American Legion Auxiliary & Youth Engagement • 30-Minute Workshop

Inspiring Young Patriots

Tools, Contests, and Programs for Teaching Americanism to Youth

Why inspire patriotism among our youth?

Why the American Legion Family?

30-Minute Presentation Roadmap

We already have the tools!

Core Principles

Americanism, Constitution & Flag values

Youth & Service

Supporting military kids & community action

Education & Junior Programs

Classroom outreach, scholarships & patches

Remembrance & Honor

Poppy traditions, VA&R service & Wreaths

Americanism: Core Youth Initiatives

AZ Americanism Chairman Amber Sanchez; ilovetheusa63amber2020@yahoo.com 626-506-8941

To foster and perpetuate a 100% Americanism:

- **Star Spangled Kids kits**: Constitution, flag etiquette, and history basics
- **Americanism Essay Contest**: annual themes with local and national school prizes
- **Wreaths Across America partnership**: Remember, Honor, and Teach missions
- **ALA Academy Training**: dedicated e-learning on youth Americanism programs

K-12

targeted grade range across all essay divisions

Resources:

- Department website: https://aladeptaz.org/3-program-bulletins-a-i
- National website: https://www.legion-aux.org/member/committees/americanism

Classroom Tools: Essay Contests & Kits

Americanism Essay Contest

- Annual patriotic theme assigned for each school year

"How can you be a beacon of light for our veterans?"

- Divided into 6 grade-level classes (grades 3–12 plus special needs)
- NEW THIS YEAR: $200 classroom wish list for each grade –level class winner at Department level
- Additional Post and Unit cash prizes could incentivize local school participation
- March 13 deadline to Department for judging and submission to National. National awards: One award in each class will be presented in each division. Winners will receive a $50 check, and a $50 donation in the student's name will be made to the Spirit of Youth Scholarship Fund.

Star Spangled Kids Kits

- Pre-packaged Constitution Day and civic lesson materials- items available through emblem sales; Junior project underway!
- Interactive pocket Constitutions, flag history, and pledge guides
- Equips schools, youth groups, and homeschool networks easily
- ALA Academy course provides step-by-step facilitation guidance

Pups & Pals Patriotic Adventures
Special Printing for the
American Legion Family Department of Arizona



An engaging, educational children's book designed to introduce young readers to core Americanism symbols, history and service traditions through relatable canine characters. Curious about their Military Police Officer Uncle and his canine partner, adorable papillon pups gather around for an unforgettable, heartwarming lesson on service, freedom and national heritage. Highlights include:

- The Poppy and its timeless symbol of sacrifice
- The U.S. Flag history and the symbolism behind the stars and stripes
- Exploration of America's National bird, the bald eagle
- Kid-friendly explanation of the Constitution and its ideals
- The Liberty Bell proclaiming liberty throughout the land

President Special Project funds will be used to purchase these "American Legion Family" branded books for distribution to schools and libraries in Arizona. They will be available to Units putting together Star Spangled Kids kits. Books will be available this spring.







Pups and Pals
Real Life Main Characters:

Army Specialist Levi Brown
Canine Partner Sergeant Alex
Toast
Wrangler
Max
Blueberry Pie

Recognizing Youth Courage and Kindness

AZ Children & Youth Chairman: Charlotte Sullivan; crsully@gmail.com; 602-619-0366

Youth Hero Award

- For youth who demonstrate physical courage or life-saving acts
- Formal medal and framed certificate presentation
- Public patriotic ceremony builds strong community goodwill and awareness
- Highlights youth bravery as a core civic value
- https://www.legion-aux.org/youth-hero-good-deed-awards
- https://legion-aux.formstack.com/forms/youth_hero_good_deed_award_nomination

Good Deed Award

- Recognizes exceptional community and neighborly service
- Seek out acts demonstrating patriotism such as helping a veteran, wreath placement, fundraising for veteran cause
- Awarded to children who embody selfless civic spirit
- Encourages ongoing volunteerism among young peers
- Nomination process is quick and open year-round

Resources:

Dept: https://aladeptaz.org/3-program-bulletins-a-i

National: https://www.legion-aux.org/member/committees/children-and-youth

Supporting Military Children by educating “civilian” youth

- Recognize military kids in schools:
  - Kids of Deployed are Heroes 2 (KDH2): recognition stickers and buttons: print at home https://www.legion-aux.org/cmsdesk/ALA/media/PDF/Programs/Hero2stickers-w.pdf
  - Blue Star Banner presentations
  - Month of the military child April School programs
- Partner with local businesses & government
  - Discounts, recognition
  - Military Child's Table setting ceremony honors sacrifices made at home- Consider placing tables in youth oriented public places with an explanation of the components
- ALA Academy courses: Supporting Military Families and KDH2 deployment tools



honoring children of deployed service members

Purple Up! For Military Kids in April

April is the Month of the Military Child & Purple Up! Day: April 15

April

Month of the Military Child across all posts and units

Purple

combines all branch colors: Army, Navy, AF, Marines, CG

100%

community visibility through school and unit events

Youth in Action: Community Service

AZ Dept Chairman: JoJo Baldwin; jbaldwinlaw.atty@gmail.com; 520-788-9714

National Days of Service

- MLK Day of Service: youth-led donation drives and volunteerism
- 9/11 Patriot Day of Remembrance: community memorial service
- Teaches civic responsibility through direct hands-on action
- Engages youth in purposeful, non-partisan public service
- **Encourage Patriotic Service Projects**

Civic Literacy Tools

- Public library partnerships: patriotic reading corners and displays
- Lawforkids.org: interactive legal, civic, and constitutional education; ballot simulation
- Holiday gatherings: family-friendly, **patriotic-themed** celebrations
- ALA Academy courses guide effective youth volunteer projects

Resources

Dept Website: https://aladeptaz.org/3-program-bulletins-a-i

National Website: https://www.legion-aux.org/member/committees/community-service

Education: Classroom Partnerships

AZ Education Chairman: Julie Vietri; jvietri@msn.com; 480-495-1558

- Give 10 to Education: 20th Anniversary milestone supporting school supplies- consider patriotic items!
- Official tracking sheets help units monitor supplies donated to teachers
- Veterans in Community Schools brings firsthand military stories to youth
- Fosters direct bonds between living veterans and elementary/middle schools

20 Yrs

of Give 10 support for local public educators

Resources

Dept Website: https://aladeptaz.org/8-education-tools

National Website:

- https://www.legion-aux.org/member/committees/education
- https://www.legion-aux.org/veterans-in-community-schools

Youth Engagement Educational Scholarships Overview

National Scholarship Name	Eligibility Focus	Key Deadline
Children of Warriors	Direct descendants of veterans who served	March 1
Spirit of Youth	Junior ALA members with active membership	March 1
Junior Loyalty	Transitioning Juniors entering higher education	March 1
James A. Parke	Youth volunteers at VA Medical Centers	Spring Annual
Junior Member of the Year	Outstanding leadership and Rising Star award	June 1: Annual. Any member, Unit or Dept may submit directly to National

The Department of Arizona also has scholarships for ALA AZ Girls State participants, health care, nursing, political science, public programs or special education.

Units may also have scholarships!!!

Junior Activities: Developing Leaders

AZ Junior Chairman, Sara Velasquez, saraelizabethward@hotmail.com; 520-840-4585

- Three-tier participation: Post/Unit, Department Conference & Convention, National Meeting
- Commemorative Enrollment & Graduation Certificates mark member growth
- ALA Junior Patch Program offers age-graded civic skill achievements
- ALA Academy Junior Mentor Series equips adult members to guide and empower youth

Resources

Dept Website: https://aladeptaz.org/4-program-bulletins-j-s

National: https://www.legion-aux.org/member/committees/junior-member-activities

K–18

Junior membership nurturing lifelong civic leaders

National Security: Symbols & Awareness

AZ National Security Chairman; Dolores Chavez; chebeejs@cox.net, 928-386-0841

Blue Star Banners

- Displayed in homes with deployed family service members
- Visible civic reminder of family sacrifice for local students
- Youth present banners at unit meetings and civic assemblies
- Builds empathy and patriotic pride across neighborhood peers

Youth Disaster Readiness

- Educates children on home preparedness and emergency plans
- Emphasizes community defense and civic teamwork
- Connects national defense concepts to local civic resilience
- Reinforces duty to assist neighbors during local crises

Resources
Dept: https://aladeptaz.org/4-program-bulletins-j-s
National: https://www.legion-aux.org/member/committees/national-security

The Poppy Tradition: Teach & Remember

AZ Poppy Chairman: Kat Sticklin, katsticklin2025@gmail.com, 928-322-1550

- Memorial Poppy: distribution of the tangible symbol of wartime sacrifice since WWI
  - Engage youth in distributing or receiving!
  - New this year: Order anytime, no penalties
- Poppy Poster Contest: students design posters
  - Entries due to Dept: May 5, 2027
  - New this year: $200 wish list for classes with winning department level entries
- National Poppy Ambassador contest: Any member, Unit or Dept may submit entry
  - New this year: National AZ winner gets paid travel expenses to the National convention
- ALA Academy e-Learning: National Poppy Day community outreach guides

100%

of poppy donations directly support veterans and families

Resources:
Dept: https://aladeptaz.org/4-program-bulletins-j-s
National: https://www.legion-aux.org/member/committees/poppy

Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation (VA&R)

AZ VA&R Chair: Stephanie McMullen, aladeptaz2ndvp.varchairman@gmail.com, 623-393-9476

Service to Veterans Projects

- Youth craft holiday cards, care packages, and bedside gifts
- Intergenerational storytelling captures living military history
- Outdoor cleanup and garden maintenance at veteran posts and homes
- Instills lifelong gratitude through personal contact with heroes

VAMC Youth Volunteerism

- Student volunteers at VA Medical Centers assist hospital staff
- James A. Parke Memorial Scholarship rewards dedicated youth volunteers
- Builds compassionate healthcare and community service resumes
- Provides meaningful service-hour credit for high school graduation

Resources:
Dept: https://aladeptaz.org/5-bulletins-va%26r
National: https://member.legion-aux.org/member/committees/var

ALA Academy: Youth focused Free Volunteer Courses

- Wreaths Across America and National Poppy Day action plans
- Youth Hero & Good Deed Awards: nomination and ceremony coaching
- Month of the Military Child & KDH2 deployment support modules
- Junior Patch Program, Junior E-Learning and Junior Mentor Series for unit leaders
- Scholarships
- NEW: Nine-Part Leadership-course w/certification

Online

self-paced training available 24/7 to all members

Equip, Engage, and Inspire Our Youth

Visit legion-aux.org to download toolkits, tracking sheets, and contest guides.

Start Your Unit's Youth Project Today