



Youth Activities Program—2024-2025

Phyllis Walker, Chairman

74 Mulcahy Blvd, Rochester, NY 14624

Telephone: (585) 571-4506 Email: phyllispwalker3019@gmail.com

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. They are our future leaders of tomorrow. So how do we get them involved and teach them about our great organizations? We can take the lead in this endeavor if we commit ourselves to teaching them and guiding them in the right direction. Get out in our community and reach youth groups, then engage them in activities that give back to our veterans, their families, and community. Teach them to respect and take responsibility for 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 the historical figures that helped built 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 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. Go to MALTA Members Resources, under Youth Activities, and under 'Patriotism through Literacy' there are lists that are divided by grade levels.

Youth Reading to our Veterans & Veterans Reading to Youth:

Reading is a big part of growing up and learning. Many students have nightly reading as homework starting at an early age. Sometimes just talking to the students about patriotism, America and our country can be dull. But taking the students on a journey in a book might capture their attention more and open their mind. For example, the little ones can view images of what Frances Scott Key saw as he wrote the "Star-Spangled Banner." The Youth Group Supporting Our Veterans Citation is one way for Auxiliaries to recognize youth groups for their efforts and service projects honoring our veterans and assisting service members and their families.

Christmas Toy Drive:

Auxiliaries are asked to participate in the Christmas Toy Drive for the children in our communities. The drive should run from November 1st - December 1st, 2024. Please bring an unwrapped toy to your District meeting by December 1st. The District President will donate the toys to an organization in your area. Suggestions of agencies: Boys & Girls Club, Daycare Centers, or Church Youth Groups.

Placemats projects:

This is an easy program. Auxiliaries can purchase paper placemats to work with children in local youth groups. Have them decorate the placemats for VA hospital, nursing home or senior center lunch program.

Illustrating America

This is a two-dimensional art contest that is open to any student in grades K-8 who are enrolled in a public, private, 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 31st, Department by April 15th, and National by May 5th. The entry form with all requirements and contest rules can be found in MALTA. **In each division winners will receive:**

First Place: \$25 Second Place: \$15 Third Place \$10

Sponsoring 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.

Most Outstanding Activity and/or Event: National Award

Youth reading to veterans and/or veterans reading to youth. 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 31st 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.

Make Your Auxiliary Accessible to Today's Youth

Communicating our causes 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.

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

Children like to be told they are doing a wonderful job. Praising a child can go a long way and it helps boost their confidence. Create a reward system for the cards, each card has so many points. The points can help them win a book, or other prizes. R.A.P. have cards available to present to a youth who demonstrates a random act of patriotism. The card can be downloaded from MALTA for free and printed on cardstock.

SPRING CONFERENCE REMINDERS

Illustrating America Art Contest: Entries are due at Spring Conference. Color sheets, digital art and photography are not accepted.

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.

“From Our Roots to Our Branches Extending Service to Our Veterans” By “Soaring Into the Next Century of Service With Our Veterans and Their Families.”