



# Youth Activities Program

Creating, Sponsoring and Working with Youth Groups

Youth Groups Supporting Our Veterans National Citations • Patriotic Youth Award  
Random Acts of Patriotism (R.A.P.) • Patriotism through Literacy • Illustrating America

The 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. We have a new generation of veterans who need the support of family, friends and country as they serve overseas and when they come home from conflicts abroad. Today's youth are the future of our nation.

## Creating, Sponsoring and Working with Youth Groups

Under the Auxiliary Youth Activities Program, an Auxiliary can sponsor a youth group and engage youth in any one of our programs, including activities to honor our veterans or assist our active-duty service members and their families.

Take advantage of the service aspects some youth groups require. Many youth-focused organizations require various types of community service or activities to earn merits in their units. College-bound seniors earn school credit for some of these same activities.

Remember that involving youth in service to veterans in conjunction with your Auxiliary can bring new membership to your Auxiliary. When youth and the whole family are included, members feel more invested in your Auxiliary. Sponsorship of a youth group can create a bright future for your Auxiliary, veterans and the community as a whole.

## Youth Groups Supporting Our Veterans National Citations

Through this national citation, youth groups can be recognized for their efforts and service projects honoring our veterans and assisting active-duty service members and their families.

Recognize a youth group in your community by applying for a citation. Citation applications are available at [www.vfwauxiliary.org/resources](http://www.vfwauxiliary.org/resources). Great traditions and good citizenship start at an early age. Recognize these bright young citizens for their good work to ensure these activities become a part of their daily lives.

## Patriotic Youth Award

The Patriotic Youth Award is designed to recognize individual youth for their patriotism and/or support of our veterans, active-duty service members and their families. The Patriotic Youth Award is available at [www.vfwauxiliary.org/resources](http://www.vfwauxiliary.org/resources) under Youth Activities.

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

See a child thanking a veteran? Witness a youth place their hand on their heart correctly? Give him or her a R.A.P. card and/or coin. The cards can be downloaded for free and printed at home. The template is available at [www.vfwauxiliary.org/resources](http://www.vfwauxiliary.org/resources). The coins can be purchased from the VFW Store at [www.vfwstore.org](http://www.vfwstore.org) or by calling 1-833-VFW-VETS. Try this fun and unique way to engage today's youth and encourage their patriotism. Several ways to use and/or reuse the R.A.P. cards and/or coins are listed below. See what your Auxiliary can come up with!

- Have a "store" where the cards and/or coins are traded in for various items.
- Host a family game night and admission is a certain number of R.A.P. coins and/or cards.
- Host a movie night and concessions (popcorn, candy, soda pop, etc.) can be purchased with R.A.P. coins and/or cards.

## Patriotism through Literacy

Promote and support reading among youth with this simple, fun and potentially free (use your local library!) initiative. Introduce youth to historical figures and teach them about events in our nation's history while fostering a love of reading that can lead to a lifetime of learning.

Reading has many benefits, including increased grammar and writing skills, improved focus and concentration, and helps children to understand and share the feelings of others; reading stretches our imagination. As Dr. Seuss said, "Reading can take you places you have never been before."

**What are the details and deadlines?**

- The student deadline is March 31, 2020. Participants submit entries to a local VFW Auxiliary Youth Activities Chairman by this date. The Auxiliary first-place winner in each grade division will be sent to the Department Youth Activities Chairman for judging.
- District Judging (Optional) - If held, the District winners must meet the Department deadline for judging.
- Department Judging – VFW Auxiliary or District entries must be received by the Department Youth Activities Chairman by April 15, 2020. Departments will judge and send first place winners in each grade division to National Headquarters by May 5, 2020.
- Only one first-place Department winner in each grade division is eligible for the National competition. All entries will be judged with one winner selected for each grade division. First-place winning entries in each grade division will receive an award and be displayed at National Convention.

**Other ways to participate in Youth Activities include:**

- Hand out R.A.P. coins and/or cards to kids who display Random Acts of Patriotism.
- Partner with other programs like Americanism or Hospital to do community outreach.
- Host an afternoon of letter writing from local youth to deployed service members.
- Recognize local youth for their patriotism with a Patriotic Youth Award.