

Heather Lyn
Americanism Chairman

Dear Friends,

As spring blooms across our communities, April offers us a wonderful opportunity to reflect on the values that unite us as Americans—patriotism, civic responsibility, and respect for our shared history.

This month, we encourage everyone to embrace **Americanism** in everyday life:

- **Honor Our Flag** – Take a moment to review proper flag etiquette, from display to respectful retirement.
- **Celebrate Our Freedoms** – Participate in local events that highlight the principles of democracy and civic engagement.
- **Support Our Youth** – Encourage students to join essay contests or history projects that explore the meaning of citizenship.

Mark Your Calendar

- **April 14** – **National Americanism Day** (observed by many civic groups)
- **April 19** – **Revolutionary War Patriots Day**
- **April 22** – **Earth Day** (a reminder that caring for our land is part of our national pride)

Spotlight Story

This month, our local high school’s history club is organizing a “Living History” event, where students will portray historical figures who shaped our nation. It’s a great way to connect with our past while inspiring the next generation.

Get Involved

Whether it’s volunteering at a veterans’ organization, attending a flag-raising ceremony, or simply sharing a story about your family’s American journey, your actions keep the spirit of Americanism alive.

Let’s make April a month of unity, pride, and purpose. Together, we can honor the ideals that make our nation strong.

Auxiliary Outreach 2025-2026

[#AuxiliaryOutreach](#) and [#az2526outreach](#) or [#az2526AuxiliaryOutreach](#)

Happy Spring!!

Thank you all for the amazing work you did this program year supporting our communities throughout Arizona! I'm so proud of the many organizations you all assisted showing so many people in this state that the VFW Auxiliary is truly willing and able to partner and help others!

I truly enjoyed reliving the great activities you all have accomplished as I went through so many Facebook hashtags and the National Citation entries!

Even though the program year is over for reporting, feel free to get out and keep on giving a helping hand where you can..... as a matter of fact, April 17th is [NATIONAL HIGH FIVE DAY - National Day Calendar](#) so give your team members a BIG HIGH FIVE for all that you've achieved!

Here are just a couple of days coming up to thank special people in our communities:

May 5: Teacher Appreciation Day

May 6: National Nurses Day

"As you shine your **light**, the world grows **bright**, you are a beacon of **love**." Sara Manke, National Ambassador, Auxiliary Outreach, 2025-26.

Remember, You've Got a Friend in Me! Again, than you for allowing me the opportunity to be you Program Chairman!



Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary
Auxiliary Outreach Program

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Buddy Poppy/National Home
Peggy Welch

BUDDY POPPY/NATIONAL HOME

Arizona Auxiliaries, your lights are shining bright on Buddy Poppy and National Home! Amazing entries for the Buddy Poppy National Citation Award were received from Auxiliaries 6306, 2066, 2357, and 541. Entries listed events including a table at America's 250 in Prescott celebrating 250 years of the USA, a Buddy Poppy Ice Cream Social and drive with the JROTC in Nogales, a Bouse Days celebration with Buddy Poppy education and distribution, and Buddy Poppy education to schoolchildren in Topock with a follow up artwork contest, T-shirts with the winning artwork depicted for all school children and staff, and the art inspired the Auxiliary's Buddy Poppy Display entry. Auxiliary 7968's entry for the National Home Citation Award included an actual National Home Store at the Florence National Guard Family Fun Day. Participants learned about the National Home Eligibility and history while "shopping" for and "buying" items to "Stock the Store" for the National Guard Food Pantry. These diverse and creative events were exciting to review and really spotlighted your Auxiliaries' dedication to the Programs. The positive responses from the communities really keep us motivated!

Let's keep the momentum going into April and early May. Some potential ideas for themed events are:

- Yuma Salutes America's 250 – April 18
- National Volunteer Week – April 19-25
- National Lookalike Day – April 20
- Earth Day – April 22
- World Book Day – April 23
- Arbor Day – April 24 (Plant a Tree)
- National Pretzel Day – April 26
- Loyalty Day – May 1
- Silver Star Service Banner Day – May 1
- VE Day – May 8
- Military Spouse Appreciation Day – May 8
- Home Front Heros Day – May 9
- Mothers Day- May 10
- Children of Fallen Patriots Day – May 13
- Armed Forces Day – May 16

Did you know that the VFW National Home once had its own hospital? It was spearheaded by the VFW Auxiliary in 1928 and completed in 1930. In the 1990s, a hospital was no longer needed, and the Auxiliary funded its conversion into the Health and Education Building. VFW Auxiliaries are major supporters of the National Home and Auxiliaries that purchased Life Memberships, purchased Tribute Bricks, and donated to “Stock the Store” are continuing this legacy of support. We also benefit the Home by getting Eligibility information out to our communities so that we can help fill vacant homes and better the lives of veteran families.

The Department of Arizona Buddy Poppy Display Contest is just 2 months away, in June. Each Auxiliary may enter under 1 or all 3 of the 3 following categories: **Public Promotion of Poppy Campaign, Memorial or Inspirational Displays, and Artistic or Decorative Use of Poppies.** Auxiliary name, number, city or state (including the shape of the state) may NOT be visible on the display. Entries will be judged on effectiveness, purpose, clarity of theme, suitability, originality, beauty and number of Poppies used. Include at least 100 Buddy Poppies on your display and, remember, one complete, fully visible Buddy Poppy in original color with full stem and label must be in the display. Traditional Buddy Poppies or Tin Pin Poppies may be used. Non-VFW trademarks or copyrighted material are prohibited. The rules and entry form are located at vfwauxaz.org under Programs, Buddy Poppy/National Home.

“From sea to Shining Sea, Honoring Our Veterans Who Keep Us Free”

Sincerely,

Peggy Welch

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Paulette Marshall
Dept of AZ Historian and Media Relations

April Newsletter

Oh, I know I have stalked you through social media and seen the fantastic work that the Auxiliaries in the Department of Arizona have done. You are all amazing!

Please keep sharing your activities on social media, tag me in them with either the Hashtag or by directly emailing me. I have been asked to continue as your Media Relations/Historian Chair for the upcoming year and there are new and great things coming up.

I have received a few forms for National Citations, but have seen some great reels that do not have submissions on the forms, other chairs are having similar problems getting information on the forms to give a better explanation of your greatest accomplishment in each program. So please take the time to fill out those nominations giving us some detail into exactly what the activities were and what impact they made. We have to make our decisions soon to meet National Deadlines and get information to our Program Ambassadors.

Again, just know I am very proud of all our Auxiliaries in Arizona!

Hospital
Amy Timbes

While this Program Year has ended, I would like the Auxiliaries to look forward to our *next* year for Hospital.

We are fortunate to have the Department of Arizona Hospital Grant- one available, each year, to each Auxiliary with a simple application letting me know, as the Hospital Chairman, what it is the Auxiliary will be doing to bring comfort and joy to Veterans and their families in a care facility.

In fact, I would like to challenge EACH Auxiliary to apply for the Hospital Grant this year, either individually or together with another Auxiliary (or more) to bring smiles to our Veterans.

How about getting an early start with Christmas in July? More than one care facility has mentioned it is great everyone wishes to donate at the holidays- care facilities have patients (and family members) year-round.

Speak with the VAVS Reps in your area: Linda Thuringer in Prescott, the north, Kim Sloan in Tucson, the south, or I would love to share what is really appreciated and needed at the Phoenix VA Hospital. We all have lists, lists with simple items, lists that could include handmade items, to lists with virtual reality items. And the Auxiliary is NOT limited to just the VA Hospitals- VA Homes, local hospitals, assisted living facilities- any location that serves a Veteran population.

What matters most to patients and their families is the time and consideration of the Auxiliary members- going that extra mile to bring comfort and show care.

As this year's National Ambassador, Kim Copson wrote: "By caring for our Veterans like the ocean caring for the waves", so much can be embodied through the Hospital Program to demonstrate care continues.

Legislative Newsletter – April

As we move into April and begin the transition into a new program year, one thing remains constant—advocacy does not stop. The wave we've built this year doesn't crash at convention; it keeps moving forward with each of us.

This is the time to stay engaged, finish strong, and carry that momentum into the next year.

As you plan upcoming events—whether it's a membership drive, membership appreciation event, or kicking off summer festivities like Memorial Day—remember that every gathering is an opportunity to grow our impact.

Bring advocacy with you.

Have your QR code for Action Corps Weekly ready to go and encourage members, families, and your community to sign up. It's one of the simplest and most effective ways we can expand our reach and ensure more voices are heard when it matters most.

Every scan is another person joining the wave.

Every sign-up strengthens our voice.

Every action helps us better serve our veterans.

We are not slowing down—we are building forward.

Let's continue to ride this wave together and ensure that as we transition into the new program year, we do so stronger, louder, and more connected than ever.

In service,
Becky

Membership Crystal McCarthy



Membership in Bloom: Celebrating What Matters Most

As spring arrives, it brings that sense of renewal — fresh energy, new beginnings, and a chance to reflect on everything we’ve grown together this past year.

Before we rush ahead into elections and a new program year, take a moment to look back.

Think about the membership tables set up at community events — not just with applications, but with conversations, smiles, and a genuine welcome.

Think about the events honoring our veterans, where we showed up not to recruit, but to serve.

Think about the birthday celebrations, milestone recognitions, and the gatherings that honored the history and longevity of our posts and auxiliaries.

Those moments matter.

Because membership isn’t built only through applications — it’s built through connection, consistency, and care.

This year, so many of you created opportunities that didn’t just recruit, but truly **recognized and uplifted** the people who make this organization what it is — our members. The very foundation we stand on.

As we step into a new program year, let’s carry that forward.

Growth will come — it always does when people feel valued. But it starts with continuing to show appreciation, creating meaningful experiences, and reminding our members that they belong here.

This spring, let's not just focus on who we can bring in.

Let's continue to nurture what we've already built.

One More Thing... Tell Me Something Good

Next month will be my final membership newsletter of the year — and we're going out strong.

I'll be taking a look back, naming names, and highlighting the incredible things happening across our auxiliaries.

👉 I challenge you — send me your BEST membership event or activity from this year. Or a member that has been invaluable to your group. I want to shout you out. Brag on you. Celebrate what you've done.

Give me ALL the details at crystal.post10254aux@gmail.com by May 1, 2026.

Let's finish this year by recognizing the impact
you've made. 💙

Irene Nowacki
Scholarships Chairman

The program reporting year for us may be over, but there is no rest for the weary.

We have programs to work all year long regardless of program year end dates. Please make sure you reach out to as many people as possible about the scholarships and contests that we sponsor.

Congratulations to the 2025-2026 VOD winners who were just recently announced at a ceremony at the historic Union League of Philadelphia. The first-place winner was from Maine.

Get the youth interested in entering the Voice of Democracy or Patriots Pen for next year. The new theme has been announced:

**2026-2027 VOD & Patriots Pen Theme is
"What a Veteran Taught Me About America"**

If you know of an artistic youth, let them know about the [Young American Patriotic Art](#) and [3-Dimensional Patriotic Art Contests](#). It is never too early to promote these. Give them a chance to come up with their ideas for next year. Get teachers and youth groups involved. There is nothing wrong with helping explore as many ideas as possible.

I cannot wait to judge the first-place entries from your auxiliaries. All these talented youth deserve a big pat on the back for their efforts in showcasing their idea of Patriotism. Will the first-place winner be from your auxiliary? We will find out at Department Convention.

And let us not forget about the [Continuing Education Scholarship](#). I am excited to hear just how much we have collected across the nation for National President Lois Callahan's special project. This scholarship may be closed to entries now, but it will be available again after National Convention announces the winners from each conference.

Speaking of Department Convention, have you booked your room yet? You don't want to miss out on the chance to cheer on the winning entry that will make its way to National Convention in Reno Nevada. Let's show up strong for these youth and show them that we support them 100%.

Keep working hard and informing your communities about the wonderful scholarships and contests that we offer.

VFS

Ray Williams

Resources! Events! Activities! Abound if you are looking in the right place. Recently a stop in at the Phoenix VA Hospital in their “Resource Room” garnered a wall of different events and information for various programs. Maybe because of rural living this was amazing, all in one place, not having to DIG for information.

There must be more! A quick search for upcoming Veteran Events in Arizona:
Veteran Events and Things to Do in Arizona:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/d/united-states--arizona/veteran/?msockid=0909b833546a6a122352aed855b26b85>

The Arizona Housing Stand Down Calendar for 2026:

<https://azhousingcoalition.org/avsa/>

AZ Veteran.com Event List

<https://azveterans.com/events/list/>

What’s even more amazing is the number of Posts and Auxiliaries that have contacted AZDVS and/or the VA and brought in Veteran Resource Fairs to their community! Remember when hosting one of these- find your target audience- post fliers at food banks, laundry rooms, job search boards, Community College Veteran Counsellors (invite them!), community centers, bookstores- anywhere people gather and may be looking for a way to better their lives.

Look within, too, at the resources through the VFW:

Resource Rack Card - [vfw_auxiliary_resource_ra\(1\).pdf](#)

NVS- VFW National Veterans Service Resource Portal-[VA Claims & Separation Benefits - VFW](#) File a claim, PRE DISCHARGE Services (Transitional Assistance Program) for those still in active duty service to learn what is available once they transition back to the civilian world

Which can HELP in preventing suicide – 61% of Veterans who committed suicide in 2023 “were not receiving VA Health Care in the last year of their life”

The one thing though that cannot be replaced is YOU. YOU are the connection, whether it may be a cup of coffee, a listening ear, help to make an appointment, a ride to do a chore or shopping, a phone call when they just cannot do it alone; YOU make a difference.

“A Rising Tide Lifts All Veterans to Success”

Youth- March 2026
JaNice Robertson

“Like seashells, we are beautiful and unique, with a story to tell”, the words National Ambassador Shannon Stanley chose to represent this year’s National Youth Program. This fits, too, to each of the Auxiliary’s activities and interaction with Youth Groups.

Recognize Youth (and those who nurture them) with the certificates provided to strengthen pride in their efforts. Whether the Youth Group showed amazing Patriotism: [patriotic_youth_citation_\(2\).pdf](#)

Generosity and Kindness:

[youth_act_of_kindness_cit\(6\).pdf](#)

[youth_act_of_kindness_cit\(7\).pdf](#)

Or to a Youth Group Coordinator who continued the conversation with the Auxiliary beyond the initial interaction: [youth_groups_supporting_o\(3\).pdf](#)

And for participating in Illustrating America [illustrating_america_reco.pdf](#)

How wonderful all these certificates of recognition are available, at our fingertips, from the National Organization, to continue the Auxiliary conversation in our community with our future.

Cookies, an American Flag, celebration and Certificates of Appreciation will be a fond memory and hopefully keep them coming back for more.

Please keep posting to Social Media the Youth participation with the Auxiliary and our Veterans. Let’s all work toward recognizing 250 Years of America!