



As we celebrate the 53rd year of the Young Marines' Charter, I am reminded that every day we make a choice between doing what we know is right and just or some other easier path. Our core values of Leadership, Discipline, and Teamwork as well as our unwavering dedication to serving others while maintaining a healthy drug-free lifestyle, have given us tools, experiences, and fortitude. We use these to empower us in times when others would turn their backs on those in need or when facing a challenge in our community. Young Marines, you possess an indomitable spirit forged from your willingness to absorb and heed the teachings of those who have been entrusted as your mentors. They are invested in you with their most precious commodity: their personal time. Young Marine volunteers across the globe believe in the strength of your character. They believe in your ability to do the right thing, at the right time, in the right way. Take their examples to heart and continue to build upon their legacy with your own deeds.

This has been another tremendous year for the program. Our actions support our beliefs. This year alone, we committed over 650,000 hours of service in our local communities and at nationally recognized events such as Pearl Harbor Remembrance, the National Memorial Day Parade, and Navajo Code Talker Day. Young Marines lead the way at each and every event. We performed over 80,000 hours of Drug Demand Reduction education, many of these hours in communities educating your fellow youth to help them fight the peril of drugs in their lives. Young Marines partnered with our biggest supporters, the Marine Corps League, to delivered hundreds of thousands of toys for Toys for Tots. These are but a handful of examples, but every day in every unit I know that you are accomplishing so much more. I am especially proud of your commitment to our nation's veterans. The joy you bring in your visits and support of veterans is priceless to them and their families.

We join together to celebrate the origins of a program created by a few volunteers willing to stand up and make a difference in the lives and development of others. I encourage you to make each moment count, always take every opportunity to be the best version of yourselves. We are proud of you for making the choice and embracing the challenge of being a Young Marine. I am inspired and motivated every time I have the opportunity to go out and visit Young Marines. I know your volunteer leaders share my motivation and pride as well. You are the future of our nation. I know that you will hold fast to our enduring principles and continue to be our next generation of leaders.

Semper Fi, Young Marines and Happy Birthday!

Col Bill Davis, USMC (Ret)
National Executive Director, Young Marines
of the Marine Corps League, Inc.