

2016-2017 American Legion Auxiliary Department of Wisconsin Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Plan of Action

The Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Program and the 2014-2019 Centennial Strategic Plan – Our work to enhance the lives of veterans, military and their families provides our members opportunities to serve in volunteer leadership roles within their local Veterans Affairs hospital (Goal 3), which broadens our membership pool (Goal 1) among a target population and build brand loyalty (Goal 5) with the veterans themselves.



The Department VA&R Team...

Mary Petrie: VA&R Chairman
808 E. Cady Street, Watertown WI 53094
mmrtpetrie@charter.net (920) 261-8161

Sue Hembrook: Director of Hospital Volunteers
24215 60th Street, Salem, WI 53168
genesuehem@wi.rr.com (262) 843-4791

Judy Walters: Homeless Women Veterans Chairman
W3105 State Road 37, Eau Claire, WI 54701
jw5942@charter.net (715) 832-5942

Bonnie Jakubczyk: Service to Veterans Chairman
7441 S. Logan Avenue, Oak Creek, WI 53154
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The VA&R Purpose...

The Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation program promotes our mission to enhance the lives of veterans, military and their families.

The VA&R program strives to...

- ...inform members and the public of the dilemmas and increasing number of homeless veterans.
- ...support rehabilitation of vets through the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival (NVCAF).
- ...increase volunteers in VA Medical Centers, VA State Homes, the community, and from home.

Veteran Affairs Medical Center (VAMC) and Community-Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) volunteers supplement the care given by hospital and clinic staffs.

The ***Homeless Women Veterans*** program extends a helping hand to female veterans, offering information on VA benefits and local resources. The grant fund was initiated to provide monetary assistance to homeless or at-risk of being homeless female vets. Funding is through donations of the Wisconsin American Legion Family and friends.

The ***Service to Veterans*** program offers a volunteer opportunity to serve veterans outside VA Centers and Homes. These volunteers work in their homes and communities, maintain records of hours, dollars spent, and projects; then report that info to their Unit VA&R Chairmen, who in turn report hours annually to the Department Service to Veterans Chairman.

Get involved!

1. Serve veterans and their families through Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS).

- Become a regular VAVS Volunteer
- Invite others to join you as a VAVS Volunteer and include your Juniors
- Volunteer hours are entered into the VAVS tracking system at the facility

Contact the ALA Representative at your nearest VA Medical Facility to volunteer:

- Dayton Residential Care Facility – Kenosha: Rep: Sue Hembrook
521 59th Street, Kenosha WI 53140 (262) 657-6122
- Middleton Memorial Veterans Hospital – Madison: Rep Rose Wenger – Dep Lesley Disalvo
2500 Overlook Terrace, Madison WI 53705-2254 (608) 280-7178
- Minneapolis VA Health Care Center – Minneapolis: Associate Rep Betty Swenson
Associate Dep Jeanne Williams
One Veterans Drive, Minneapolis, MN 55417 (612) 725-2000 or (866) 414-5058
- Oscar G. Johnson Medical Center: Associate Rep Cora Gavigan - Associate Dep Joyce Sporrer
325 East H Street, Iron Mountain MI 496600 (906) 774-3300 ext. 32780
- VA Great Lakes Health Care System- Tomah: Rep Patricia Flanders – Dep Mary Callaway
ALA Bldg. 407, Room 1739 Dep Zetta Fredrickson – Dep Laura Hubert
500 E. Veterans Street, Tomah, WI 54660 (608) 372-1727 ext. 66235
- Wisconsin Veterans Home – Chippewa Falls: Rep Nancy Randen – Dep Joan Chwala
2175 E. Park Avenue, Chippewa Falls 54729 (715) 720-6775
- Wisconsin Veterans Home – King: Rep Nancy Neuroth – Assistant Rep Alice Bentley
Dep Linda Hagen – Dep Dawn Lind
N2665 County QQ, King, WI 54946 (715) 258-5586 ext. 2369
- Wisconsin Veterans Home – Union Grove: Rep Marcie Stuckart
21425 Spring Street, Union Grove, WI 53182 (262) 878-6700
- Zablocki VA Medical Center – Milwaukee: Rep Bonnie Jakubczyk – Dep Sharon Miller
ALA Room #70C14 Dep Sue Middlestead – Dep Kathy Zagar
5000 W. National Avenue, Milwaukee WI 53295 (414) 384-2000 ext. 41804
- Camp American Legion – Director Kevin Moshea
8529 County Road D, Lake Tomahawk WI 54539 (715) 277-2510 campal@newnorth.net

Each facility provides orientation and volunteer placement. A potential volunteer will interview with a member of the Voluntary Services staff to discuss skills, interest, and intent. A formal orientation includes fingerprinting, background check, photo ID, and TB test. Special training is offered for certain positions (computer, feeding patients, etc.)

2. If there's no facility in or close to your area, the Service to Veterans program offers valuable volunteer opportunities to work from home and/or in the community. Volunteers maintain their own records, which include hours served and dollars spent, and each volunteer is responsible for reporting hours to her Unit VA&R Chairman.

- Crafty members can get involved in the Quilts of Valor Foundation (www.qovf.org) and/or check the VA&R patterns WI's website at www.amlegionauxwi.org for needed handcrafted VA items
- Check with local nursing homes and assisted living facilities to see if veterans reside there - Ask what they might enjoy or need (personal care items, stamps, snacks, etc.)
- Visit veterans in local nursing homes or assisted living facilities
- Adopt a veteran: Many Units remember a vet on holidays and his/her birthday
- Offer veterans an internet use help session
- Organize/furnish transportation for veterans to assist with errands
- Research what is needed and work to fill that need:
 - Would a clothing drive help homeless vets in your area?
 - Is there a veteran in your neighborhood who would enjoy a home-cooked meal?
- Host a Veteran Job Fair or Stand Down, or volunteer at an already-scheduled event
- Contact members who seldom attend meetings to ask for help on a short-term project for veterans (It might just get them activated!)
- Whatever projects undertaken for veterans, coordinate with the Unit PR Chairman to publicize the work being done
- Supply pamphlets and information on the ALA and what the organization does for veterans at Post and Unit functions, as well as at community events – Be sure to include Unit contact info on all handouts!

3. Contact the local American Legion Post Service Officer for information to assist veterans in accessing VA benefits for health care and other services.

- Work with local American Legion Posts to identify the Service Officer or check the list at www.legion.org/serviceofficers
- Help eligible veterans obtain benefits through referrals
- Encourage eligible veterans to use the VA health care system and its services: hospitals, community-based-outpatient clinics, centers, etc.
- Participate in and encourage veterans and their families to participate in town hall meetings organized by The American Legion in advance of the Legion's *System Worth Saving* site visits to VA health care systems:
www.legion.org/systemworthsaving
- **Resource:** VA Health Care Hotline for women veterans
1-855-VA-Women (1-855-829-6636) – See va.gov/health-care
- Invite a local, county, or state Service Officer to speak at an event

4. Help homeless veterans

- Lend a hand to the Legion's Department Homeless Veteran Coordinator, offering to help with requests for assistance from homeless veterans or homeless veteran service providers
- Crochet hats, scarves or mittens to be distributed to homeless veterans - Check the VA Wish Lists (www.amlegionaguxwi.org) or contact the homeless veteran coordinator at the VA health care facility near you to see what is needed – Check with the facility before donating!
- Participate in Project CHALENG (Community Homelessness Assessment, Local Education and Networking Groups) www.va.gov/homeless/challeng.asp, which works to meet the needs of homeless vets
- Contact your local Post Chairman to offer assistance with requests coming in through the Legion's Family Support Network (FSN)
- Raise funds for local American Legion Post to help vets and their families through the FSN for veterans at risk of losing their housing or homeless veterans transitioning to permanent housing – Money raised can make overdue rent payments, utility payments or deposits or security deposits

- Host or volunteer at Homeless Veterans' Stand Downs, providing veterans with free goods and services, such as haircuts and medical exams
- Contact homeless veterans emergency shelters, transitional housing projects and permanent housing projects in your community to identify volunteer and in-kind needs, such as meal prep and serving, clothing collection and distribution, assembly and delivery of hygiene kits and buddy baskets, purchasing/securing household items or furniture
- Extend a hand to specific homeless veterans, such as residents of projects previously mentioned to provide practical, social, and moral support
- Create 'blessing bags' for the local police department or other organizations who deal with homeless veterans
- Create a 'Tree of Warmth' by collecting scarves, hats, and mittens; then attach to a tree in a spot the homeless frequent – Include a sign such as 'Please Take if Needed'
- Find a Homeless Roundtable and attend

5. Support veteran rehab and healing through the National Creative Arts Festival (NCAF)

- Familiarize yourself with the 2014 edition of *ALA Guide for Volunteers* – The guide can be purchased from the Legion's Flag & Emblem catalog (emblem.legion.org) for \$1.95 or downloaded from the National website for free at www.alaforveterans.org
- Help your Unit or Department earn recognition at National Convention through monetary donations to the NCAF
- If nearby, volunteer individually or with your Unit at a local Creative Arts Festival
- Identify projects targeted to veterans (writing, oral history recording, visual and performing arts, quilting and gardening, etc.) or organize a project or introduce a Unit to what is already in place in the community – See *Arts Deployed: Action Guide and Webinars* to bring the arts to your community: www.alaforveterans.org/Programs/Veterans-Affairs--Rehabilitation
- Donate supplies to supplement visual veteran artists' needs for their project
- Donate funds to help local veterans attend state and national Wheel Chair Games, Veterans Creative Arts Festivals, ParaOlympic, etc.
- Host an informational table at a local job fair or support the Legion by helping host a local job fair at your Post or in the community

ALA Resources: How to Organize a Job Fair for Veterans and/or Military and Veteran Spouses

***www.uschamber.com/hiringourheroes: Serve as a career e-Mentor for female veterans via electronic communications. The e-mentoring network, operated by the Business and Professional Women's Foundation, Joining Forces and Mentoring Plus, pairs female veterans with career mentors and subject matter experts for guidance and support.

***www.ementorprogram.org/p/milouse/: Support home building and renovation projects for veterans and their families by volunteering for Habitat for Humanity. Locate veteran-specific projects through The American Legion: www.legion.org/documents/legion/pdf/habitat.pdf

6. Support veterans' caregivers.

- Consider getting involved in the VA Caregiver Support Program
- Consider getting involved with the Military and Veteran Caregiver Peer Support Network
- Become a Veteran Caregiver Peer Support Trainer or volunteer
- Become a Legacy Corps AmeriCorps member if the Legacy Corps is in your area
- Check with the VA facility near you to see if it offers a VA Voluntary Service Volunteer Support Caregiver program and sign up
- Invite a VA Caregiver Support Coordinator to do a presentation at a meeting or event
- Get involved in the Elizabeth Dole Foundation for Caregivers

ALA Resources...

Legacy Corps Frequently Asked Questions

VA Caregiver Support – www.caregiver.va.gov/

Elizabeth Dole Foundation – www.elizabethdoletfoundation.org

Military and Veteran Caregiver Peer Support Network – www.taps.org/MVCN/

VA&R Reporting: Reports offer an overview of work carried out for our veterans
Reporting is mandatory for every Unit. If possible, include photos of select projects.
If your Unit is not involved in this program, say so. That will serve as your report.

Mid-Year Report Deadline: December 10, 2016

Year-End Report Deadline: April 23, 2017

Mail or e-mail to Mary Petrie (See contact info on first page)

Each Unit will be furnished with a Year-End statistical report form from Headquarters. Fill this in as accurately as possible. As part of your narrative report, National would like the following information included:

- **Did your Unit participate in the caregiver support program? Yes/No If so, how?**
- **Describe how members earned their Service to Veterans hours**
- **Did your Unit assist/host a Stand Down? Yes/No What did the Unit learn about assisting/hosting? What went well? What could be done differently?**

AWARDS...

Criteria varies from award to award, so to assure qualification, carefully read the requirements, use the necessary form if requested, and mail/e-mail to the appropriate contact.

Service to Veterans – No Cover Sheet or Form Required

- ✓ Member Award: Hour Bar Recognition for Service to Veterans Volunteers
- ✓ Hour bars are awarded by the Department of Wisconsin via ALA National Headquarters
- ✓ Specific hour milestone recognition: 50 and pin, 100, 300, 500, 1000
- ✓ After first 1000 hours, bars are awarded in 1000 hour increments up to 20,000; then 25,000 and 30,000
- ✓ This award disallows hours of service to a veteran within a member's own family.
- ✓ Timeframe: April 1, 2016 – March 31, 2017

Hours are to be sent by the Unit VA&R Chairman (or designated person) directly to Bonnie Jakubczyk, Service to Veterans Chairman (See contact info on first page)

Outstanding Unit VA&R Program Award – National Cover Sheet Required

- ✓ A citation will be presented to one Unit VA&R Chairman per Division (5 awards), who conducted the best overall promotion of the VA&R Program
- ✓ Entries are required to include the award cover sheet from National, including the name of the award, name and contact information for the Department and Unit Chairman
- ✓ The entry must be typewritten in narrative format; not to exceed 1000 words
- ✓ Include pictures, clippings, scrapbooks, folders, etc.

Entries are to be sent of the Department VA&R Chairman, Mary Petrie (See contact info on first page) by May 15, 2016 – Department Chairman will send on to National Chairman

NVCAF Award: National Veterans Creative Arts Festival Support Recognition

- ✓ Verbal announcement will be made during VA&R Chairman's remarks at the 2017 ALA National Convention
- ✓ Awards will be presented to Departments, Units, and/or members who qualify for contribution levels noted below – Donations are made through the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation
- ✓ ALA National Headquarters will submit qualifying donations to NVCAF staff in July

*Donations are made to the NVCAF between August 1, 2016 and July 31, 2017
and must be received in the National office between those dates*

Bronze: \$1000-\$2400

Silver: \$2500-\$4999

Gold: \$5000-\$14999

Veteran Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS) Awards

- ✓ **National Award – VAVS Volunteer of the Year Award**/National Advisory Committee (NAC) Nominee
- ✓ Citation & \$500 donation to VAVS facility or VCAF of her choice presented by the ALA
- ✓ Presented to member
- ✓ Candidates for this award will be submitted by the Chiefs of Voluntary Service and Department Chairman by November 1, 2016, and to National VAVS Deputy (Sharon Nevel, 107 Bradford Circle, Clayton, NC 27527-6679 or snevillebelieve@gmail.com)
- ✓ Awarded to a nominee who has given extraordinary service to our nation's veterans through the ALA VA&R program and the VAVS program
- ✓ Nominee must serve in an established VA assignment and be defined as a regularly scheduled volunteer
- ✓ Nominee should be actively involved in working with veterans in any one of the following areas: outpatient clinics, nursing homes, homeless veteran programs, hosted veteran-related functions outside the VA, or visited veterans confined to their homes (as assigned by VAVS)
- ✓ The American Legion Auxiliary selects the ALA Volunteer of the Year. The name of the American Legion Auxiliary Volunteer of the Year is forwarded for consideration as the NAC Volunteer of the Year

Member Awards: 10,000 Volunteer Service Award & 20,000 Volunteer Service Award

- ✓ The 10,000 and 20,000 hour awards are given to volunteers who have reached 10,000 and 20,000 hours of service in a VA facility during this year: April 1, 2016 – March 31, 2017
- ✓ Verification of hours must be received at National Headquarters by the first Friday in June

Individual Recognition Awards:

Hospital Representative Volunteer Recruitment & Service Award

- ✓ No entry form required
- ✓ Awarded to the hospital Rep at every facility that shows an increase in both volunteers and volunteer hours at a VA Medical Center from April 1, 2016 – March 31, 2017
- ✓ The award winner will be determined by the National VAVS Rep through verification of hours and number of volunteers as recorded by VAVS

100% VAVS Meeting Attendance Award – Hospital Representatives and Deputies

- ✓ No entry form required
- ✓ An "Attendance Card" will be awarded to each Rep and Dep who has 100% attendance at VAVS Committee meetings at her assigned facility
- ✓ The National VAVS Rep will verify the winners from VA records

Additional Info...

James H. Parke Scholarship

This substantial scholarship is awarded annually by Veterans Affairs to a student volunteer. The American Legion Auxiliary contributes \$2,000 annually to the scholarship fund.

Eligibility: Candidates must have completed 100 hours of regularly scheduled VAVS service during the calendar year prior to September 1; be a student in the 10th grade or above; and not have reached his/her 19th birthday.

The Medical Center Director nominates a candidate for the award by submission of the nomination form to the president of the fund by November 1 of each calendar year. Nominations received after that date will not be considered. The nomination form should be completed to reflect the volunteer service and background of the candidate and include age, years of volunteering, number of volunteer hours, areas of service and affiliated/supporting organizations, if any. See www.va.gov for information on VAVS, James H. Parke Scholarship. The national winner receives a plaque and a letter of commitment. This presentation is usually made at the Annual Meeting of the VAVS National Advisory Committee.

Welcome Home Celebrations

Provide assistance to your local VA health care system in supporting returning servicemembers and their families in the community. VA supports this initiative by providing information about the opportunities available to them through the VA. Every VA health care system sponsors welcome home celebrations in their facilities and community.

National Salute to Veterans

This annual event occurs the week of February 14. This initiative salutes America's heroes, the more than 98,000 veterans of the U.S. Armed Services who are cared for every day in VA Medical Centers.

Additional Resources...

- ❖ Homeless Veterans Coalition: www.hchv.org
- ❖ How To Sheets: All can be found at www.ALAforVeterans.org
 - How to raise awareness in your communities about the ever-increasing number of homeless
 - How to increase donations to the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival
 - Other How To Sheets
- ❖ Quilts of Valor: www.qovf.org
- ❖ VA Homeless Programs: www.va.gov/homeless/index.asp
- ❖ HUD Homeless Assistance Programs: www.onecpd.info/homelessness-assistance/
- ❖ On-Call: Handbook for Homeless Veterans and Service Providers
www.legion.org/homelessveterans/handbook
- ❖ The American Legion Family Support Network: www.legion.org/familysupport
- ❖ National Veterans Creative Arts Festival Facebook Page
- ❖ American Legion Auxiliary Veterans Creative Activities Action Guide
www.ALAforVeterans.org
- ❖ National Veterans Creative Arts Festival: www.creativeartsfestival.va.gov

Volunteer Opportunities to check out...

Heroes to Hometowns is a transition program for severely injured service members returning home from Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom.

Quilts of Valor began in the sewing room of a Delaware Blue Star mom. Her son's year-long deployment to Iraq provided the inspiration, spurring her desire to see that returning warriors were welcomed home with love and gratitude.

Project CHALANG, or Community Homelessness Assessment, Local Education and Networking Groups, for Veterans was launched in 1994 to bring providers, advocates, veterans, and other concerned citizens together to identify the needs of homeless veterans and then work to meet those needs.

VA Caregiver Support is a support program for the family caregiver, providing service for both the caregiver and veteran, in house or not.

National Veterans Creative Arts Festival is sponsored by the Department of Veterans Affairs and the American Legion Auxiliary. The annual event showcases the talents of veterans from across the U.S. through art, drama, dance, music, and creative writing.

Elizabeth Dole Foundation assists organizations and agencies serving caregivers responsible for an injured military member.

Camo Quilts is a Wisconsin-based program, located at 439 Factory Street, Plymouth WI 53073. The project provides handmade quilts free of charge to troops serving in the Middle East.

www.camoquiltproject.blogspot.com or www.amlegionauxwi.org (printable brochure on WI website)

Contact: Linda Wieck (920) 627-3460 – E-mail: Linda.camoquilt.com

Hours: Wednesdays & Saturdays – 9 AM to 3 PM and Tuesdays & Thursdays – 6 to 9 PM

Donations: 100% of donated money is used directly for the quilts!

Send check payable to Franklin Legion Post 387

c/o Steven Bender

N7417 Bittersweet Rd.

Plymouth WI 53073

National VA&R Chairman

Kathy Dungan, Department of Mississippi (601) 643-2383 kdungan@hughes.net
5059 Timberlane Road, Wesson MS 39191-9390

National Committee Contact Information: VA&R@ALAforVeterans.org

Central Division VA&R Chairman

Patti Williamson, Department of Illinois (217) 377-3708 nellazecca@Mchsi.com
405 E. Belle Avenue, Rantoul, IL 61866

This page will include the National Award Form when available