

**Education**  
**Year-End Report 2023-2024**  
**Department of Arizona**

The Auxiliary Education projects in the Department of Arizona were extremely successful. During the 2023-2024 Auxiliary year, thirty-three Units in the Department of Arizona reported activity in the Education program, with approximately 1998 Auxiliary members, 39 Junior members, and 606 Legion members participating. These numbers are more than double last year's participation levels. This Chairman informed the Units and Districts about the Education program via information packets distributed on the Department website following the 2023 Fall Conference, as well as bulletins in the monthly Department newsletters during the year.

Units participated in American Education Week by providing Thank-you notes, lunches, cookies, and treats to teachers at local schools. Thank-you cards were sent to staff members, including school nurses, custodians, and bus drivers. Units held in-person events, a Stuff-the-Bus event, and drive-through events to collect and distribute school supplies and backpacks to children at local schools. Units presented videos and booklets on flag etiquette and Halloween safety, and donated craft supplies. Schools were presented U.S. flags and Arizona state flags to replace old flags in front of schools and in classrooms.

Units participated in the *Give 10 to Education* program by providing school supplies and educational materials to schools. Members of all Post entities donated school supplies or money toward purchase of school supplies. Other necessities such as backpacks, tissue, hand sanitizer, wipes, story books, toiletries, and shoes were collected and distributed to local schools. School wish lists were fulfilled. Sixty-three *Give 10 to Education* certificates were awarded to Unit Members.

All Units reporting also assisted needy students in many ways. Clothes were donated and delivered to a school district clothing bank where every student in need has access to free goods. Donations were also made to Coats for Kids and Kids in Foster Care. Food pantries were stocked. Christmas Angels worked with local schools to provide gifts, toys, and food baskets for needy students. Units also delivered Easter, Christmas, and Thanksgiving food baskets. Blankets were donated to children at Luke Air Force Base.

During the 2023-2024 school year, Units reported awarding 32 Unit scholarships, totaling \$23,610. Units raised funds for scholarships in several ways including dinners, raffles, contests, and sales. National scholarship applications and information were published in monthly Unit correspondence newsletters and delivered to local high schools through the mail, email, and in person. Units delivered information regarding the Past Presidents Parley nursing scholarship to community colleges and assisted with the Arizona State University's Veterans Program. In 2023-2024, eleven applications for the *Children of Warriors National Presidents' Scholarship*, three applications for the *Non-traditional Student Scholarship*, and one for the *Spirit of Youth Scholarship* were received by the Department. A Department winner was selected and forwarded to the Western Division Education Chairman for each of these scholarships. Each applicant received a letter thanking them for their application and informing them of the outcome. The Department winners for these scholarships were invited to attend the Department Convention and receive a \$25 cash award as a token of congratulations for their accomplishments. The *Non-traditional Scholarship* and the *Spirit of Youth* winners from Arizona were selected as a National winner! In addition, the Arizona Girls State nominee for the Samsung Scholarship was selected as a national semi-final winner of a \$5000 scholarship.

The Department of Arizona has established the *Wilma Hoyal/Maxine Chilton Memorial Scholarship*. There are three scholarships of \$1000.00 available annually: one to Arizona State University, one to The University of Arizona, and one to Northern Arizona University. This scholarship is renewable provided the student meets the outlined criteria. Recipients must be enrolled as second year or upper-division students in Political Science, Public Programs, or Special Education. Submissions for this scholarship are not due until May 15 so results are not yet available.

Units involved the Legionnaires, the Sons of the American Legion, and the Legion Riders in donating time, school supplies, money, and labor to all the Education and Children's programs. They helped work in a school garden, a Run to the Guns event, and a fundraiser for the Future Business Leaders of America. They assisted with Halloween safety programs, Christmas parties, and Easter parties. Legionnaires acted as judges for an essay contest, promoted scholarships, helped with Girl Scout activities, and attended the awards ceremony.

Units reported presenting "Veterans in the Classroom" programs. Veterans visited elementary schools for interviews, spoke at assemblies and in classrooms about the Poppy story, the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and the difference between Veterans Day and Memorial Day. Schools honored veterans on Veterans Day with flags, songs, and videos. Units presented programs on the accomplishments of our Veterans by honoring veterans on Veterans Day at local schools. A Veteran read books during Story Time. Veterans spoke about what it means to be a Veteran.

All reporting Units used many community resources or activities to assist students, teachers, or support personnel. Units donated to the Shop-with-a-Firefighter program. Monetary donations were made to a local mentoring program, Junior ROTC awards, Girls State, Girls Scouts, Cub Scouts, baseball teams, Special Olympics, and Future Business Leaders of America programs. A Unit worked with the Political Action Committee for Constitutional Education. Unit Members and Legionnaires volunteered at Fort Huachuca and the Purple Up for Military Kids program.

The Department of Arizona offers the **JEAN BATLEY PLAQUE** for Units with membership of 150 and under and the **CHRISTEEN FRITZINGER PLAQUE** for Units with membership of 151 and over. The purpose of these awards is to stimulate interest in good participation in the Education program of the American Legion Auxiliary by giving recognition to the Unit which makes the most use of the available ideas in education, scholarship, and loan possibilities. These plaques will be awarded at our Department Convention in June.

The Department of Arizona recognizes that our young people are our future, and a good education is the key to their success. The members of the Department of Arizona are devoted to contributing to this success.

Respectfully submitted,

*Julie M. Vietri*

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Education Chairman  
Department of Arizona

(994 words)