VFW Programs & Projects

Since its founding, VFW has been a staple in the community. Troop support, youth activities, volunteering and scholarship programs are a few of the ways VFW shines in the many communities and cities where Posts are located.

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Youth Scholarship Programs

• ***Voice of Democracy***
This audio-essay competition annually awards more than $2 million in scholarships to students in grades 9-12. First-place winner receives a $30,000 scholarship.

• ***Patriot's Pen***
More than $1.2 million is awarded annually to students in grades 6-8 in this essay contest. First-place winner receives $5,000.

• ***Scout of the Year***
Three scholarships are awarded annually to outstanding scouts. First place receives $5,000, second place receives $3,000 and third place receives $1,000.

Educational Outreach

• ***Echoes From the Wall***
VFW partnered with the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund to distribute a curriculum, Echoes From the Wall, to 25,000 public and private high schools and donated $50,000 to the project.

• ***Educational Brochures***
VFW produces and distributes a flag brochure and poster.

• ***Veterans in the Classroom***
November is officially known as VFW Veterans in the Classroom Month. Members demonstrate flag etiquette and share their wartime experiences with America's youth.

Youth Activities

Locally, VFW Posts sponsor various youth sporting programs such as baseball and ice hockey. In addition many VFW Posts sponsor Boy and Girl Scout troops, Junior Olympics, bike safety, JROTC units, drill teams, color guards and a variety of other programs to build good citizenship and exemplary character in America's youth.

Community Volunteerism

Each year, VFW members volunteer nearly 9 million hours of service to various community endeavors.

• ***Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service***
VFW was a charter member in 1946. VFW volunteers donate millions of hours of service annually at VA medical facilities.

Troop Support

• ***Military Assistance Program (MAP)***
The link between the VFW and the military community has provided over 4,000 grants to VFW Departments and Posts for morale-boosting events since 2005, hosting more than 2 million military members and their families at these events.

• ***Adopt-a-Unit***
More than 2,800 units and ships have been adopted through VFW Posts since 2007. VFW National Headquarters adopted the USS Cole in 2002.

• ***Care Packages***
Posts across the country show their support of America's military by collecting and distributing much-needed personal items for troops.

• ***VFW Unmet Needs***
This program administers emergency financial grants to military families to help cover basic expenses like mortgage payments, childcare, food and more. Since 2004, more than 4,100 grants have been issued totaling $6.2 million.

• ***VFW "Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship"***
Introduced in 2013, this program awards scholarships of up to $5,000 to qualifying veterans and service members. The program has provided more than 715 scholarships totaling more than $3 million.

• ***1 Student Veteran***
Enacted in 2013, this program offers direct assistance to student veterans who have questions or are experiencing problems accessing their VA benefits.

• ***VFW Operation Uplink™***
Introduced in 1996, this program connects active-duty personnel and hospitalized veterans with family members through free phone time and VFW "Free Call Days." Operation Uplink has provided over 7.6 million free connections through FCDs since 2006.