

2023-2024 American Legion Auxiliary Program Engagement Plan Department of Florida Juniors



The Junior Activities program inspires active participation in members age 17 and under so that they will become engaging, productive members who will want to continue their American Legion Auxiliary membership into adulthood. The mission of the Junior Activities committee is to promote volunteerism through community-based programs and services that involve veterans and to teach the principles of loyalty to God & Country, justice, freedom, and democracy to our young members. This year Juniors will #RingYourBell as Tinker Bell's in service to our Veterans and Community.

Committee Contact Information

Chairperson '*Wendy*'- Tara Harris
407-702-7217
Juniors@alafi.org
2421 Brownwood Drive
Mulberry, FL 33860

Committee Member:
Michelle Ligeikis

Volunteers:
Julie Kay and MaryAnn Spellman

Un-official Committee Advisor
Jasmine Harris



2023-2024 American Legion Auxiliary Program Engagement Plan Department of Florida Juniors

This year, with President Dee's theme of "Bells in Service", our Junior members are the Tinker Bells. They may be small, but they are mighty. Our Juniors as well as our Young SAL members are the future of the American Legion Family. And as such, the Juniors Committee has included the Young SAL members in our theme this year, deeming them our "Lost Boys", because without the guidance of Senior members, our legacy will be lost.



Just as Tinker Bell and other fairies need to be believed in to thrive, our Juniors need us to believe in them. As Senior members, we need to take the Juniors under our wings and teach them the mission of the American Legion Auxiliary.

Important Dates for Juniors

Workshop- July 21st-23rd,2023

Fall Conference- November 17th-19th,2023

Southern Division National Juniors Meeting- February 3rd, 2024- Nashville, TN

Department Convention- June 13th-16th, 2024

Juniors ages 8-17 (under 8 allowed to attend with adult accompaniment) are invited to attend all events listed above. Juniors are also invited to Children and Youth activities, President's Project events and any program events that they can assist at.

2023-2024 American Legion Auxiliary Program Engagement Plan Department of Florida Juniors

Social Media

Facebook: NEW THIS YEAR!!! We have a Facebook Page AND a Facebook Group.

What is the difference between the two?

A Facebook Page is PUBLIC where ANYONE can follow and see what is posted, where a Facebook Group can be (and ours IS) private. Where members must be approved, and posts are only seen by the group members.

Why the change?

First and foremost, Juniors are minors. You must have parental permission to post photos of their child. There is a Media Release Form for parents to sign for this purpose. A second reason for adding a group is to give Auxiliary members the opportunity to share what their Juniors are doing, share ideas, or ask questions in a private forum. The Junior Committee can then ask to use photos posted by members to the public Facebook page to showcase Department Juniors in action.

To join the American Legion Auxiliary Department of Florida Juniors **GROUP**, scan the QR code below with the camera on your phone:



To like the American Legion Auxiliary Department of Florida Juniors **PAGE**, scan the QR code below with the camera on your phone:



Hashtags:

#ALAJuniors- Hashtag for the National Juniors Program

#ALAJuniors- Hashtag for the Department of Florida Juniors Program

#BeTheOne- Hashtag for the National American Legion's 'Be The One' Initiative

#RingYourBell- Hashtag for President Dee Bell's theme

#BelieveInOurFuture- Hashtag for the Department of Florida Juniors for the 2023-2024

year

2023-2024 American Legion Auxiliary Program Engagement Plan Department of Florida Juniors

Program Focus

The focus of the Department of Florida Juniors Program this year is activeness. What do we mean by 'activeness'? We mean getting your Junior members excited about the mission of the American Legion Auxiliary, and active in participating in the numerous programs.

How can they participate?

AMERICANISM - Ask your Junior Members to assist at a meeting or event to say the Pledge of Allegiance or Sing the National Anthem. Value them as members! Juniors can also participate in the Star-Spangled Kids program which educates youth on the US Constitution and History of the United States, this year there is an award specifically for Juniors. Teach these young members to memorize and learn to recite the ALA Preamble, Children have great memories and once they learn it, they can help adult members say it. Don't forget the Oratorical Contest, Flag Etiquette, or the Americanism Essay Contest - Juniors from 3rd - 12th Grades, as well as ALA Girls State candidates can participate and could win the National Essay Contest. Follow the PEP under Americanism for information, awards, deadline dates and specifics.

CHILDREN & YOUTH - Your Juniors can help set-up the Military Child's Table - and have it accessible so that your juniors can perform each part and help to educate the rest of your Legion family about the sacrifices that children of military must go through. Wear Purple on April 15th or have Juniors participate in making crafts to celebrate the Month of Military kids' day and month. September 11th is Patriots Day and September 17th is Citizenship Day Make our Juniors feel Special with certificates to acknowledge or honor themes being Great American's! You can also purchase or download the coloring books for Juniors. Follow the PEP under Children & Youth for more information, awards, deadline dates and specifics.

COMMUNITY SERVICE - Juniors can help in any activities including at the Legion Post home or going outside the Legion Family. Encourage them to wear their ALA Branded apparel and participate in Legion, SAL & Riders events, dinners, walks, nursing home visits, volunteering at a dog shelter and local events including other children's organizations like Scouting, Children's Miracle Network, Special Olympics, or Rotary Club Kids. Follow the PEP under Community Service for more information, deadline dates and specifics.

EDUCATION - Check out scholarships especially for junior members that are graduating or heading to college, trade school or even the Military. Some include Spirit of Youth Scholarship, James H. Parke Memorial, Children of Warriors, and Samsung for ALA Girls State attendees. Juniors can also partner with schools and donate for: Give 10 to Education, Box Tops or School Supply Drives, you can also ask the schools to see what community service projects they can assist with perhaps volunteer to read to younger students. Follow the PEP under Education for more details, awards, deadline dates and specifics.

2023-2024 American Legion Auxiliary Program Engagement Plan Department of Florida Juniors

ALA GIRLS STATE – Don't wait until their 11th grade year to tell your Junior members about Girls State. Utilize younger Juniors, (middle school aged and older) in your Girls State interview process. Allow them to sit with Senior members while interviewing candidates. Get them excited about Girls State so that when their 11th grade year comes, they already know all about the program and want to apply to attend. The 2024 session at FSU will be in June 2024. Juniors can also assist the program by having a fundraiser to support meals or supplies needed at ALA Florida Girls State. Follow the Girls State PEP for more info.

HISTORY - Ask your Juniors to either put together a Pictorial History book (scrapbook) or submit a written History on your Unit or District and submit it to the Department Historian. They can also start writing the Veterans History Project (www.loc.gov/vets) by interviewing veterans, either family members or neighbors. Follow the PEP under Historian for awards, deadlines, dates, and specifics.

NATIONAL SECURITY - Juniors can participate or apply for: Youth Cadet Law Enforcement Program, CERT Civilian Emergency Response Training, Welcome Home ceremonies at Military Installations, Airports or at Legion Posts. If they participate in their schools JROTC program, there are awards that they are eligible for. Follow the PEP under National Security for awards, deadlines, dates, and specifics.

POPPY – You can also encourage Juniors to apply for Little Miss Poppy Contest (ages 6-12) on the Department and National level or participate in the Poppy Poster Contest. Ask the girls to make table favors or wreaths. Juniors can also be great helpers when you host your “poppy days” they can distribute poppies and collect donations. Juniors can also learn the story of the Poppy, recite In Flanders Fields Poem, or learn about Moina Michaels, the Poppy Lady. Follow the PEP under Poppy for awards, deadlines, dates, and specifics.

PUBLIC RELATIONS – Please make sure when using our youths' photos, a Media Release form has been filled out and is on hand. Utilize PR and different media sources by promoting what your Junior Members are doing - Newspapers & TV Stations love children, call your local radio stations, many give free PSA's (Public Service Announcements.) Also allow your Juniors to assist you in setting up a Facebook page, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, or other Social Media accounts as well as websites. Juniors are very tech savvy and can help you set things up for your Unit or a separate Juniors Group or page. Follow the PEP under Public Relations for awards, deadlines, dates, and specifics and check out the National Awards for submissions. And don't forget to use your hashtags!

2023-2024 American Legion Auxiliary Program Engagement Plan Department of Florida Juniors

AEA JUNIOR LEADERSHIP COURSE - Juniors can take the leadership course online through the www.legion-aux.org website.

PRESIDENTS PROJECT – The year the Presidents Project is AEF: Disaster Relief, which focuses on helping those who have had catastrophic events occur (fire, hurricane, tornado, etc....) The Juniors will hold a fundraiser this year to benefit the Presidents Project and participate in the Parade of Checks at Department Convention.

NATIONAL JUNIORS MEETING- National Junior meetings will be held at the same time as Mission Training. The meeting in the Southern Division will be held in Nashville, TN on February 3rd 2024. Juniors who attend one of the national Junior meetings will be eligible to vote and run for Honorary National Junior Division Vice President (HNJDVP). Each of the elected HNJDVPs will help conduct the national Junior meetings and will receive a \$2,000 scholarship.

Last but certainly not least!

JUNIORS PATCH PROGRAM - All Juniors, as well as young SAL Members (17 and younger) can participate in this program. Not only will they be rewarded for their good deeds they will also be recognized at Department Convention for earning patches. The Patch Program activities can be found on the Junior Member Activities page on the Department of Florida website www.alafl.org attachments or in the Members Only section at www.legion-aux.org. There are 3 different age groups: Red, Gold & Blue and 11 different categories that can be earned.

What can YOU do for the Juniors?

Build your Junior Activities program one member at a time! Get all eligible Girls to become Junior members. Just because most Juniors activities require girls to be 5 years of age - please allow them to become members, even at birth. Ask Legion members to sign up their daughters and granddaughters. They don't have to live in Florida to be members here, sign-up your relatives if they are eligible. You can always find things for them to do, and if you offer to pay for their membership (annual fee which is cheaper than adult membership) you can make your membership goals quickly. Organize your own Juniors Group within your Unit or District - It only takes 1! If your Unit still has bank accounts set aside for juniors, utilize them to pay for members still on your roster. Include Junior membership information and activities in monthly newsletters. Include information on the Juniors program in renewal notices. Invite Junior Members to unit/district meetings and activities.

2023-2024 American Legion Auxiliary Program Engagement Plan Department of Florida Juniors

'Like" and Follow the National Juniors Activities and Department of Florida Juniors Facebook pages. Share posts from both and encourage your friends and family to sign up eligible Juniors.

MENTOR!!! Mentor a Junior or be a Senior Sponsor to guide them through a committee or office. Allow them to have their own Junior meeting and teach them to use Robert's Rules of Order but make it fun for them so it's orderly but not too much emphasis on protocol. Scripts for Junior Meetings, Ceremonies, along with other fun activities can be found in the Junior Activities Handbook available to use as a guide at www.legion-aux.org.

Participate and donate in supporting the Junior Activities Committee. Fundraisers are a way that the Juniors learn to budget and work towards a goal as well as manage their money and help raise funds for Veterans Programs, Military Families or Community Service projects.

Celebrate our Juniors - make it a point to Congratulate them on any accomplishment, be it a certificate, plaque, award, patch, celebration, or something at school to honor them. Offer them snacks or drinks or even host a pizza party, prom, or spa day (manis and pedis at the Post!)

BELIEVE IN THEM!!!

Yes, it may take ten minutes more to let that 9-year-old Junior help set up for Friday night dinner, but she WANTS to help!! How many Senior members are BEGGING to help you?!?!? If you keep saying 'No' to that Junior, eventually she is going to get discouraged and not want to help anymore. Teach them while they are young how they can help, even if it is just the smallest, simplest task. Even if you only have one active Junior member, let her help. She may attract more Junior members to become active.

2023-2024 American Legion Auxiliary Program Engagement Plan Department of Florida Juniors

Awards

COMMITTEE AWARD- "FINDING NEVERLAND"

This will be awarded to the Unit that encourages and utilizes their Junior members to participate in the most programs and events. Submissions are due to the Department Chairman NO LATER than May 1st, 2024.

DEPARTMENT JUNIOR AUXILIARY MEMBER OF THE YEAR

Sponsored by: PHDJP: Delaney Enya and Dara Oliver

Awarded to the Florida American Legion Auxiliary Junior Member who is a current paid member in good standing that shows outstanding participation in one or more programs of the American Legion Auxiliary. Narrative to be typed, submitted, and signed by Unit Junior Activities Chairman (or a nominating senior member) not to exceed 500 words. A cover page must include the nominee's name, age, date of birth, Unit name and number, Jr's ALA membership number, e-mail, mailing address and contact #. The narrative should summarize and include the Juniors accomplishments during the current year. Pictures, clippings, social media posts, scrapbooks, folders, flyers etc. can be included and are not counted against the word count. The submission must be signed by the Unit President. Entries to be received by the Department Junior Activities chairman: postmarked before May 1, 2024, and the winner will be presented a plaque at the Department Convention.

NATIONAL JUNIOR AUXILIARY MEMBER OF THE YEAR

Awarded to the Junior Auxiliary Member who is a current paid member in good standing at the start of the 2023-24 administrative year in recognition of her dedicated service efforts and talents towards the American Legion Auxiliary. National Report and Award Cover sheet is required to accompany submission. Narrative to be typed and submitted by Unit Chairman not to exceed 500 words to include a cover page with the nominee's name, age, date of birth, ALA membership number, e-mail, and mailing address. The narrative must summarize their accomplishments during the current year. Pictures, clippings, scrapbooks, folders, flyers etc. can be included but must be signed by the Junior Activities Chairman. More information can be found on the Junior Member Activities page in the Members Only section at www.legion-aux.org

NATIONAL AWARD: MOST OUTSTANDING UNIT JUNIOR ACTIVITIES PROGRAM

Presented to one unit in each division (5) Narrative not to exceed 1,000 words. Include specific examples of how your Juniors worked the ALA mission. May include pictures, news articles, news releases, etc.

NATIONAL AWARD: BEST MEDIA COVERAGE OF ACTIVITY OR PROJECT

Presented to one Junior group (department, district or unit) Awarded to the Junior group with the best media coverage of their activities or a project. Narrative not to exceed 500 words. Include specific examples of media coverage, including news articles, news releases, newsletters, pictures of displays, ALA events, speeches, website address, social media activity, etc.

2023-2024 American Legion Auxiliary Program
Engagement Plan
Department of Florida
Juniors

Reports

Unit Reports are due to the District Juniors Chairman by April 1st 2024.

District Reports are due to the Department Chairman by April 15th 2024.

Please include with your report a narrative on what your *Tinkerbells* (and *Lost Boys* if they participated) along with photos of activities. Please make sure that release forms have been signed for photos of minors so that they may be used in presentations.

If we all **BELIEVE** in our Tinkerbells and Lost Boys, mentoring them and guiding them along the way, the legacy of the American Legion Family will live on in future generations.

For God and Country,

Tara Harris

Department Juniors Chairman