.

**Deadlines:**

Entries received by Local Auxiliary – **March 31, 2025**  
Department Headquarters – **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, tempera, crayon, acrylic, pen, ink, oil, marker, or other media may be used.
- Submit canvas entries on a stretcher frame or canvas board. Other entries, if matted, must be matted in white or reinforced with heavy paper.
- The art should be no smaller than 8”X10” but no larger than 18” x 24”, not including the mat.
- **Coloring sheets, digital art and photography are not accepted.**

**Get Excited for the Red, White, and Blue**

I am excited! Are you excited? Now is the time to get your children, grandchildren, and all the students in educational settings to get fired up about singing the National Anthem solo and enter the USA National Anthem Contest. Each singer must sing **only the original words of our National Anthem** in any way that they wish. It must be a video and taken to a local Auxiliary. The singer will be judged on their vocal ability, mastery of lyrics, originality or interpretation and entertainment value. **You can get more information, rules and entry forms on MALTA Member Resources – Youth Activities**

**Deadlines:**

Local Auxiliary: **March 31, 2025**  
Department: **April 15, 2025**  
National: **May 5, 2025**

**R.A.P. Cards**

**“Random Acts of Patriotism”** (R.A.P.) Cards can be given out to any youth who are showing:

- Patriotism
- Thanking a Veteran
- Placing American flags on veteran graves
- Raising funds for a veteran’s memorial or marching in patriotic holiday parades.

These are just a few but there are many more examples that can be recognized. When the child shows Random Acts of Patriotism, recognize them with the R.A.P. card and explain to them why they are receiving. Show and tell them how proud you are of them.

The R.A.P. card template can be found online at MALTA – Member Resources – Youth Activities.

### **Marie Klugow Educational Grant**

This Program is a California Program only for Auxiliary members and their families to begin/continue their college education. It offers a \$3,000.00 scholarship in three (3) different areas.

- One to a graduating High School Senior
- One to a Continuing College Student
- One to a student pursuing a Nursing or Health Care career.

**Deadline** for Marie Klugow Educational Grant is **April 15, 2025**. Applications and information can be found on [vfwauxca.org](http://vfwauxca.org) – Members Only > Department Headquarters Information Resources.

### **Awards for Auxiliaries**

1. Most outstanding activity and/or event of youth reading to veterans and/or veterans reading to youth.
  - Citation and \$25 to one VFW Auxiliary in each of the 10 Program Divisions for most outstanding activity and /or event of youth reading to veterans and /or veterans reading to youth.

Entry form required and available in MALTA Member Resources – Youth Activities. 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 Youth Activities Chairman by **April 30, 2025**, for judging. Citations will be mailed directly to the winning VFW Auxiliaries from National headquarters and money will be deposited into the winning VFW Auxiliary account after the 2025 VFW Auxiliary National Convention.

### **Awards for Department and Department Chairman**

1. \$25 VFW Store gift certificate to one Department Youth Activities Chairman in each of the 10 Program Divisions for the best promotion of implementing youth reading to the veterans and/or veterans reading to youth.
2. The Outstanding Performance Award and Second – Place Outstanding Performance Award will be awarded in each of the 10 Program Divisions based on the criteria listed on Page 5 in the National Program Book and for the promotion of the program goals listed at the top of Page 56.

Winners will be announced and awards presented at the 2025 VFW Auxiliary National Convention in Columbus, Ohio.

### **Department Legacy Award**

A Legacy Award will be awarded to one Outstanding Auxiliary Chairman for best Performance in the Youth Activities Program.

These are the questions you should try to answer when you make your reports about your Auxiliary's Youth Activities projects online. Include sufficient details in your description to help your Department Chairman recognize your accomplishments. Select the appropriate "Activity" when completing your report.

## VFW Auxiliary National Year-End Report Worksheet Youth Activities 2024-2025

This form is for statistical purposes only.

The Department Chairman must submit this report form to their Department President by May 1.  
This report to be processed in MALTA by the Department President by May 10.

Department: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of participating Auxiliaries: \_\_\_\_\_

### 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. \_\_\_\_\_
4. Number of Auxiliaries that hosted an awards ceremony to recognize awardees and participants in this contest. \_\_\_\_\_
5. Total dollar amount and/or value of awards presented by Auxiliaries, Districts and Department. \_\_\_\_\_

Department Chairman signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Conference: \_\_\_\_\_