

Year-End Report 2023-2024
Americanism Chairman Shauna Dubuque
American Legion Auxiliary
Department of North Dakota
NW Division

I was honored to be the Department Americanism Chairman again this year. What a wonderful program. I learned a lot and was thrilled to read some wonderful essays from the Americanism Essay Contest. The hard work, skill, and love of country was evident in the students' writing. We have some very talented and patriotic youth that I am confident will be great assets to the workforce and country in coming years.

Nine units sponsored essay submissions at the Department Level. I am grateful to Department Secretary Marcy Schmidt for including the essay contest in a unit mailing and school mailing in December. We got full class participation from several high schools in history/social sciences classes where educators had the essay become part of the curriculum. There were several elementary school classes that participated as well. I am so pleased at the participation of the local Auxiliary units, the educators, superintendents, and most of all, the students. Way to go!! You all did this with a hearty "Yes. How can I help?" attitude that was amazing.

As the chairman, I had the tough decision of choosing one essay winner from each class category. What a job! The essays were all well-written and completed with purpose. The Department winners received a certificate, a \$25 gift card, and a chance to compete at the National level of the contest. We had students compete in all six class levels. We also had 2 entries from home-school students. A total of 21 entries were judged and 6 were sent to the NW Division.

We received the Star Spangled Kids Kit in early September. We (as a Department) decided to showcase this part of the Americanism program at our Winter Conference in January. We felt that more units would be reached through this method. I created sample kits from the items that were mailed to us in September. These sample kits, including an explanatory letter and list of kit ideas, were distributed at Winter Conference with the remaining kits distributed at Spring District meetings. A unit mailing to all Department units was sent out in February that had a letter and kit ideas regarding the Star Spangled Kids program.

The Americanism Essay Contest and the Star Spangled Kids Program were the main items I focused on for the Department. I did write two articles for the quarterly newspaper and one letter for a Department unit mailing. I encouraged participation in the contest and Star Spangled Kids program, getting out to vote, remembering proper flag etiquette, and proudly displaying the flag for celebrations and parades. In addition, I had information posted on our Department Americanism web page. I truly appreciated the information in the quarterly newsletter from the NW Division and National Americanism Chairmen. I could not have completed my job without the wonderful help from Ann Ritacco, Sallie Rossman, and the others at national during the quarterly meetings. Thank you all!

Other Americanism items that were reported to me from North Dakota units and districts are as follows:

- *Community and school participation in the Americanism Essay Contest
- *Encouragement of student participation in the Oratorical Contest (although this is handled almost exclusively by the Legion in North Dakota)
- *Participation in other patriotic organizations
- *Participation in sharing patriotic music with communities
- *Encouraging and participating in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance in schools and at meetings
- *Participation and hosting of flag burning/retirement ceremonies with student and community involvement
- *Care for and proper flying of the flag at unit meeting halls, Veterans Day and Memorial Day programs, parades, and community celebrations

- *Voting and promoting voting in communities. Providing rides to the polls
- *Purchasing school supplies
- *Holding flag-folding ceremonies and instructional meetings on flags at local schools

Thank you for the opportunity to serve. I continue to appreciate the new insights and encouragement that I have received from the American Legion Auxiliary. What a wonderful organization with truly patriotic members.

Respectfully submitted,
Shauna Dubuque