



AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY
Department of Ohio

2010-2011
VETERANS AFFAIRS &
REHABILITATION
PLAN OF ACTION

Department of Ohio V A & R Committee

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REPORT DUE : May 1, 2011

SEND REPORT TO : Your District V A & R Chairman
(address on back of this page)



High on Patriotism
Linda Close
2010-2011 Department President

VETERANS AFFAIRS AND REHABILITATION

2010 – 2011

Welcome to the VA&R committee! Your chairmanship is very rewarding and most important of all the chairmanships. This committee is what the American Legion Auxiliary is all about, to serve our military, veterans, their children and promote community events that assist them. Our mission is 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.

There are many ways of helping our veterans and their families. You can contact a representative at a VA Medical center or Outpatient Clinic to find out what assistance is needed. Volunteers are always needed at these facilities. If there is no VA facility near you then you can contact area nursing homes or contact the county VA Office and ask if there are any veterans that need help. When volunteering, ask both new and renewing members if they would like to help. Don't forget the American Legion, SAL and non-members for they are willing to help also. Most people liked to be asked as opposed to volunteer on their own.

Explain the Home Service and Field Service Programs to your members. Host a Field Service Orientation for your unit and other units within your area. Keep complete and accurate records of all that is done so that at the end of the year you can tell us what has been accomplished. I will need a report from you by December 15th so I can send a mid-year report to the National/Central Division Chairman. If you have any questions please contact me or Lois Singleton, our address and phone numbers are on the cover page. We will be more than willing to help.

OBJECTIVES

1. **OBJECTIVE – HOMELESS VETERANS** - Today it is estimated that 1 in 4 homeless are veterans and that includes approximately 6,500 female veterans. We need to educate Unit members about homeless veterans. Every VAMC has a homeless coordinator.

Action Steps:

- a. Call our Deputy Representative at the VA facility nearest you to get in contact with the Homeless Veteran Program Coordinator and make an appointment with him/her and ask what your unit can do to help the homeless veterans.
 - b. Locate a homeless shelter in your area and try to find out if any veterans are there.
 - c. Work with the Post's Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Chairman and the Sons of the American Legion to increase your efforts.
2. **OBJECTIVE – VETERANS CREATIVE ARTS FESTIVAL** - National needs to raise \$150,000 to fulfill our obligation as a corporate sponsor of the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival.

Action Steps:

- a. Each Unit is encouraged to raise funds with a goal of 18 cents per member to be sent to Department to fulfill our obligations as a corporate sponsor.

3. **OBJECTIVE – RIDE TO RECOVERY** - To increase participation in Ride to Recovery (R2R) events. To encourage fund raising and volunteer participation for all scheduled events.

Action Items:

- a. Promote participation and donations to R2R events.
 - b. 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. Cycling is an important part of the veteran's recovery and rehabilitation.
 - c. Sponsor a wounded warrior for the R2R.
 - d. Join the ride as a contributor.
4. **OBJECTIVE – VOLUNTEERS** – To increase volunteer services within the VAMC or outpatient clinic by 10 volunteers and to increase volunteers outside a VAMC through Field Service and Home Service by 10 volunteers.

Action Steps:

- a. Work with your VA facilities to create meaningful assignments for every volunteer in your unit based on the volunteers' availability.
- b. Share methods of recruiting, retaining, motivating and recognizing volunteers.
- c. 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.
- d. Establish a youth service project for student volunteers.

Other programs included in the VA&R Plan of Action include:

1. **VA MEDICAL CENTER (VAMC) & OUTPATIENT FACILITIES**

The American Legion Auxiliary fills a vital role at VA facilities (VAMCs and outpatient clinics) across the country – enabling facility and program administrators to stretch their resource 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 record keeping and dollars spent. Home service volunteers do projects and work for active-duty military/veterans and/or families from their own home (**the volunteers Home**) and also maintain their own record keeping and dollars spent.

3. **WELCOME HOME CELEBRATIONS**

Provide assistance to your local VAMC in supporting returning servicemen and women and their families in the community. The 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.

4. FISHER HOUSE

We need to continue to raise money toward the building of a Fisher House at Wade Park. In addition, we need to help supply the houses at Dayton and Cincinnati.

5. SUPPORT AMERICAN LEGION PROGRAMS

Support 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 maintain the highest quality of life.

6. APRIL - NATIONAL VOLUNTEER MONTH

During this month it is encouraged that all levels of this organization recognize and celebrate the important work that volunteers do every day on behalf of veterans.

AWARDS

DEPARTMENT

- 1. THE BLANCHE KLEIN PLAQUE** - Awarded to the unit with the best all-around Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Program based on the Annual **Green** Report form. Annual Green Report Form is to be submitted to the **District Chairman** by **May 1, 2011**.
- 2. THE SUE FRIEDRICH PLAQUE – BEST OVERALL VA&R PROGRAM BY A UNIT** – Awarded at Department Convention to the Unit with the best overall VA&R program based on a narrative. Winning narrative will be forward to the central Division Chairman. A citation Plaque will be presented to a Unit VA&R Chairman in the Central Division with the best overall program in VA&R. Entry must be in narrative form not to exceed 1,000 words and must include a complete copy of the annual report form Please include name and address of the Unit chairman and the Department. Entry must be submitted to the **Department VA&R Chairman**, Jeanie Gibson, 225 W. South St. Carey, Oh, 43316-1254 by **May 1, 2011**.
- 3. THE MARIE MORRE FUND PLAQUE** - Awarded to the Unit donating the most money per capita (based on membership goal) to the Gifts For Vets Fund. Donations must be received in Department Headquarters by **June 1, 2011**.
- 4. OLIVE RUFFNER PLAQUE** - Awarded to the most outstanding VA Volunteer. VA facilities are to submit nominations to the **Department Hospital Director**, June Stas, 2176 S. Turner Rd., Youngstown, Oh, 44515, by **May 1, 2011**.
- 5. MARY WALKER PLAQUE** – Awarded to a Junior member for the most hours served in a VA facility. She must have met all requirements as set forth by the VAVS.

NATIONAL

1. THE POWER OF ONE 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 service members at any VAMC or VA facility, veterans home, Fisher House, vet centers, homeless veterans shelter or any facility where more than 60 percent of the residents are veterans. Entry must be type written 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 Rosemarie Hauck by **June 1, 2011**.

2. DEPARTMENT VA &R PROGRAM AWARDS

A citation plaque will be presented to the Department Chairman in each Division who reports the Most Outstanding Overall program as per goal stated in this Plan of Action. Entry must be type written in narrative form not to exceed 1,000 words. All entries must be postmarked by **June 1, 2011**, and sent by the **Department Chairman** to the National Division Chairman.

3. 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, 2010 – March 31, 2011, in each Division for Junior and Senior members. Units should send their nominees to the **Field Service Chairman**, Pat Miller, 400 May Ave, Cuyahoga Falls, Oh. 44221 by **May 1, 2011**. The Unit is required to certify the hours of any nominee.

4. 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, 2010 – March 31, 2011, in each Division for Junior or senior members. Units should send their nominees to the **Home Service Chairman/Vice Chairman**, Lois Singleton, 936 Village Drive, Newark, Oh, 43055-2853 by **May 1, 2011**.

5. NATIONAL VETERANS CREATIVE ARTS FESTIVAL (NVCAF)

The NVCAF will recognize Departments that contribute at the Bronze, Silver and Gold level. This recognition will be made at the 2011 festival. ALA National Headquarters will submit qualifying donations to NVCAF staff in July. Donations considered are those received in the national office September 1, 2010, through June 30, 2011.

6. 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 Action. Entry must be typewritten in narrative form not exceed 1,000 words. Units will submit entries to the **Department Chairman**, Jeanie Gibson, 225 W. South St. Carey, Oh, 43316-1254 by **May 1, 2011**.

7. 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 **Hospital Director**, June Stas, 2176 S Turner Rd, Youngstown, Ohio 44515, by **May 1, 2011**. 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; or visiting veterans confined to their homes (as assigned by VAVS). The national winner will receive \$500 to donate to the VAVS facility of her choice and in recipient's name, and she will be profiled in the national Auxiliary magazine. In addition, the ALA will forward her name as our candidate for the VAVS National Advisory Committee Volunteer of the Year.

8. 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, 2010 – March 31, 2011. The award winner will be determined by the national VAVS representative through verification of Department hours and number of volunteers as recorded by VAVS.

9. 100 PERCENT VAVS MEETING ATTENDANCE

An "Attendance Card" will be awarded to each representative and deputy who have 100 percent attendance to VAVS committee meetings at her assigned facility. The national VAVS representative will verify the winner from VA records.

10. 10,000 – VOLUNTEER SERVICE AWARD

A special volunteer citation will be awarded to the eligible volunteer and a \$100 donation will be sent, in eligible volunteers' name, to the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival Fund. Volunteer must have accrued 10,000 hours of volunteer service in a VA facility. Verification of hours must be received at National Headquarters' by **June 1, 2011**.

11. 20,000 - HOUR VOLUNTEER AWARD

A special volunteer citation will be awarded to the eligible volunteer and a \$200 donation will be sent, in eligible volunteers' name, to the National Creative Arts Festival Fund. Volunteers must have accrued 20,000 hours of volunteer service in a VA facility. Verification of hours must be received at National Head quarters by **June 1, 2011**.

12. HOMELESS VETERANS OUTREACH AWARD

The ALA, TAL and SAL come together annually to select a Department that has done an outstanding job in the area of homeless veterans outreach. Award nominations are solicited each fall and the winners are recognized at national convention and the National NCHV Conference each June in Washington, D.C. For more information, visit www.legion-aux.org.

RESOURCES

1. www.ride2recovery.us.com
2. VA&R Guide (formerly Guide for Volunteers): This guide explains the importance of volunteers to the VA Medical Center Program and summarizes additional volunteer opportunities through Field and Home Service. Available for free download at www.legion-aux/var/gfv. or call Department.
3. A System Worth Saving: A guide provided through The American Legion.
4. Brochures available The American Legion: 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.
5. Nation Veterans Creative Arts Festival: www.creativeartsfestival.va.gov.
6. Fisher House: The Fisher House program is a unique private-public partnership that supports America's military in their time of need. Fisher House Foundation donates "comfort homes," built on the grounds of major military and VA medical centers. These homes enable family members to be close to a loved one at the most stressful time – during the hospitalization for an unexpected illness, disease, or injury. Go to www.fisherhouse.org for more information or call (888)294-8560.

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

FIELD SERVICE PROGRAM

Welcome to the Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Committee's Field Service Program. This program was started in 1964 by the American Legion Auxiliary to care and assist the sick, disabled and needy veterans in the community. It gives properly trained volunteers a chance to directly serve our veterans in Non-VA facilities, Veterans Homes, Senior Day Care Centers, Foster Homes, Halfway Houses, Homeless shelters and a veteran's own home.

In 1993 the program was expanded to include service performed for a veteran at a National Cemetery. This has been expanded to include state and local cemeteries, or memorial services performed at the funeral home if the family does not want one at the cemetery.

To become a Field Service Volunteer a person must take the American Legion Auxiliary's Field Service Orientation Course. The Department Field Service Director or an appointed District instructor can give the Orientation Course. The cost of this course is \$5.00 a person. Money can be taken from your Unit's restricted funds for this.

A Volunteer may serve as a regularly scheduled volunteer or as an occasional Volunteer. Volunteers keep a record of their hours and turn them into their Unit's VA&R Chairman, who sends the total hours to the Department Field Service Director in her end of year report. The Department Field Service Director tabulates all the hours for each volunteer and orders the earned pins and bars from the National office.

It is recommended that each Unit VA&R Chairman keep a file of the Unit's Field Service Volunteers and add or delete information as it is appropriate. It is also recommended that this file be given to the next VA&R Chairman at the Beginning of the new administrative year.

A Field Service Record keeping form is on the back of this page. Unit VA&R Chairman are asked to give copies of this to all your Field Service Volunteers and then collect them in April to help you with your End of Year report. **DO NOT SEND THIS TO THE DEPARTMENT FIELD SERVICE DIRECTOR JUST SEND THE FIELD SERVICE REPORT.**

While we know that our members do not offer series to our veterans to get rewarded there are some small ways in which the Auxiliary says Thanks. A list of these awards follows:

A Field Service Volunteer Accreditation Card(blue) and A "Guide for Volunteers" Booklet will be give to each person who takes the orientation course.

PINS and BARS

1. A Filed Service Pin for 50 Hours of Service.
2. Field Service Hour Bars that hang on the Field Service Pin are available for 50, 100, 300, 500, 1000 hours and a bar for each additional 1000 hours of service.

HOME SERVICE PROGRAM

In 1974, a new method of reporting the number of volunteers, hours and cost of material and supplies was initiated to record service for the veterans by our volunteers in their own homes. Home Service completes a true record of service given by all American Legion Auxiliary volunteers for reporting to the Congress of the United States and also recognizes all volunteer hours of service by our National organization.

No orientation course or training is required to receive credit for Home Service hours.

Home Service hours can be earned through work done in your home for the benefit of homebound, sick or injured service members and veterans. These activities might include cooking, sewing, mending, babysitting while the veteran attends medical appointment or rehab sessions, or making quilts/knitting for hospitalized or homeless veterans. Time spent shopping and the cost of materials and supplies should also be reported.

Home Service can be a wonderful way to have members who cannot visit hospitals or clinics to participate in the VA&R program.

Keeping records of hours is done on the honor system. You may request a Home Service Record keeping from the Unit VA&R Chairman to help with the accurate accounting.

The Unit Chairman will forward this information the Vice Chairman of the Department VA&R committee at the end of the year. A Home Service Pin will be awarded after 50 hours of service has been accumulated. Bars are given for 50, 100, 300, 500, and 1000 hours of service. After reaching 1000 hours, bars are available for each additional 1000 hours.

