

Heather Lyn
Americanism Chairman

Hello Arizona,

As members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary, one of our most heartfelt responsibilities is to promote patriotism and love of country in our communities. Americanism isn't just a program — it's a living expression of our pride, our gratitude, and our shared values as Americans.

This month let's take time to reflect on what it means to be an American, and how we can demonstrate that pride every day — in our schools, neighborhoods, and events.

Here are a few creative ways to incorporate Americanism into your Auxiliary programs this month:

1. Host a “Stars & Stripes” Community Event

- Set up a flag etiquette demonstration — invite a local Scout troop or JROTC unit.
- Provide small American flags and distribute them with handouts on proper flag care.
- Include a brief patriotic ceremony and recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Engage Youth with Patriotic Projects

- Organize an essay or art contest around the theme “*What America Means to Me*”.
- Partner with local schools to teach flag folding or host “Red, White, and Blue” days.
- Encourage young people to research local veterans and their contributions.

3. Recognize Patriotic Citizens

- Present Certificates of Appreciation to community members or businesses that proudly display the flag.
- Highlight local heroes, teachers, or volunteers in your newsletter or social media.

4. Add Americanism to Every Meeting

- Start meetings with a short patriotic reading, quote, or poem.
- Display red, white, and blue decorations throughout the meeting space.
- Encourage members to share stories about their family's service or immigration journey.

This month let's each challenge ourselves to find one new way to demonstrate Americanism.

Fly your flag proudly, share your love of country openly, and inspire others to do the same.

Together, we keep the spirit of America strong — one act of patriotism at a time.

Auxiliary Outreach 2025-2026

#AuxiliaryOutreach and **#az2526outreach** or **#az2526AuxiliaryOutreach**

This year is "March"ing along so quickly! This is a very important month for reporting! I want to find the BEST representation of Auxiliary Outreach for the State of Arizona to show off all of our work through the year, but I need your help to do it! 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>. It is also available in Malta under Member Resources for Auxiliary Outreach.

Here is a quick link to additional suggestions from National: [Auxiliary Outreach - VFW Auxiliary National Organization](#) and a great reminder of what it's all about: [AUXILIARY OUTREACH](#)

Some special days in the last part of the month to wrap up the reporting period include:

March 20: First Day of Spring (Spring Equinox) - a great opportunity to work with an animal shelter!

March 22: World Water Day - [Volunteer with Water Services | City of Phoenix](#)

March 30: National Doctors' Day - help out at a clinic or medical center in your area.

This month's shout out goes to Auxiliary #7968 who helped the local Apache Junction Police Department with their annual Fuel of Dreams fundraiser for the Arizona Special Olympics pumping gas and washing windows!

Be sure to use this hashtag for National awareness: [#AuxiliaryOutreach](#)

Keep up the amazing work that you all are doing!

"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
amyaz@cox.net
(480) 510-4457

Buddy Poppy/National Home
Peggy Welch

We are having a great year with the Buddy Poppy/National Home Program! The Department of Arizona Auxiliaries have had some seriously impressive and creative promotions of the Program in your communities. As we wrap up the year, be sure to check the MALTA website, malta.vfwauxiliary.org, for the National Citation Award forms and the rules for your Buddy Poppy Displays. Each Auxiliary President has an email with the National Citation forms for Buddy Poppy and the National Home. They will also be receiving an email with the display contest rules and entry form this month. So far, I have received Citation Award entries from Auxiliaries 720 and 6306. Way to go!

Our National Ambassador, Sandra Jeffries, states in her recent Blog, “I just want to remind each Department of my goal for the Buddy Poppy. This year we are sailing around the nation looking for creative ways to educate our members on how to partner with the VFW for joint Poppy drives and/or fundraisers, and how to split the proceeds. I have been receiving many pictures of events, now I need each state to send me more detailed information on combined events. Remember, when you distribute Poppies, you are honoring the dead by helping the living.”

We also want to continue supporting the VFW National Home with each Auxiliary purchasing a membership and a Tribute brick. Our National President, Lois Callahan, and VFW Commander-In-Chief, Carol Whitmore, are encouraging each state (VFW and Auxiliary both) to send donations to “Stock the Store.” This is an extension of the Special Project from 2023-2024 to remodel the Welcome Center retail space. Sandra’s goal for the National Home “is to create ideas from all around the nation to help introduce veterans and their families to (the National Home) services.”

To remind us of the impact the VFW National Home has on participants, I am sharing Heather’s story. Her journey began after she was honorably discharged from the Army and moved to the National Home with her 9-month-old daughter. While working the program, she earned her medical assistant certification and attained financial stability while raising her child. She worked as a medical assistant for 12 years before returning to school to become a social worker with the goal of helping veterans as she was helped. She has come full circle, from being a participant to now working at the National Home as a Case Manager/Social Worker. She truly understands the value of the counseling and support she received personally and wants to give back to our veterans and help get them set up for lifelong success.

While “Building Strong Families,” the National Home also boasts some innovative initiatives. Last year they received a \$10,000 grant to promote STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) education. The resource will provide students with hands-on opportunities to apply their learning. The Home is also involved in the VRAD (Veteran Regenerative Agriculture Demonstration) Program to empower veterans and veteran family members to care for the land and grow food while rediscovering their own strengths, confidence, and sense of purpose. And they get to play in the dirt!

Continue to wear and display your Poppies everywhere you go! You are representing our veterans and the sacrifices they have made in this simple way!

Paulette Marshall

Dept of AZ Historian and Media Relations

Oh my, where has the time gone? Now is the time for all auxiliaries to get their best programs into the appropriate program chair! Yes, we have the hashtags, and our chairs are doing their best to use those to see your activities, but if you email your program chair directly with a detailed description of the Who, What, Where, Why and When. Our jobs are to get as many Arizona Auxiliaries as possible nominated for those awards at National Convention in Reno.

I know everyone has been working the programs even if you are not getting them into PARs, so please find a person in your group that can get those recorded, we are all so busy, it is important to share the load and get to mentoring and delegating. Each thing we do is an opportunity to build up our members, train them in the policies and procedures of the VFW Auxiliary.

One of my biggest joys is that throughout the entire VFW Auxiliary Program, I have had the best mentors, and the State of AZ Auxiliary has taken that task to heart. I am still learning, which includes being able to appreciate constructive criticism NOT as a personal attack, but rather a learning lesson in which someone cares enough to build me up. There is an obligation to guide those who will follow us through years, building the future one member at a time.

Hospital
Amy Timbes

Well, we meet again. Thank the Lord!

It's 5 o'clock in the morning and here I am reading over the 10 hospital grant applications that I approved. As well as the other reports I've received during the year. Right now, I have only three applications for the National Hospital award. You only have until the end of March to submit to me so I can submit to National before end of April. If you are not familiar with this look in the hospital program on department website. It is all about creative ways to interact with and provide happiness to veterans in hospitals (VA and Non-VA facilities). Please look back on the year and describe whatever you think might apply. Never know you might be the only auxiliary that did it over the top.

By the way, why didn't your auxiliary put in for a grant. Don't need it? Can't spend it? I promise you there are veterans in facilities out there that need it. It only takes a few minutes and can get to me in a second. So far valentines made from jeans from 10254 caught my attention, thousands of girl scout cookies being devoured is a hoot and Gabe, I think guitars for the music therapy is outstanding too. So many great things are happening out there. We want to share those so others can follow suit.

I would also like hospital volunteers to call me. Gabe, myself, Jan, Kerry, Betty and Rosemary I am aware of, but who is out there that I haven't met or been made aware of. There is more than one way to acknowledge your generosity, and you deserve it. I need some fun stories from volunteer times with veterans. What better way to get new recruits. My number is 480-560-8863.

HONOR ESCORT ...please get the info out to Care Centers, hospices, First responders, Coroners and Hospitals. If these folks do not have flags to be utilized, you may use your hospital grant to order and give them out. This is an honor due every Veteran during their last hour.

It's been an honor to work with you for our veterans in hospitals, etc. I know you do more than I will ever drag out of you. Remember "Noone can do everything for everyone, but everyone CAN do something for someone."

Forever Rely On God,

Legislative Newsletter - March

Becky Baldwin

As we move into March, I want to highlight an exciting opportunity for our Auxiliaries to be recognized for your hard work and dedication to our veterans — the **Legislative National Program Award**.

Award for Auxiliaries

We are looking for the **most outstanding activity and/or event** focused on creating **thank-you notes and cards to veterans** that include links to: **VFW Action Corps Weekly & VFW Priority Goals**

This is a meaningful way to both thank our veterans and connect them with important legislative information and advocacy efforts that directly impact their benefits and quality of life.

What You Need to Do

Arizona VFW Auxiliaries must:

1. **Complete the official entry form**
 - Available at: www.vfwauxaz.org; Click on **Programs** → **Legislative**
2. **Submit the completed entry form** to me Becky Baldwin **DUE: March 31, 2026**
3. **Provide a detailed description** of your activity or event, including:
 - How thank-you notes/cards were created and distributed; How links to VFW Action Corps Weekly and/or VFW Priority Goals were included; Who participated (members, youth groups, community partners, etc.) and The impact on veterans and the community
4. **Include supporting materials**, such as:
 - Flyers or brochures; Social media posts; Newsletters or e-newsletters; Handouts; Photos; Links to videos; Any additional promotional materials

The more complete your submission, the better it reflects the creativity, outreach, and dedication of your Auxiliary.

This award is more than recognition — it is an opportunity to amplify our mission, educate veterans about legislative advocacy, and showcase the incredible work being done across Arizona.

Let's demonstrate the strength and compassion of our Auxiliaries by making this a statewide success. I look forward to receiving your submissions and celebrating your outstanding efforts!

Membership
Crystal McCarthy



🍀 Lucky to Serve – Lucky to Belong 🍀

March is the month of green, gold, and good fortune — and I can't help but think how incredibly lucky we are. It's, also, the perfect time to talk about recruiting — because who wouldn't want to be part of something this meaningful?

When you talk to potential members, don't start with the rules. Start with the heart.

Tell them we are:

Lucky to serve our nation's heroes.

Lucky to stand beside one another.

Lucky to be part of something that truly matters.

Invite them to see it in action. Bring them to a project. Let them feel the energy in the room. Let them meet the members who laugh hard, work harder, and care deeply.

Sometimes recruiting isn't about convincing — it's about sharing what already makes us proud.

And don't forget: look at your own circle. Family members, friends, coworkers, neighbors. There are eligible people who just need someone to say, "You'd be amazing at this."

Across this state, our members are showing up in big and small ways every single day. From hospital visits and community outreach to membership drives and creative fundraisers, you continue to prove that service isn't just something we do — it's who we are.

And that? That's pure gold.

Out in the Wild: Auxiliary & Member Spotlights

This space is reserved to celebrate YOU. Let's shine a light on it.

Auxiliary/Member Shout-Outs:

- Auxiliary 720 helped pack food boxes at the Herb Harrison Pantry
- Debbie Spradling Beckerlep crocheted lap blankets that were donated to veterans that are homebound and on hospice.
- Auxiliary 549, hand in hand with their Comrades, hosted a birthday party for Geri Meyer, a 103-year-old World War II Nurse.
- Auxiliary 1433 collected Valentines cards from students at Victory Autism Academy for drop off to veterans at the VA.

April is the Month of the Military Child - Let's Think Ahead

March is the perfect time to start planning for the Month of the Military Child.

Behind every service member stands a child who serves in their own way — through moves, deployments, new schools, and constant change. These kids show resilience beyond their years.

Let's:

- Recognize Military Children already in our membership families.
- Highlight programs or events that support them.
- Reach out to families who may be eligible but don't yet know there's a place for them here.

Military kids are often the quiet heroes. Let's make sure they feel seen.

And while we're thinking about growth — don't overlook youth and family connections already within your Auxiliary. The next generation of leaders may already be sitting at your meeting table.

 **We Are Lucky — But It's Not Luck Alone**

Our strength isn't luck. It's commitment. It's compassion. It's consistency.

This March, wear your green proudly — not just for tradition, but as a reminder that we are fortunate to serve, fortunate to belong, and fortunate to do this work together.

*Let's keep showing up.
Let's keep telling our story.
Let's keep growing.*

Because there is nothing luckier than a heart that serves.



Irene Nowacki
Scholarships Chairman

Thank you all for your due diligence in getting your entries to me on time for the [Young American Creative Patriotic Art contest](#) and [3-Dimensional Patriotic Art Contests](#). We have a few more weeks to get the last of them in. Please make sure that they are packaged correctly and securely to limit any damage during shipping. I am super excited to be able to see all the entries and have the honor to judge these. Department Convention will be an exciting time to reveal who the winners are in each contest.

Don't forget, we still have our very own [Department of Arizona VFW Auxiliary Educational Grant](#) and [VFW Auxiliary Merit Scholarship](#). These are **due to me by April 1st, 2026**. Let's get our auxiliary members some much needed help for their academic future. The department has budgeted for this, so let's give the money to those that need a little extra help. These applications are available on the department website www.vfwauxaz.org under the Scholarships.

There is still time to make your donations to National President Lois' special project [Continuing Education Scholarship](#). Let's see how much the department of Arizona can donate to this wonderful scholarship.

The program year is coming to an end soon. Don't forget to tell me about your **most creative/unique activity and/or event educating your community about the Scholarship opportunities in the VFW and VFW Auxiliary that you have done in your area and across the state**. A citation and \$25 to one Auxiliary in each of the 10 program divisions will be awarded. Will it be to your auxiliary? Make sure to fill out the entry form in MALTA (www.vfwauxiliary.org) behind member log in that is under Member Resources and then the Scholarships tab. These need to be sent to me by no later than **March 31, 2026** for judging.

I hope that you are all making plans to attend the Department Convention in Tucson. It will be very exciting to be able to reveal the winners of the National art scholarships and the winners from the Department Grant and Scholarship. Until then, keep those art projects coming!

VFS
Ray Williams

MAKE YOUR MARK

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I recently watch an old video from our National President, and it inspired me about for myself and the Auxiliary's mission. She was speaking about the story of the pencil. I found the story was attributed to author Paulo Coelho and it is the following:

The Story of the Pencil

by Paulo Coelho

A boy was watching his grandmother write a letter. At one point he asked:

'Are you writing a story about what we've done? Is it a story about me?'

His grandmother stopped writing her letter and said to her grandson:

'I am writing about you, actually, but more important than the words is the pencil I'm using. I hope you will be like this pencil when you grow up.'

Intrigued, the boy looked at the pencil. It didn't seem very special.

'But it's just like any other pencil I've ever seen!'

'That depends on how you look at things. It has five qualities which, if you manage to hang on them, will make you a person who is always at peace with the world.'

*'**First quality:** you are capable of great things, but you must never forget that there is a hand guiding your steps. We call that hand God, and He always guides us according to His will.'*

*'**Second quality:** now and then, I have to stop writing and use a sharpener. That makes the pencil suffer a little, but afterwards, he's much sharper. So, you, too, must learn to bear certain pains and sorrows, because they will make you a better person.'*

*'**Third quality:** the pencil always allows us to use an eraser to rub out any mistakes. This means that correcting something we did is not necessarily a bad thing; it helps to keep us on the road to justice.'*

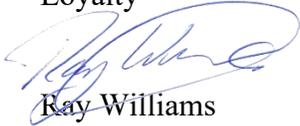
*'**Fourth quality:** what really matters in a pencil is not its wooden exterior, but the graphite inside. So always pay attention to what is happening inside you.'*

*'Finally, the pencil's **fifth quality:** it always leaves a mark. in just the same way, you should know that everything you do in life will leave a mark, so try to be conscious of that in your every action'*

This simple story carries a powerful inspirational message about character, perseverance, and purpose. For me, this story is inspirational and can be applied to our mission of supporting our Veterans, family and community. We are all capable of incredible things (1st quality), however we can drift "off mission" and sometimes it takes commitment and hard of work to sharpen our focus. (2nd quality). Mistakes are a part of growth and learning, correct your course and move on (3rd quality). What matters is what drives you (4th quality). Being a VFW Auxiliary member I know you have a deep passion for our country, Veterans and their families. And that leaves the

5th quality, “leave a mark” and this is where I challenge you to leave your mark. Whether it is leading this organization or helping one person, just leave your mark.

Loyalty



Ray Williams
2025 – 2026 VFS Chair



Youth- March 2026
JaNice Robertson

Well, the time is getting closer to the end of the Program year. I hope everyone has had a good time with all of the programs. I have seen so many wonderful things on Facebook that the Auxiliaries and members have been doing every day. Please email me directly with the wonderful things you have done with our youth and include photos. Bells_Whistles@hotmail.com

Below is the criteria for the National Citation in the Youth program:
Awards for Auxiliaries:

1. Most creative and/or unique activity and/or event of the VFW Auxiliary working with a youth group.
 - Citation and \$25 to one VFW Auxiliary in each of the 10 Program Divisions for the most creative and/or unique activity and/or event of the VFW Auxiliary working with a youth group.

Entry form is required and available on the Department website, under the Youth Program [25-26YouthNationalAward.pdf](#)

VFW Auxiliaries must send the completed required entry form to the Department Youth Activities Chairman by March 31, 2026 for judging.

Also, please submit the Auxiliary's "Illustrating America" entries to either Kim Sloan or me. We want to see Patriotism through the eyes and art of our Youth! Please acknowledge and congratulate them for their efforts. Please do not wait until the last days to get them. The deadline for the Auxiliary to receive Illustrating America entries is March 31st. As Chairman, this leaves about 2 weeks to judge the entries and send the winners on to National.

Remember: NOW is the time to also complete credit for these Youth activities on the Auxiliary's Program Activity Report (PAR)

- *Work with a Youth Group
- *Award Youth supporting our Veterans Citation Award
- *Participate in Patriotism through Literacy
- *Promote Illustrating America Art Contest
- *Receive entries for Illustrating America Art Contest
- *HOST AN AWARD Ceremony to recognize the winners

“The Youth of today are the members of the future and what we show them now by promoting patriotism, being kind and active in our Veteran lives and communities, will make the difference to how we are portrayed by their families.”

Shannon Stanley, National Youth Ambassador 25-26