

# Voice of Democracy & Patriot's Pen



## DIRECTOR

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In 1946, the National Association of Broadcasters, along with assistance from the Veterans of Foreign Wars, established the Voice of Democracy Program. The VFW took sole responsibility for the program in 1961, and the Ladies Auxiliary came on board as co-sponsor in 1965.

Patriotism is one of our country's core democratic values, and by promoting the Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen contests for our young people, we can accomplish one of the basic missions of our organization: to serve our veterans and to promote the ideals for which they so valiantly fought. *It's Time for America's Military Heroes* to be recognized by our young adults and as an added bonus, we also give these fine young people an opportunity to learn about the VFW and its VFW Ladies Auxiliary.

## OUR GOALS:

1. To publicize this program in schools, local newspapers, on cable television, at local churches, on radio broadcasts and by using the internet.
2. To be prepared and informed by providing all necessary rules and deadlines for participants.
3. To work together with the VFW to ensure the success of this program.
4. To remember to acknowledge all who have participated in this program.

## VOICE OF DEMOCRACY

2009-2010 Theme

### "Does America Still Have Heroes?"

The Voice of Democracy Contest is open to all students enrolled in public, private, parochial high

school or home-schooled students in the United States, its territories and possessions, or in an overseas U.S. military/civilian dependent school in grades 9-12. Previous Voice of Democracy first-place state winners, foreign exchange students or students over the age of 20 are not eligible.

Students will record a 3-5 minute essay on a cassette or CD on this year's theme and label the cassette or CD with their name. They must also have a typed copy of the essay and a completed entry form in order to submit the entry for judging.

The National Organization awards approximately \$150,000 in scholarships yearly, with the first-place winner receiving a \$30,000 scholarship.

## PATRIOT'S PEN

2009-2010 Theme

### "When Is the Right Time to Honor Our Military Heroes?"

The Patriot's Pen Contest is open to students in grades 6-8. This is an essay of 300-400 words in English. All words count, even those with single letters. The first-place winner of this contest will receive a \$10,000 U.S. savings bond.

For a complete set of rules and an entry form, go to the *VFW Programs Guide* or log on to the VFW Web site at [www.vfw.org](http://www.vfw.org). Brochures that explain the program and include the entry form can be obtained by contacting the VFW Emblem & Supply Department at (800) 821-2606.

Start your program early by meeting with your Post Chairman. Work together by contacting local schools in the spring and again in September when the program starts. Contact the PTO/PTA and ask if you can come to a meeting. Let them know that these programs help build writing skills and self-confidence. Make sure when you attend the meeting that you have plenty of material to distribute.

Next, you must select judges for both programs. They should be prominent members of your community, such as educators, members of the media or local government officials. Send out a news release about the contest and the judges who were selected.

When your program has been completed, remember to thank your judges, teachers and any members who worked together on the program. If you have a recognition program, invite the judges and teachers who participated and present certificates to show appreciation for their participation.

## DEADLINES:

The deadlines for both contests are the same:

November 1 – Student entries to the Post

November 15 – Completion of Post judging

December 6 – Completion of District judging

January 7 – Completion of Department judging

January 15 – Department winners are due at VFW National Headquarters.

## AWARDS FOR DEPARTMENTS AND DEPARTMENT CHAIRMEN:

For each program award, unless otherwise noted, \$25 will go to the first-place Department and a keepsake to the Chairman; the second-place Department will receive \$15 and a citation to the Department Chairman.

1. \*Citation to each Department Chairman with at least 80% participation by Auxiliaries.
2. Award to the Department with the best overall promotion of the Voice of Democracy Audio/Essay Competition.
3. Award to the Department with the best overall promotion of the Patriot's Pen Contest.
4. Outstanding Performance Award in each Membership Group based on criteria on Page 1.

## AWARD FOR NATIONAL CHAIRMAN:

“It’s Time for America’s Military Heroes” Plate to the National Chairman based on quality and timeliness of material.

**\*Note:** Winners will be published in the *Year-End Officers’ and Directors’ Report* and awards will be mailed to the 2009-2010 Department President for distribution.

## CONFERENCE CHAIRMEN



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