

Back-to-School Season: The Perfect Time to Start the Game



Every successful football team knows that championships aren't won on game day. They're built during training camp, in practices, and through countless hours spent mastering the fundamentals.

The same is true for our youth.

As students head back to school, we have a unique opportunity to help build a strong foundation for the next generation. That's why Play #1 in our Youth Activities Playbook is all about **Patriotism Through Literacy**.

Reading opens doors. It introduces young people to history, teaches critical thinking, sparks imagination, and helps them discover the stories of those who came before them. Through books, children can learn about our nation's founding, the sacrifices of our veterans, and the values that make our communities strong.

The good news? Building that foundation doesn't require a huge budget or a major event.

Consider hosting a book drive, donating patriotic or educational books to a local classroom, partnering with a school or library, or simply reading to children during a community event. If your Auxiliary has a lending library, now is the perfect time to refresh it and share it with families returning to their school-year routines.

Remember, every great play starts with a strong foundation. A single book placed in a child's hands today can inspire a lifelong love of learning tomorrow.

As we begin this new program year, I encourage every Auxiliary to look for one simple way to support literacy in your community. Small efforts can make a big impact, and together we can help our Future Playmakers develop the skills, confidence, and knowledge they'll carry for years to come.

So huddle up, Arizona! Training camp is underway, and it's time to Build the Foundation.

Let's make this season a winning one.



Coach's Corner: August Audible Calls from the Sidelines

August 2 – International Friendship Day

Friendships help build confidence, teamwork, and a sense of belonging. Consider inviting youth to create friendship cards for veterans, participate in a community service project with a friend, or recognize the importance of kindness and inclusion in their schools and neighborhoods.

August 16 – National Tell a Joke Day

Laughter brings people together! Encourage youth to share family-friendly jokes, host a joke contest, or create a "Jokes for Heroes" display featuring funny notes and drawings for veterans in nursing homes, hospitals, or local posts.

August 21 – National Senior Citizens Day

This is a wonderful opportunity to connect generations. Youth can interview veterans and seniors about their life experiences, create handmade cards, assist with a visit to a nursing facility, or help preserve local history by listening to and recording stories from older community members.

August 26 – National Dog Day

Many veterans and military families share a special bond with their pets. Consider collecting pet supplies for a local shelter, inviting youth to create pet-themed thank-you cards, highlighting service dogs and their important work, or hosting a pet photo contest to encourage community participation.

Bonus Play for August

National Read-a-Book Month and **Back-to-School Month** continue all month long! Every book donated, every story shared, and every child encouraged to read helps us Build the Foundation for future success.