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
nearly 1.7 million members of the Veterans of
Foreign Wars (VFW) and the VFW Auxiliary
share your commitment to America’s youth.
Each year, the VFW and the VFW Auxiliary
provides 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

Patriot’s 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 $54,500 in awards at the
national level. The first-place national
winner receives a $5,000 award and an all-
expenses-paid trip to Washington D.C.,
where they tour the city. The entry
deadline is Oct. 31.

Voice of Democracy Scholarship Competition

The National Association of Broadcasters (NAB) started
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 former 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 $2.1 million in college
scholarships and incentives. State winners receive an all-
expenses-paid trip to Washington, D.C., to enjoy our
nation’s capital and compete for $155,500 in scholarships
—first place receiving a $30,000 scholarship. The entry
deadline is Oct. 31.

Smart/Maher VFW National Citizenship
Education Teacher of the Year Program

Each year three exceptional teachers are recognized by the
VFW for their outstanding commitment to teach
Americanism and patriotism to their students.
The VFW annually recognizes the nation’s top
elementary, junior high and high school teachers who
teach at least half of the school day in a classroom
environment and promote America’s history, traditions
and citizenship education effectively. The Smart/Maher
VFW National Citizenship Education Teacher Award
recipients are selected from entries submitted to local VFW
Posts in every state and overseas.

The awards include the following items:
• A national $1,000 Past National CIC John Smart award for
  the top K-5, 6-8 and 9-12 grade teachers for professional
development expenses.
• $1,000 award for each winning teacher’s school.
• Plaques for both the winning teacher and school.
• An all-expenses-paid trip to attend the VFW National Convention.

Nominations must be submitted to a local VFW Post by
Oct. 31. For additional information about our program please
refer to our website at www.vfw.org/teacheroftheyear.
How Do I Get My Students Involved?
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 www.vfw.org/find-a-post 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 www.vfw.org/VOD.

Patriotic Project
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 www.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 www.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
VFW "Golden Heart Post" 3629
324 2nd Street, Fairbanks, AK
(907) 451-8810
POC: Doug Harvey (907) 460-8709
Between 8 am - 8 pm
Lisa Hall (907) 251-6812
Between 2 pm - 6 pm