



2011-2012

YOUTH ACTIVITIES PROGRAM



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Post 3862-12



Youth Activities programs can be a big asset for your post and district if they are promoted in your communities. Put out press releases and introduce these programs to all in the community. People like to hear of organizations doing things for Veterans and the local youth. When picking your chairpersons make sure to appoint someone that is energetic and knowledgeable of our programs. Make copies of this book as well as going to the National Website (vfw.org); go to programs and copy "It's About Service", which contains all the core programs, special projects and suggested activities. When approaching the different types of youth activities, come up with a plan for implementing your projects. Give yourself plenty of time to implement your plan so that you can set up press releases and advertising, as well as contacting key people in your community (you usually need a couple of weeks lead time for press releases to advertise your programs). Local papers like to hear of different youth programs, so it's usually easy to get the press to cover these programs. Our youth is our future and working with America's youth can only strengthen our posts and the communities in which we serve. We are helping to promote good citizenship and showing them the joys of service.

The informed Post, District and Auxiliary Chairpersons are vital in our organization. They are the main link to the community and to today's youth. Contact your various schools, scouting organizations, as well as the many church groups you have in your areas. See the different kind of activities they already have and tie our different activities in with theirs.

Be excited about our programs; the Patriots' Pen Essay contest. Our Eagle Scout Program and Junior ROTC programs are a natural for us. Be creative and work in new programs with the teachers and scout leaders. Be sure to honor these young people with certificates, trophies, plaques, and cash awards to help keep them excited and motivated.

Once you have done these programs be sure to report them to State Headquarters. Reporting on a monthly basis makes it easier and keeps your reporting more accurate. Be sure to explain your programs and put them under the proper category for your X Sheet.

Youth Activities Program 2011-2012 continued

Post Awards

There will be a cash award and certificate for first, and second place, presented to the posts who have the most hours, dollars, and member participation reported in the following membership categories:

Up to 150 members	151 to 300 members	301 members and up
1 st Place - \$50.00	1 st Place - \$50.00	1 st Place - \$50.00
2 nd Place - \$35.00	2 nd Place - \$35.00	2 nd Place - \$35.00

District Awards

There will be one District Plaque Award presented to the District who has the most hours, dollars, and member participation reported.

PATRIOT'S PEN

The theme for 2011 - 2012 is: **“Are You Proud of Your Country?”**. Get started in your schools as soon as possible. Be sure to have all the information (entry forms, theme, rules and eligibility requirements, post award information as well as District and state information) when you approach your teachers to help you. Maybe even a copy of last year's winning essay (which you can get a copy of from the VFW website). This year we are also putting all of the forms (entry, judging, bio, etc.) on the vfwil.org website. Make sure you coordinate with your Auxiliary, because working together can make it easier on everyone.

Rules

The contest is open to all 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students enrolled in a public, private, or parochial school or a home schooled study program within the United States, its' territories and possessions; or enrolled in an overseas school as a dependent of the US Military or US Civilian personnel. (Foreign Exchange students are excluded)

The essay must be the contestant's original work and the participants cannot refer to their race, disabilities, national origin, or identify themselves, their school, city or state, in any way within the essay. All essays must be typewritten and have to be no less than 300 or more than 400 words. A one letter word such as (a), will be counted as one word. Essays either under or above requirements will be disqualified. Posts and Auxiliaries are encouraged to work together in promoting the program

Deadlines

Student entry deadline is November 1, 2011 – essays must be in the hands of the Post Chairman no later than this date.

Post judging deadline November 15, 2011 – winning essays to the District Chairman by November 21st, 2011

District judging deadline is December 12, 2011 – Districts must have their District winner to the State Director no later than December 23rd, 2011; complete with completed entry form, sponsoring Post and /or Auxiliary signature; a head and shoulder color/glossy photo and biography questionnaire from the VOD program.

State judging is Wednesday, December 28th, 2011.

State Awards

****First Place Award -- \$1,000.00 cash, a specially designed plaque, and 2 nights lodging at the State of Illinois Voice of Democracy and Patriots Pen Awards Banquet, and meeting weekend in Springfield.**

****The winner will be notified prior to the VOD and Patriots Pen Awards Banquet and the winner will read his or her winning essay****

NOTE: Posts can receive credit on the "X" Sheet for Patriots Pen participation by making a cash donation to the State of Illinois, VFW earmarked "Patriots Pen".

Posts with 100 members or more must donate \$100.00
Posts with less than 100 members must donate \$50.00

Scouting Program

Every Post has an opportunity to work to promote Americanism by working with the Boy Scouts of America in your local area through sponsorship or chartering a scout unit. Direct involvement in scouting is a chance to positively affect young people while developing a positive youth/adult partnership.

Each Post and District is urged to assign a liaison person to work closely with scout groups in your area. This is a natural fit for the VFW, and will afford your Posts and Districts an opportunity to create activities that promote good Citizenship and Americanism.

Through working with your local scout groups you will also be able to assist and promote the scouts to work towards being an eagle scout. Every year the State and National has an eagle Scout Award. On the Post level you can establish a Post Award of maybe a plaque or cash. Then nominate your eagle scout to State where they would have a possibility of advancing to National.

State Award

The State Eagle Scout Award is \$500.00 cash and a beautifully engraved plaque.

Deadline dates for the Eagle Scout of the Year Award:

Student entry to Post – March 1, 2012
Post entry to State – April 1, 2012
State winner to National – May 1, 2012

Make an extra effort to involve your Posts and Districts in Scouting. The rewards are great for you as well as the Scouts.

All the necessary forms needed are at vfw.org under Scouting.

Always remember you are invited to call if you have any questions or need any help. Let's plan to make Youth Activities a priority in our posts and Districts. These programs will allow you more visibility in your community; will allow you more opportunity for new member recruitment, as well as current members getting involved because they have children and grandchildren. Remember too, that the Patriots Pen and Scouting programs can be a precursor for the Voice of Democracy Contest.

"WE CONTINUE TO SERVE"





PATRIOTS PEN INTRODUCTION QUESTIONNAIRE

Representing VFW District _____ and its Ladies Auxiliary, a _____
(6th, 7th or 8th Grade)

Student of _____ in _____
(Name of School) (City)

(Students Name)

With _____ today is/are his/her
(Informal or nickname)

Parents:

Mother: _____

Father: _____

Other (Brother, Sister, Teacher, etc.)

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Please indicate after the names, how they are pronounced so that you and your guests will be introduced correctly.

Teacher's Name _____

Favorite Activities

If more space is needed, please use back side



Patriot's Pen
Are You Proud of Your Country?



Patriotic Essay Writing Contest
Grand Prize: \$10,000 savings bond

What is Patriot's Pen?

Conducted nationwide, this VFW sponsored youth essay competition gives students an opportunity to write essays expressing their views on democracy with the prospect of winning U.S. savings bonds. We invite you to join the more than 112,000 students who participated last year in this contest. The top 48 national winners all receive at least a \$1,000 savings bond. The first-place award is currently a \$10,000 savings bond plus an all-expense paid trip to Washington, D.C. for the winner and a parent or guardian.

Big National Prizes

Prizes include the various amounts of U.S. Savings Bonds listed below:

1st	\$10,000 Bond	7th	\$2,500 Bond
2nd	\$8,000 Bond	8-9th	\$2,000 Bond
3rd	\$7,000 Bond	10-11th	\$2,500 Bond
4th	\$5,500 Bond	12-13th	\$2,000 Bond
5th	\$5,000 Bond	14-15th	\$1,500 Bond
6th	\$4,000 Bond	16-66th	\$1,000 Bond

When is the deadline?

To qualify, all entries must be submitted to a sponsoring VFW Post by November 1, 2011.

The National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASPP) has again approved this contest for its National Advisory List of Contests and Activities.

How does the contest work?

The contest consists of four levels. The first level (entry) is sponsored by local VFW Posts. Post winners advance to the VFW District (regional) level where the one first-place winner is advanced to the VFW Department (state) level. The one first-place winner at the Department level is then advanced into the VFW National competition. The winner from each Department (state) then competes for the national prize.

Who can enter?

Patriot's Pen is open to 6th-, 7th- and 8th-grade students enrolled in public, private or parochial schools in the U.S., its territories or its possessions. Home-schooled students also are eligible.

Dependents of U.S. military or civilian personnel in overseas schools can participate too. (Foreign exchange students and former winners that placed in the National Finals are excluded from the contest.)

2011-12 OFFICIAL STUDENT PATRIOT'S PEN COMPETITION ENTRY FORM MUST BE COMPLETED BY ALL CONTESTANTS

Name: First, M.I., Last _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

{ _____ } _____
Home Phone _____ E-mail _____

Date of Birth _____ Grade to Be Used _____ Essay Word Count _____

School Name, City, State _____

I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTAND THE CONTEST RULES

Signature of Student Participant _____ Date _____

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE VFW/AUXILIARY POST

I certify that this student is an authorized entry to our VFW Post Level Patriot's Pen Competition.

Post Commander's/Chairman's Signature _____ Post # _____

Local Auxiliary President's/Chairman's Signature _____

Post Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

No. of students participating _____ No. of winners advanced to District _____

Amount of Post/Aux. awards and bonds \$ _____

Amount of Post/Aux. additional expenses (travel, gas, etc.) \$ _____

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE VFW/AUXILIARY DISTRICT

I certify that the student named in the previous section is the only authorized winner of the Patriot's Pen Essay Contest District Competition and is our sole entry into the Department level.

District Chairman's Signature _____ Dist. # _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

{ _____ } _____
Phone _____ E-mail _____

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE VFW DEPARTMENT CHAIRMAN

I certify that the student named in the previous section is the only authorized first-place winner of the Patriot's Pen Essay Department Competition, and is our sole entry into the National judging.

Department Chairman's Signature _____

{ _____ } _____
Department Phone _____ Fax _____

E-mail _____

The winner ☐ has been ☐ will be [check one] notified that they are the first place Department winner on _____, unless National Headquarters will contact your winner after this date to verify status of their national placement.

Patriot's Pen

Are You Proud of Your Country?

What are the rules?

- Essay length: 300-400 typewritten words.
- You must write your own essay.
- All essays should be typewritten in English with no color or graphics and cannot be less than 300 words or greater than 400 words in length. (Essays under or over these word amounts will be eliminated.) Every word is counted regardless of length. The essay title (theme) or added footnotes do not contribute to the word count.

Deadline—

The completed essay and entry form must be in the hands of the VFW Post Chairman by midnight Nov. 1, 2011.

In no way may contestants identify themselves within their essay. Do not put your name on your essay. The entry form is your essay's cover sheet. Secure the Official Student Entry Form with a staple or other fastener on top of your essay. Contestants are allowed to enter only once (one Post competition). Contestants found in violation of this rule will face elimination from the competition and will be required to return any and all prize money awarded or received.

The essay must be a contestant's original work and a product of the contestant's own thinking. The approach to the Patriot's Pen theme should be positive and clearly focused. Poetry is not acceptable. Quotations may be used sparingly if plainly identified whenever used. A contestant's teacher, counselor or parent may check the essay for punctuation, grammar and/or spelling, but the content must remain the contestant's. Contestants will be judged on the basis of their essay alone and are not required to present the essay orally. All essays become the property of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. The VFW retains non-exclusive rights to use your essay and likeness in the promotion and execution of the organization's programs and activities.

Note: All entries must be submitted to a VFW Post competition. If you have difficulty identifying a sponsoring Post in your area, call the Patriot's Pen national office at: (816) 756-3398, ext. 228 or e-mail: rs228n@vfw.org.

How do I get started?

- Ask a teacher or youth group/club's adult leader to supervise the Patriot's Pen writing competition.
- Contact a local VFW Post and indicate your interest in participating.
- Establish a contact person who is a member of that VFW Post or its Ladies Auxiliary.
- Make sure that your essay is submitted to the VFW Post before the contest deadline of Nov. 1, 2011.

How am I judged?

You will be judged on how well you understand, develop and present the theme. A positive approach is recommended to express your viewpoint.

Knowledge of the theme is worth 30 points

You must show a thorough knowledge of the theme in your work. Demonstrate you have researched the issue extensively.

Theme development is worth 33 points

Answer all relevant facts about the theme such as the who, what, where, when and why. Relate the theme to your own experiences.

Clarity of ideas is worth 37 points

Write your essay in an easy-to-understand format. Leave your reader with a clear understanding of your explanation of the theme.

What is the theme?

VFW's Commander-in-Chief annually chooses the year's theme. The 2011-12 theme is *Are You Proud of Your Country?*

LOCAL VFW POST INFORMATION:

CONTACT: _____

PHONE: _____ BEST TIME TO CALL: _____

ALTERNATE CONTACT: _____

PHONE: _____ BEST TIME TO CALL: _____



Patriot's Pen Competition Veterans of Foreign Wars & Ladies Auxiliary

Kansas City, Missouri
(816) 764-3398, ext. 228
E-Mail: rs228n@vfw.org
www.vfw.org

EMBLEM AND SUPPLY ORDER NO. 4440

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