

## Volunteer Girls State Application

Due: November 19, 2010

**Date: May 29-June 4, 2011**

### **What is ALA Volunteer Girls State?**

Volunteer Girls State (VGS) is a leadership and citizenship-training program offered to young women in Tennessee by the American Legion Auxiliary (ALA). Nationally recognized as one of the top Girls State programs in the nation, Volunteer Girls State provides young women the opportunity to form and run a mock government by meeting, living, and working with other young female leaders from across the state. All events and activities that citizens experience or participate in are designed to demonstrate, foster, or provide opportunities to practice good citizenship and leadership and instill a sense of pride in our state and country.

ALA Volunteer Girls State is a one-week program offered to young women who are rising seniors in high school. The mission of Volunteer Girls State is to provide a practical application of Americanism and good citizenship. The program, as sponsored by the American Legion Auxiliary, is a nonpartisan, non-political attempt to teach and to instill in the young women of Tennessee a love of God and country.

### **What Do We Do All Week?**

From the moment citizens arrive on campus, they'll be part of a community and an experience that often is described as "life-changing." As stated above, ALA Volunteer Girls State provides young women the opportunity to learn about state government, citizenship and how they can positively affect their communities by forming and running a mock government.

- **Actualize government.** Much of the week is spent creating a mock government in an exciting, fun way. To begin, all 500 citizens of the state of Volunteer are divided into two political parties and 12 cities.
- **Run for office.** From the first day of ALA VGS and throughout the week, citizens will develop city, county and state mock governments and have the opportunity to run for or be appointed to an office in all of these levels. As a possible candidate you will be required to meet petitioning requirements, give speeches, address true-to-life issues that affect the level of office you are seeking and interact with your constituents.
- **Become informed.** As a part of actualizing government, one of the most important roles citizens can play is that of an informed voter. Listening to speakers address issues and voting appropriately is a life skill that will serve you well in all aspects of your future.
- **Practice citizenship.** Leadership skills will be honed as you cooperate with other citizens to accomplish both serious and fun tasks. The fun side of Girls State is comprised of participation

in VGS Olympics, Fast Song and Girls State Jeopardy, and each city's ability to work in harmony toward excellence may result in the honor of winning Best City.

- Sing a song. Citizens will have the opportunity to audition for the VGS Chorus. Three citizens from each city are selected to join this special group and will participate in many of the ALA VGS assemblies and special events. Not in Chorus? You may – just may – have the opportunity to sing anyway.
- Listen and learn. Each day you spend time in assemblies listening to and learning from distinguished speakers. Past speakers include Vice President Al Gore, First Lady Rosalyn Carter, author and University of Tennessee Lady Vols basketball coach Pat Head Summitt, and Governors Lamar Alexander, Ned Ray McWherter, Don Sundquist and Phil Bredesen (left).
- Make friends. From the time you meet your roommate to the closing ceremonies, you will have the opportunity to make lifelong connections with other young leaders from Tennessee.

### Application Process

Please submit a 1000-word essay responding to the following prompt:

What does it mean to be a good citizen of Tennessee? What are two major problems affecting the state of Tennessee and how would you address each of them?

Please submit your essay to Mrs. Ruse by Friday, Nov. 19.