

Education
Year-End Report 2025-2026
Department of Arizona

The Auxiliary Education projects in the Department of Arizona were extremely successful. During the 2025-2026 Auxiliary year, forty Units in the Department of Arizona reported activity in the Education program, with approximately 955 Auxiliary members, 36 Junior members, and 625 Legion members participating. This Chairman informed the Units and Districts about the Education program via information packets distributed on the Department website following the 2025 Fall Conference, as well as monthly bulletins on the Department website. National Education newsletters were also shared on the Department website and Facebook page.

Units participated in American Education Week by providing thank-you notes, lunches, cookies, and treats to teachers at local schools. Thank-you cards were sent to staff members, including school nurses, custodians, and bus drivers. Units held in-person events, school supply drives, and drive-through events to collect and distribute school supplies and backpacks to children at local schools. One unit collected 11,563 items valued at \$2344.75. Units presented videos and booklets on flag etiquette and Halloween safety, and donated craft supplies. Monthly bulletin boards on patriotic holidays and the branches of the military were created in a school. Funds were donated to a food bank in honor of the teachers.

Units participated in the *Give 10 to Education* program by providing school supplies and educational materials to schools. Members of all Post entities donated school supplies or money toward purchase of school supplies. Other necessities such as backpacks, tissue, hand sanitizer, wipes, story books, toiletries, and shoes were collected and distributed to local schools. School wish lists were fulfilled. Twenty-three *Give 10 to Education* certificates were awarded to Unit Members.

All Units reporting also assisted needy students in many ways. Clothes were donated and delivered to a school district clothing bank where every student in need has access to free goods. Donations were also made for students in foster care, disabled students, and the homeless. Food pantries were stocked. Christmas Angels worked with local schools to provide gifts, toys, and food baskets for needy students. Units also delivered Easter, Christmas, and Thanksgiving food baskets. A Unit collected dresses, shoes, and jewelry for a Pop-Up Prom store valued at \$10,763 serving 385 students.

During the 2024-2025 school year, Units reported awarding 37 Unit scholarships, totaling \$28,325. Units raised funds for scholarships in several ways including dinners, raffles, contests, and sales. National scholarship applications and information were published in monthly Unit newsletters, distributed at school open houses, distributed at a Home and Garden Show, and delivered to local high schools through the mail, email, and in person. Units delivered information regarding the Past Presidents Parley nursing scholarship to community colleges and assisted with the Arizona State University's Veterans Program. In 2025-2026, seven applications for the *Children of Warriors National Presidents' Scholarship*, two for the *Member Loyalty Scholarship*, two for the *Non-traditional Student Scholarship*, one for the *Spirit of Youth Scholarship* were received by this Department. The Department of Arizona has established the *Wilma Hoyal/Maxine Chilton Memorial Scholarship*. There are three scholarships of \$3000.00 available annually: one to Arizona State University, one to The University of Arizona, and one to Northern Arizona University. This scholarship is renewable provided the student meets the outlined criteria. Recipients must be enrolled as second year or upper-division students in Political Science, Public Programs, or Special Education. Submissions for this scholarship are not due until May 15 so results are not yet available.

Units involved the Legionnaires, the Sons of the American Legion, and the Legion Riders in donating time, school supplies, money, and labor to all the Education and Children's programs. They taught motorcycle safety classes, flag etiquette, and the meaning of Veterans Day. They assisted with Halloween safety programs, Christmas parties, and Easter parties. Legionnaires acted as judges for an essay contest, promoted scholarships, helped with Girl Scout activities, and attended the awards ceremony.

Units reported presenting "Veterans in the Classroom" programs. Veterans visited elementary schools for interviews, spoke at assemblies and in classrooms about the Poppy story, teaching the students to make poppies. Schools honored veterans on Veterans Day with flags, songs, and videos. Units presented programs on the accomplishments of our Veterans by honoring veterans on Veterans Day at local schools. A Veteran read books during Story Time. Veterans spoke about what it means to be a Veteran.

Units supported Veterans associations on college and university campuses by donating to JROTC, ROTC, and Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University. Cadets were also recognized for outstanding achievements. In collaboration with the Arizona State University Pat Tillman Veterans Center, a Unit assisted a veteran's dependent in obtaining a nursing scholarship.

All reporting Units used many community resources or activities to assist students, teachers, or support personnel. Units donated to the Shop-with-a-Firefighter program. Monetary donations were made to a local mentoring program, JROTC awards, Girls State, Girls Scouts, Cub Scouts, baseball teams, Special Olympics, and 4-H Clubs. Units worked with libraries, parks and recreation, JROTC, NHS, and Student Councils to write letters for Packages from Home.

The Department of Arizona offers the **JEAN BATLEY PLAQUE** for Units with membership of 150 and under and the **CHRYSTEEN FRITZINGER PLAQUE** for Units with membership of 151 and over. The purpose of these awards is to stimulate interest in good participation in the Education program of the American Legion Auxiliary by giving recognition to the Unit which makes the most use of the available ideas in education, scholarship, and loan possibilities. These plaques will be awarded at our Department Convention in June.

The Department of Arizona recognizes that our young people are our future, and a good education is the key to their success. The members of the Department of Arizona are devoted to contributing to this success.

Respectfully submitted,

Julie M. Vietri

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Education Chairman
Department of Arizona

(964 words)