

YOUTH ACTIVITIES

2022-2023

Do you want to offer the youth of today a way to foster the traditions and the values of Patriotism? When you promote and participate in the Youth Activities Program with the VFW Auxiliary you can do that! Today's young people have many different ways and opportunities to serve the Veterans and families. Be a part of the program that helps acknowledge these outstanding youths in their support of our Veterans.

GET EXCITED FOR THE RED, WHITE, AND BLUE!



The program teaches youth the lyrics to "The Star Spangled Banner" while promoting their creative side.

The contest consists of a **SOLO** vocal performance of "The Star Spangled Banner" recorded between July 1, 2022 and March 31, 2023. The performance must be submitted on a flash drive or uploaded to an online video platform; for example:

YouTube or Vimeo. Vocals can be either a cappella, using background tracks or instruments. The song can be sung in an arrangement or genre of the contestant's preference. **NO WORDS CAN BE CHANGED!** A completed contest entry form with parent/guardian's signature is required.

This contest is open to anyone in grades K-12 who attend public, private, or parochial schools and those who are home schooled in the United States, its territories and possessions, or the dependents of US military/civilian personnel in overseas schools. There will be winners chosen in two grade divisions: K-8 and 9-12. The contestant must be a US citizen or national. No relationship to a VFW or VFW Auxiliary member is



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PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS & DEADLINES

- ✓ Creating, Sponsoring and Working with Youth Groups
- ✓ Youth Groups Supporting Our Veterans Citations and Patriotic Youth Awards
- ✓ Patriotism through Literacy
- ✓ Graves Beautification
- ✓ Get Excited for the Red, White and Blue! *
- ✓ Illustrating America *

*** Deadlines**

Entries received by:
Local Auxiliary – March 31
Department – April 15
National – May 5

needed to enter. Foreign exchange and students who are over 20 years old are not eligible. Winners of previous Get Excited contests are eligible to enter as long as the entry is in a different grade division.



ILLUSTRATING AMERICA: The contest is for elementary, middle and junior high school students. It encourages the artist's creative abilities and rewards them. There are three grade divisions: K-2, 3-5 and 6-8. A 1st, 2nd and 3rd place National winner will be selected for each grade division.

Rules for this contest are:

1. Art must be two-dimensional.
2. Entry can be on either canvas or paper.
3. Canvas entries must be on a stretcher frame or canvas board.
4. Paper entries are to be matted in white or reinforced with heavy paper.
5. Artwork size should be between 8" x 10" and 18" x 24", not including mat.
6. Watercolor, pencil, pastel, charcoal, tempera, crayon, acrylic, pen, ink, oil, marker, glitter or other media may be used.

PATRIOTISM THROUGH LITERACY helps to promote and support reading among the young with a simple, fun and potentially free initiative. The program will introduce youth to historical figures as well as teach them about events that happened in our Nation's history. The goal of Patriotism through Literacy is to foster a love of reading with the benefit of continuous learning. There is a list of suggested books by grade available under the Program & Publicity Resources at www.vfwauxiliary.org.



GRAVES BEAUTIFICATION

A new part of the Youth Activities Program this year is Graves Beautification. It holds a special place in National Chairman Ramona Henson's heart. Your local cemeteries take great care of the hallowed grounds; sometimes certain graves just need a little more zhuzhing (to improve the appearance). Veterans' graves deserve to be well maintained. Steps for caring for Veterans' graves are:

1. Contact the cemetery for permission.
2. Follow the VA's National Cemetery Administration's guidelines for cleaning headstones and markers (visit www.cem.va.gov/hmm/cleaning.asp).
3. Check out online video's showing safe practices for cleaning headstones.
4. Gather a group of young people to assist in this project.
5. When cleaning is complete, place a Flag on the gravesite – be sure to follow the guidelines of the cemetery. Sometimes civilian cemeteries only want Flags on wooden sticks placed directly in the ground. If the

cemetery allows, Flag holders can be made with PVC pipe by cutting 1/2" PVC pipe to correct length. Place the Flag ten inches (or one combat boot size) from the front of the headstone in the center. Step back to make sure "Old Glory" is straight.

When reporting a Graves Beautification project, please include the following:

1. A before and after picture of every headstone cleaned.
2. A log of the gravesites cleaned during the project, including the:
 - a. Name of Veteran,
 - b. Cemetery name,
 - c. Cemetery city and state.

BY YOUTH, FOR YOUTH

By Youth for Youth is part of the Youth Activities Program focused on developing young people to become leaders, and to acknowledge and identify needs in their community. The youth in our Veterans' families make sacrifices for this country with some experiencing the ultimate sacrifice when a parent gives all for our freedom.



Hold an event or benefit to help the young in your community to assist other youth in need. Project ideas could be to team up with the local high school students to hold a toy collection drive around the holidays to benefit those that who would not otherwise receive gifts. Work with a local scout troop on a "Back to School" drive to help with all those little items needed for school: Backpacks, Pencils, Crayons, etc. The local schools can help with supply lists for each grade as well as help with distribution to needy children. Food drives are another way to help families in need. All you need to do is assist or support a group of young people who want to give back to their community.

CREATING, SPONSORING, AND WORKING WITH A YOUTH GROUP

Did you know that many youth groups are service oriented? High Schoolers are looking for community service activities in your area to receive school credit and improve their college applications. Involving the youth in Veterans services can also boost your membership to the Auxiliary. Sponsoring a youth group helps your community as well as your Auxiliary. There are citations and patriotic awards for all parts of the program at www.vfwauxiliary.org/resources under "Youth Activities". Please use these resources to recognize our youth and youth groups for what they do for our Veterans and communities.

YOUTH ACTIVITIES

Program Awards

DEPARTMENT AWARDS

Auxiliary Awards

1. A citation to each Auxiliary that is reported in the Youth Activities program by December 31, 2022.
2. A citation to every Auxiliary that has an entry in both the *Get Excited for the Red, White, and Blue!* and the *Illustrating America* contests.
3. An award to the Auxiliary Chairman with the best promotion of the *Get Excited for the Red, White, and Blue!* contest. Report must be received by the Department Chairman within 30 days of the promotion, but no later than April 15, 2023.
4. An award to the Auxiliary Chairman with the best promotion of the *Illustrating America* contest. Report must be received by the Department Chairman within 30 days of the promotion, but no later than April 15, 2023.
5. An award to the Auxiliary Chairman with the best promotion of the *Patriotism through Literacy* program. Report must be received by the Department Chairman within 30 days of the promotion, but no later than April 15, 2023.
6. An award to the Auxiliary with the most outstanding Veteran grave beautification activity and/or event with youth involvement. An entry form (required) is available at vfwauxiliary.org/resources. Auxiliaries must send the entry form to their Department Youth Activities Chairman by March 31, 2023.
7. An award to the Auxiliary Chairman with the best promotion of the Youth Activities program in the Auxiliary meeting. Reports must be received by the Department Chairman within 30 days of the meeting, but no later than April 15, 2023.

District Awards

1. A citation to each District Chairman who has 100% of his/her Auxiliaries in the District reported in Youth Activities by December 31, 2022.
2. An award to the District Chairman with the best promotion of the Youth Activities program in a District meeting. Report must be received by the Department Chairman within 30 days of the meeting, but no later than April 15, 2023.

NATIONAL AWARDS

Auxiliary Awards

1. Most outstanding Veteran Grave Beautification activity and/or event by an Auxiliary with youth involvement.
 - Citation to every Auxiliary that hosts a Veteran Grave Beautification activity and/or event with youth involvement. Criteria and entry form (required) available at vfwauxiliary.org/resources. Auxiliaries must send the entry form to their Department Youth Activities Chairman by March 31, 2023.

The Department Youth Activities Chairman must send a copy of all submitted entry forms to National Headquarters by April 30, 2023.

Citations will be mailed directly to participating Auxiliaries from National Headquarters.

- Citation and \$25 to one Auxiliary in each of the four Conferences with the most outstanding Veteran Grave Beautification activity and/or event with youth involvement. Winners will be announced and awards presented at the 2023 National Convention in Phoenix, Arizona. The Department Youth Activities Chairman must sign and send a copy of the completed Department-winning entry form to the National Youth Activities Ambassador by April 30, 2023 for judging.