

# HELP YOUR KIDS GET A HEAD START ON THEIR FUTURE



## An Open Letter to Teachers and Youth Leaders:

*Thank you for the time, effort and commitment you invest each year in America's young people. Because of you, our nation continues to produce scholars, dreamers and leaders who benefit the entire world. We, the more than 1.5 million members of the VFW and the VFW Auxiliary share your commitment to America's youth. Each year, we provide millions of dollars worth of awards and college scholarships to students across the U.S. and overseas. The purpose of these awards is to encourage personal growth and foster a greater understanding and appreciation for America, its history and values. This brochure is provided to acquaint you with the VFW's programs that benefit those young lives you touch each day. Again, thank you for all you do. If we can serve you in any way, please contact me directly.*

Sincerely,

Lynn W. Rolf, III  
Director, VFW Programs  
lrolf@vfw.org



## Patriots Pen Essay Contest

Patriot's Pen provides 6th, 7th and 8th grade students the opportunity to express their opinion on a patriotic theme and improve their writing skills while they compete for worthwhile awards and prizes. Awards can be given at the local, district and state levels. The state winners compete for \$55,000 in awards at the national level. The first place national winner receives a \$5,000 award. **The entry deadline is Oct. 31.**

## Voice of Democracy Scholarship Competition

The National Association of Broadcasters (NAB) started the Voice of Democracy Scholarship Competition in 1947. The VFW became a national sponsor in the late 1950s and assumed sole responsibility for the program in 1961. Many notables have participated in Voice of Democracy including journalist Charles Kuralt, Miss America Anita Bryant and U.S. Attorney General John Ashcroft. The Voice of Democracy competition provides high school freshmen, sophomores, juniors and seniors the opportunity to write and record an essay on a patriotic theme, competing for more than \$2 million in college scholarships and incentives. State winners compete for \$154,000 in scholarships - with the first place national winner receiving a \$30,000 scholarship. **Deadline is Oct. 31.**

## Smart/Maher VFW National Citizenship Education Teacher Award Program

Each year, the VFW presents an elementary, middle and high school teacher with its Smart/Maher VFW National Citizenship Education Teacher Award to recognize them for their outstanding commitment to teach and promote America's history, traditions and citizenship.

VFW Posts nominate their top local candidate in each category to their (state) Department, which then selects a candidate from each category to submit to VFW National Headquarters. The national Department winners in each grade category will receive a VFW National citation for both themselves, and their school.

All current certified/licensed teachers in grades K-12 who promote civic responsibility, flag etiquette and patriotism are prime candidates for this award. From planning field trips to city hall and organizing community volunteer projects, to inviting veterans into the classroom to discuss their military experiences and teachers who foster the development of democratic values and beliefs through unique projects, if you know of such a teacher nominate them today.

**Nominations must be submitted to a local VFW Post by Oct. 31.** For additional information about our program, please visit our website at [vfw.org/TeacheroftheYear](http://vfw.org/TeacheroftheYear).

# HELP YOUR KIDS GET A HEAD START ON THEIR FUTURE

To encourage as many students as possible to participate, the VFW provides a number of ways to enter.

## Submitting Student Entries

Students can enter directly by submitting the required entry form, along with their essay (and in the case of Voice of Democracy, their recording) to a local participating VFW Post.

Your local VFW Post's contact information can be obtained at [vfw.org/FindaPost](http://vfw.org/FindaPost) or by calling the VFW National Programs office during normal business hours at 816.756.3390. Entry forms and instructions can be downloaded from the VFW website at [vfw.org/YouthScholarships](http://vfw.org/YouthScholarships).

## PATRIOTIC PROJECTS

Teachers and youth leaders may obtain student entry forms in the manner indicated above. You may then select from the following options:

### Patriot's Pen (Grades 6-8)

Write a 300-400 word essay on the annual theme available online at [vfw.org/PatriotsPen](http://vfw.org/PatriotsPen) or by calling 816.756.3390. Use the competition as a patriotic assignment and encourage the students with the best essays to complete the entry form and forward those, along with the essay, to the local VFW Post competition.

### Voice of Democracy (Grades 9-12)

Write an essay on the annual theme available online at [vfw.org/VOD](http://vfw.org/VOD) or by calling 816.756.3390. Again, use the competition as an essay contest and encourage the students with the best essays to record their essays, complete the entry form and forward them, with the recording and typed essay, to the local VFW Post competition.



## Local VFW Post Information

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



### Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States

VFW Programs  
406 W. 34th Street  
Kansas City, MO 64111  
816.756.3390  
[youthscholarships@vfw.org](mailto:youthscholarships@vfw.org)  
[www.vfw.org](http://www.vfw.org)