

My name is Jennifer Martin, and I will be your Youth Activities Department Chairman for the 2026-2027 year. My husband and I joined Linn Post 584 in Albany in 2014. Our mission together is to serve veterans. I served as the Post's Youth Activities Chairman from 2021 through 2024 and am still involved as the co-chairman. I continue to head up the Illustrating America and Young American Creative Patriotic Art contests. We have worked hard to develop both of these programs, and they have continued to grow every year, we have had several pieces of art sent to national. This is a team effort by my auxiliary helping with spreading the word and helping host an awards ceremony. During the 2025-2026 contest we had 45 pieces of artwork submitted for Illustrating America alone.

I encourage each Youth Activities Chairman to develop relationships with art teachers in your communities. I have met some amazing teachers who care about patriotic art. If you need some ideas on how to increase your program; please do not hesitate to contact me I would love to help and encourage you in the development of your program for the upcoming year. One big change this year is the Illustrating America art is due by December 15, 2026.

As Youth Activities Chairman, you are responsible for the VFW Auxiliary lending Library. This is a great opportunity to help children with their reading by providing books for them to learn about patriot themes and improve their reading. Malta provides a list of books on patriotism for each age group. I looked up these books on Amazon and many of them are inexpensive. They have Lending Library kits that can be purchased on Amazon, or you can create your own Lending Library stand. These stands can be placed anywhere in your community with prior permission. Work with your post commander to host a reading event at your VFW Post; it would be amazing to read to children and teach them about American history and the sacrifices that veterans make for our country.

Remember to recognize youth with Random Acts of Patriotism when you see a child doing a patriotic act. Get involved with youth groups in your community; scouts, FFA, YMCA, local churches, etc. Go to where your heart is and support that group.

Please get ahold of me at barutie@comcast.net or 541-971-5208. I look forward to working with you.