



VETERANS DAY SPEECH 2026 (*young audience*)

Good morning/afternoon, [name of school/group].

[Thank event hosts and any special VIPs]

<PAUSE>

I'm honored to join you today in celebration of Veterans Day. I'd like to start by asking anyone here with a family member who was or is in the military to please raise their hand. That can be your mom or dad, grandma or grandpa, aunts or uncles, brothers or sisters, or anyone else in your family who served.

<PAUSE>

If your hand is raised, ***thank you***. I and so many Americans appreciate your family member's service, and we know that having a loved one in the military can be difficult. So again, thank you.

If you don't know whether any of your family members served in the military, just ask. And if they say yes, ask them about what they did in the military and how it changed their lives. I promise you'll be better for it, and it will mean the world to the veteran in your family that you care enough to ask.

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[Briefly talk about your own military service (branch, era, military occupation) and/or that of a family member]

Millions of men and women have served in the military since our country was founded. All of them had different reasons for joining. They held different jobs and served in different places across the world. Some served for a few years, and others made it their whole career. Many went to war; many were injured. Whatever their story is, when their nation called, they took a great risk to protect our country and our freedoms.

That is why we celebrate Veterans Day—to recognize and honor the courage, sacrifice and contributions of the men and women who served. One simple but meaningful way to do that is to say, “Thank you for your service.”

But an even more powerful way to show your gratitude is to help the veterans in your families and your communities. An act of service can change their lives **and** yours.

Just ask Jacob Weber.

Jacob's grandfather Don had served in the Vietnam War. While there, he was exposed to Agent Orange, an herbicide that was used to kill dense jungle foliage that gave the enemy cover.

Unfortunately, Agent Orange can cause devastating illnesses. In Jacob's grandfather's case, the exposure caused Parkinson's disease, a brain disorder that causes a loss in movement and many other symptoms.

As a young teen, Jacob went to a doctor's appointment with his grandfather at their local veterans healthcare facility. That's where Jacob found a passion for serving veterans.

He started Treats for Troops, distributing candy at the veterans medical center in Ann Arbor, Michigan. That project led him to start, among other volunteer initiatives, Stockings for Soldiers and Cards That Care, distributing care packages and letters to veterans. He recruited classmates to help and mentored others to continue the projects in his absence.

He also became an advocate for people affected by Agent Orange exposure, including his mom, Lori. His mom was diagnosed with spina bifida, a condition that occurs in some children of Vietnam veterans and can be linked to Agent Orange exposure.

In recognition of Jacob's selfless service to veterans, he earned a \$30,000 scholarship from Disabled American Veterans, or DAV. He recently graduated from Michigan State University and now spends time encouraging elementary and middle school students to carry the torch and become volunteers.

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Jacob once said,

“Volunteering has opened my eyes to the world around me. [It] brought me joy, gave me a sense of accomplishment and helped me express my gratitude.”

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This Veterans Day, I encourage you to follow Jacob’s lead. You can start by helping a veteran in your family, like Jacob did.

Or you can find veterans in your community. Maybe you can help them with groceries or yard work, or you can volunteer at a local event for veterans. There are also opportunities to volunteer at your local veterans medical center.

If you're 21 years old or younger and are willing to volunteer a certain number of hours, you could also qualify for one of DAV's college scholarships that recognize those who volunteer their time for veterans in DAV's name. You can learn more at davscholarships.org.

[If applicable, you can share how DAV has helped you as a veteran, or your family.]

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Another way you can get involved and support veterans is by participating in DAV's Field of Flags. Based on how much money you raise, you'll be sent a box of flags to display in your yard. Schools and businesses can also participate. Learn more at fieldofflags.org.

If you like getting outside, consider participating in the annual DAV 5K race, where veterans, families and supporters run, walk, ride or roll over 3 miles in support of veterans. The event is an opportunity to raise money and awareness for veterans. You can participate in person in Cincinnati or join the virtual race right here in your hometown. You can even organize your own running team when you sign up at [DAV5K.org](https://www.DAV5K.org).

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Lastly, if you raised your hand earlier, you can help support veterans like your family members by becoming a junior member of the DAV Auxiliary. The Auxiliary is made up primarily of veterans' family members and supports DAV's mission to ensure those who served are cared for. The Auxiliary offers more opportunities to volunteer for veterans and to say thank you with action.

<PAUSE>

I want to thank [event host/school/group] again for having me here today. Have a wonderful Veterans Day, and don't forget to reflect on what today is all about and how ***you*** can help veterans.

Thank you.

<END>