



Local League Awards

LWVNJ Convention 2019

INNOVATION AWARD

Criteria for Award:

1. A new project or a significant modification of an existing/ongoing project.
2. The project (or change) must have been done between May 2017 and the present.
3. The project can be one that educated the public about an important issue, served voters or influenced policy, *with the result that the League became more visible, added members, and/or made a difference in the community.*
4. Creativity will be rewarded.

Submit a description of your project, including:

1. Your goal in doing the project and to what extent you achieved that goal. (If your goal was to educate voters, for example, how and how much did it help do that?)
2. If you modified a project done previously, explain how the changes improved results.
3. Provide evidence that the project made the League more visible and/or made a difference in the community. For example, the number of newspaper articles, phone calls, requests for speakers, policies changed, and/or people who joined because of the project.

Local League ___ *League of Women Voters of the Township of Ocean*

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Return this form with supporting material by February 4, 2019 to Pat Thompson at thompson@lwvnj.org.

2019 Innovation Award Application

League of Women Voters of the Township of Ocean
February 4, 2019

BACKGROUND

Two events changed the landscape for our voter registration and turnout work. The first was the 2016 election, which generated an interest in the political process—including voter registration—unprecedented in recent history. The second was passage of New Jersey’s new Motor Vehicle automatic voting registration law. Taken together, the two events have and will continue to swell the ranks of eligible voters and reduce the pool of unregistered citizens in the state.

The new conditions called for a new approach, one that would continue to offer voter registration training and drives, but would boost energy and put greater focus on getting voters to the polls. To this end, we developed and are delivering the “Fighting for the Vote” program.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

“Fighting for the Vote” is an interactive program adaptable for students from grade four through early college that brings home the message that voting is a hard-won right and turns students into voter-turnout advocates in their homes and communities.

The core of the program is a role-playing walk through the timeline of suffrage—from the American Revolution through recent changes in the state’s voting laws. Students take on the persona of an avatar. They are given a card describing their avatar, including a picture and a list of attributes that map to voter edibility through time. (For example: “Jasmine: 19-years old, white, female, citizen, no felony record.”) As the League facilitator tells the story of each struggle for suffrage, those in the room who can vote at that point in history stand. At each milestone, students see and hear about the struggle and learn the cost people paid for the right to vote. They share with each other why they (that is their avatars) can or cannot vote. They begin developing a personal interest in eligibility and the fight for it.

Younger children (elementary) receive “*I can’t vote, but you can*” buttons. They are encouraged to talk with their families about what they learned. They practice what they will say, based on what they just learned, when adults notice their pins (or when parents ask “What happened in school today?”).

Older children follow the “Fighting for the Vote” timeline role-play with an interactive discussion of voter turnout. The students see graphs of voter turnout that demonstrate who does and doesn’t vote—with a focus on their own demographics. They are asked to brainstorm “why?”— the reasons they think people (especially those in their demographic) stay home. Their answers are posted and visible for the next discussion: their ideas to overcome those reasons and get people to the polls. They are asked to make personal pledge to register when eligible (if they are eligible and not already registered, that is done at the time) and when registered, to vote.

Whatever the age, “Fighting for the Vote” leaves students with a call to action.

GOALS

The goal of “Fighting for the Vote” is turnout. The strategy is to enroll students as informed champions who will 1) advocate for voting in their homes and communities, and 2) participate themselves when they are eligible. The underlying assumption is that these children and young adults are more convincing proponents—particularly in under-served communities—than outsiders could ever be.

TRACK RECORD SO FAR

“Fighting for the Vote” was first delivered in early 2018 to a fifth grade class in Wall Township. The results were promising, based on the participation and enthusiasm of the students. With that encouragement, the League of Women Voters of the Township of Ocean approached the two other Leagues in Monmouth County (Greater Red Bank and Western Monmouth County) to propose a collaborative effort to train League facilitators and reach out to schools in the region. The Monmouth County ILO agreed to fund printing of the “I can’t vote, but you can” buttons. (We arranged for a public service ad in the November *NJMonthly* using the same tagline and promoting VOTE411.org.) With the coalition in place, we’ve:

- Developed a formal lesson plan and enrolled and trained four additional program facilitators.
- Delivered “Fighting for the Vote” to sixth graders in the Neptune school district, and as a result, were asked to present to two grades in the district intermediate school. Neptune is interested in offering the program to high schools and we are in the process of working out a plan.
- Secured a \$500 grant from the LWVUS (2019 Youth Registration Project) for a spring 2019 voter registration/turnout campaign based on the “Fighting for the Vote” program that will reach at least 500 students in at least 5 schools, most serving historically low-turnout populations.

IN THE WORKS

The LWVUS grant final grant report is due in June 28, 2019—creating a real sense of urgency to take “Fighting for the Vote” to the next level. We are hard at work:

- Designing a workshop open to members of all the Leagues in Monmouth County to train and qualify “Fighting for the Vote” facilitators. (This is a opportunity to get new League members active and involved in the kind of work many joined the League to learn/do.)
- Developing contacts, networking, and reaching out to enroll at least five schools in the program.
- Developing a “Fighting for the Vote” pamphlet to explain and promote the program.
- Creating formal lesson plans for older students, based the foundation of our elementary school plan and on design ideas already developed. (A leader of our “Fighting for the Vote” program is a retired school superintendent who tapping her network of school principals and superintendents and is even exploring the possibility of having the program formally integrated into school curriculum.)
- Designing a plan for classroom teachers of the high school and college classes to remind students on election day of their commitments and hand out “Vote” wrist bands.

SUPPORTING MATERIALS

- “Fighting for the Vote” elementary-school-level lesson plan
- Set of avatar cards
- “I can’t vote, but you can” button artwork

Lesson Plan

“Fighting for the Vote”

Lesson in the importance of voting, adaptable for grades 3 to 5

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Appreciate that the right to vote was hard won
- Develop a personal commitment to vote when they are able
- Learn how to promote voting to family/friends

Vocabulary

The first three vocabulary words are introduced and taught as part of the program. The others are terms that may or may not be familiar to the students you are working with. Use your judgment and sense of the class to either define the terms as you use them or avoid using them where possible (e.g. “*passed a law for the whole country*” rather than “*passed a Constitutional Amendment*”).

- **Democracy** (*a government where the people get to choose/vote*)
- **Suffrage** (*the right to vote*)
- **Suffragists** (*women who organized to win the right to vote*)
- **Revolutionary War** (*when the Colonies fought against England for their freedom, 1775-1773*)
- **Civil War** (*when the North and South fought over slavery and to save the union, 1861-1865*)
- **Citizen** (*someone who lives in and is protected by a country. In the U.S. a citizen has to meet certain requirements: 1) born here or has a U.S. citizen parent; 2) has studied and passed a test to become a citizen and has promised to be loyal to our country.*)
- **Constitution** (*the set of laws George Washington and the men who started the country put in place to that say how the country will be run*)
- **Amendment to the Constitution** (*a change or addition to the original set of laws*)
- **Vote** (*to choose between candidates or sides of an issue and have your choice counted in the decision*)
- **Slave** (*a person held as property*)
- **Property** (*a thing belonging to a person such as land*)
- **Civil Rights** (*a citizen’s right to vote and be treated fairly and equally*)

· Preferred usage has changed from *suffragette* to *suffragist*.

Materials

- Vocabulary posters (Democracy, Suffrage, Suffragist)
- Avatar cards (one for each student; image and description of potential voter)
- Enlarged photos of suffragists and of Voting Rights Protester
- *"I can't vote. But you can."* Buttons (one for each child)
- *Voting Age Cards: 30, 21, 18* (alternative- write three ages on board and point to each one)

Procedure/Steps

INTRODUCTION

- Introduce yourself as a member of the League of Women Voters. Explain that the League is an organization that works to make sure that everyone who can vote does and that they have the information they need about the people running and the issues (Wear your League button or League name tag.)

SETTING THE STAGE

- Ask: *"What is a **democracy**?"* Let students offer answers. Arrive at a definition, e.g. *"A democracy is a government where the people get to choose their leaders and have a say in making the rules."*

DEMOCRACY	Show the word "Democracy" on the poster and place the poster where it can be seen for the whole session.
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- Ask: *"How do people in a **democracy** choose their leaders?"* Let students offer answers. Arrive at: *"They **vote**."*
- Ask: *"In a **democracy**, does EVERYONE get to vote?" "Do you vote?"* Help students identify who cannot vote—mostly obviously, they themselves. Ask them why they can't vote and arrive at the answer **"too young."** Ask: *"Who can vote?"* Help them to quickly arrive at the answer, **"Adults 18 year-olds and older and Citizens."** (Confirm that they understand what a **citizen** is.)
- Explain, "There is a fancy word that means being able to vote, the word is **Suffrage**"

SUFFRAGE	Show the poster of the word and place it where it can be seen throughout the session. Ask if the word Suffrage reminds them of any other word. Help them get to "suffer." Explain that it's interesting that suffrage reminds us of suffer because we're about to find out that a lot of people suffered to get the right to vote.
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PREPARATION FOR THE "Who Gets to Vote Game"

- Explain that they are going to play a game to learn more about **suffrage**.

- Pass out the avatar cards, explaining that you are going to give each student a card that has the name, picture, and information about the PERSON THEY ARE GOING TO BE FOR THE GAME.
- Explain that a girl may get a “boy card” or a boy may get a “girl card” and that since this is a pretend game, it doesn’t matter if that happens. They will have a role to play just like actors in a movie.
- Allow students time to read and understand the information on the card. Ask students to raise their hands if they are having difficulty understanding the card and someone will come to help them.

THE GAME

- Explain that Americans have been fighting for the right to vote from the beginning of our nation. **Ask** “Does anyone know *the name of the war we fought to gain independence from England and become our own country?*” Quickly arrive at the **REVOLUTIONARY WAR**. (If students are not familiar with the term, introduce it as a vocabulary word.) Point out that the **Revolutionary War** was really a fight for the right to **VOTE**—to be able to decide (or **vote**) for our leaders and have a say in the rules we live under.

Explain that in the beginning (1789) the states made up the rules about who could vote, and for the most part, the states decided that **WHITE MEN, 21 YEARS OLD and OLDER, WHO OWNED PROPERTY (land) and were CITIZENS could vote.**

Tell class that we are going to pretend that it is **1789, 230 years ago**. Direct students to look at their cards. Remind them that not everyone will be able to vote. **Ask:** “*In 1788 who can vote?*” “**STAND UP** if you can vote.” Ask a few of the standing students who they are and why they **can vote**. Ask a few of the seated students who they are and why they **can’t vote**. (Thank the students and ask them to be seated.)

- **Now we are in the early 1850s, 60 years later.** Explain that most states decided that it wasn’t FAIR that people who didn’t own property could not vote. So these states changed the law to allow **WHITE MEN, 21 YEARS OLD AND OLDER, who were CITIZENS to vote.**

Ask: “It’s **1856**, who in this room can vote?” “**STAND UP.**” Ask a few of the standing students who they are and why they can vote. Ask a few of the seated students who they are and why they can’t vote. (Following their responses, thank the students and ask them to be seated.)

- **1870:** Explain that between 1861 and 1865 the United States fought a war between the states in the North and the states in the South. **Ask:** “*What was that war called?*” Quickly arrive at the **Civil War**. (If students are not familiar with the term, introduce it as a vocabulary word.) Explain that

how we treat African/Black Americans was the biggest issue that the states were fighting about. The North, which wanted to end **slavery**, won the war. We changed the law to end slavery. And five years after the end of the war, we passed the 15th **AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION**. It changed the laws across the country to allow **ALL MEN (of any color or race), 21 YEARS OLD AND OLDER, who were CITIZENS to vote**.

Ask: It's 1870, nearly 150 years ago, who in this room can vote? **STAND UP**. Ask a few of the standing students who they are and why they can vote. Ask some of the seated students who they are and why they can't vote. (Thank the students and ask them to be seated.)

- **It is now 1920**, point out that none of the people who have stood up were women. Explain that less than 100 years ago, women were not allowed to vote and that they were getting very upset by not being able to act as voting citizens. Many women organized and protested. It was their way of fighting hard for the vote.

SUFFRAGIST	These women were called SUFFRAGISTS or suffragettes. Show the poster with the word SUFFRAGIST and place it where it can be seen.
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Show the photo of the suffragists being arrested. Explain that some suffragists were arrested when they protested. Ask the students to notice the look on the faces of the men walking by them. Help them see that the men look angry at the woman and are not willing to help her. Talk about how the **suffragists** were attacked by men and women who called them names and didn't want women to vote.



Show the photo of the suffragist behind bars. Explain that some suffragists who were arrested refused to eat. They wanted people to know how much getting the vote meant to them—that they were willing to DIE to get the vote. The guards in the jail put a tube down their throat and poured food in to force them to eat.

Explain that despite the opposition they faced, the **suffragists** kept fighting.

Finally in 1920, almost 100 years ago, our country passed the **19th CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT** to allow **ALL MEN AND WOMEN (of any color or race), 21 YEARS OLD AND OLDER, who were CITIZENS to vote**.

Ask: "It's 1920, who in this room can vote?" **STAND UP**. Ask a few of the standing students who they are and why they can vote. Ask a few of the seated students who they are and why they can't vote. (Thank the students and ask them to take their seats.)

- **It is now the 1960s:** Explain that sometimes, even though the laws change, some people resist by not enforcing the law or protesting against it. Remember, in 1870, after the Civil War, we changed the law so men of all colors and races could vote. This happened after the **15th Amendment** was passed in 1870. There were places in the country where people didn't like the new law and found ways to prevent black men from voting. (Be prepared to answer questions about how—but don't go into this in the interest of time.)



Show the photo of the voting rights protester being arrested. Explain that in the 1960s, many people, black and white, including Martin Luther King, marched and protested to fight for the rights of African Americans to vote. Again we put new laws in place to make sure that everyone who was legally allowed to vote, could vote. (You can mention the 1964 Voting Rights Act, or not, depending on time and audience.)

- **It is now 1971,** explain that the last change we made to the Constitution to allow more people to vote happened in 1971. The **26th AMENDMENT to the CONSTITUTION** gave the right to vote to **ALL CITIZENS 18 YEARS OLD and OLDER who are CITIZENS.**

Ask: “It’s 1971, who in this room can vote?” “STAND UP.” Ask a few of the standing students who they are and why they can vote. Ask a few of the seated students who they are and why they can’t vote. (Answer: they are too young or not citizens.) Thank the students and ask them to be seated.

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WRAP-UP Notes to the Teacher

- Summarize the lesson by saying, “We’ve just walked through 230 years of our country’s history and we’ve seen how hard people have fought to win the **right to vote.**”
- Emphasize the point: “Many who fought for the vote died. Many went to jail. Many were made to feel like they were troublemakers. Our right to vote was hard won and we cannot take it for granted.” Ask: “Let me hear what Americans fought hard for.” Response from students should be, “**The right to vote.**”
- Ask: “When you are old enough (and ask how old that is), will you vote? Raise your hand.”
- Explain that even though they are not yet old enough to vote, they can make a difference right now by helping to get the adults in their lives to vote.



Pass out the buttons and explain that we have a gift that will help them in this job, if they choose to do it. Have teacher and other available adults help children put their pins on.

Help the children talk about their pins. Explain: When an adult asks you about your pin, tell them that you learned that many people fought hard—and even

died—for the right to vote. Ask them, “If you can, please VOTE.”

Evaluation (how students demonstrate their understanding of the lesson)

- The majority of students will be able to identify the voting age by responding with a show of hands to the question, “Raise your hand when I show you the card that tells the correct voting age.” (Teacher will hold up “voting age cards: 30, 21, 18 individually and ask for a show of hands when the correct age is shown or write numbers on board). Repeat the process if needed.
- (Group and individual responses) Teacher will ask students to raise their hands if they think they can explain their “I can’t vote, but you can” button to adults?” Teacher will call on one or more students to orally explain the meaning.
- The majority of students will STAND when asked, “Please stand if you are ready to vote when you turn 18 years old.”

Closing - Thank students for their help in making **democracy** work and tell them to give themselves a round of applause (or a silent cheer). **Optional:** Tell students, “I hope to someday meet you at a League of Women Voters’ meeting where we are registering people to vote.”

Core Curriculum Content Standard

Content Area 6.1.4.A.2

Social Studies: Explain how fundamental rights guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights (i.e. freedom of expression, freedom of religion, **the right to vote**, and the right to due process) contribute to the continuation and improvement of American democracy.



George

- " White
- " Man
- " 64 years old
- " Owns property
- " Citizen



A

Jim

- " White
- " Man
- " 30 years old
- " Owns a house
- " Citizen

2



Mark

- " White
- " Man
- " 25 years old
- " Owns a house
- " Citizen



Abe

- " White
- " Man
- " 50 years old
- " Owns property
- " Citizen



Teddy

- " White
- " Man
- " 53 years old
- " Owns property
- " Citizen



Jason

- " White
- " Man
- " 21 years old
- " Doesn't own property
- " Citizen



Bill

- " White
- " Man
- " 21 years old
- " Rents a house. Doesn't own property.
- " Citizen



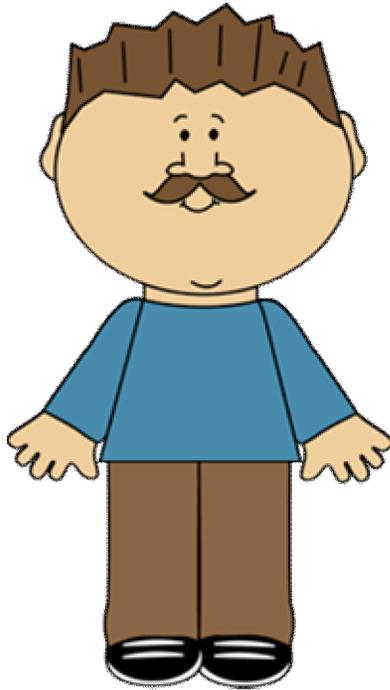
Ted

- " White
- " Man
- " 99 years old
- " Citizen
- " Doesn't own property



Peter

- " White
- " Man
- " 40 years old
- " Doesn't own property
- " Citizen



B

Bob

- " White
- " Man
- " 55 years old
- " Doesn't own property
- " Citizen

10



Ben

- " White
- " Man
- " 90 years old
- " Doesn't own property
- " Citizen



Malcolm

- " Black
- " Man
- " 35 years old
- " Citizen



Martin

- " Black
- " Man
- " 40 years old
- " Citizen



C

Joseph

- " Black
- " Man
- " 50 years old
- " Citizen



C

Ned

- " Black
- " Man
- " 21 years old
- " Citizen



Muhammad

- " Black
- " Man
- " 26 years old
- " Citizen



David

- " Black
- " Man
- " 45 years old
- " Owns a building
- " Citizen



Vincent

- " Black
- " Young man
- " 19 years old
- " Doesn't own property
- " Citizen



Martin

- " African American
- " Man
- " 21 years old
- " Owns a house
- " Citizen



Mary

- " African American
- " Woman
- " 35 years old
- " Citizen



Jill

- " Black
- " Young woman
- " 25 years old
- " Citizen



Diane

- " Black
- " Woman
- " 40 years old
- " Citizen



Beth

- " White
- " Woman
- " 28 years old
- " Not a citizen



Oretha

- " Black
- " Woman
- " 21 years old
- " Citizen



Michelle

- " Black
- " Woman
- " 54 years old
- " Citizen



D

Lisa

- " White
- " Woman
- " 35 years old
- " Citizen



Peggy

- " White
- " Woman
- " 50 years old
- " Citizen



Sharon

- " White
- " Woman
- " 21 years old
- " Citizen



Rosa

- " African American
- " Woman
- " 68 years old
- " Citizen



D

Helen

- " White
- " Woman
- " 49 years old
- " Citizen



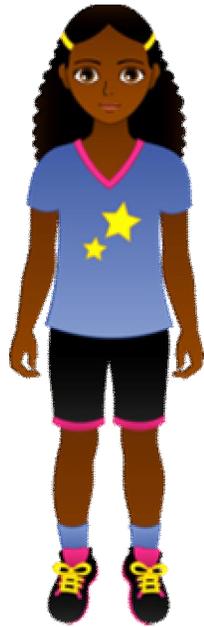
Sasha

- " Asian
- " Woman
- " 47 years old
- " Citizen



Ellie

- " Black
- " Woman
- " 20 years old
- " Citizen



Dee Dee

- " Black
- " Girl
- " 18 years old
- " Citizen



Rose

- " Black
- " Woman
- " 19 years old
- " Citizen



Shanna

- " White
- " Woman
- " 18 years old
- " Citizen



William

- " Black
- " Man
- " 19 years old
- " Citizen



Amy

- " White
- " Girl
- " 19 years old
- " Citizen



Pat

- " Black
- " Girl
- " 18 years old
- " Citizen



E

Paul

- " White
- " Man
- " 20 years old
- " Citizen



Arthur

- " White
- " Young man
- " 19 years old
- " Doesn't own property
- " Citizen



Betty

- " African American
- " Woman
- " 18 years old
- " Citizen



Brian

- " White
- " Young man
- " 17 years old
- " Doesn't own property
- " Citizen



Annette

- " Black
- " Girl
- " 10 years old
- " Citizen



Anne

- " White
- " Girl
- " 16 years old
- " Citizen



Ali

- " Black
- " Boy
- " 10 years old
- " Citizen



James

- " White
- " Boy
- " 16 years old
- " Citizen



Tina

- " Black
- " Girl
- " 10 years old
- " Not a citizen



Nan

- " White
- " Woman
- " 19 years old
- " Not a citizen



Alice

- " African American
- " Woman
- " 17 years old
- " Citizen



John

- " African American
- " Boy
- " 16 years old
- " Citizen
- " Doesn't own property



James

- " African American
- " Man
- " 40 years old
- " Not a citizen
- " Rents his house.
Doesn't own property.



Robert

- " Black
- " Young man
- " 29 years old
- " Owns property
- " Not a citizen



Michele

- " White
- " Woman
- " 18 years old
- " Not a citizen



Laura

- " White
- " Woman
- " 45 years old
- " Not a citizen



Sally

- " White
- " Young woman
- " 17 years old
- " Doesn't own property
- " Not a citizen

I can't
Vote.
But you can!