

Good afternoon. I am Joyce Caldwell and I am your YOUTH ACTIVITIES AMBASSADOR FOR 2023-2024.

The Youth Activities Program is essential in order for our youth of today to become our leaders of tomorrow. We can help ensure this aspect if we instill in our youth the value of our veterans and their sacrifices in order for them to help understand freedom and patriotism. Think back to the younger you --- when was the first time you were introduced to patriotism. Do you remember?

My first time was as a 5-year-old in the first grade learning our Pledge to the Flag. We need to focus attention on our youth beginning at a young age in order for them to appreciate our history and our veterans' sacrifices who have fought and died to keep our freedoms. That is why I want to emphasize promoting

PATRIOTISM THROUGH LITERACY

PROMOTIONS

We, as mothers, fathers, grandparents, aunts and uncles and yes, even siblings, can reach out to our youth as young as 2 years old - how? By reading to them.

Pre-K, kindergarteners, 1st and 2nd graders—again by reading to them, but some learn to read at an early age, so provide books with historical facts and/or illustrations according to their age. Teach our youth our Pledge to the Flag, our National Anthem and about other areas of historical significance.

Library

How can you promote patriotism through literacy? Through libraries: community libraries, school libraries, classroom libraries and home libraries. Donations of appropriate age level books depicting our history of patriotism is how you can support these libraries. In my program I have listed several age-appropriate books that can be purchased and donated to a library of your choosing, but the list is endless.

Literacy benefits

Literacy benefits are numerous also. For example, books teach our youth our American history; they foster a love for reading thus providing a lifetime of learning; books help our youth to better understand our American history; and books improve

grammar, writing skills, and concentration just to mention a few.

Participation

How can you participate? Volunteer at your local library; donate historical books to local schools and community libraries; donate books to local shelters temporarily housing youth at risk; host a read-a-thon at a school awarding prizes for the most books read. Youth love awards, and we have a great Award, our own

SLIDE

RAP Card-Random Acts of Patriotism

Have you observed youth showing patriotism? Have you seen a child thanking a veteran? Have you witnessed a child or youth place their hand over their heart correctly? Have you seen a child or

youth show respect to our American Flag? These are examples of how you can award the RAP card.

Other areas of working with our youth:

Create, Support and Work with Youth Groups - HOW?
Through Community involvement - Boys and Girls Clubs of America; Scouts; School-sponsored clubs; church groups. Also, youth groups can assist with our auxiliary projects - help to deliver groceries to disabled veterans; helping veterans with yard work or taking out trash for them; visiting nursing homes, hospitals or veterans' centers. Our veterans and our elderly love for our youth to visit them.

Recognize our youth with the fillable, printable Patriotic Youth Award citation which can be found in MALTA behind Members Resources.

Recognizing our youth with the *Get Excited for the Red, White and Blue!* singing contest is another area for our youth to excel. Two age groups, K-8 and 9-12. The contest is singing our National Anthem in any genre without changing the words. The entry form and rules can be found in MALTA Member Resources or can be directly located by going to vfwauxiliary.org/what-we-do/youth-activities.

The *Illustrating America* art contest is another way we can recognize our youth and their individuality. This contest consists of three grade divisions: k-2, 3-5 and 6-8. Again, all rules and entry forms can be found in MALTA Member Resources or can be found directly at vfwauxiliary.org/illustrating-america.

So, let's get out in our communities and support our youth - our future leaders of tomorrow.

THANK YOU.