

# YOUTH ACTIVITIES – 2024-2025

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As stated in our Auxiliary National Program Book, “The VFW Auxiliary is in a unique position to help teach our youth the skills to become responsible adults through serving our country, communities and veterans. Today’s youth are the future of our nation.” This year, our National Youth Activities Program’s main areas of focus include:

- **Sponsoring and Working with Youth Groups**
- **Youth Groups Supporting Our Veterans Citations**
- **Individual Patriotic Youth Awards**
- **Random Act of Patriotism (R.A.P.) Cards**
- **Illustrating America**
- **Patriotism Through Literacy**
- **Involving Youth in ALL Auxiliary Programs**



(The “Get Excited for the Red, White and Blue!” National Anthem Contest will not be offered this year.)

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## ★ **SPONSORING AND WORKING WITH YOUTH GROUPS**

- As part of the Auxiliary Youth Activities Program, your Auxiliary can sponsor and engage youth in any one of our programs, including activities to honor our veterans or assist our service members and their families. Auxiliaries can work with youth sports teams, church youth groups, after-school programs, youth focused organizations like Scouts, 4-H, and Boys and Girls Clubs, school clubs, home-school associations, youth community service groups, JROTC and more! Many youth-focused organizations require community service hours – tap into that and encourage these youth to take part in our Auxiliary activities. Remember, involving youth and possibly their whole family in your service to veterans can bring new membership to your Auxiliary. It’s a win-win situation for your Auxiliary, veterans and the community as a whole!

## *Recognize and Thank Youth with . . .*

### **YOUTH GROUPS SUPPORTING OUR VETERANS CITATIONS**

Youth groups are doing amazing things for veterans and their families. We can ensure that these great projects and activities continue by recognizing the whole group with a **Youth Groups Supporting our Veterans Citation**. This is an easy and free way to acknowledge youth groups – your Auxiliary should give it a try this year!

### **PATRIOTIC YOUTH AWARDS**

Do you know an individual youth who displays patriotism and/or supports our veterans, service members and their families? Don’t let this go unnoticed – present them with a **Patriotic Youth Award!** There are three versions of this award to choose from.

### **R.A.P. CARDS**

Have you seen a child respecting our flag or thanking a veteran? R.A.P. Cards are a fun way to say, “Thank you” and “Good Job” to boys and girls who support veterans or display patriotism.



All of these awards can be found on MALTA Member Resources or on our Wisconsin Auxiliary webpage under Youth Activities. You can print them out yourselves! Giving our youth recognition for their achievements will encourage them to continue on with their good works.

## ILLUSTRATING AMERICA

While we have the Young American Creative Patriotic Art competition for our high schoolers, Illustrating America is a patriotic art contest open to all students in grades K-8. Their artwork will be judged on patriotic theme and technique. Please remind students to **follow all the rules** included on the entry form! The contest consists of these three grade divisions: K-2, 3-5 and 6-8. Entries must reach local Auxiliaries by March 31, 2025. Auxiliaries can then send their first-place winner in each grade division to me by April 15, 2025. First, second and third place awards will be given out at both the Department and National level in all three grade divisions. Applications and other information can be found under Youth Activities on our Wisconsin website or on MALTA Member Resources. In 2022-23, we had a first-grade student take the second-place spot in the Grades K-2 division in the National Contest. Our talented students can achieve this again – **Go, Wisconsin!**



## PATRIOTISM THROUGH LITERACY

This program fosters a lifelong love of reading among our youth, introduces them to various American events and people, and helps them to understand our history better. It also gives us a chance to spend time with kids in our community in new, creative ways. How can your Auxiliary participate in Patriotism Through Literacy? Some ideas include:

- Volunteer to read a patriotic book at your school or local library.
- Donate historical and patriotic books to area schools, shelters or libraries.
- Host a read-a-thon with prizes or run a writer's workshop for young authors.
- Invite an author of historical fiction or non-fiction for a book talking or signing.

The National VFW Auxiliary offers a Patriotic through Literacy Suggested Book list that will help you out with this program. If you donate books, there are labels available that you could place inside each book. Reading has many benefits for children – increased grammar and writing skills, improved focus and concentration, better understanding of the feelings of others and a widening of their imaginations. As Dr. Seuss famously said, "Reading can take you places you have never been before."

National Youth Activities Ambassador Dominique Garcia is emphasizing this year how books can forge a bond between veterans and children. She invites us to host a day of reading – veterans reading to kids or kids reading to veterans. Choose a book from the Patriotism through Literacy List. You can meet at your local library, schools, VFW Post, VA Hospitals, Veterans Nursing Homes, etc.

## YOUTH ACTIVITIES NATIONAL PROGRAM AWARDS

In fact, this year's the National Youth Activities Program Awards are for the most **outstanding activity and/or event of youth reading to veterans and/or veterans reading to youth**. Your Auxiliary should go for it! A citation and \$25 goes to one VFW Auxiliary in each of the 10 Program Divisions. Auxiliaries must send their entry form to me by March 31, 2025. Forms are found on our Wisconsin Auxiliary website or MALTA Member Resources under Youth Activities.



## INVOLVE YOUTH IN ALL AUXILIARY PROGRAMS

Americanism, Buddy Poppy/National Home, Legislative, Hospital, Auxiliary Outreach, Veterans & Family Support, Scholarships – our youth can benefit from and help with these and all our Auxiliary programs!

