

Heather Lyn
Americanism Chairman

Hello Arizona,

As this year continues to fly by us, we must keep in mind the deadline for the Auxiliary submissions for a National Citation for the Americanism Program. Auxiliaries have until March 31, 2026 to have the required entry form for me as the Department Americanism Chairman.

The award will be given to the “Auxiliary with the most outstanding activity or event displaying or educating others about proper ways to display and respect the American Flag”.

Looking forward to some holidays and days of recognition to come, which will give opportunities to show patriotism:

2/16 Presidents Day

3/3 Star-Spangled Banner Day

3/13 K-9 Veterans Day

3/21 Rosie the Riveter Day

3/29 Vietnam Veterans Day

As National Vietnam War Day (3/29) approaches I was curious on how our Vietnam Veterans felt when someone thanked them for their service. As most of us know, our Veterans were not treated kindly when they returned. So, I was curious to learn how some feel now. It is my great fortune to work at the Department of Arizona VFW Headquarters which gives me the opportunity to speak to many of our Veterans as they come in. Recently, when I greeted them, I asked if they would not mind answering a question for me. I was surprised almost all had about the same response.

The question I asked was, “How does it make you feel when a person Thanks you for your service? And how do you respond?”

There were quite a few who told me they appreciated the person recognized their service and many would respond with, “You’re welcome.”

Others responded in ways that touched me and honestly brought tears to my eyes. Here are a few:

“It was my privilege to serve.”

“By the grace of God, I was able to serve for you”,

and the one that touched me most,

“You were worth it”.

All our Veterans have given so much. Take a moment, thank them sincerely and let them know you appreciate the sacrifices they made for all of us.

Americanism: “Unfailing love of country, loyalty to its institutions and ideas, eagerness to defend it against all enemies, undivided allegiance to the Flag, and a desire to secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and posterity.”

Auxiliary Outreach 2025-2026

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

February is full of heart and giving!

The Arizona Cardinals Foundation Launches [Cardinals Climb](#) will be held on **February 21st**. Click on the link to see how you can participate in this fundraising effort for families and adults with special needs.

The day that I think would be a wonderful day to give back to your community would be on [NATIONAL GOOD SAMARITAN DAY - March 13, 2026 - National Today](#) which is a reminder to offer a helping hand to others as often as we can.

Another great day to help out a neighborhood organization would be on **March 17th, St Patrick's Day** where you can provide a bit of "luck" to others lending a helping hand.

Reminder: (1) Plan your activity after confirming with the organization that needs help, (2) Vote on it at your next meeting, (3) encourage others in your Auxiliary to participate as a group, (4) Wear your VFW Auxiliary attire (pin, hat, shirt), (5) Be a positive person and exude a good nature, (5) take photos and post on social media with the [#AuxiliaryOutreach](#) for National recognition.

This month's shout out goes to Auxiliaries who helped in their communities including #1796 volunteered at the annual SAGE Christmas House on December 20th at High Desert Park in Black Canyon City. Highlights include cookie decorating (and eating,) craft-making stations, visits with Santa and the Grinch, and lots of tasty treats! #9977 members putting in the work helping the Lions club cook, plate and clean up their rib dinner event in late January. Also, #2066 was proud to support the Cultural Arts Committee, the City of Nogales, and the Nogales Consulate in an early Valentine's Day celebration for seniors. 🌹

Please remember that the **deadline to submit to me at amyaz@cox.net for the National Citation submission by March 31st**. Here is the form [auxiliary_outreach_aux_aw.pdf](#) that can be found on <https://vfwauxaz.org>

"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! Please don't hesitate to ask me if you have questions!



Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary
Auxiliary Outreach Program

Amy Bennett
Department of Arizona
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Buddy Poppy/National Home
Peggy Welch

What a beautiful beginning of the year for Buddy Poppy/National Home. Thank you, everyone, for doing your PARs. Department Arizona is at 100% for the Program! Way to go!

I know we are still busy with our Buddy Poppy Promotions. I want to share two recent activities that were heartfelt. First, as many of you know, our dear Sister, District 4 President, Angela Cummins Hubbard, passed away. Auxiliary 3632 hosted a wonderful Celebration of Life for her, complete with Buddy Poppy decorations everywhere. Buddy Poppy was near and dear to her heart, and she participated in the Buddy Poppy/National Home Jeopardy game in August at the MIT. We will miss you, Angela! Second, Auxiliary 6306, Topock, AZ, engaged local elementary school students to draw what patriotism means to them. The winning artwork will be incorporated into the Auxiliary's Buddy Poppy Project. What a great way to get our youth and educators involved in what we represent.

Do not forget to send your entry for the Buddy Poppy Program National Citation Award to me no later than March 31, 2026. Describe the activity/event with your Post to educate the community about the VFW Buddy Poppy. Include materials used: flyers, brochures, social media posts, newsletters, e-newsletters, handouts, videos, and pictures, pictures. The form is available on MALTA under Member Resources, Buddy Poppy/National Home Program, Award No. 1. You can send the form and materials to me by email, sunlover1102@gmail.com, or by "snail" mail to Peggy Welch, 8989 South Desert Well Rd., Tucson, AZ, 85736.

The VFW National Home has been busy honoring their Mission Statement: "The VFW National Home assists military, veterans, and their families with children, by creating a foundation of services and resources to achieve their personal and family goals in order to move forward in a positive, safe, and healthy environment." Dennis Parizek, District 11 National Home Trustee, shared some information from Western Conference. If you purchased a Centennial Life Membership, you are eligible for 10% off souvenirs and apparel, reduced Guest Lodge rates, and exclusive Members Only apparel. Note that after December 31st only regular Life Memberships are available for \$100. To make that purchase more affordable, an installment payment option is available.

Continue supporting "Stock the Store," this year's Special Project of Commander-In-Chief, Carol Whitmore, and National Auxiliary President, Lois Callahan. The new Retail Store will be in the Welcome Center which we supported a couple years ago. The donations will fund

the coolers, freezers, and an honor point-of-sale program so residents can shop with a swipe card and pay by credit card, even after hours. Donations can be made at vfnationalhome.org/donate and type Retail Store in the comments.

Dennis reports that the Arizona House is well funded by the Department of Arizona, with \$40,000 in the coffers. Good job, everyone.

The Guest Lodge was recently refurbished, and our purchases of memberships and Tribute Bricks helps support these activities. To date, eleven Department of AZ Auxiliaries have reported purchases of Tribute Bricks and three Auxiliaries have reported purchases of Memberships. Did you know that a National Home Membership can be purchased with funds from your Auxiliary's Relief Fund when passed by vote? If you have a member you would like to gift a membership, this could be an option. Regular Tribute Bricks are always available and there are 400 more Centennial Bricks for purchase, ready to be placed in the Centennial Garden.

Be sure to document and photograph, if possible, your Promotion of the National Home and Eligibility activities. Submit your entry for the VFW National Home National Citation Award to me by March 31, 2026. Describe the activity/event that created awareness, and education of eligibility and who qualifies for help from the VFW National Home and promoting it within their Department to help veterans and their families. Include pictures, emails, a write-up, etc. The form is in MALTA, Award No. 2. All entries must be sent to me by the deadline by email or "snail" mail. The award is \$25 to your Auxiliary.

Last, but not least, gather your Poppies and ideas for your entry in the Department and, hopefully, National Buddy Poppy Display contest. Categories and rules were printed in the January 2026 Newsletter.

Short on ideas? Past entries are posted on Facebook under #buddypoppy. I am sure there are more, so feel free to share.

Keep it fun! Keep it real! Keep it Buddy Poppy/VFW National Home!

Paulette Marshall

Dept of AZ Historian and Media Relations

How do we reach out to others to let them know about what it is the VFW Auxiliary does for our Veterans, their Families and our Community?

Auxiliary Outreach has us partnering, as an organization, with other organizations in our community, solely as a volunteer corp. Why can't we ask the other organization for the opportunity to visit their meeting with their membership and speak about the VFW Auxiliary?

Part of this year's Media resources lists information about "Speakers Bureau" which is a program to bolster Auxiliary members to do just that. Open the conversation about who we are, what we do, and our Why.

In MALTA- under Member Resources, Historian/Media is a plethora of information about Speaker's Bureau [VFW Auxiliary Speakers Bureau \(4\).pdf](#) Beautifully written, with support documents and even a template of the letter to send to another community organization as an introduction: [Speaker's Bureau Tool Kit \(3\).pdf](#) and [Speaker's Bureau Request Sample Letter \(2\).pdf](#)

Let's open the door to our community, to invite them into the World of the VFW Auxiliary, WHO we are and telling our story.

Please post your success stories and tips #AZ2526Media
I'll be looking for them!

Hospital
Amy Timbes

Brothers and Sisters,

Here we are mid-February and Entry Forms for awards must be in by March 31, 2026. Please share with me the creative ways you are providing happiness for our fellow veterans. I know you are doing the work, tell me about it.

Also read carefully the Hospital Volunteer Recruiter award information. It's never too late to find a volunteer and we never have enough volunteers.

I can't believe I have received less than 10 hospital grant applications. I am positive you can find some veterans somewhere in Assisted living, skilled nursing facilities, rest homes that have needs not provided by the facility. In fact, I challenge you to find one such place with at least one veteran. Send me the address and number of veterans and I will prepare and send out cards for those facilities.

You could even find someone to share VA's Veterans Legacy Memorial platform with. It honors more than 10 million veterans – and now includes the Living Veterans feature, where Veterans can begin preserving their story, today. Veterans can record stories, milestones, and experiences. Upload photos and documents. Write their autobiography and define how they would like to be remembered. Share their legacy with family, friends and future generations. Do some research yourself. We all understand how much our heroes like re-telling their adventures.

When you read this, we will have just completed National Patient Appreciation Week. Of course, we must let our heroes know that we appreciate them all year long. Hope your Valentine's Day was all you wished for and remember GREEN is the color for March,

Love and prayers.

Legislative Newsletter - February

Becky Baldwin

February ❤️ has been a strong month for advocacy, and our legislative efforts continue to build momentum. Like the ocean, legislative change doesn't happen in a single splash 🌊—it's the result of steady waves of action, timing, and persistence.

VFW Legislative Conference – Washington, D.C.

At the end of this month, we will be riding the wave 🏄 to Washington, D.C. for the VFW Legislative Conference, joining VFW and Auxiliary members from across the country to advocate directly for veterans, service members, and their families. Face-to-face meetings with lawmakers reinforced an important truth: veterans' issues rise when we show up together. 🗣️ Each conversation added energy to the wave we're building toward meaningful legislative change.

Turning Gratitude into Forward Motion

Continue to send Thank You 🙏 cards for veterans that will include a QR code linking directly to Action Corps Weekly. This initiative turns appreciation into action—helping veterans and supporters catch the next wave 🌊 by staying informed and responding quickly to legislative calls to action. This is also the National Legislative Award, so do the most creative event write it up and send it my way!

Legislative work never stops, and neither does the tide of advocacy. Thank you for continuing to show up, speak out, and ride this wave together as we work to protect those who have served. 🇺🇸

Together, we create the momentum for change.

Membership Crystal McCarthy

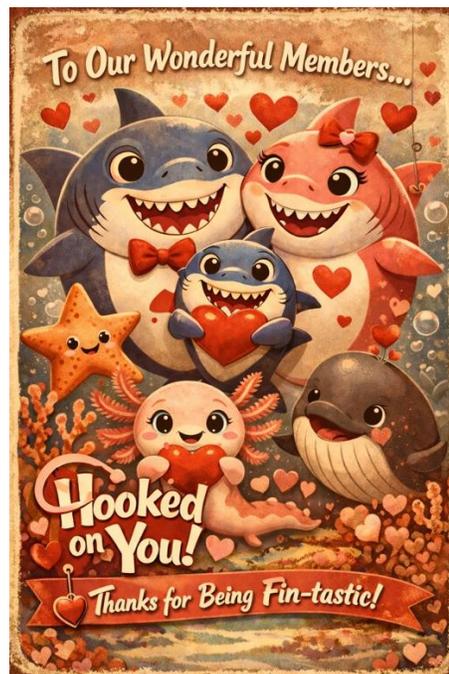
February: Love in Action

February reminds us that love is more than words—it's what we *do*. As members of the **VFW Auxiliary**, our love shows up every time we serve our veterans, support their families, and stand beside one another.

When we grow our membership, we grow our impact. An ever-increasing membership gives us a stronger, louder voice with our government leaders—and that matters when we're advocating for our nation's heroes. Just as important, growth starts at home. Continue working with your current members. To grow, we must *show the love*: check in, invite them to participate, and remind them why they belong.

This month, we'd love to **see love in action**. Please email photos of your Valentine projects—whether they're at VA facilities, nursing homes, or within your local communities. Don't forget to carry our message of care and gratitude everywhere you go.

We'd also love to hear about any **sweetheart dances, dinners, socials, or fun activities** your Auxiliary is hosting. These moments build connection—and connection builds strength.



Looking Ahead: Growing Leaders, Keeping Members

As we approach **upcoming elections**, this is a great time to tap into your membership and think intentionally about **engagement and retention**. Members who feel valued, trusted, and given responsibility are far more likely to stay involved — and to grow within our organization. ❤️

Look for members who show interest, ask questions, volunteer consistently, or soak up every lesson offered. These are often the members who are ready for the next step, even if they don't realize it yet.

By encouraging responsibility and focus, we strengthen not only our leadership pipeline, but our **membership as a whole**. Strong involvement builds strong commitment. 🌱

If you — or someone you see potential in — may be interested in a position at **any level**, be sure to reach out to your **District or Department leadership**. Those conversations help create confident leaders and a connected, thriving organization for the future. US ❤️

Thinking Ahead: St. Patrick's Day 🍀 *(Think Outside the Box!)*

- **“Lucky to Serve” Notes** – Have members or community kids write short notes to veterans about why we're lucky to have them. Deliver them with green treats or pins.
- **Green & Gold Community Pop-Up** – Set up a small table at a local coffee shop, senior center, or event with green goodies, Auxiliary info, and a friendly invitation to learn more about who we are and what we do.
- **Share the Luck Bring-a-Friend Social** – Invite members to bring a friend to a casual gathering- coffee, dessert night, or short social - and share why they feel *lucky* to be part of the Auxiliary.
Each member shares one favorite project, event, or moment that keeps them involved. Talk to the guests about how they can join and get involved.

Let's keep sharing the love—within our Auxiliaries, throughout our communities, and always with our veterans at heart. ❤️

Irene Nowacki

Scholarships Chairman

Hey Department of Arizona!

National President Lois Callahan's special project **Continuing Education Scholarship** is now closed for applications but still very open for donations. If your Auxiliary has not yet donated, please make sure to get those submitted through MALTA under the Make a Gift tab, and then National Presidents Special Project. Or mail a check to National Headquarters earmarked National Presidents Special Project. Let's see just how close we can get to the \$10,000.00 goal.

It is time to really push our other contests.

Young American Creative Patriotic Art Contest is open to students in grades 9-12. Submissions must be turned into the sponsoring Post/Auxiliary by March 31st, 2026. First place winners are due to Department by no later than April 15, 2026. The winning entry will be sent to National Headquarters by May 5th, 2026. The winner will be announced at National Convention and on their social media page so keep an eye out for your entry.

<https://vfwauxiliary.org/wp-content/uploads/Young-American-Creative-Patriotic-Art-Contest-Scholarship-25-26.pdf>

3-Dimensional Patriotic Art Contest is open to students in grades 9-12. Submissions must be turned into the sponsoring Post/Auxiliary by March 31st, 2026. First place winners are due to Department by no later than April 15, 2026. The winning entry will be sent to National Headquarters by May 5th, 2026. The winner will be announced at National Convention and on their social media page so keep an eye out for your entry.

<https://vfwauxiliary.org/wp-content/uploads/3-Dimensional-Patriotic-Art-Contest-Scholarship-25-26.pdf>

Let's see just how many entries we can get for all our contests. I would also love for anyone interested in helping assist me in judging the entries to reach out to me. I am looking for individuals that are not connected to any entries or are fortunate enough to have one from their Post/Auxiliary. Please send me an email if you are interested. My contact information is behind member log in, on the department website. www.vfwauxaz.org

Good luck to all, and make sure to award your students that do turn in an entry. They are all amazing in my book for taking the time to share their artistic abilities and show just how Patriotic they truly are.



VFS

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

An old man was walking on the beach one morning, after a storm. In the distance, he could see someone moving like a dancer; as he came closer, he saw that it was a young woman picking up starfish and gently throwing them into the ocean. “Young lady, why are you throwing starfish into the ocean?” She said “The sun is up, and the tide is going out, and if I do not throw them in, they will die.” “But young lady, do you not realize that there are many miles of beach and thousands of starfish? You cannot possibly make a difference.” The young woman listened politely, then bent down, picked up another starfish, and threw it into the sea.

“It made a difference for that one,” she smiled.

This simple story, shared by our National VFW Auxiliary President Lois Callahan, captures the heart of the **Veterans & Family Support Program** here in Arizona. YOU may not be able to solve every challenge faced by every veteran or every family member. But when we help one person, when we ease one burden, answer one question, guide one spouse, support one caregiver, or connect one veteran to the resources they desperately need **YOU HAVE MADE A DIFFERENCE.**

And that is exactly what our program is built on:

small acts of service that create life-changing impact, one person at a time.

Let's not measure our personal success by grand gestures or sweeping statistics but in moments of often unseen moments where one volunteer steps forward to help one veteran or one family.

- Maybe it is you sitting with a veteran's spouse to help them understand VA benefits.

- The phone call made to check on a caregiver who feels overwhelmed.

- The ride offered to a veteran who has no way to get to a medical appointment.

- The simple act of listening when someone needs to talk.

These moments may seem small, but to the person receiving that support, they mean everything.

Just like the starfish, each life touched is a life changed.

Just like The Starfish Story, support our Veterans and their families, at least one at a time.

Loyalty


Ray Williams
VFS Chair

Youth- February 2026
JaNice Robertson

Time is getting away! It is already February and deadlines for Illustrating America, the Youth Patriotic Art contest, to be submitted to the local Auxiliary is March 31, 2026. Please get out to your schools, scout groups, homeschool groups with the criteria and applications ASAP! There are three grade divisions: K-2, 3-5 and 6-8.

Tips:

- *Two-dimensional art on canvas (stretcher frame or canvas board), paper with heavy paper.
- *Do not frame original art with wood, metal, plastic or glass.
- *Mats may be included.
- *NO smaller than 8x10 - NO Larger than 18x24 including mat.
- * There are three grade divisions: K-2, 3-5 and 6-8. Each entry must include the completed contest entry form.

Please refer to all guidelines in National Program Book.

[illustrating_america_art_\(6\).pdf](#) We do not want any student's art entry to be disqualified on a technicality. Winning entries need to be turned in to Department by April 15, 2026

The other deadline quickly approaching is the Youth Program National Citation for, "Most creative or unique activity and/or event of the VFW Auxiliary working with a youth group." Deadline for this is March 31, 2026. Please forward your Auxiliary's completed citation form to me as the Youth Program Chairman.
[youth_activities_aux_awar\(3\).pdf](#)

Even if you are using the hashtags with your Social Media posts and photos on the Auxiliary's activities, please email me your Auxiliary's exceptional Youth activities. bells_whistles@hotmail.com (That is an underscore between bells and whistles)

How has your Auxiliary used the Youth "Acts of Kindness" Certificates this year? [youth_act_of_kindness_cit\(5\).pdf](#)