

AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY
DEPARTMENT OF CALIFORNIA



Junior Activities Program
End of Year Report
2023-2024

Department Membership

17,121

Seniors

15,843

Juniors

1,278

Department Chairman

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The Department of California 2023-2024 year began with our annual workshops hosted at the Veteran Memorial in Clovis, CA. Packets with written materials and web links were provided to the Junior Activities Chairmen in attendance from the 30 Districts. Additionally, the same packets/materials were made available for other workshop participants in attendance. These packets contained Junior Activities handbook, Junior Activities Department of California Code/Rules, Department and National publications along with other resources available to members from both the Department and National websites. For this year, the Junior Activities information also adopted the “Wonder Woman” theme complete with baseball T-shirts. Lastly, Junior Conference raffle tickets were distributed as it has been the program’s annual major fundraiser for Junior Conference.

Subsequently, email and text notifications were sent out to Junior members regarding regular monthly Department of California Junior Activities zoom meetings. This was to serve as an opportunity for Juniors statewide to engage, share ideas and work collectively on projects relating to the American Legion Auxiliary programs. Our Junior Activities, this year was known at the “Youth Council Commission”, which stayed connected statewide through these zoom meetings discussing a variety of topics and programs while at the same time assisting other Juniors with their special projects at their Units, Districts and Department. Furthermore, through these zoom meetings, the Juniors were learning about the Patch Program and/or earning and collecting patches, Mission Training participation, attendance at meetings, Mid-Year, Department Convention and fundraising activities. The Junior’s activities were regularly featured in the Department of California newsletter, the Hub, under the “Junior’s Rock” page which allowed for additional participation and excitement from other Junior and Senior members.

Early on this year, Juniors were strongly encouraged to work with Senior Auxiliary members and the Legion Family in promoting the ALA Mission and working with the Legion Family on all levels. At the end of the year, sixteen (16) of the thirty (30) American Legion Auxiliary Districts and six (6) Units submitted their End of Year Reports: And of the 220 Units over 100 responded, five (5) Districts and three (3) Units reporting with some narrative supplemental and pictures which included Junior participation in the Patch Program, service projects, technology assistance, scholarship awareness, folding pocket flags, blanket and sock VA delivery, school supplies drives, bake sales, food bank drives, Post and Unit dinners, Valentine and Christmas card deliveries to active duty members at home and abroad, also to veterans in homes and hospitals, Veterans and Memorial Day ceremonies and activities. I am happy to further report that Senior members are reporting that they are actively mentoring, coaching and providing leadership opportunities and training to these future leaders and Rock Stars. From these reports, volunteer hours by Junior members were counted at over 6,540 hours, service to more than 630 military families, 43 service projects, 77 Junior participation in those service projects, collecting \$395 from the Junior Conference tickets fundraiser, fundraising activities of \$6,900 for other programs, five (5) noted Junior participation at Junior Conference in April 2024 and two (2) attended Mission Training in Las Vegas, Nevada in January 2024.

Some of the highlights of Junior Projects by Mid-Year:

- Olivia/Unit 716 - Christmas Art for Barstow Veterans Home with Legion Riders delivery and Art/Pizza/Ice Cream event at Los Alamitos Post 716 for Juniors to work on art pieces.
- Brooklyn/Unit 521 - Donation of Veterans Day cards/personal delivery and Spaghetti Dinner Junior and Sons fundraiser at Post 447.

- Rebeka/Unit 299 - Christmas Cards for veterans/service members, international care packages to service members overseas, Junior Quatermania fundraiser event at Elmer C Jertberg Post 299 and donations to Jr. Activities, Patient Remembrance/Gift Shop and Presidents Special Project.
- Maddison and Kairi/Unit 180 - held a bake sale raising money for ALA scholarship funds.

Additionally, the reports included a total of 243 patches already awarded across the Red, Gold and Blue levels of the Patch Program from Districts across the state. Which also included collaboration in service projects, assisting with regular dinners, backpack drives, district baby shower, flag placing, service dog donations, assisting with fundraisers, participation in Veterans and Memorial days and special theme parties which included the volunteer hours previously stated. Some of the Department of California Juniors activities mentioned in the end of year reports were featured on social media locally, statewide and through the National ALA Juniors Western Division Facebook and or Instagram accounts.

Some of the highlights of Junior Project by End of Year:

- Juniors/Unit 716 - Juniors actively participated in several American Legion Auxiliary program focused activity; Americanism, Community Service, Children and Youth, VA&R and Education.
- Juniors/Unit 589 - A Junior participated in Poppy centerpiece contest and awarded \$10. Juniors also passed out flags at the Salinas Day Parade.
- Juniors/Unit 790 - Raised \$200 by selling candy apples and popcorn to donate to local veterans food bank. They also assisted in packaging 25 Thanksgiving baskets for a local school and veterans in need.

- Juniors/Unit 81 - Baked and decorated dozen of cupcakes for the Unit's fundraising events during Memorial Day and Auxiliary Emergency Fund (AEF), along with flag placement at the Gonzales Cemetery for Veterans and Memorial Days.

This chairman has participated in the National Western Division zoom meetings which included divisional breakout sessions. Information share included scholarship information, upcoming webinars, such as the "Lunch and Learn", ALA Academy online training portal with video recordings and more opportunities for Juniors as ALA has introduced a new Purple level as part of the patch program this year.

I have enjoyed the growth of many of the Juniors and more importantly their engagement with the Legion Family at all levels with the encouragement and support of their Senior counterparts.

Juniors Rock!

Martha Romano

Junior Activities Chairman