



Pod—Family Support

- Americanism
- Education
- Community Service
- National Chaplain

Americanism

2011-2012 American Legion Auxiliary Plan of Action

Purpose: To promote patriotism and responsible citizenship.

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For examples on how to implement each objective in this Plan, refer to the *How To* component at the end of this section.

Americanism

National-level Objectives

1. **Objective:** Be a patriot through Unit involvement in community events. Promote the ALA's value of Americanism through community education about flag etiquette and respect by demonstrating leadership in support of our country and our military.

Action Steps

- a. Be the go-to organization in your community for flag promotion and protection.
 - b. Promote community awareness of yellow ribbon reintegration programs (reintegrating troops back to the community), deployment of troops and welcome-home ceremonies. Contact your local Family Readiness Group support person for details. Information is available at www.armyfrg.org. More information on yellow ribbon reintegration program is available in the National Security Plan of Action.
 - c. Be active in observing patriotic holidays. Encourage flying the flag every day but especially on patriotic holidays. Hold community-wide special events significant to the individual holiday.
 - d. Be knowledgeable on flag history, etiquette and proper disposal.
 - e. Participate in the Pocket Flag project by providing flags for deploying troops.
 - f. Participate in the Get Out The Vote and Kids Voting USA campaigns. Follow the guidelines here: www.legion.org/vote and www.kidsvotingusa.org.
 - g. Support the amendment to protect the United States flag from desecration (H.J. Res 8). The amendment, which reads, "The Congress shall have power to prohibit the physical desecration of the flag of the United States," currently is assigned to the House Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights, and Civil Liberties.
2. **Objective:** Increase awareness and participation in youth activities that support proper respect for our flag and loyalty to our country.

Action Steps

- a. Encourage participation in the Americanism Essay Contest by increasing awareness through stronger networking in schools, youth groups (i.e., 4-H, YMCA, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, FFA/FHA), and home school associations. The Americanism Essay Contest encourages participants to learn about the fundamental rights and freedoms we enjoy today. This year's theme will be "How Can I Show My Patriotism in My Community?"
3. **Objective:** Promote Auxiliary participation in The American Legion Americanism programs.

Action Steps

- a. Support American Legion Baseball – sponsor a team, help with statistics, man the concession booth, hold a fundraiser, drive the team to games. Contact your local American Legion chairman to see what their needs are.
- b. Oratorical Contest – a speaking contest to help students develop a deeper understanding of the U.S. Constitution. Support your local chairman by offering to locate interested students, be an escort or timekeeper or even a judge.
- c. Junior Shooting Sports – promotes gun safety and marksmanship training for youth. Offer your local chairman help with scoring, supervision or transportation.

Americanism Awards:

1. Americanism Essay Contest:

One award in each of five classes will be presented in each division. Winners will receive \$50 and a \$50 honorarium in the student's name to the National President's Scholarship. Department chairman is responsible for informing Units of the deadline date. All Department entries must be

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Americanism

postmarked by May 1, 2012, and sent to the Division Chairman. Division Chairman must submit her winners to the National Chairman by June 1, 2012. The Americanism essay cover sheet is available at www.ALAforVeterans.org.

2. Department Awards:

A plaque will be presented to the Department Chairman in each division reporting the Most Outstanding Overall Americanism Program. The entry must be typewritten in narrative form, not to exceed 1,000 words. Do not include pictures, clippings, scrapbooks, folders, etc. All entries must be postmarked by June 1, 2012, and sent by the Department Chairman to the Division Chairman.

3. Dorothy Pearl Plaque:

A plaque will be presented to the Unit that reports the Most Outstanding Americanism Program targeted to children and youth. The entry must be typewritten in narrative form, not to exceed 1,000 words. The entry may include no more than five pictures and news articles. All entries must be postmarked by June 1, 2012, and sent to Committee Member Shelley Riggs.

4. Junior Americanism Award:

A plaque will be presented to a Junior group that reports the Most Outstanding Americanism Program. The entry must be typewritten in narrative form, not to exceed 1,000 words. A maximum of five pictures and news articles may be included. All entries must be postmarked by June 1, 2012, and sent to Committee Member Lynda Horton-Turk.

Resources

1. Capitol Building flags: To order flags flown over the Capitol, contact your Congressional Representative or Senator or visit his/her website. Flags are available for a nominal fee; 4-6 weeks should be allowed for delivery.
2. Pocket Flag Project: www.pocketflagproject.com or write Pocket Flag Project, P.O. Box 740847, Arvada, CO 80006.
3. Emblem Sales: www.emblem.legion.org - flag education DVD: explains the history, significance, meaning, proper display and treatment of the U.S. flag. *Let's Be Right on Flag Etiquette* - a "question and answer" booklet on proper flag etiquette.
4. The American Legion Flag Advocacy: www.legion.org/flag
5. The American Legion's *Action Program of Americanism* brochure: www.legion.org/publications
See program page on www.ALAforVeterans.org for additional resources.

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AMERICANISM ESSAY CONTEST 2011 - 2012 Cover Sheet

Each year, the American Legion Auxiliary (ALA) sponsors an Americanism Essay Contest for students in grades 3-12. Grade levels are divided into five classes. One award in each of the five classes will be presented in each Division. Winners will receive \$50 and a \$50 honorarium in the student's name to the Children of Warriors National Presidents' Scholarship.

Essay Theme: *How Can I Show My Patriotism in My Community?*

Essay Classes:

Class	Grade Level	Word Requirement
I	3 and 4	150-250
II	5 and 6	250-300
III	7 and 8	350-400
IV	9 and 10	450-500
V	11 and 12	450-500

Essay Checklist:

- Student grade _____ Class competing in _____
- Sponsoring ALA Unit _____
- Typed or neatly written essay conforming to the word limit for class
- Completed essay coversheet as first page of essay

Complete this Information:

Student Name: _____

Address (Street, City, State, Zip): _____

School Name: _____

School City/State: _____

Teacher Name and Signature: _____

Sponsoring Unit: _____



Committee:

Americanism

Submitted by:

Melanie Taylor, National Americanism Chairman

Contact Information for Questions:

chfslove@aol.com or your Department Americanism chairman

Objective:

#1 Be a patriot through Unit involvement in community events. Promote the ALA's value of Americanism through community education about flag etiquette and respect by demonstrating leadership in support of our country and our military.

Step-by-Step Instructions:

- Start a Pocket Flag Project in your unit.
- Assign a project chairman to coordinate flags, volunteers, community involvement.
- Project chairman should work with Unit members to identify potential fundraising opportunities to raise funds to purchase flags, shipping materials, any misc. items.
- Project chairman should work with Unit to identify a deployed military unit from your city/state that will receive the pocket flags.
- Use *ALA e-News*, Facebook, Unit/Post newsletters, and local media to promote project and select a time and place to assemble flags to be shipped.
- Order flags from www.pocketflagproject.com or by mail at Pocket Flag Project, P.O. Box 740847, Arvada, CO 80006.
- Flags are available in lots of 300 for \$70, including shipping.
- You will also need to purchase 3x3 Ziplock-style bags. Craft stores, discount department stores, jewelry or bead supply stores will carry these.
- Once you receive the flags, Units can personalize and put their return address and information on the pocket flag card.
- You can also use free templates on the Pocket Flag Project website to personalize your own cards by going to www.pocketflagproject.com.
- Once pocket flags are assembled and distributed, be sure to promote your patriotism by sending a news release to local media outlets.
- For news release templates, visit www.ALAforVeterans.org.



Committee:

Americanism

Submitted by:

Melanie Taylor, National Americanism Chairman

Contact Information for Questions:

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Objective:

#2 Increase awareness and participation in youth activities that support proper respect for our flag and loyalty to our country.

Step-by-Step Instructions:

- 2011-2012 Americanism Essay Theme: "How Can I Show My Patriotism In My Community?"
- Promote Americanism Essay Contest in your local schools and other nonprofit organizations that promote youth education and development (examples of nonprofits you should be contacting in your community are local 4-H centers, YMCAs, Big Brothers/Big Sisters and Boys and Girls Club).
- Create information packets explaining contest rules, deadline dates, theme, and award opportunities.
- Work with school administration to identify guidance counselors, history teachers, etc., whose students would be interested in participating.
- Also remember to utilize your Junior members to promote the essay contest in their schools by providing them with materials to distribute to classrooms and teachers.
- If there is a local nonprofit in your city/town, reach out to youth program coordinators and provide them with the same packets and information that your schools received.
- Arrange for a day with the schools (preferably during a student assembly) to present the essay winners with their prizes. Provide a cash award and or a savings bond.
- Contact your local newspaper and ask if a reporter will attend the presentation.
- Contact essay winners' parents and ask if they would bring their child to your next Auxiliary meeting to read their essays. Provide refreshments afterward.
- Contact your local newspaper again and invite them to come hear the student read his/her essay.
- Be sure to include this information on your Unit report to your District, Department and National Chairman.



Committee:

Americanism

Submitted by:

Melanie Taylor, National Americanism Chairman

Contact Information for Questions:

chfslove@aol.com or your Department Americanism chairman

Objective:

#3 Promote Auxiliary participation in The American Legion Americanism programs.

Step-by-Step Instructions:

- Support American Legion Baseball:
 - Contact your local American Legion committee chair to see what their needs are, and find out specifics of being a team sponsor (may include paying for uniforms, equipment, travel, pre- and post-game refreshments, etc.).
- As a Unit, decide/vote on what you will be providing to the team for the baseball season.
- Select a project chairman to coordinate logistics between the supporting Unit and baseball team/Post.
- Contact the local sports shop and ask if they would be willing to make donations toward a fundraiser or offer a discounted price to purchase needed items.
- Publish your Legion Baseball schedule in your local newspaper to draw fans to come and support The American Legion Family.



Pod: Family Support

Committees included: Americanism, Education, Community Service, and National Chaplain

Submitted by:

Melanie Taylor, Coral May Grout, and Martha Corriher

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The American Legion Auxiliary is a hands-on organization to serve veterans, their families, active-duty servicemembers, their families and homeless veterans with their needs, such as:

- meals
- babysitting
- being a sounding board for their concerns
- helping local assistance with needs they might have
- using media of all kinds to help explain their needs and how the public can help assist them

Proposed schedule of activity:

September:

- Gather up team and identify what each members' strengths and weaknesses are.
- Identify the military population in your area with the Family Readiness Group, Post or Base Commander, Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Community Based Outreach Clinic or local Service Officer.
- Develop a relationship with the local media by making an appointment to meet with reporters, providing Auxiliary materials at the meeting, determining ways in which the media and local Auxiliary can collaborate, and determining what the media will use vs. what they will not. Be sure to check with the responsible adult in the family before contacting any media. Families may have reasons to protect their privacy, and we don't want to add to their stress during a difficult time.

October:

- Select the veteran's family you will be working with. The selection should be based upon the strengths of Unit members who are involved with the projects (e.g., time restraints, fundraising capabilities to provide financial assistance, and/or cooking ability).
- Don't forget to present a Blue Star Banner if active-duty servicemember.
- Meet with the selected family to identify yourselves and inquire as to their needs and let them know who we are and what we can do to help. Be sure to find out birthdays and anniversary in order to remember them on these days.
- Team meets to discuss one of the needs and their Plan of Action and how they are going to implement it.

November:

- Review progress and add/change needs as appropriate.
- Recognize the family at Veterans Day, and invite them to attend your meeting and ceremonies.
- Make sure family is taken care of on Thanksgiving Day by providing a meal or a food basket for the family. If your Unit is cooking a meal at the Post home, invite the family to attend.

continued



Pod: Family Support and Advocacy continued

December:

- Assist the family with Christmas gifts for each member, store coupons and food basket.
- Ask your local merchants if they will offer merchandise or products for needy families.
- Give the family memberships into the Post, Unit or Squadron.

January:

- Continue with immediate family needs as identified within your demographics, weather and location (e.g., provide shoveling assistance in cold climates or lawnmowing assistance in warmer areas).

February:

- Invite the family to the Post for the Legion birthday celebration honoring all past leadership.
- Offer to take them to a job interview, appointments, doctor appointments, etc.
- Offer to babysit the children and pay for a "Pamper Me Day."

April:

- Offer to provide Easter/Passover meal.
- Sponsor a community egg hunt at your Post and invite your adopted family to participate.

May:

- Invite family to help with poppy distribution during your Unit's Poppy Week.
- Invite your family to the Post for Memorial Day ceremony and celebrations. Offer to pick family up.
- Remember Mother's Day by sending a flower arrangement and card.
- If your Unit is visiting nursing homes or a nearby VAMC, invite the family to join your members.

June:

- Invite your adopted family to help in a flag disposal/retirement ceremony.
- Stay in communication with the family throughout the month to ascertain if they have any special needs.
- Remember to send a Father's Day card.

July:

- Invite the family to your Post and have a BBQ.
- Present an American flag to the family and install pole mount if necessary.
- Don't forget to present a Blue Star Banner if active-duty servicemember.

August:

- Meet with the family to see if you provided the necessary needs and your mission was accomplished.