

# Youth Activities Program

## Program Goals

- Sponsoring and collaborating with youth groups
  - Promoting patriotism through literacy,
    - Illustrating America

**National President's Theme**  
"Serving America's Heroes"

**Department President's Theme**  
"Growing Stronger for Our Veterans"

## Sponsoring and Working with Youth Groups

Engaging with youth groups is a meaningful way to connect with young people in our communities. Many youth groups have service requirements that can be fulfilled through Auxiliary-sponsored activities, and some programs allow participants to earn school credit. Involving youth in service to veterans alongside Auxiliary members can introduce new members to the organization and set a positive example of "Serving America's Heroes".

## Youth Groups Supporting Our Veterans Citations and Patriotic Youth Awards

We honor youth groups that support veterans through the Youth Groups Supporting Veterans Citation. These recognitions celebrate young people who volunteer at VA facilities, organize events, or send care packages, demonstrating compassion and leadership.

The "Random Acts of Patriotism" (R.A.P.) initiative encourages youth to display patriotism and integrity in their daily lives, such as placing a hand over their heart during the National Anthem or Pledge of Allegiance, distributing U.S. flags, or engaging in other patriotic acts. These behaviors are acknowledged with citations to reward their commitment to country and community.

## Patriotism Through Literacy

The Patriotism Through Literacy initiative aims to spark a love of country in young readers by using patriotic books. The approach is straightforward, enjoyable, and can even be free. Activities range from reading historical or creative nonfiction picture books at local libraries to donating relevant titles to schools, shelters, and libraries. You might organize a read-a-thon with small prizes for reaching reading goals, host a writing workshop for teens at the VFW Post Home, or invite an author for a book talk and signing. This program encourages appreciation for American values and history, leaving a lasting impression on youth through the power of stories that lead to a lifetime of learning.

## Illustrating America Art Contest

The Illustrating America art contest invites students in grades K–8 to showcase their artistic talents by creating original, patriotic-themed artwork. This national competition encourages young artists to gain confidence, receive recognition, and express their love for country through creativity. The contest offers an opportunity for everyone to appreciate the unique perspectives of youth. **NEW DUE DATE: DECEMBER 15, 2026 to Auxiliaries! January 15<sup>th</sup> to Department Chairman. January 31<sup>st</sup> to National!**

## Involving Youth in Auxiliary Programs

All Auxiliary programs are open to youth involvement, ensuring every young person can find a meaningful way to serve their community and veterans. Presenting a variety of opportunities allows youth to contribute and grow alongside dedicated Auxiliary members.

## Access to Forms and Resources

Forms, citations, score sheets, and other materials for all Youth Programs are available on the MALTA website. Members can find these resources by logging in, navigating to “Member Resources,” and selecting “Youth Activities.”



## Contact Information

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## Department Awards

One award in each membership class for the most creative and/or unique VFW Auxiliary Lending Library. Entry form is required and available on the Dept. website under Youth Program and also in MALTA under Member Resources. VFW Auxiliaries must send the required entry form to the Department Youth Activities Chairman by March 31, 2027 for judging.

### DEPARTMENT AWARDS FOR YOUTH:

Illustrating America (3 Categories: K-2nd grade, 3rd-5th grade, and 6th-8th grade) • 1st Place in Each Category: \$100 and a certificate • 2nd Place in Each Category: \$50 and a certificate • 3rd Place in Each Category: \$25 and a certificate. Winning Students will be invited to June Convention.

**NEW DUE DATE: DECEMBER 15, 2026 to Auxiliaries!**