

**Hospital
2022 - 2023
Rosalind Jenkins**

It is with a great amount of pride that I get to say that the VFW Auxiliary is working on its second hundred years of volunteering in hospitals and medical facilities since the organization's inception in 1914. The Hospital Program was one of the first and oldest nationally adopted programs for the organization. This program provides a meaningful way for volunteers to give back to those who have given so much for all of us. Thus, State President Mary Anne's Theme: *VFW Auxiliary Family One Team, One Heartbeat*, as well as National President Jane's Theme: *Hands That Serve, Hearts That Care*, are perfect and apply to the Hospital Program in every way. Many of our Nations Heroes are growing older and no longer have a family. This is where volunteering at bedside visits in VA facilities as well as nursing homes can be invaluable to bring comfort and companionship to those who are alone. Any act of kindness or good deed shown can make a positive and lasting impact on many lives.

PROGRAM GOALS

1. Volunteer in Medical Facilities
2. Volunteer Recruitment and Recognition
3. Veterans Voices Writing Project
4. PTSD Awareness

Who can volunteer?

1) Members, 2) Non-Members, 3) Community or Youth Groups, 4) Families

Where can we volunteer?

1) Local hospitals, 2) Veterans/Nursing homes, 3) Both VA and non-VA medical facilities

What can we do?

Some facilities have a volunteer program in place with specific jobs, events and needs. Volunteers help create a friendly and caring atmosphere no matter where they volunteer. All facility policies must be adhered to when considering any type of project at that facility. Most importantly to have Auxiliary approval before beginning any project.

Recruiting New Volunteers

New volunteers are desperately needed across the land. No thanks to the COVID-19 PANDEMIC, the volunteer program is suffering greatly. Volunteers bring a sense of warmth and friendship to those that are ailing or alone in any facility. Everyone should be able to set aside a few hours a month to help/entertain America's Heroes and then to bring a friend as well.

Recruiting and keeping non-member volunteers

Talk to anyone who will listen about our attributes!
Do not be afraid to brag on our accomplishments! Encourage members as well as non-members to become involved!
Be specific about what volunteers will be doing, include the time commitment!
Find out how each person best communicates: verbal, email, telephone!
Youth groups are good candidates, as the hours volunteered in any VA facility go toward a NAC Scholarship!
Public recognition of non-members for their service!

THE CHALLENGE

This year's challenge is to create a different approach to serving our veterans in a hospital setting. Put your thinking cap on, use or implement an idea from a new recruit or non-member (good incentive to encourage recruitment using their idea) to try something different. Continue to do the bedside, everyone does not have this talent. Sitting/talking with the patient, should not change. Putting a new twist on a visit is what the challenge is all about.

Veterans Voices Writing Project

The Veterans Voices Writing Project (VVWP) was founded in 1946. It is a therapeutic writing program that helps veterans express themselves and communicate in a creative way. They accept personal experiences, fiction, poems and artwork from veterans. This creative expression allows many to heal and gain self-esteem. Auxiliary members can become involved with VVWP Representative and assist veterans at bedside as well in writing, recording or iPad typing. 'Veterans Voices' magazine is published three

times a year, prints a selection of submissions.

For more information or to get involved with training and resources visit veteransvoices.org, or email volunteer@veteransvoices.org or CALL (816) 701-6844

Just another reason to volunteer all year, not just on the annual Holidays.

Veterans Crisis Line

The Veterans Crisis Line connects veterans in crisis and their families and friends with qualified, caring Department of Veteran Affairs responders through a confidential toll-free hotline, online chat or text. Veterans and their loved ones call 1-(800) 273-8255 and press one, to chat online or send a text message to 838255 to receive confidential support 24 hours a day, 7 weeks, 365 days a year. Support for deaf and hard of hearing individuals is available.

Women Veterans Health Care

Women have served our nation for generations and are the fastest growing group within the veteran population. June 12 is Women Veterans Day: She Served, She sacrificed, She Deserves. Comprehensive health services are available and tailored to the unique needs of women veterans. Some of the Clinics include but are not limited to: Female-specific services for Birth Control, Maternity Care, screening for cervical and breast cancer tests as well as preconception counseling, disease prevention, menopausal support, nutrition counseling, and Mental Health counseling for military sexual trauma.

Fisher House

The Fisher Houses are a network of comfort homes where military and veterans' families can stay at no cost while a loved one is receiving treatment.

They are located at major military and VA medical centers nationwide, close to the medical center or hospital they serve. The Fisher House Foundation also operates the Hero Miles Program, using donated frequent flyer miles to bring family members to the bedside of injured service members. Need more info? Go to www.fisherhouse.org.

Honoring Veterans on Holidays

Remembering veterans during special holidays or events can do wonders to lift spirits. Shows your

Love and appreciation for all they have done to keep us free.

National Salute to Veterans Week is the week with Valentine's Day in it. In addition to all of the traditional holidays, why not celebrate the various Branch of the Service Birthdays?

Example: Army-June 14, US Coast Guard-Aug 4, Air Force-Sept 14, Navy-Oct 13, Marine-Nov 10. These will definitely wake everyone up and create a new interest!

Valentine's Day	Easter
Memorial Day	Flag Day
Independence Day	Pearl Harbor
Patriot Day (9/11)	Thanksgiving
Christmas	

HONORS ESCORT

The Honors Escort Program is an opportunity to honor each veteran in a respectful and open manner. The Escort Program provides an opportunity for the veteran's family, friends and associates, other veterans, and medical facility staff to participate in a display of high regard and reverence for the individual at the time of death. Some VA Facilities have the Escort Program, others do not. Why not reach out to your local VA Facility and find out if they have an Honors Escort Program. If not, inquire about getting the Escort Program implemented.

HOSPITAL QUOTA DONATION

A suggested donation of \$1.00 per member is requested from each Auxiliary. The amount is based on your membership as of June 30, 2022. Seventy-Five cents of each dollar goes toward the Hospital Fund. These funds are then presented to VA Hospitals and clinics by the current President as her annual visits. Hospital donations should be sent to Department by December 31, 2022.

CALIFORNIA MEDICAL ASSISTANCE GRANT

Twenty-five cents of the one-dollar Hospital donation goes to fund the Medical Assistance Program (grant). This grant assists our members with hospital bills not covered by their insurance. This special assistance is only to be recommended for a member who has had continuous membership for at least one (1) year prior to application. It does NOT COVER CANCER (because the Cancer Program provides grants for

that purpose). Only two (2) grants are allowed per member; and a full twelve (12) months must pass before a second request is made. The Assistance will not exceed Five Hundred and Seventy-Five (\$575.00) per hospitalization. The check will be sent directly to the Auxiliary Member; if the member has passed on, the check must be returned to the Department Office. This request must be confidential, and the Auxiliary must, to the best of its ability, thoroughly investigate and find that this Auxiliary member does qualify!

CRITERIA FOR APPROVING MEDICAL ASSISTANCE GRANTS:

- Minimum number of years of membership
- Confirm member has hospitalization Insurance (attach proof of insurance)
- Percentage of Hospital Bills covered by insurance (attach copy and statement from insurance to show amount covered)
- Receipts from Hospital or Medical Bills
- Need for Assistance (complete application for medical assistance grant)
- Physician's statement and prognosis. (Submit completed form to Department President)

"If you want others to be happy, practice compassion. If you want to be happy, practice compassion."

— Dalai Lama#