

Americanism
Department of Florida
2016-2017

Kelli's theme: Navigating the course for Veterans and their families

Mission of the Program: Promote patriotism and responsible citizenship.

Purpose: To inspire, recognize, and perpetuate responsible citizenship through education and acts of patriotism, in order to raise awareness and increase appreciation of the price paid for our fundamental freedoms.

As we navigate the roads for our veterans and active military, we need to be knowledgeable on flag history, etiquette, and proper disposal methods, and promote the observation of patriotic holidays so your community will look to the ALA for information.

Members can promote Flag etiquette by publishing flag etiquette tips in your newspaper and on social media, practicing respect for our flag at public events, volunteering at a local patriotic event, sign up to receive notifications on when to display your flag at half-staff at www.legion.org.

Units can conduct or attend the post's flag disposal ceremony, host flag awareness events in schools, at your post home, and public functions, and participate in local patriotic holiday events. They can organize a patriotic holiday event or participate in ones held by the local post. They can also encourage local businesses and members to fly a flag, and assemble and distribute pocket flags to active duty military overseas.

Dates to fly the Flag:

Patriots Day

September 11th. Commemorates the Terrorist attack on the World Trade Center in 2001. Lower the flag to half-mast.

Constitution Day

September 17th. This is the day our Constitution was signed in 1787.

Election Day

November. The Tuesday following the 1st Monday in November.

Veterans Day

November 11th. To commemorate and remember the Veterans of the U.S. Military

Bill of Rights Day

December 15th. Celebrates the addition of the Bill of Rights to the US Constitution in 1791.

Martin Luther King Jr. Day

January. Celebrated the 3rd Monday in January. His birthday was established as a National Holiday in 1986 but was not celebrated by all 50 states until 2000.

Memorial Day

May 29th. The last Monday in May. Celebrates the lives of service men and women who died protecting the U.S.A.

Flag Day

June 14th. Official adoption of the United States Flag in 1777.

Independence Day

July 4th. Adoption by the 1st Constitutional Congress of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776.

Encourage members to vote and to support the amendment to protect the U.S. flag from desecration. The amendment currently reads, "The Congress shall have power to prohibit the physical desecration of the flag of the United States."

Encourage others to vote. Take children with you to vote. They will learn how to vote, and that it is a privilege to be able to vote.

Recruit others to support the flag amendment by explaining what it is and why it is important.

At the Unit level you can encourage members to contact state and federal representatives, asking them to support the flag amendment, and participate in Get Out the Vote and Kids Voting USA. You can find guidelines at www.legion.org/vote and www.kidsvotingusa.org. Encourage member participation at the annual ALA Washington DC Conference.

Promote pride in our Organization.

You belong to the World's largest Woman's Patriotic Organization; the American Legion Auxiliary!

Wear and display your name, unit, and/or department ID badge at all functions, and Auxiliary apparel when volunteering, and carry membership applications for the Legion family at all times.

Participate in the High School Oratorical Contest

This is designed to develop students with a deeper knowledge and understanding of the Constitution of the United States.

Help recruit candidates at local schools, volunteer as timekeepers or judges, host the contest, provide refreshments or transportation for the candidates.

Participate in the Americanism Essay Contest

Theme: "How does learning about government and our America help you become a future guardian of the liberties of our country?"

Grade levels are divided into six classes, from 3rd and 4th grades to 11th and 12th grades, and one for students with special needs. For more information about the Essay Contest, consult your gold department unit guide.

Contact schools and other organizations such as Young Marines and Boy and Girl Scouts about the essay contest and offer prizes, and invite the parents of the winners to bring their child to your next Auxiliary meeting to read his/her winning essay. Include this information in your unit year-end report.

There are two reports this year. One of them is the mid-year report, which units need to send to their District Chairmen by December 1, 2016. The District Chairmen need to have their reports to the Department Chairman by December 15, 2016. The year-end report is due by the units to the district chairmen by April 1, 2017, and I need the district reports by April 15, 2017. These dates should be easy to remember: April Fools' Day and Tax Day!

National Americanism Awards

Unit Award: Dorothy Pearl Most Outstanding Americanism Program

Type of Award: Citation Plaque, announced at the National Convention

Presented to: One unit Americanism chairman that reports the most outstanding Americanism program to children and youth.

Materials and Guidelines:

The entry must be typewritten in narrative format, not to exceed 1,000 words, the entry may include no more than five pictures and five news articles, and must be received by Department Americanism Chairman by April 15, 2017. Include the name of the Unit Americanism Chairman.

Additional Resources:

1. Emblem sales: www.emblem.legion.org
 - a. Flag education DVD
 - b. Let's Be Right on Flag Etiquette
 - c. Flag Code
 - d. Pledge of Allegiance Comic Book
 - e. Our Country's Flag Comic
 - f. Patriotic Bookmarks, Rulers, and Stickers
 - g. Junior Shooting Sport Handbook
2. The American Flag Advocacy: www.legion.org/flag
3. The American Legion's *Action Program of Americanism* brochure: www.legion.org/publications
4. 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; four to six weeks should be allowed for delivery.
5. Promote the Pocket Flag Project: www.pocketflagproject.com

Hilde Schmid
Americanism Chairman
Department of Florida