



Michigan Connection

November 2023

(To be read on the Auxiliary Floor)

www.vfwauxmi.org

Department of Michigan Auxiliary

#4

Hello Sisters and Brothers,

A sincere thank you to all the members who attended the Fall Conference Trainings. The feedback that I received was all positive. The Quarter Mania was well attended, and everyone seemed to enjoy themselves. Thank you to the Officers, Districts, and members who donated to the Quarter Mania. About \$3800.00 was raised.

The Hospital Star Raffle raised \$1655.00, and the Silver Dollar Table brought in \$262.00.

I wish to thank every Auxiliary that participated during the month of September with my special project of planting a tree to bring attention to Suicide Awareness. Although I asked for the project to be completed during the month of September, your Auxiliary can still plant the tree and report it any time this year. Please submit your tree planting event or ceremony pictures to our department historian. She will be compiling a book with those pictures separate from everything else that happens during my tenure as a special gift to highlight my year of service.

We hope that enjoyed the membership slide show at the Fall Conference. Thank you to everyone who submitted pictures of your Veterans. We will be showing it again during our Mid-winter Conference. It was brought to my attention some pictures that were sent in did not appear. PLEASE resend the pictures for them to be added. If you didn't participate the first time now is your opportunity to do so. Pictures MUST be submitted by December 31, 2023, to be included.

Congratulation to Marian Belaire for being elected and Installed at the Big 10 Conference as Guard!

Many questions have been asked by Auxiliaries as to whether their installation reports, bonds, or audits, have come to the office. Every Auxiliary can check our Dashboard. There you can scroll across your Auxiliary line and if it is green, the answer is yes. If it's still red, that means the office has not. You can also see program chairmanships that have been reported in each quarter marked in green also.

Respectfully, Sara Manke Department of Michigan VFW Auxiliary President.

A sincere thank you to the officers, District Presidents and members who distributed the Department Gun Raffle Tickets. It clearly was a huge success as a fundraiser clearing \$10,140.00 in net profit. Thank you to our Department Chaplain Jason Manke for bringing this project forward.

The Auxiliary IRS 990's is due on or before November 15, 2023. Please get them completed and send a copy to the Department Office.

Has every one of your Auxiliary elected officers paid their 2024 dues? If not, please encourage them and all continuous members to get their dues paid in a timely manner and not at the last minute on 12/31/2023.

Upcoming District Meeting Dates:

- | | | |
|--------------|-------------------|------------------------------|
| District 5- | December 3, 2023 | Heart of Lakes VFW #1008 |
| District 6- | January 6, 2024 | Mason VFW Post #7309 |
| District 7- | November 5, 2023 | Celery City VFW Post #6248 |
| District 8- | November 4, 2023 | Thornapple Valley Post #8260 |
| District 9- | November 18, 2023 | Fred E. Richards Post #3055 |
| District 10- | November 4, 2023 | Sandusky VFW Post #2945 |
| District 11- | November 5, 2023 | Harrison VFW Post #1075 |
| District 12- | November 5, 2023 | Gold Bar Post #5096 |
| District 13- | November 4, 2023 | Onaway VFW Post #5857 |

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Department of Michigan Auxiliary

The holiday season is upon us. We hope you find the opportunity to spend time with Veterans that are in VA Facilities, Nursing Homes, or living on their own without family nearby. Maybe your Auxiliary could provide a goodies basket filled with things that would make their lives a little bit more festive this holiday season.

Colder months are coming quickly. When planning to cancel or reschedule meetings let this be a friendly reminder.
Sec. 210—Meetings, Regular and Special

First two bold black bullets

- Monthly business meetings are encouraged, however every Auxiliary shall hold at least ten (10) business meetings per year.
- A change in the regular monthly business meeting date, time, or location shall be approved by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Auxiliary members present at such meeting.

- Notification of such change shall be sent to all of its auxiliary members, the National, Department, and District Secretaries within ten (10) calendar days.

The deadline to pay your 2024 dues to remain a member in good standing is December 31, 2023. An officer who has not paid by 12/31/2023 will have their position declared vacant.

The Buddy® Poppy Contest Theme at Mid-Winter Conference will be Our Veterans, Angels Among us. Chairman Patrick Rich is looking forward to witnessing all your entries with all of their individual creativity.

The Department Mid-Winter Conference will be held in Kalamazoo at the Radisson Hotel January 26th-27th, 2024. The hotel information can be found on our Department Webpage under announcements. The National VFW Auxiliary Representative to the Conference will be National District Council Member Area B, Stephanie Krueger.

You may now order your Voice of Democracy/Patriot's Pen/Teacher of the Year Banquet Tickets. Online ordering is available at vfwmi.org click on the NEWS TAB and then MID-WINTER CONFERENCE PAGE. Tickets are \$52.00 per person. Ordering after January 19, 2024, the cost will be \$60.00 per person.

Training will be the primary focus for this Mid-Winter Conference. We believe what is being planned will be beneficial to every Auxiliary and we hope that you will make your plans now to attend.


Sara Manke- Department President


Sandi Onstwedder- Department Secretary

Michigan Department VFW Auxiliary VETERANS & FAMILY SUPPORT BULLETIN

November 2023

www.vfwauxmi.org

Facebook Page: Veterans & Family Support-Michigan

UNWAVERING SUPPORT

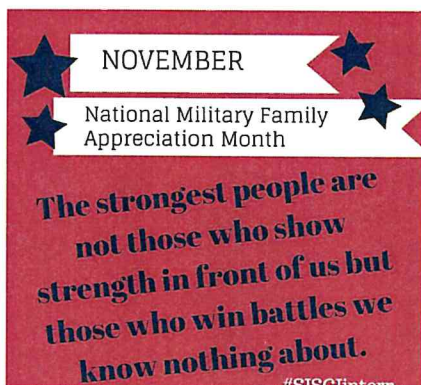


FOR UNCOMMON HEROES™

National Theme: Banding Together for Our Veterans

Department Theme: Our Veterans the Angels Among Us

"As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them." —John Fitzgerald Kennedy



November is here and it gives us lots of opportunities to say "Thank you!" and show our appreciation! Here are the following holidays to support this mission:

National Veterans & Military Month
Warrior Care Month
National Family Caregivers Month
National Veterans Small Business Week - Oct. 30 -Nov. 3, 23
Marine Corp Birthday - November 10
Veterans Day - November 11

Here are a few ways ideas for Auxiliaries to support this month's themes and celebrations:

- Does your Auxiliary or community members have any active duty families stationed abroad? Gather a list of those that you might have and reach out with a simple "Thinking of You" card. Let them know they have an Auxiliary back home to support them. Do they have any needs?
- What is Warrior Care Month? It is highlighting the strength and resilience physically, mentally, and spiritually – of our wounded, ill, and injured service members and their families and caregivers. The effort is aimed at raising awareness of the recovery coordination resources and programs available today and inspiring year-round discussions regarding today's warrior care priorities. Promote resources on your Auxiliary Facebook pages or community pages. A great place to start is <https://health.mil/Military-Health-Topics>.
- Does your Auxiliary know of any family caregivers? Perhaps have an appreciation dinner for them or offer to bring them dinner one night to help ease some of the daily stress. Reach out and let them know they are not alone. There are a lot of resources out there like www.caregiver.va.gov that you can get more ideas of support from.
- Do you know any veteran or military spouse owned businesses in your area? Let's celebrate and empower these businesses through promotion, purchasing or even calling them with some encouraging words. Also, if you know of any transitioning veterans, there are resources available to them to help them like [Boots to Business](#) or connect them with your local [Veterans Business Outreach Center](#) to assist them in developing a business plan, receive marketing tips, and access government contracting opportunities.
- How can I or my Auxiliary support Veterans Day? Attend a community event (or create one!) to show your appreciation; Write a "Thank You" note to Veterans in your life; Offer a discount if you are a business owner (be creative); Volunteer (Host a food drive/supply drive; Visit a nursing home; Assist veterans in need with chores or tasks; and/or Donate!

December 2023

"The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched. They must be felt with the heart. Wishing you happiness." – Helen Keller

The season of "Thankfulness" has come and gone, but now we are entering the season of "Giving". What does giving look like? It can be the donation of our time to local organizations to support their cause, like Wreaths Across America or your local food bank. Do you have any veterans or families that might need assistance with leaf pick up or snow shoveling this winter? Get volunteers lined up now to help those that might need assistance in various ways. Now is also the time to establish an opportunity to send a care package to an active duty member that might be spending the holidays alone. Your giving opportunities are abundant!

According to an article in the MVAA website dated July 23, 2023, "In 2022, there were 2,342 veterans experiencing homelessness in Michigan, according to the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). But Erika Hoover, the MVAA's women veterans and special populations coordinator, said that number is likely much higher." This month I want to encourage Auxiliaries to reach out to their local homeless veteran organizations and ask them how you and your Auxiliary can help them this month. The weather here in Michigan is pretty brutal and this is



the time of year when donations and vital resources are needed the most. One way you may be able to assist is to create Winter Support Kits for Homeless Veterans. Items can include: gloves, warm socks, hat, scarf, toiletry items, water, snacks, and a gift card to the local Speedway for a cup of warm joe. In those kits, you can include local resources that might be beneficial, the local VSO (Veteran Service Officer) contact information, and any events that might support their well being.

This holiday season can be a time of happiness, good cheer and excitement. But, for others, it can mean loneliness, isolation, grief and sadness. Please reach out to those that might be struggling this holiday season. You can do that through a phone call, card, or even inviting them over for some coffee or to fill an empty seat at your table.

Reporting: If your Auxiliary has yet to report anything for Veterans & Family support, I would highly encourage you to do so by the end of the month. If you need assistance with reporting, please don't hesitate to reach out. This program is the heart of our organization and it is why we are here!

December Holidays:

- 12/7- National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day
- 12/13- U.S. National Guard Birthday
- 12/16- Wreaths Across America
- 12/20- U.S. Space Force Birthday

Christine LeBrun
Veterans & Family Support Chairman
10367 River Rock Blvd
Dimondale, MI 48821
vfsmi23.24@gmail.com



**Michigan Department VFW Auxiliary
Americanism Bulletin**

November 2023

www.vfwauxmi.org

Facebook page: Americanism-Michigan



National Theme: Banding Together for Our Veterans

Department Theme: Our Veterans the Angels Among Us

Hope you received valuable information while attending the fall conference. Many different ideas were shared with those in attendance on how to promote Americanism in your local communities. I truly enjoyed talking and discussing the Americanism program with each of you at my curbside on Saturday afternoon.

With the holidays fast approaching, we still have many projects that we could accomplish. We have a sacred Patriotic holiday quickly approaching on the 11th day of this month. What has your Auxiliary planned to do, or to host to honor your veterans-on-Veterans Day? Are you planning a luncheon or dinner at your post home? Will you honor them with a certificate, small gift, or just a thank them for their service? No gesture goes unnoticed by our veterans. They are humble but appreciate being recognized for their time in America's military.

If you give out flags or donate them, remember to report how many American flags, and Prisoners of War/Missing in Action Flags, you distribute. Remember when speaking to use the words, not acronyms.

"Help the living by honoring the dead" As your patriotic instructor, it is nice to help new members with some of our rituals like the raps of the gavel.

One rap: Attention Two raps: Stand Up Three Raps: Be Seated

Happy thanksgiving to you, and your family, and all the Veterans of this great nation.

Roberta Reid, Americanism/Patriotic Instructor Chairman
flagsrreid@gmail.com

Michigan Department VFW Auxiliary
Americanism Bulletin
December 2023

www.vfwauxmi.org

Facebook page: Americanism-Michigan



National Theme: Banding Together for Our Veterans

Department Theme: Our Veterans the Angels Among Us

Have you been on MALTA and used any of the resources that are available for executing your Americanism program? If so, report it to me. An award that you can earn is based on whether you have utilized this site and the material available there.

This month our Patriotic holiday is December 7th, Pearl Harbor Day. This is a day permanently etched in the minds of every American citizen. Have you planned a local program for your VFW and Auxiliary? Are you inviting community leaders and citizens?

Have you handed out any Patriotic Appreciation Citations, Certificates of Appreciation, or Respect for the Flag Citations, and presented them to individual citizens and/or businesses in recognition of their displaying the American flag, Prisons of War/Missing in Action flag and/or other displays that denote American Pride? If so, report them to me.

Does your auxiliary have a creative idea for an activity or event, in which you educate your community that our VFW Auxiliary acronyms are “more than letters”? And, sharing what is the meaning behind each word? For Instance, POW stands for Prisoner of War. Your Auxiliary will receive a citation if you host an activity/event that educates citizens in your community that our VFW Auxiliary acronyms are “more than letters.” Entry form is required, and available on MALTA under Member Resources. Auxiliaries must send their entry form to me as the Department Americanism Chairman by March 31, 2024.

May you have a safe and happy holiday season along with your veteran families!

Roberta Reid, Americanism/Patriotic Instructor Chairman
flagsrreid@gmail.com
6060 North Road
Burtchville, MI 48059
810-656-7725

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT VFW AUXILIARY AUXILIARY OUTREACH BULLETIN November 2023

www.vfwauxmi.org

Facebook Page: Auxiliary Outreach-Michigan

UNWAVERING SUPPORT



FOR UNCOMMON HEROES™

National Theme: Banding Together for Our Veterans

Department Theme: Our Veterans the Angels Among Us

Fall Conference is behind us all and we now look forward to the beautiful winter months that are upon us! If you attended Fall Conference I hope that you enriched yourself with the knowledge of others and networked with your fellow Auxiliary members. I know that I truly had an amazing time presenting to all that attended!

This month I want to focus on some good housekeeping to help you submit quality reports while trying to streamline the process. Many of you have reported fantastic opportunities, I am truly impressed with the groups that you are partnering with.

When reporting multiple activities within a single month you can consolidate these different activities into a single report rather than submitting a report for each activity. In the below image you can see that the "description" box contains the dates and information for the activities. The Cumulative Hours, Members and # of Projects is the combined total of all the listed activities in the description box.



By making this change in your submission process it will greatly reduce the amount of time to submit all of the quality Auxiliary Outreach reports. REMEMBER: An approved motion is required prior to the Auxiliary Outreach opportunity.

<input type="radio"/> Americanism	<input type="radio"/> Auxiliary Achievement	<input type="radio"/> Auxiliary Outreach
<input type="radio"/> Buddy Poppy ® /National Home	<input type="radio"/> District Achievement	<input type="radio"/> Extension & Revitalization
<input type="radio"/> Historian / Media Relations	<input type="radio"/> Hospital	<input type="radio"/> Membership
<input type="radio"/> Mentoring For Leadership	<input type="radio"/> Legislative	<input type="radio"/> Scholarships
<input type="radio"/> Veterans and Family Support	<input type="radio"/> Youth & Camp Trotter	
Cumulative Hours*	Miles*	Members*
56	0	22
Dollars Spent/Donated*	Poppies*	Youth*
0	0	0
Chairman*	# of Projects*	
John Q. Adams	5	

Description*

11/6/23 - 6 members volunteered at Fish and Loves food party
 11/10/23 - 2 members Worked registration booth at local snowmobile meeting
 11/19/23 - 1 member assisted at at the Special Olympics event
 11/23/23 - 4 members volunteered at the food stand for community fair
 11/30/23 - 9 members worked the adoption event for the Humane Society

SUBMIT

AUXILIARY OUTREACH

December 2023



With the Mid-Winter Conference next month now is the time to regroup and focus on completing many successful Auxiliary Outreach opportunities. Just because it's winter does not mean that the busy Auxiliary worker bees have taken a break! December is the time to reaffirm your volunteering and seek out groups that desperately need assistance during the cold months and holiday season. Put on that winter hat and scarf and get out there!

Consider looking into not only one but many local food/soup kitchens; these organizations are always looking for "workers" to assist them during this busy time. Reach out to your local groups regarding food distribution. As a worker bee you can assist in the packing of food boxes, distribution and much more.

Now is the time to Bee the change and help others Bee successful!

When in doubt, shout! If you ever have any questions please never hesitate to reach out and ask. If I don't know the answer I will get you one.

Thank you to all the Auxiliaries who are charging the way! You are an inspiration to me; it's because of your efforts that the Department of Michigan VFW Auxiliary Outreach is successful.

Some last minute ideas can include:

- Salvation Army
- Toys for Tots
- Meals on Wheels
- Local Santa's Workshop
- Rescue Missions

Does your Auxiliary struggle to find opportunities? Visit <https://www.volunteermatch.org/> to help locate and identify possible opportunities.

Wishing you and your family a safe and joyful holiday season!

Jared Blum
172 Davis St.
Wyandotte, MI 48192
734-771-3050
Jblum25@gmail.com

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT VFW AUXILIARY
"BUDDY":® POPPY/NATIONAL HOME BULLETIN
Nov/Dec 2023

www.vfwauxmi.org

Facebook Page: "Buddy" ® Poppy /National Home Michigan

UNWAVERING SUPPORT



FOR UNCOMMON HEROES™

National Theme: Banding Together for Our Veterans

Department Theme: Our Veterans the Angels Among Us

Look at our guide sheets to see what else we need to accomplish. Have you utilized MALTA to get "Buddy" Poppy materials and resources?

"Buddy" ® Poppy mid-winter conference display remembers the theme (Our Veterans the Angels Among us) here is a copy of the rules.

Veterans Day is coming use as many "Buddy" ® Poppy on your table, wrap the flat ware with "Buddy" ® Poppy count everyone you use. Work as a team with your members to make the project for Mid-winter Conference. Have Fun! Whenever you or Auxiliary does anything for "Buddy" ® Poppy or the National Home report it so we know what you are up to. Also, the none profit status can be dropped if cannot prove you have helped veterans. The IRS can pull you nonprofit. So, Report what you do.

When reporting on the "Buddy" Poppy program, it is important to know that we only count the money going out. We do not need to know how much you brought in from your drives. We need to know how much your Auxiliary donates to Veterans and the number of Poppies procured from the V.F.W.



Let's not forget our Veterans during Veterans Day use "Buddy" Poppy in your Table display and count everyone used if you do a bundle of 10 and put a bundle of 10 on 8 tables you just used 80 "Buddy" Poppy please report that.

Christmas will be here soon using "Buddy" Poppy in your decorations in your post please let me know how many "Buddy" Poppy you use. Thanks

How are you coming on your "Buddy" Poppy display for Mid-Winter.

Using "Buddy" Poppy is remembering all the Service men and Women that never came home and honoring the one that came home but have injuries and scarred for life.

If your auxiliary purchases a box of "Buddy" Poppy report it. We need to plant the seed of "Buddy" Poppy what I mean by that is let your community know what a "Buddy" Poppy and the true meaning of this beautiful flower is. By getting the information to them we can help other Veterans.

Use "Buddy" Poppy on your tables at your Veterans dinner count them and let me know how many used.

Please report the total number of "Buddy" Poppy used, Miles, Number of members, and the Dollars amount.

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT VFW AUXILIARY "BUDDY":® POPPY/NATIONAL HOME BULLETIN

Nov/Dec 2023

www.vfwauxmi.org



We need to look at our guide sheets to see what else we need to accomplish. Have you utilized MALTA to get V.F.W. National Home materials and resources?

V.F.W. National Home Helpline 1-800-313-4200 put this number in your cell phone so when you encounter a Veteran that you think might need help give it to them. V.F.W. National Home has QR codes to help you to purchase Memorial Bricks.



Don't forget Life membership from the VFW National Home. Cash for Kiddos how are we doing.

The V.F.W. National Home now have a gift shop you can utilize thru a QR code from your phone and sent straight to you. Get your merchandise hats, Shirts, Etc.



A great way for you to get National Home Merchandise if you don't live near the VFW National Home. Try it this QR code from you cell phone, you can see everything they have. Fast Fun, Easy.

Check out the "Buddy" Poppy National Home Facebook page, I put out a lot of information weekly. Reminders upcoming events and lots of great input you might need.

There are a lot of things going on at the National Home thru the Holidays and there are needs.

On January 7th, 2025, the V.F.W. National Home will be 100 years old. What can we do to make that year big and Bright. Plans are being made now.

If you don't know how to report, please call me. I will be glad to walk it thru with you.

Promote the V.F.W. National Home. I live 3 miles from the National and in Eaton Rapids people have never heard of it. What is it.

Michigan has the greatest jewel, right here and we need to be proud of it and tell people about it, they may know someone that might need it.

Our Veterans need us, lets use the tools we already have.

Santa Shop 2023 Gift Suggestion list on the Department web site. Please visit and print it out. Thanks.

Patrick Rich "Buddy" ® Poppy/VFW National Home Chairman

315 ½ E. Elizabeth St. Eaton Rapids, MI, 48827

Prichfred@prodigy.net 517-525-9300

Michigan Department VFW Auxiliary EXTENSION AND REVITALIZATION BULLETIN November 2023



Make use of the Tools on Malta, especially *Building on the Auxiliary Foundation*, and the Healthy Auxiliary Tool Kit.

There are Awards for members who assist the Chief of Staff. Read up on them on your Guide Sheet and on Malta.

Review of the Healthy Auxiliary checklist found on the Chief of Staff Program page:

You should have accomplished the following by now:

- The audit from July/August/September 2023 should be in the Department office. It was due to be completed by October 31, 2023 and in the Department office by Nov. 30, 2023.

Healthy Auxiliaries have things in common:

- They hold a minimum of 10 meetings w/ a quorum per year
- Dues are current for officers (by 12-31-2023)
- The offices of both President and Treasurer were bonded by 8-31-23
- The 990 report has been filed with the IRS by 11-15-23, and copy to the Department Office. Help is only a phone call away. Just ask.
- They are always working to recruit new members and retain current members.
- There is representation at all District meetings since it is mandatory for EVERY Auxiliary at EVERY District meeting to be represented, per the By-Laws.
- Red Flags are ok. They mean a little attention is needed. Don't be afraid to speak of your worries. That's the only way we can help. Please do not wait until April elections to say anything. We also expect an honest evaluation from the District President on his/her Official Visit.

The following deadlines will be coming up quickly so get prepared:

- The next round of District meetings of the Auxiliary year will begin in November and December so plan to have representation at those meetings. Remember that it is now a By-Law requirement.

I hope you learned about Organizing Teams at the Fall Conference. Always be on the lookout for a spark of interest from an unaffiliated post to start an auxiliary.

Extension and Revitalization Bulletin December 2023

I know this is a busy month for many with the holidays, events for children, veterans, and our own family celebrations. But our work continues, to avoid those **RED FLAGS** and stay healthy.

This is the month we must make certain all officers' dues are paid. Have your President, Secretary and Treasurer paid their 2023 dues yet? They need to set the example. On January 1, 2024 they are **no longer a member in good standing** if they are not paid, and therefore no longer an Officer.

This is also a great time to consider making a gift of dues for a member who might be struggling and juggling what bills take priority. We have a relief fund that can be used for this purpose. Be a dues Angel.

- The most recent audit period was July/August/September. This audit was to be completed in October. It was then to be approved at the next auxiliary meeting after the audit and due into the office by November 30th. Did you get it to the office by the end of November?
- 990's were due to the IRS (with a copy to the office) by November 15th. Did you get it done and sent in? If not contact the office and Nicole can assist you.

These will keep you up to date on what a Healthy Auxiliary does. If you missed any of these, it is not too late to accomplish them

There was much information shared by all of the Department Chairman at the Fall Conference. Hopefully you were there and learned at least one new thing.

Don't be afraid to reach out if your Auxiliary needs a bit of help or just has a question that they need answered. We can only help if we know there is a need. We are all in this together. The Healthier we are, the more we can do for the Veterans and Communities.

Let's all work to have every Auxiliary healthy and thriving this next year. If you have concerns, need help, or know of a post without an Auxiliary that would like one, please call my cell listed below.

Stephanie Krueger
10165 Fairview
Taylor, MI 48180
313-585-5066
stepherthevfer@aol.com

Michigan Department VFW Auxiliary HISTORIAN-MEDIA RELATIONS BULLETIN BULLETIN

November & December 2023

www.vfwauxmi.org

UNWAVERING SUPPORT



FOR UNCOMMON HEROES

National Theme: Banding Together for our Veterans

Department Theme: Our Veterans, The Angels Among Us

When members look back at this time in 10, 20 or 50 years (or more) in the future, they will have an idea of how we, as an organization, met the needs of our veterans and their families during these times.

Connect with members:

- Prepare a monthly or quarterly newsletter or e-newsletter for your members. Give them ideas of how to help with Programs while they socially distancing.
- Maintain an Auxiliary/Post Facebook page to share information.
- Recognize member anniversaries, birthdays, and volunteer work.

Promote your Auxiliary's activities and events:

- Use the VFW Auxiliary Publicity Guide.
- Use a fillable press/media release form for activities/events.
- Send a Communications Award to local media for covering Auxiliary activities/events.

Did your Auxiliary **DO** or does your Auxiliary **HAVE PLANS TO DO** any of the following:

- Educate youth about the Pledge of Allegiance (in-person or through video conferencing)?
- Host a "Buddy"® Poppy Drive?
- Partner with another organization to better your community?
- Drop off items for hospitalized veterans at VA and non-VA medical facilities?
- Participate in "Get out the Vote" efforts?
- Contact members of Congress regarding veterans' issues?
- Host a drive-by school supply pickup, trick-or-treat, Santa or Easter Bunny visit?
- Fill stockings for homeless veterans?
- Participate in Wreaths Across America?
- Host food drives or donate food to a local food bank/food pantry?
- Donate gift cards so service members overseas can purchase items of their choice.
- Send Christmas or Valentine cards to soldiers overseas or hospitalized veterans?
- Donate books to your local library, school, or literacy organization?
- Promote and participate in our youth scholarships and contests?

We know members and Auxiliaries are doing, plan to do and have done things listed above, along with many other things not listed. However, did they post pictures on Facebook, and a description of what they did? It's so important for members to take photos and keep a record of the projects they work on at home or in small groups in addition to photos at larger Auxiliary activities/events.

The who, what, when where and why of an event is so important to the story – and history – of the VFW Auxiliary. Take pictures (and write down who is in them), keep newspaper articles or print out online news articles about what is going on in your community, your state, our country and the world.



To send all the pictures of your Tree ceremonies that you have already done or the ones that you plan to take to Nicole Koutz. It is best that you email them her at turtlelee@hotmail.com please let her know what Auxiliary the pictures are from and names if you have them. You can also text them at 989-620-6425. The Department President really would like a Book of all the different ceremonies of everyone planting their trees.

REPORTING

I know some think it is hard to report for Historian, but it really isn't!! Remember you can report that you post on Facebook, that you do Newsletters, that you use MALTA resources, that you are working on a scrap book, and that you are taking pictures. Many of you have not reported under Historian yet, and just know it's not too late, you have at least 2 quarters left if you were not able to report in the first two.

Capturing the Best Picture

When capturing your picture, it's important to keep a few details in mind:

- Think about the format the picture is intended for (e.g.: Facebook, website, newspaper, etc.).
- Hold your hands steady; this will help keep your subject in focus.
- Never be afraid to take lots of pictures, as you never know what memories you'll most want to remember.

Some reminders:

- Make sure you are posting to your Facebook page.
- Make sure you are posting to your Website.
- Send out Newsletters.
- Take Pictures and keep a book.
- Take notes and put with your pictures of what took place throughout the year.
- Share your Flyers with the Community.

Keep up the great work that you are doing!

Nicole Koutz
Historian/Media Relations
924 N Washington Ave
Lansing MI 48880
989-620-6425
turtlelee@hotmail.com

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT VFW AUXILIARY HOSPITAL BULLETIN

November 2023

www.vfwauxmi.org

Facebook Page: Hospital Michigan

UNWAVERING SUPPORT



FOR UNCOMMON HEROES

National Theme: Banding Together for Our Veterans

Department Theme: Our Veterans the Angels Among Us

REPORTING REMINDERS

The reports I have received are amazing. Remember to include miles driven to a meeting or the facility. If you are mailing suggested donations, count the miles from your residence to the post office. Members should only be counted **ONCE** a year. Keep track of the volunteers you report so you don't duplicate members. For example: if a volunteer does 3 different projects, you only count the member for the 1st project and zero for the other 2 projects. Don't forget to report the suggested donations and recruiting new volunteers. You can add more than 1 Hospital project in a report. List each project in the description with miles, hours, number of volunteers and dollars per project. Add the total in the boxes above the description.

NON-TRADITIONAL HOLIDAYS

- November 11 is National Sundae Day
- November 16 is National Fast Food Day
- November 21 is World Television Day
- November 28 is National French Toast Day

VOLUNTEER

Did you know Volunteer Services at the VA facilities has changed its name? It is now known as the VA Center for Development and Civic Engagement (CDCE). VA could not provide its extremely high-quality level of service without our volunteers. Please remember to recognize, honor and thank them. If you talk to a volunteer, they don't volunteer for the accolades. They volunteer because they want to make a difference and enjoy helping Veterans.

VA has many programs that you can volunteer your time with such as becoming a Volunteer Transportation Network Driver, greeting Veterans at the main entrance as a Red Coat Ambassador, or becoming part of the Compassionate Contact Corps by contacting socially isolated Veterans through phone calls. Your time commitment is up to you.

Hospital December 2023

Happy Holidays to all! Don't forget the Star Raffle is coming up at the Mid-Winter Conference in Kalamazoo. Donate the gift cards you may receive as a gift and won't use. We accept gift card donations in \$5-\$25 increments. Don't forget to stop by the booth and buy a star. You are guaranteed to win your money back.

Non-Traditional Holidays

- December 1 National Christmas Lights Day
- December 14 Monkey Day
- December 22 National Short Person Day
- December 28 Pledge of Allegiance Day

VALENTINES FOR VETERANS

Share the love we have for our Veterans and service members this Valentine's Day by sending a store-bought or handmade valentine, hosting a party, recognition event in their honor. Fellow members, individuals and groups in your community can use their creativity to show compassion for our Veterans and service members. Stop by the hospital booth at Mid-Winter Conference and sign a card for a Veteran. I will distribute them to the VAVS representatives at the Conference to take back to their facilities. Let's shower Veterans with hearts for Valentines Day. If you have a special event, post the pictures to the Hospital Facebook page. I love seeing all the pictures of the events. Contact the facility before hosting an event. Some facilities have restrictions as to what the patients may receive. Better be safe than sorry.

Don't forget to report. I try to approve reports at least once a week. I look forward to reading the amazing work the members are doing for our Veterans.

Together in Service,

DeeAnn Miller
5742 Harrison St.
Garden City, MI 48135
Phone: 313-570-4525
auxmihospital@yahoo.com

Michigan Department VFW Auxiliary Legislative Bulletin November 2023

www.vfwauxmi.org

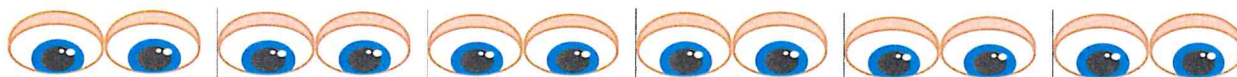
Facebook Page: Legislative Michigan

National Theme: Banding Together for Our Veterans
Department Theme: Our Veterans the Angels Among Us

Hello Michigan

1. Have you reported the number of members (total) who subscribe to Action Corps?
2. Have you signed up new members to Action Corps and reported the additional count?
3. Have you sent a letter or an email to your congressional representative in DC about supporting any of the bills for veterans? (see October's newsletter)
4. Have you written or met with your state representative?
5. Have you printed the priority goals from Malta and distributed copies at your post home?
6. Have you helped others find who their legislator is using any of the websites shared through Malta or Action Corps?
7. Do you know a bill in Lansing is H.B.xxxx or S.B.xxxx and those in DC are H.R.xxxx or S.xxxx?
8. Have you reported on each of these items?

Remember I am collecting the individual's name and the bill name. So, include this information when you report. The more information that you provide detailing who, what, when, that you put into your report, the easier it is for the chairmen to review and accept.



From the National Ambassador, Sherry Howland, Legislative work

Legislation to watch

There are several bills in the House and Senate that are imperative that we educate and have our members become active in achieving our elected representatives' support. All are listed on the vfw.org website in Legislative Priority Goals and in the subparagraphs of pending and current legislation.

While there are too many to list here, many are certainly necessary for our watchful eyes.

- Major Richard Star Act 2023 – Still a top priority issue. A proposed legislation that would allow combat-wounded veterans who are medically retired before serving 20 years to concurrently receive military retirement and disability pay, without offsets.
- Camp Lejeune Justice Act of 2022 – It is important that our veterans and their families know that if they are awarded compensation by the courts, their VA disability compensation is not affected. So, if they are in the Camp Lejeune category, they should apply for the benefit.
- Women Veterans Issues – It is imperative that we are alert for any legislation affecting the health care or any other benefits afforded women for their military service. Legislative Chairs, I encourage you to make sure our members are educated and up to date on all legislative issues regarding our veteran men and women and how to take necessary action to ensure Legislator support.

Michigan Department VFW Auxiliary Legislative Bulletin December 2023

www.vfwauxmi.org

Facebook Page: Legislative Michigan

National Theme: Banding Together for Our Veterans
Department Theme: Our Veterans the Angels Among Us

Hello Michigan

The calendar year is coming to a close and just a few months remain in this program year. Please review the list on the guide sheet for auxiliary achievements.

- Did you utilize resources from Malta? Check yes/no. If not, why not? You still have time to get this done.
- Did you ask your members how many receive Action Corps? I need a total number. I am asking for 10% participation. Just one for every ten members. I know this is possible.
- Did your auxiliary work to promote the VFW Priority Goals? Check yes/no. If not, why not? Many of the bills that are listed within Action Corps fall within the Priority Goals.
- Were you specific in reporting contacts with legislators? Names and bill number/name?
- Did you invite your state representative to your awards banquet for Voice of Democracy/Patriot's Pen? Some representatives might be willing to work with your auxiliary to write a resolution to honor your students. Ask; he who hesitates is lost. It never hurts to ask. You might get surprised.
- Did you look at the National awards listed on the guide sheet? The entry form is available in MALTA. The completed entry (and any supporting documents) need to be sent to me by March 31, 2024.

If you are computer savvy, have you checked out the department Facebook pages for each chairmanship? Many chairmen are posting hints and helps that you might be able to implement in your auxiliary.

Mid-winter conference is a couple of months away. It will be held at the Kalamazoo Radisson – Downtown. If you took petitions for a new veterans' cemetery following fall conference, or downloaded the petition I posted on the Legislative Facebook page, bring your completed pages to Mid-winter to give to me. I hear there is a possibility of a spot between Black Lake and Rogers City for a new veterans' cemetery. Let's push this through for our veterans.



Keep up the good work.

Loyally

Aileen Adragna, Department VFW Auxiliary Legislative Chair 2023-2024

10 Cardinal hill, Orion, MI 48359

Email: aileenadragn@yahoo.com

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT VFW AUXILIARY MEMBERSHIP BULLETIN

November 2023

www.vfwauxmi.org

Facebook Page: Membership Michigan

UNWAVERING SUPPORT



FOR UNCOMMON HEROES

National Theme: Banding Together for Our Veterans

Department Theme: Our Veterans the Angels Among Us

This is the time of year when we think more to give thanks. However, we should always be "thankful" for the thousands of men and women who fought for our freedoms. There are many ways we can show that we are thankful. We can put on our "Incredible superhero suits" and fight for Veterans rights in our government and V.A. Hospitals. They gave and sacrificed so much; it is our job as Auxiliary members now to protect them. Another way we can use our powers for good is by getting our members up. As the old saying goes "there is strength in numbers". So, if we have lots of new or continuous members in our fold then there is nothing we can't achieve.

Wonder Woman has her golden lasso of truth, Superman has his x-ray vision and Spiderman has his sticky webs, well as Auxiliary members we have our own set of secret weapons. We have each other and we have National and Department Auxiliary websites where we can pull LOTS of information from. Like how to attract new members and how to engage them. How to keep current members interested. How to match members' strengths with different tasks that need to be accomplished. If someone is savvy on the computer, see if they would do the reports for the auxiliary. Maybe a member does not get out much, but they like to bake then ask them for goodies for your monthly bake sale. The point is to find what works with your team of people.

There is a Department deadline at the end of this month....We must be 95% Plus to achieve our Bronze Medal of \$200.00 by November 30th. As of this writing we are not that far off. I have faith we will "Soar" past this with our "Wing of Positivity". Members can also earn a Lights, Camera, Action pin for recruiting 5 new members through May 31, 2024. We have as of this writing 11 Auxiliaries (100%) that achieved 98% plus by March 31st. So many others are so close just keep fighting the good fight and get the dues in.

I am Blessed by your Friendships and Thankful to you all. Happy Thanksgiving

Wendi Hall
Membership Chairman
4849 Williams Street
Montague MI 49437
wendihall65@gmail.com
917-295-3531



MEMBERSHIP BULLETIN

December 2023

Ho Ho Ho, here we are again at the end of the Calendar year and while everything is Merry and Bright and festive, if your membership is not paid by the end of the month, you will no longer be a member in good standing. We don't want anyone on the "naughty list" so hurry on "down Santa Claus Lane" and get those dues taken care of. If you have those couple of members who struggle financially to get their dues in, as a special gift at this time of year maybe your auxiliary could cover their dues. Don't be "A Grinch"! Remember you can use your relief fund to do this. If your Auxiliary is having a Christmas/Holiday party, it would be "Incredibly kind" to reach out to some of those members you don't see that often and personally invite them and offer to give them a "Sleigh Ride" to the gathering. Many older members don't like to drive after dark or in winter but if given a chance to socialize they would grab it. We all know we have lots of projects and work things to cover but it is nice occasionally to sit back and appreciate the fellowship and friendship of the members and not be so concerned about agendas.

Please remember when reporting you may list more than one project per report. In the description box just separate them by like #1 #2 or A) B) and then tell me the pertinent facts of what your auxiliary did. The end of our business year is not that far off so please refer to your guide sheet to make sure you have covered all your boxes. Please keep watching the Department (Membership-Michigan) Facebook page for more up to date membership statistics and other good bits of information. You as members can also post ideas on recruitment or ask questions. I would like to go to the Mid-Winter Conference and be able to display our "Wing of Positivity" completely filled and overflowing with "heart feathers" to make us 100% in membership. This Department works "Incredibly" hard in all programs but without members none of our programs can succeed. Though it may be "Frosty" outside our hearts and minds can be warm and cozy inside because "It's a Wonderful *auxiliary* Life" when we team up and stay strong together. We can't afford to be like Mr. Scrooge and get stuck in the past ways of Auxiliary business (it's the way we have always done it) we must seek out the best ways in "the present" for "the future" of this organization and the welfare of our Veterans.

Wendi Hall
Membership Chairman
4849 Williams Street
Montague MI 49437
wendihall65@gmail.com
917-295-3531



Michigan Department VFW Auxiliary MENTORING FOR LEADERSHIP BULLETIN November 2023

www.vfwauxmi.org

Facebook Page: Mentoring for Leadership Michigan

UNWAVERING SUPPORT



FOR UNCOMMON HEROES

National Theme: Banding Together for Our Veterans

Department Theme: Our Veterans the Angels Among Us

A sincere thank you to those of you who attended the Fall Conference and the program trainings. I hope you walked away with a better understanding of all our Auxiliary programs. I enjoyed seeing the smile on many of your faces when you opened the gift packages that I distributed to each of you so you could visually see what a Mentor truly looks like. I know I was impressed to see what I believed were quality member mentors!

Please utilize the MALTA Member Resources available on the National VFW Auxiliary website. Then take the opportunity to share, inspire, and empower your members with the tools and resources they need to become a successful mentor while utilizing the following goals.

- C. Communicate clearly.
- A. Activate Sharing of organizational knowledge.
- R. Remember to include all Auxiliary Members.
- E. Encourage participation.

It would be an excellent idea to build a solid mentoring team of members within your Auxiliary who are familiar with our Bylaws and Traditions. Once the team has been assembled, give them the leeway (an amount of time to speak, move, or act on behalf of those being mentored) within your Auxiliary meetings to share as the meeting progresses for purpose of understanding. That way all members will feel included and a part of moving forward.

Our organization has been built on a solid foundation enacted by passionate strategic leaders. Our traditions, when shared, allow new members to catch up, and understand how far we have come as an Auxiliary. Once they feel like a valued member of the Auxiliary, they will be prepared to commit to helping your Auxiliary and our organization grow and move forward into the future.

- Be Patient.
- Be Encouraging.
- Be Kind

Respectfully yours,
Sandi Onstwedder' Mentoring for Leadership Chairman

Michigan Department VFW Auxiliary
MENTORING FOR LEADERSHIP BULLETIN
December 2023

www.vfwauxmi.org

Facebook Page: Mentoring for Leadership Michigan

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National Theme: Banding Together for Our Veterans

Department Theme: Our Veterans the Angels Among Us

Thank you to those of you that are reporting in Mentoring for Leadership on a regular basis. I have been crediting you for the report but please remember to achieve awards at the end of this year you have certain goals to master.

Tomorrow isn't promised for any one of us. That is one C.O.R.E. reason that we need to continually share and mentor the foundation of which our organization was formed upon. This chairmanship is self-explanatory. Talk about the business of the Auxiliary. Create a plan that works for the majority of your Auxiliary members. Then, execute your plans while involving as many members as possible. Finally, base all actions and plans on the foundation of our Bylaws and Ritual.

- C- Communicate clearly.
- O- Organize business, programs, and projects for understanding.
- R- Recognize members and their different skills and abilities.
- E- Engage and involve all members who wish to participate.

Have your officers purchased the 2024 Auxiliary Podium Edition of our Bylaws and Ritual? They are available for purchase from the VFW Store in hard copy, or you can go to MALTA, log in, and under Member Resources find the current Podium Edition to download.

Please continue to utilize MALTA Member Resources behind your MALTA login to have a successful Mentoring for Leadership Program. While there research the Awards that are available from the national organization.

To quote my Mentoring for Leadership Ambassador. "Start each relationship from our common ground, support for our veterans and build on it with time and patience and caring."

Respectfully,

Sandi Onstwedder Osandi25@hotmail.com
2597 Heartland Blvd. #4 Ionia, MI 48846 (616) 835-7126

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT VFW AUXILIARY SCHOLARSHIPS BULLETIN

November 2023

www.vfwauxmi.org

Facebook Page: Scholarships Michigan

UNWAVERING SUPPORT



FOR UNCOMMON HEROES

National Theme: Banding Together for Our Veterans

Department Theme: Our Veterans the Angels Among Us

***Participation *Recognition *Program Awareness *Scholarship Fund Building**

Greetings!

All Patriot Pen, Voice of Democracy and Teacher of the Year entries must be at the post level and soon ready to be sent to the district for judging. Reminder all of your entries must have the required paperwork: Student Bio, School Release, wallet sized photo, hard copy of their application and entry. VOD must include their recorded speech on a USB. NO DVD's are accepted. **DUE date to your district by Nov. 15, 2023.**

The district winners must complete the ScholarsApp profile. **Students can scan the QR code or go to <https://apply.scholarsapp.com/>** All post chairman must also complete the donor profile as well, please work with your post to complete this. I have placed the link to the training on how to complete this on our Scholarships-Michigan Facebook page. If you would like a copy of the PowerPoint ScholarsApp training, please contact me.

Have you reserved your rooms for the Mid-Winter Conference in January? Rooms are going fast. Kalamazoo Radisson 1- 269-343-3333, as for the VFW block. There are other hotels near there as well.

Have you started planning your recognition ceremonies for your students and Teach of the Year? Local and district events are important to show our appreciation for their participation. Awards and certificates can be purchased from the VFW store. You may also purchase trophies or medals through a local retainer if you choose.

Don't forget to report every quarter. Follow the guide sheet for reporting. I am here if you have any questions, email, text or call (after 3pm).

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT VFW AUXILIARY SCHOLARSHIPS BULLETIN December 2023

www.vfwauxmi.org

Facebook Page: Scholarships Michigan

UNWAVERING SUPPORT



FOR UNCOMMON HEROES

National Theme: Banding Together for Our Veterans

Department Theme: Our Veterans the Angels Among Us

***Participation *Recognition *Program Awareness *Scholarship Fund Building**

Happy Holidays!

District judging will occur this month. Did you remember to send all the required forms with your entries? If any of the paperwork is missing the entry will be disqualified. Were you able to assist your post and district winners in getting their ScholarsApp.com profile completed? This is a learning year, please reach out and we can help you.

If you have not reserved your rooms for the Mid-Winter Conference in January, you may need to travel from one of the outside hotels. Please check the department website for additional lodging choices. Now, here's the next order of business. If you are attending Mid-Winter and want to go to the awards banquet Saturday January 27, 2024, you must purchase your meal tickets soon. The deadline is the first part of January, no tickets will be sold at the door. Payment for the tickets will need to go to Pat Patterson the Events Chairman.

Promotion of the Young Patriotic Art and 3D Art Scholarship contest should be in full swing. Entries are due to the post March 31, 2024. Remember any student in 9th through 12th grade may participate. Please review the rules for sizes, specific flag colors and required paperwork. If you have any Art Centers or supply stores see if you can put up a brochure there, make sure you have a contact number on them.

Follow the guide sheet for reporting. I am here if you have any questions, email, text or call (after 3pm).

From my family to all of yours, wishing you the happiest and healthiest of holidays.
Cheers to 2024!

Denise Arnold
9525 E River Rd.
Mt Pleasant, MI 48858
989-621-0327
mischolar2324@gmail.com

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT VFW AUXILIARY YOUTH ACTIVITIES BULLETIN NOVEMBER 2023

www.vfwauxmi.org

Facebook Page: Youth Activities Michigan

UNWAVERING SUPPORT



FOR UNCOMMON HEROES

National Theme: Banding Together for Our Veterans

Department Theme: Our Veterans the Angels Among Us



In case you were not at training at Fall Conference in Flint, I introduced Auxiliary members to two very important new "Disney Youth Activities Helpers" HOW MUCH & HOW MANY! They are two very important members to use in all your Youth Activities projects. For instance,

when you are reporting your donation to the Silver Dollar Table. I need

to have each of you who donated let me know "How Many" items were donated and "How Much" were they worth – "How Much" did you spend at the table? I can tell you "How Much" we collected -\$262.00 total for Youth Activities/Camp Trotter! But without your report I won't know "How Many" donated & who you were. Thank you for all those that contributed!!



Now on to creating unique ways to introduce our youth to Patriotism! One of the most important projects to work on is the Patriotism through Literacy – making sure every student realizes the importance of our Flag and how our country was formed. We can do this by making sure we contribute to their education in some way, making our history come alive with books and stories about the past to make a connection to our present & future. Instilling that connection will help our youth realize they are part of history too.

Teachers are a great source of knowledge - Think about "Adopting" a classroom or maybe Story Hour or Craft Day at the library. Your assistance could encourage the use of Patriotic Materials or just donate Patriotic Books to a classroom. Auxiliary members working and volunteering with youth presents a positive Patriotic role model and encouragement to our youth, who are our future.

Make sure you visit the websites (www.vfwauxmi.org and www.vfwauxiliary.org) for the latest information about the contests and the forms to distribute to students for the Illustrating America and Sing out for the Red White and Blue contests. Make sure you connect with Youth Groups in your area. Showing you care can be as simple as supporting Girl Scouts by buying a box of Girl Scout Cookies, or Boy Scout Popcorn or contributing to any youth fundraising project – it will let organizations know the VFW Auxiliary is available and ready to help our youth in any way possible. Give youth organizations handouts about the programs we offer when you purchase from them.

Let's show we are "Banding Together for Our Veterans" because "Our Veterans are the Angels Among Us"

Evelyn Avery, Youth Activities Chairman 269-423-8129 (h) 269-491-0642 (c)
44936 C.R. 352 Decatur, MI 49045 email: averycow@yahoo.com



MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT VFW AUXILIARY YOUTH ACTIVITIES BULLETIN DECEMBER 2023

www.vfwauxmi.org

Facebook Page: Youth Activities Michigan

National Theme: Banding Together for Our Veterans

Department Theme: Our Veterans the Angels Among Us



Hope your Thanksgiving was 'yummy' and your Santa will fulfill your wishes for Christmas! I'm sure you have taken information to school and youth groups about the Illustrating America and the Sing Out for the Red, White and Blue contests. The deadline for the local Auxiliary (March 31, 2024) for both of these contests are coming fast. It's the perfect time of year to be cozy inside doing artwork and recording the Star Spangled Banner.

Warm and cozy is always a good time to curl up with a good book and imagine yourself in another world – what better time of year to give Patriotic Books to our youth to support the Patriotism Through Literacy program. Most Auxiliaries sponsor Christmas parties for the youth in their area, why not include a Patriotic book in a goody bag for the children when they come to the annual Christmas Party your Auxiliary could have.

This is also a good time to have children make cards for Veterans for the Holidays. While having them make cards you could take this opportunity to talk about why the cards are needed, what a Veteran is and how the VFW Auxiliary supports Patriotism. Have a "support the troops" collection at school and give out R.A.P. cards to those that bring items for the troop boxes. Have a competition between classrooms and offer an ice cream party to the class that collects the most items to send to the troops. Read the class a short story telling about an Act of Patriotism in history and Youth Supporting Our Troops Citations.

Start now to fill out the National Award form for educating the community about Patriotism Through Literacy and utilizing the Random Act of Patriotism cards (R.A.P.). This is due to me by March 31, 2024. Sending in this form will earn your Auxiliary a Citation and may even earn your auxiliary \$25.00 and a citation if your project is chosen as the best in our Big Ten Conference.

Don't forget Camp Trotter. What about giving a Life Membership to Camp Trotter to someone in your family for Christmas. Your auxiliary could have a Christmas drawing to award a Life membership to someone in your auxiliary who paid their dues by December 1st.

Make sure you post articles on Facebook and in the local newspaper on what your Auxiliary is doing to support the community youth. Being a role model and encouraging our youth can make all the difference in a young life. We need to "Band Together for Our Veterans" because

"Our Veterans are the Angels Among Us"



Evelyn Avery, Youth Activities Chairman
44936 C.R. 352 Decatur, MI 49045

269-423-8129 (h) 269-491-0642 (c)
e-mail: averycow@yahoo.com