



# Youth Activities

**T**he 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 military 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 military 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.

### PROJECT EXAMPLES

- Visiting and volunteering in VA and non-VA facilities
- Raising funds for a community veterans memorial
- Marching in patriotic holiday parades
- Volunteering to help veterans and active-duty military and their families with yard work or household repairs
- Sending cards or small gifts to the National Home to support families
- Planning a card- and letter-writing campaign in local schools to send mail to our troops overseas or our veterans in VA facilities
- Organizing assembly, collection and delivery of care packages for troops
- Teaching veterans computer skills

### YOUTH GROUP EXAMPLES FOR VFW AUXILIARY SPONSORSHIP

- Youth sports teams
- Church youth groups
- After-school programs
- Youth-focused organizations
- School clubs
- Home-school associations
- Youth community service groups
- Nonprofit organization youth advisory councils
- Service learning and civic engagement departments in high schools and colleges

### **Patriotic Youth Award**

The Patriotic Youth Award is designed to recognize individual youth for their patriotism and/or support of our veterans, active-duty military and their families. The Patriotic Youth Award is available on the National website 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 1-800-821-2606. Try this fun and unique way to engage today's youth and encourage their patriotism.

### **MAKE YOUR AUXILIARY ACCESSIBLE TO TODAY'S YOUTH**

It has never been so easy to communicate your cause and events to the world. Social media as teaching and information tools have natural collaborative elements allowing our youth to view and comment on each other's activities. They are tweeting on Twitter, posting on Facebook, instantly sending pictures on Instagram and "liking" the videos on YouTube. If you don't know what any of this is - **LEARN**.

#### **POPULAR SOCIAL MEDIA NETWORKS**

Facebook | Twitter | LinkedIn  
YouTube | Pinterest | Instagram  
Get online, and see what's new!

For helpful tips on maximizing your reach through social media, check out all the resources available behind login, including the Publicity Guide.

### **INVOLVE YOUTH IN ALL AUXILIARY PROGRAMS**

Youth play such an important role in our future. Encourage involvement from an early age in all Auxiliary Programs. Every young person can find their place to serve when they are presented with a variety of opportunities to serve their communities and veterans.

Teach youth about Auxiliary efforts to:

- Respect and take pride in our country
- Serve hospitalized veterans
- Elect leaders who appreciate our military
- Pass legislation that secures benefits for our veterans
- And many other worthy efforts!



### **PROGRAM GOALS:**

Creating, Sponsoring and Working with Youth Groups  
Youth Groups Supporting Our Veterans National Citations  
Random Acts of Patriotism (R.A.P.)  
Creating a Contest for Students in Grades K-5