

Americanism Chairman's Corner
Department of Arizona Auxiliary
2026-2027
August Newsletter

Hello! Please allow me to introduce myself. My name is Amber Sanchez, I am a member of Swaskegame (swa-kee-GA-may) Unit 14, Kingman. I am honored to serve as your 2026-2027 Department of Arizona Americanism Chairman.

My American Legion Auxiliary journey began in 2023 in a way I never expected. My husband and I participated in a local Christmas in July motorcycle charity ride. At the end of the ride, we were invited by the American Legion Riders Director to visit Post 14. We accepted the invitation and while my husband was receiving a tour of the historic building, I sat chatting with members in the Social Quarters. I learned about the Legion Family, and before the day ended, we both knew we had found a place where we belonged. We joined that very day.

I am eligible for membership through my husband, who proudly served in the United States Marine Corps near the end of the Vietnam era. Military service has always been woven throughout our family's history. My father (USMC) and father-in-law (ARMY) both served during the Vietnam era. I have two veteran sons, one served in the United States Navy (2006-2014), and one served in the United States Marine Corps (2008-2012), I also have another son who is currently serving on active duty in the United States Navy since 2022. In addition, several aunts and uncles have served in both the United States Marine Corps and the United States Air Force. Service to our nation has always been an important part of our family's story.

Not long after joining the Auxiliary, I was asked to accept a nomination for Second Vice President of my Unit. I accepted and as many of you know, sometimes saying "YES" opens the door to many other "YES" opportunities. I served as Second Vice President before moving into the Vice President role, and today I have the privilege of serving as President of ALA Unit 14 and Vice President of District 7.

Leadership has never been about holding a title for me, it has always been about serving others, encouraging people to become involved, and helping others discover that they have something valuable to contribute. I believe the best leaders don't simply lead – they invite others to lead alongside them.

When Department President Marge Christensen asked me to serve as Americanism Chairman, it felt like a perfect fit for me. In a previous leadership role, I was often affectionately called "Lady Liberty". My office was filled with patriotic decorations, flags and American history. These treasures now fill my home office, and my passion for our country has only continued to grow.

I am especially excited to support President Marge's Special Project, **"Engaging Our Youth in Patriotism for Our Veterans"**. I believe one of the greatest gifts we can give future generations is an appreciation for our nation's history, our freedoms, and the sacrifices made by those who served to protect them.

There is a line in Whitney Houston's song **Greatest Love of All** that has always spoken to my heart: ***"I believe that children are our future. Teach them well and let them lead the way"***. Those words remind us that the time we invest in teaching our youth today will shape tomorrow's leaders.

Between my husband and me, we are blessed with ten children and, nineteen grandchildren, ranging from ages six to twenty-six. Watching them learn about our flag, proudly recite the Pledge of Allegiance, sing patriotic songs, and ask questions about our country's history has been one of life's greatest joys. Their excitement reminds me that children naturally want to learn – we simply must take the time to teach them.

As our nation continues to celebrate America's 250th Birthday, what better opportunity could there be to inspire our youth to understand our history, honor our veterans, respect our flag, and appreciate the freedoms we enjoy every day?

Throughout the coming year there will be ideas, resources, information, and reminders about our Americanism programs, including the **Americanism Essay Contest, Oratorical Contest, Star Spangled Kids**, and many other opportunities for Units to participate. Be sure to visit the Americanism area on the Member Resources page, where you'll find helpful information and links as they become available.

As we begin this new Auxiliary year, I'd like to encourage every Unit to look for simple opportunities to teach patriotism throughout the year, Americanism isn't limited to just one month or one program – it can be incorporated into many of the observances we already recognize. **August 7th is National Purple Heart Day**, a wonderful opportunity to teach our youth about the brave sacrifices of our Armed Forces who were wounded during their service. A few ideas to consider:

- Consider inviting a Purple Heart recipient to share their story
- Create a small educational display recognizing Purple Heart recipients in your community (or if you are not aware of any, just an educational display)
- Take a few moments during your Unit meeting or Junior meeting to discuss the significance of the Purple Heart.
- Wear your Purple Heart shirt or a purple shirt on August 7th in support of the national holiday.

Every patriotic lesson, no matter how small, helps preserve our nation's history and reminds the next generation that freedom has never been free.

Until next month...keep teaching, keep learning, and keep Americanism alive – one heart, one family, and one community at a time!

In unity for God and Country, Service, Not Self

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