



**Youth Activities Program—2023-2024**      **Ruth Huber, Chairman**  
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Children are the future of our nation. Focusing our attention on our youth from a young age is vital as we help them learn about our nation's history and our Veteran's sacrifices who fought and died to keep our freedoms. They are our leaders of tomorrow, our teachers, and doctors, and even our Auxiliary members. We are in a unique position to assist in the development of our children as they become responsible and educated adults who will have the potential to lead us into a brighter tomorrow. Our goal should be to teach them good morals and values, to have respect for themselves and others, and to have pride in their personal accomplishments. We can take the lead in this endeavor if we commit ourselves to teaching them and guiding them in the right direction. My challenge to you is to be a good leader. Get out there and reach out to our youth, then engage them in activities that give back to our veterans, their families, and the community. Teach them to respect and take pride in their country.

### **Patriotism Through Literacy**

One of the easiest ways to promote patriotism is through reading. It is often taken for granted the many freedoms we enjoy that our forefathers fought so hard to defend. We need to educate our youth at an early age about who our historical figures were that helped build this great country, the United States of America. Ways you can participate: donate historical fiction or non-fiction books to your local school, library, or shelter, volunteer to read to younger youth at a school or library, host a read-a-thon and award prizes for the number of books read. Prizes might include books, bookmarks, or stickers.

### **Random Acts of Patriotism (R.A.P.)**

Have a supply of R.A.P. cards available to present to a youth who demonstrates a random act of patriotism. When we recognize the good behavior a youth demonstrates, it encourages and inspires them to repeat the action and builds their self-esteem. The cards can be downloaded from MALTA for free and printed on cardstock.

### **Creating, Supporting and Working with Youth Groups**

An Auxiliary can sponsor a youth group and engage youth in all our programs. Teach them about Auxiliary efforts to respect and take pride in our country. They can visit and volunteer in VA and non-VA hospitals and/or facilities, raise funds for a community veterans memorial, march in patriotic holiday parades, volunteer to help veterans and active-duty military families with yard work or household chores, send cards or small gifts to the National Home to show support for the families, make cards or write letters in the classroom to mail to our troops overseas or hospitalized veterans, or teach veterans and their families computer skills.

Youth groups should be recognized for their efforts and service projects that honor our veterans and assist active-duty military personnel and their families. Let your community leaders, teachers, coaches, school clubs, and others know what we have to offer our youth and how we will recognize their efforts. Supporting Our Veterans National Citation and the Patriotic Youth Award are available in MALTA.

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

The Auxiliary sponsors a singing contest for youth in grades K-8 and 9-12 who sing and record our National Anthem. Entries are judged on vocal ability, mastery of lyrics, originality or interpretation, and entertainment value. The first-place winner from each age group will receive \$25 and then be forwarded to the National Auxiliary Headquarters where first, second, and third place winners in each grade division will receive an award. Entries must be received at the participating Auxiliary by March 31<sup>st</sup> Department by April 15<sup>th</sup>, and National by May 5<sup>th</sup>. The entry form with all requirements and contest rules can be found in MALTA.

### **Illustrating America**

This is a two-dimensional art contest that is open to any student in grades K-8 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. Entries will be judged on patriotic theme and technique and consist of three grade divisions: K-2, 3-5, and 6-8. Entries must be received at the participating Auxiliary by March 31<sup>st</sup>, Department by April 15<sup>th</sup>, and National by May 5<sup>th</sup>. The entry form with all requirements and contest rules can be found in MALTA.

### **Scrapbook Contest**

All Auxiliaries are asked to connect with at least one school in your area to explain the scrapbook contest. The scrapbooks can be completed as a class project or on an individual basis and should be in a patriotic theme. This could include the American Flag, parades, patriotic holidays, veterans, and/or branches of the military. **Categories for judging at Spring Conference** will be as follows: **Kindergarten, 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Grades, and Students With Disabilities in self-contained settings. Awards will be 1<sup>st</sup>-\$25, 2<sup>nd</sup>-\$15, 3<sup>rd</sup>-\$10 in each of the three divisions.** The scrapbooks need to be judged at the Auxiliary level with the first-place entry(ies) advancing to Department level judging. An index card needs to be attached to the back of the scrapbook indicating the age of the student and/or grade category, Auxiliary name, number, and District submitting the entry.

### **Poster/Collage Contest**

Auxiliaries are asked to promote the Poster/Collage Contest to youth in **3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> grades**. They should be done in a patriotic theme i.e., the American Flag, parades, patriotic holidays, veterans, and/or branches of the military. The entries need to be judged at the Auxiliary level with the first-place entry(ies) advancing to Department level for judging. All entries will be judged together. **Awards as follows: 1<sup>st</sup>-\$25, 2<sup>nd</sup>-\$15, 3<sup>rd</sup>-\$10.** An index card needs to be attached to the back of the entry indicating the student's name, grade category, Auxiliary name and number, and District submitting the entry.

### **Make Your Auxiliary Accessible to Today's Youth**

Communicating our cause and events to the world has never been easier. The youth of today are tweeting on Twitter, posting on Facebook, sending pictures on Instagram, and subscribing to YouTube channels. The collaborative elements of social media allow our youth the ability to view and comment on each other's activities. Use these resources to get the word out about how they can get involved in our cause.

**Most Outstanding Activity and/or Event** educating the community about Patriotism Through Literacy and the R.A.P. card award. **A citation will be awarded to every Auxiliary that hosts an activity and/or event who submits an entry form, which can be found on MALTA, and received by the Department Chairman by March 31<sup>st</sup> for judging.** All entries will be sent to National who will mail the citations to the Auxiliaries. One Auxiliary in each of the four Conferences will receive a citation and \$25 for the most outstanding activity/event.

### **SPRING CONFERENCE REMINDERS**

Bring your entries from your local level judging for both the scrapbook contest and the poster/collage contests so they can be judged at the conference. After they are judged you will be able to pick them up to return to your local winners.

By actively participating in the youth activities program, you are giving of yourself to help ensure a better world for our Veterans, their families, and the communities in which we live. You are teaching good citizenship, building self-esteem, instilling responsibility, and giving us all hope for the future where our children can grow and become responsible caring adults. Together we can be the difference!

By "Banding Together For Our Veterans" we can "Light The Flame of Hope for Our Veterans"