

How the Spirit of America program works:

1. Chapter representatives make an appointment with the School District Superintendent to discuss the program and the awards.
2. On approval the District Office notifies the middle or junior high school principals in the district of the program.
3. Each school principal selects two students (one boy and one girl of the graduating class) from their school for the award and notifies the District of those students (I have a criteria sheet used by the school).
4. The School District selects one boy and one girl from the District as the winners of the District level recognition.
5. The School District notifies the SAR Chapter of the two selectees for the District-wide awards, and the runners-up at the schools, and the times and dates of the graduation ceremonies for the presentation.
6. The SAR Chapter prepares the awards and certificates for presentation and returns them to the District Office so they can be distributed to the schools to be on the rostrum at the graduation ceremony. The district-wide winners receive the SAR Bronze Good Citizenship Medal and certificate, and the other runners-up in the schools receive the SAR Outstanding Citizenship Pins and certificates.
7. The SAR Chapter arranges for volunteer compatriots to be at the graduation ceremonies to present the awards to the winning students.

The Gen. Patton Chapter has done this in Camarillo (Pleasant Valley School District-4 schools), Ventura - 3 schools, Oxnard - 3 schools, Fillmore - 1 school, Thousand Oaks - 1 school. Other chapters have offered the program in the past, and may current offer this or a similar program.

The main challenge encountered is continuity. People change positions within the Districts and the Schools from year to year. It is easy for these extracurricular activities to drop between the cracks unless there is some continuing contact with the schools and districts.

The name "Spirit of America" was given the program because it went into effect during the fervor of the American Bi-Centennial. It is great public relations for the SAR in the community. It is optional whether our presenters wear their colonial uniform at the graduation ceremony. There are usually about 800 people besides the graduates present at these graduation ceremonies. There are only about three community agencies that present awards at that time, the SAR, the American Legion and one Ladies Optimist group, all of the other awards are given out at a separate school award ceremony.

This once a year per school program works well for the Gen. Patton Chapter and does not cost much money, or require much effort to offer.

If you are interested in exploring this program in your Chapter, please contact the program chairman and he will assist you and provide you with additional aids you might find useful.