

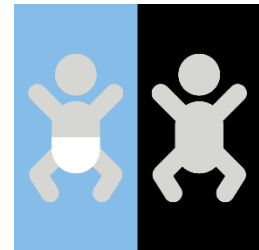
November is **National Family Caregivers Month**. While family caregivers should always be appreciated and valued, this is a good time to recognize and thank family caregivers. Nationally, this month raises awareness around caregiving issues and provides information and education.



Caregiving is an important part of the Veterans and Family Support program. Many of our Veterans are aging or suffer from health conditions as a result of their service. Family members and friends often step up to provide for their essential care. However, caregiving, in particular 24/7 caregiving, can be very stressful and caregivers are often in need of some downtime. This is where Auxiliary members can help by offering to sit with the Veteran to give the caregiver a few hours of “me time”. You can also offer to do some chores or cook a meal for the veteran or caregiver to make their day easier.

You can learn more about this important issue on the Elizabeth Dole Foundation website at <https://www.elizabethdolefoundation.org>.

A focus for this year’s program is Child Care for Active-Duty Service Members. You can help by offering babysitting services to a local active-duty service member, by providing essential needs for a young or just by being a support as needed. As a reminder, this focus area ties into our National President’s Special Project – Operation Bottom Cover. Per the National Diaper Bank Network “1 in 2 US families struggles with diaper need. Babies without clean diapers are exposed to more potential health risks and less likely to be accepted to daycares leaving parents unable to attend work”.



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**Calling all Auxiliary and District Chaplains....**

While some Auxiliary and District Chaplains remain in place for several years, many of us just spend one year in the position as we work our way through the chairs. That means that just as we are starting to figure things out we are moving on! To help jump start the process for all our new Chaplain’s, I want to share some useful

advice and resources that were shared with me by the Department of California’s VFW Chaplain, Frank Correa.

Firstly, five pieces of advice....

- 1) Keep any prayers you give in a general setting such as an Auxiliary meeting generic. Auxiliary members come from all different faiths. On joining the VFW Auxiliary we express a belief in God (which can mean different things to different religions) so starting

prayers with Almighty God or similar is fine. Many prayers can be easily adapted to be more non-denominational/multi-faith.

If you are asked to do a celebration of life for a family or some other event and they ask you to conform to a certain religion, that is perfectly fine.

- 2) As a Chaplain, your conversations should be treated as confidential. While you may not be an ordained minister you are acting in a similar capacity and members need to have confidence that what they are telling you will remain private.
- 3) Remember to report. When you send out a get well or sympathy card, when you attend or officiate at a celebration of life, or when you do other activities as a Chaplain that is reportable under Veterans and Family Support.
- 4) Work alongside your VFW Post Chaplain.
- 5) Keep a prayer handy...you never know when you will be called upon to offer a prayer before a meeting or a dinner or on any other occasion!

Now for resources. The Department of California VFW has a Chaplain's Corner that is accessible to Auxiliary Chaplains. [Chaplain's Corner - VFW Department of California](#).

Amongst other things, you will find

- Links to training – both live and recorded on YouTube. Auxiliary members are welcome at the VFW training.
  - For example, there is a link to upcoming training on November 6th ***Volunteer Suicide Intervention Basic Training***
- A link to the Chaplains Handbook which is an extremely useful document
  - Talks about the role and responsibilities of a Chaplain
  - Provides sample prayers, benedictions and invocations
- Guidance on how to get on the mailing list for the National VFW Chaplain so that you get any updates and invites to training emailed to you
  - Send an email to [PeterHook@verizon.net](mailto:PeterHook@verizon.net) . In the email body say “I wish to sign up for the VFW Chaplain training sessions and provide
    - Your name
    - Email address
    - Phone number
    - State
    - District
    - Auxiliary