

Dear Department Presidents and Scholarships Chairmen,

My name is Brenda Blair from the Department of Maine. I am a Life Member of Pine Tree Auxiliary #887 in Augusta, Maine. I am so excited to be your 2021-2022 National Scholarships Ambassador. I want to thank incoming National President Jean Hamil for the opportunity to serve you and the organization in this position.

I joined the Auxiliary 17 years ago as a Life Member on the eligibility of my husband, Michael, who served in Vietnam from 1966-1967. We have one daughter who, with her husband, has five (5) children; all are members of the VFW Auxiliary.

I have held many elected and appointed positions at the local, District and National levels since joining this wonderful organization:

- Local Auxiliary President (2016-2019, 2015-2016, 2008-2009, 2005-2006)
- Local Auxiliary Secretary (2009-2011)
- District Conductress (2018-2019)
- District Trustee (2018-2019)
- Department Guard (2011-2012)
- Department Conductress (2012-2013)
- Department Audit Committee Chairman (2020-2021)
- Department Standing Rules Committee Chairman (2020-2021)
- Department Veterans & Family Support Chairman (2013-2014)
- Department Scholarships Chairman (2020-2021)
- Department VAVS Representative (2011-2021)

I have helped at Oktoberfest's, Stand Downs for homeless veterans, holiday parties, in the Veterans Service Office and wherever else needed to help our precious veterans.

In July 2018, the Department of Maine's Senior Vice-President passed away, and I was asked if I would run for Senior Vice as all the Department Officers wanted to complete their year. In October 2018, I was elected and installed Department Senior Vice-President. That year I was asked and accepted the position of 2019 Department Convention Chair.

In June 2019, I was elected and installed the 2019-2020 Department of Maine President. Our Department Line Officers, Council Members and members supported me so much during my year as Department President. I traveled from one end of the state to the other until March 2020, when the COVID-19 pandemic began.

I look forward to working with each of you and hearing how you promote this Program in your Department. If you should have any questions or concerns, I will find answers and reply to you promptly.

Loyally,

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Scholarships Promotion #1 - July 2021

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I'm so excited.



It's that time of year again to get **EXCITED** about the Auxiliary's new Program Year!

There are four scholarships to promote this year:

- Continuing Education
- Young American Creative Patriotic Art
- Patriot's Pen (*VFW contest we help promote*)
- Voice of Democracy (*VFW contest we help promote*)

The first to focus on are the VFW youth contests. Their deadlines are coming up much sooner than the Auxiliary contests and it's not far away.

Posts are to receive the Voice of Democracy and the Patriot's Pen entries by **October 31, 2021**.

The 2021-2022 theme for the VFW's Voice of Democracy is:

"America: Where do we go from here?"

This scholarship is an audio-essay competition for students in grades 9-12. This is for public, private, parochial and homeschooled students. The student is to record their original 3-5 minute audio-essay and submit it, along with a typed version, to their local VFW Post.

The 2021-2022 theme for the Patriot's Pen's is:

How can I be a good American?

This scholarship is an essay contest for students in grades 6-8. This is for public, private, parochial and homeschooled students. The student is to type a 300-400-word essay, in their own words, about the theme.

Rules and requirements are listed on each application that can be obtained on the [VFW website](#). If you have questions or need help with these contests, please email VFW National Headquarters at youthscholarships@vfw.org.

Provide Contest Information to Auxiliary Chairmen

Make sure your Auxiliary Chairmen have the tools they need to succeed. Provide links to, or mail a copy of, the Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen Chairman's Manual and [Voice of Democracy](#) and [Patriot's Pen](#) contest applications. Make sure you know where to find this information online, too! Visit the [Resources page](#) of the VFW Auxiliary website for additional Scholarship tools.

To give a member part of the information - even if they've held this Chairmanship before - isn't going to make this Program soar. We must mentor and be there for them. If you don't know an answer to a question, ask! I – and National Headquarters – am here to help.

Get the Information Out!

We need to put on our thinking caps and think of ways to get the word out to our youth about the wonderful scholarships that the VFW and Auxiliary offer. Ways include:

- Encourage members to talk about these scholarships with youth – their children, grandchildren, faith-based youth groups, sports teams, teachers, school guidance counselors, etc.
- Share the information on social media. Facebook will reach the grandparents and parents of our youth. Instagram, Snapchat and TikTok will reach the youth.
- Post flyers in coffee shops, libraries, community centers and other locations where youth gather.



Work as a Team!

Work with your Youth Activities Chairman. We could reach more youth and students by helping each other.

Scholarships and our Youth Activities contests (Illustrating American and Get Excited for the Red, White and Blue!) open the door to reach more youth and their families in our communities. An elementary-aged youth may have an older sibling that could benefit from our scholarship contests. A Voice of Democracy, Patriot's Pen or Young American Creative Patriotic Art participant may have a younger sibling that could benefit from contests and opportunities provided by the Youth Activities Program.

We must come together and work together to get the word out. This would help both Programs so youth aren't left out.

I hope you're SO EXCITED for this year!

Loyally,

Brenda L. Blair