

Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation

2009-2010 Celebrating the 90th Anniversary of the Auxiliary
National President's Theme: Reconnect and Energize!

Plan of Action: Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Committee

Purpose: To initiate, sponsor and participate in programs and services that assist and enhance the lives of veterans and their families; ensuring restoration and/or transition to normally functioning lives; physically, mentally, socially, and vocationally.

Committee Contact Information

E-Mail: VA&R@legion-aux.org



National Chairman

Name: Kris Nelson
Department of Minnesota

National Vice Chairman

Name: Carlene "Charlie" Dew
VAVS Representative
Department of Texas

Committee Member

Name: Gwenda Schroeder-Zulch
Homeless Veterans and Creative Arts
Department of Ohio

Committee Member

Name: Rosemarie Hauck
VAVS Deputy
Department of Missouri

Central Division Chairman

Name: Carollee Junge
Department of Illinois

National Headquarters Contact (Program Coordinator)

Name: Maria Potts
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Eastern Division Chairman

Name: Lorraine "Rani" Gile
Department of Vermont

Northwestern Division Chairman

Name: Peggy Miller
Department of Wyoming

Southern Division Chairman

Name: Beverly Waller
Department of North Carolina

Western Division Chairman

Name: Madeline Lee
Department of California

Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation

National-level Objectives

1. **Objective:** To increase volunteer services within a VAMC or outpatient clinics by 10 volunteers per Department and to increase volunteers outside a VAMC through Field Service and Home Service volunteers by 10 per Department.

Action Steps

- a. Educate Auxiliary members of the opportunities available through VA Medical Centers/clinics, Field Service or Home Service volunteering. Host American Legion Auxiliary Forums and recruitment tables at Department meetings; Post and Unit functions, conventions and community events.
 - b. Work with your VA Facilities to create meaningful assignments for every volunteer based on the volunteers' availability. Offer volunteer opportunities on Department and Unit websites, newsletters and other types of communication.
 - c. Promote special emphasis on methods of recruiting, retaining, motivating, and recognizing volunteers. Remember there are grant dollars available to assist you in completing your action plan
 - d. Promote veteran-related activities that fulfill volunteer service requirements for high school and college students, through restorative justice/teen court programs, or youth groups by offering them volunteer opportunities through the American Legion Auxiliary. Assist VAVS Representatives and Deputies to work with VAVS Chief in establishing a Youth Service Project for student volunteers.
 - e. Promote veteran-related outreach volunteers for members living in rural communities with no access to VA facilities. Seek out veterans living in your communities through assistance from your VAMC's, VA Clinics, local nursing homes, local American Legion Posts, and other veterans organizations
2. **Objective:** To raise \$150K to fulfill our obligation and increase our donation as a corporate sponsor of The Veterans Creative Arts Festival.

Action Steps

- a. To promote the annual competition that recognizes the progress and recovery made through recreation therapy and raises the visibility of the creative achievements of our nation's veterans after disease, disability, or life crisis we need to increase our donations in each Department
- b. On the Unit and Department level encourage fundraising with a goal of eighteen cents per member sent to National to fulfill our obligation as a corporate sponsor.
- c. Issue news releases announcing the event to be held in San Antonio, Texas held October 5-11, 2009
- d. Publicize the Bronze (\$1000 to \$1999), Silver (\$2000 to \$4999) or Gold (\$5000 and above) awards presented to Departments made to National Creative Arts Festival through National close of books 2010.

Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation

3. **Objective:** To increase participation in Ride 2 Recovery (R2R) events. To encourage fundraising and volunteer participation for the five scheduled R2R events.

Action Steps

- a. Promote participation and in-kind donations to Ride 2 Recovery (R2R). Assist the VA Committee when a ride is scheduled for your area by serving as site coordinators, hosting fundraising and meals for wounded warriors, and promoting community support.
- b. To support Spinning Recovery Labs and outdoor cycling programs at Military and VA locations around the U.S. to help injured veterans overcome obstacles they face. Cycling is an important part of the veteran's recovery and rehabilitation
- c. Identify those local VA facilities that do not have Spinning Recovery Labs by collaborating and encouraging the adaptation of spin cycle programs and recovery labs.
- d. Sponsor a wounded warrior for their Ride 2 Recovery.
- e. Join the ride as a contributor.
- f. Develop a PR Campaign to educate the community on the benefits of cycling which promotes morale and welfare benefits by strengthening the body, reducing stress, depression and anxiety, and providing a life-changing experience that can impact the lives of our wounded warriors forever.

4. **Objective:** Collaborate with American Legion Auxiliary VISTA volunteers to help indigent veterans.

Action Steps

- a. Develop a tool-kit to direct Departments on how to sponsor a Stand Down.
- b. Assist Units by developing tools to support Homeless Veterans Shelters.
- c. Develop a needs list to support shelters with toiletry items, clothing, books, and cleaning goods.

To be filled out by Department Chairman:

Department Goals relating to above. Should have no more than three department-level goals supporting the National objectives outlined above. Department Chair - please share these with your Committee and forward a copy to your National Chairman. (This process does not need national approval.)

1. Objective:

Action Steps

- a.

2. Objective:

Action Steps

- a.

Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation

3. Objective:

Action Steps

a.

Programs

1. VA Medical Center (VAMC) & Outpatient Facilities
Volunteer service provided for a veteran within a VAMC or outpatient clinic. The American Legion Auxiliary fills a vital role at VA facilities across the country; enabling facility and program administrators to stretch their resources with our guaranteed aid and assistance so they can concentrate on the delivery of core services.
2. Field and Home Service
Field Service volunteers provide service to veterans outside a VAMC. Volunteers complete a Field Service Orientation Course initiated by the American Legion Auxiliary. Field Service volunteers maintain their own recordkeeping and dollars spent. Home Service volunteers do projects and work for active duty military/veterans and/or families from the home and also maintain their own recordkeeping and dollars spent.
3. National Veterans Creative Arts Festival (NVCAF)
Promote the annual competition that recognizes the progress and recovery made through recreation therapy, and raises the visibility of the creative achievements of our nation's veterans after disease, disability or life crisis. As a national sponsor, the American Legion Auxiliary should strive to increase monetary support by encouraging Departments to sponsor fundraisers that will contribute to the increased awareness and support of this program.
4. Homeless Veterans Initiatives
Work collaboratively with the VA Homeless Veterans Program, The American Legion and National Coalition of Homeless Veterans to encourage active participation in homeless veteran's initiatives.
5. Welcome Home Celebrations
To provide assistance to your local VAMC in supporting returning service men and women and their families in the community. VA supports this initiative by providing them with information about the opportunities available to them through the VA system. Every VAMC has been mandated to sponsor Welcome Home Celebrations in their facilities and community.
6. Fisher House
Provide volunteer resources and annual donations to Fisher House.

Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation

7. Veterans Affairs Voluntary Services National Advisory Committee
Actively engage in the activity of the VAVS Committee enabling the American Legion Auxiliary National Representative to better represent the interest of and exert influence on behalf of the American Legion Auxiliary on a national level. Develop a deeper connection between the National Representative and Deputy with the Representatives and Deputies in each Department.
8. Support American Legion Programs
Promote The American Legion's legislative efforts that support programs at the Department and Post level to increase awareness of and participation in programs and resources to assist transitioning service members from military service to civilian life while maintaining the highest quality of life.
9. National Recognition Programs
To annually salute America's Heroes ~ more than 98,000 veterans of the U.S. Armed Services who are cared for everyday in VA Medical Centers during the week of February 14th annually.
10. National Volunteer Month (April)
Encourage the organization, at all levels, to recognize and celebrate the important work that volunteers do every day on behalf of veterans.

Committee Awards

- A. Reconnecting Our Service Through Veteran Support Award
A Citation Plaque will be presented to the Unit that implements and carries out the Most Outstanding Event that brings honor and recognition to our veterans and/or servicemembers at any VAMC or VA Facility, Veteran's Home, Fisher House, VetCenter, Homeless Veterans Shelter or any facility where more than 60% of the residents are veterans. Entry must be typewritten in narrative form not to exceed 1,000 words. Pictures and newspaper articles may be included but not to exceed six pages. Entry cannot be in bound book or hard cover. Cover sheet must include Unit name and number, address, Unit chairman's name, address and phone number, date and location where the event was held. Submit to National Committee Member Gwenda Schroeder-Zulch by June 1, 2010.
- B. Department VA&R Program Awards
A citation plaque will be presented to the Department Chairman in each Division that reports the Most Outstanding Overall VA&R program as per the goals stated in this Plan of Work. Entry must be typewritten in narrative form not to exceed 1,000 words. All entries must be post-marked by June 1, 2010 and sent by the Department Chairman to the National Division Chairman.
- C. Field Service Volunteer Hours Award
A citation plaque will be presented to a Field Service volunteer serving the greatest number of hours from April 1, 2009 – March 31, 2010 in each Division for Junior and Senior members. Units should send their nominees to the Department Chairman who is responsible for informing units of their due date. Unit is required to certify hours of any nominee – the Department Chair may ask for this information. The Department Chairman will then send the top hour volunteer Junior and Senior volunteer, to the National Division Chairman by June 1, 2010.

Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation

D. Home Service Volunteer Hours Award

A citation plaque will be presented to a Home Service volunteer serving the greatest number of hours from April 1, 2009 - March 31, 2010 in each Division for Junior or Senior members. Units should send their nominees to the Department Chairman who is responsible for informing units of their due date. Unit is required to certify hours of any nominee – the Department Chair may ask for this information. The Department Chairman will then send the top hour volunteer Junior and Senior volunteer, to the National Division Chairman by June 1, 2010.

E. Junior Volunteer Scholarship

A \$1,000 scholarship and certificate will be awarded to a Junior Member who also serves in a volunteer capacity and is a High School senior, in each Division. Candidates should be chosen based on the cumulative total of hours served in a VA facility, and/or in combination with Field or Home Service hours. Unit Chairman or President may submit an introduction of the nominee that should not exceed 500 words. Units should send their nominees to the Department Chairman who is responsible for informing units of their due date. Unit is required to certify hours of any nominee – the Department Chair may ask for this information. The Department Chairman will then send the top Junior volunteer to National Committee Member Rosemarie Hauck by June 1, 2010.

F. National Creative Arts Festival Contribution Recognition

The NCAF will recognize departments who contribute at the Bronze, Silver and Gold level. This recognition will be made at the 2010 Festival. ALA Headquarters will submit qualifying donations to the NCAF staff in July – donations considered are those received in the National Office September 1, 2009 through June 30, 2010.

G. Unit VA&R Program Awards

A citation plaque will be presented to a Unit Chairman in each Division reporting the Most Outstanding Overall VA&R program as per the goals stated in this Plan of Work. Entry must be typewritten in narrative form not to exceed 1,000 words. Units will submit entries to the Department Chairman by her required date. All entries must be post-marked by June 1, 2010 and sent by the Department Chairman to the National Chairman.

H. VAVS VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARD/ALA NAC NOMINEE

The Department VA&R Chairman or ALA Department Director of Hospital Volunteers will make nominations for consideration. A Department nomination must be prepared in a narrative format not to exceed 500 words and may include up to two letters of recommendation. This nomination is due to the National VAVS Deputy, by June 1, 2010.

This award will be made to the nominee who has given extraordinary service to our nation's veterans through the ALA VA&R program and the VAVS program. Specifically this nominee must serve in an established VA assignment and be defined as a regularly scheduled volunteer. In addition, we are looking for an individual who is actively involved working with veterans in any one of the following areas: Outpatient Clinics; Nursing Homes; Homeless Veteran Programs; Hosted veteran related functions outside the VA; Visiting veterans confined to their homes (as assigned by VAVS). The National winner will receive \$500 to be donated to the VAVS facility of her choice and in

Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation

recipient's name, and she will be profiled in the National News. In addition, the ALA will forward her name as our candidate for the VAVS National Advisory Committee Volunteer of the Year.

I. Volunteer Recruitment & Service Department Award

A citation plaque will be presented to the Department in each Division with the largest increase of Regularly Scheduled Volunteers and Regularly Scheduled volunteer hours at a VA Medical Center from April 1, 2009 – March 31, 2010. The award winner will be determined by the National VAVS Rep through verification of Department hours and number of volunteers as recorded by VAVS.

J. 100% VAVS MEETING ATTENDANCE

An 'Attendance Card' will be awarded to each Representative and Deputy who has 100% attendance to VAVS Committee meetings at her assigned facility. The National VAVS Representative will verify the winners from VA records.

K. 10,000 – Hour Volunteer Service Award

A special Volunteer Citation will be awarded to the eligible volunteer and a \$100 donation will be awarded in eligible volunteers' name to the VAVS facility of her choice. Volunteer must have accrued 10,000 hours of volunteer service in a VA Facility. This is a one-time presentation and will be made at convention if verification of hours is received at the DC Office by June 1, 2010.

L. 20,000 – Hour Volunteer Service Award

A special Volunteer Citation will be awarded to the eligible volunteer and a \$200 donation will be awarded in eligible volunteers' name to the VAVS facility of her choice. Volunteer who provided 20,000 hours of volunteer service to the veteran. This is a one-time presentation and will be made at convention if verification of hours is received at the DC Office by June 1, 2010.

M. Homeless Veterans Outreach Award

The ALA, TAL and SAL come together annually to select a Department who has done an outstanding job in the area of Homeless Veterans Outreach. Award nominations are solicited each fall and the winners are recognized at the National Convention and the National NCHV Conference held each June in Washington, D.C. For more information go to:
www.legion-aux.org/MO-Programs/VeteransAffairsandRehabilitation/index.aspx

Resources

1. www.ride2recovery.us.com
2. VA&R Guide (formerly, Guide for Volunteers); provided through the Auxiliary
3. A System Worth Saving; guide provided through The American Legion
4. Gulf War Benefits and Programs, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Vietnam Veterans - Guide to Agent Orange Benefits, What to do Before a Veteran Dies, Women Veterans - Identifying Risk, Services and Prevention; brochures available through The American Legion.

See program page on www.legion-aux.org for additional resources