



Department of Missouri VFW
Auxiliary
Youth Activities Program
2024-2025

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"Our children are the rock on which our future will be built, our greatest asset as a nation."

- Nelson Mandela

Our youth are the future of our country. They are impressionable, and we as Auxiliary members are in a unique position to mold and teach our young people the principles upon which our nation was founded. We can lead by example while serving our veterans, service members and their families.

Sponsoring and Working with Youth Groups

As part of the Auxiliary Youth Activities Program, an Auxiliary can sponsor a youth group and engage youth in any of our programs, including activities to honor and assist our veterans and their families. Recruit within your local schools and youth organizations that may require volunteer or community service hours for advancements, school credits or service hours.

Examples of Youth Groups you can work with:

- School clubs
 - Youth sports teams
 - After school programs
 - Home School Association
 - Church youth groups
 - Scouting programs
 - JROTC
 - Youth community service groups
 - Nonprofit organization youth advisory councils
- And so many more!

Never forget, involving youth can bring new membership! When you involve entire families, they feel welcome and included. If children can help at an event, remember to act responsibly and respectfully around them. They are watching and learning from you.

Patriotism Through Literacy

This program helps us promote and encourages our youth through literacy. We have the ability to introduce historical figures and teach them about events in our nation's history, all while fostering a love of books that leads to a lifetime of learning.

Some examples of way you can participate are:

- Volunteer to read to youth at a local library or school.
- Hold a book drive, and donate to local library, school, or shelter.
- Host a read-a-thon
- Invite an author to do a book talk/signing in your area.
- Host a "Reading" party at your post home.
- Donate patriotic books to local schools, libraries, etc.



Youth Reading to Veterans & Veterans Reading to Youth

Reading is a big part of growing up and learning. Most students have nightly reading starting at a young age in school, and many times just listening to someone talk about patriotism and American history can be dull, but with a book, we can take them on a journey through history, and get them interested in patriotism, the Flag, and our country.

If you go to vfwauxmo.org under Youth Activities, there is the Patriotism Through Literacy book list that is divided up by grade levels that you can pick books from. Check with your local libraries to see if they have any of the books in stock, or check bookstores, online, or e-books.

- Host a day of reading. Veterans can read to youth, and youth can read to them. Choose a book from the Patriotism Through Literacy list.
- When visiting a VA or nursing home see if the staff can set up a reading area for the youth and veterans can read to each other.
- Create a read-a-thon

Illustrating America

The Illustrating America Art Contest is open to any student in grades K-8 who is enrolled in 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. Students must be U.S. citizen or lawful U.S. permanent resident. Foreign exchange students and students age 15 or older are ineligible. National grade division winners of previous Illustrating American contests may enter the subsequent grade division but are ineligible for the same grade division of which they are a previous National winner.

- ✓ Entries will be judged on patriotic theme and technique.
- ✓ Contest will consist of three grade divisions: K-2, 3-5, and 6-8
- ✓ Entries must be received by Auxiliaries by **March 31, 2025**.
- ✓ **First place winner** from each grade division due to Department by **April 15, 2025**.
- ✓ Entry forms and contest rules can be found at vfwauxmo.org under Youth Activities



Youth Groups Supporting Our Veterans Citation

The Youth Groups Supporting Our Veterans Citation is one way Auxiliaries can recognize youth groups for their efforts and service projects honoring veterans, service members and their families. This fillable, printable citation is available at vfwauxmo.org under Youth Activities.

Patriotic Youth Award

The Patriotic Youth Award is designed to recognize individual youth for their patriotism and/or support of our veterans, service members and their families. A fillable, printable citation is available at vfwauxmo.org under Youth Activities.

Random Acts of Patriotism

Children like to be told they are doing a good job. These R.A.P. cards are the perfect thing to print and present to our younger youth when they are observed doing something patriotic. Remember to take time and explain why you are giving it to them. You can find the template at vfwauxmo.org under Youth Activities.



Involve Youth in ALL Auxiliary Programs

Our youth are such a vital part of our future, that we must encourage involvement from an early age in all Auxiliary programs. There is always a place to serve even for our youngest youth. We also have the opportunity to communicate our cause easily through social media for all to see.

Project examples Youth can help with:

- Visiting and volunteering in VA and non-VA facilities
- Marching in patriotic parades
- Volunteering to help veterans, service members, and families with yard work or house repairs.
- Send cards and small gifts to the VFW National Home families.
- Plan card and letter writing campaign in local schools to send mail to troops and veterans.
- Organizing collection, assembly, and delivery of care packages for troops.

Department of Missouri Building Bridges Awards for Auxiliaries:

First place - \$20 (subject to approval by the council) and a citation to one Auxiliary in each of the membership groups with the most outstanding program/project including teamwork within the Auxiliary and including the VFW members.

Second place: A citation to one Auxiliary in each of the membership groups with the most outstanding program/project including teamwork within the Auxiliary and including the VFW members.

National Awards for Auxiliaries:

Most outstanding activity and/or event of youth reading to veterans and/or veterans reading to youth.

Citation and \$25 to one VFW Auxiliary in each of the 10 Program Divisions that hosts the most outstanding activity and/or event of youth reading to veterans and/or veterans reading to youth.

Entry form is required and available at vfwauxmo.org under Youth Activities. VFW Auxiliaries must send the required entry form to their Department Youth Activities Chairman by March 31, 2025, for judging.

As we involve our youth in *“Helping Veterans by Bridging the Gap With Teamwork”*, let us never forget that *“From Our Roots to Our Branches, Extending Service to Our Veterans”* is the reason we exist.