



*American Legion Auxiliary – Department of Minnesota
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VETERANS AFFAIRS and REHABILITATION Mar/Apr 2019

I want to share with you what some of our Units are doing throughout the Department to enhance the lives of veterans. These are ideas for your Unit to consider as you continue to work on your Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation program this year and into the future.

Many of our Auxiliary members have joined hands with Quilts of Valor, making quilts and wrapping our veterans in warmth and love. This is a priceless act of love that is radiated on the faces of the veteran recipients. Others are getting their sewing groups together to fill the “needs” list from our VA veterans homes and hospitals. What a wonderful way to have a great time together, be social and help our veterans.

Backpacks are being filled and donated to organizations that do veterans outreach. Some of the items included in the backpacks are towels, \$5 fast food gift cards, socks, toiletries, mats, mittens, hats and snacks.

One of our Districts is supporting “Every Third Saturday”, a South Minneapolis building that offers services & resources to veterans for homelessness, suicide prevention, moral injury, difficulty transitioning and loss of purpose that is plaguing our veterans. A couple of our Districts are actively supporting the CRRC, Community Resources and Referral Center, providing new clothing, food, hats, mittens, coats, personal care items and gift cards. Way to go ALA members! Partnering only makes us stronger.

Units are assisting veterans and their families with car repairs and mortgage payments. Some are providing meals when they are needed and while others are providing tickets to social and sporting events for the families. Get to know the veteran and military families in your community and let them know you can be a resource when times are tough and they are struggling.

Many Units visit their local nursing homes and bring gifts for the veterans who reside there. Some invite their Junior members or local school kids to join them. Interaction between the young and the aging is good for the soul.

Units are working with the high school volunteer organizations to assist veterans. One Unit partnered with the National Honor Society to collect items for women veterans and delivered them to the St. Cloud VAHCS. A great learning experience for those young people for sure.

A huge shout out to the Units that volunteer to decorate the VA facilities for holidays, provide social activities monthly and bring treats and favors for the veterans throughout the year.

Many units are contributing to the Minnesota Veterans Creative Arts Festivals with monetary donations. Your donations provide the craft kits and supplies, costumes, sheet and recorded

music and other items which allow the veterans an opportunity to share their talents at no cost to them personally but their time. Expressing themselves through the written, visual and performing arts is very beneficial to their healing process.

This and so much more is happening all around our state by the **American Legion Auxiliary!** THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU! For all you do every day to make a difference in the lives of our veterans and their families.

The Department of Minnesota ALA is doing great as we work together to enhance the lives of “Our Veterans – Our Stars and Our Heroes”. I applaud all of you on your efforts.

Please share your Unit’s story of service on your VA&R Annual Reports. I am looking forward to reading about many more wonderful things that are happening.

Patti Coleman, VA&R Chairman 2018-2019

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