

# VA&R – Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

## PURPOSE:

- to provide an opportunity for members and non-members to support the needs of our veterans and their families
- to ensure veterans' transition and/or restoration to normally functioning lives

## ACTIVITIES THAT CAN BE DONE WITH THIS PROGRAM:

### Activities ONE member can do:

- ✓ act as a contact person for the Veteran Service Officer
- ✓ Visit your local senior center or nursing home to inquire if it would be possible to start a “Veterans Voice” roundtable where veterans and those that support veterans can share conversation and stories with the Auxiliary women and junior members
- ✓ if allowed, bring special treats made by the Auxiliary to veterans in nursing homes and senior centers
- ✓ encourage unit members and community members to volunteer at VA medical centers, and to perform field service and home service
- ✓ host and participate in stand down events; invite community members to assist
- ✓ encourage the local Veterans Administration Medical Center to start local VCAF programs.
- ✓ Apply for the Local Veterans Creative Arts Festival/ Creative Arts Workshop Grant to get started with an art festival
- ✓ remind members to visit veterans in hospitals on Memorial Day, Veterans Day, and other days

### Activities for 2-3 members:

- ❖ act as a contact person for the Veteran Service Officer
- ❖ identify veterans in the community by placing a reply box in local area business establishments with a bright header asking “Are You a US Veteran or Do you Support our Military?” Supply slips of paper where citizens can complete 2 or 3 simple questions:
  - Are you a US Veteran? If so, do you have any special needs?
  - Would you like to volunteer to help other area veterans?
  - Your name and how can we contact you?
- ❖ develop a relationship with the businesses and urge them to become a community partner to help and support veterans in your area and state
- ❖ encourage the local Veterans Administration Medical Center to start local VCAF programs.

- ❖ apply for the Local Veterans Creative Arts Festival/ Creative Arts Workshop Grant to get started with an art festival
- ❖ remind members to visit veterans in hospitals on Memorial Day, Veterans Day, and other days

**Activities for the UNIT:**

- provide information and guest speakers to members and veterans on the hot issues facing today's veterans-- PTSD, Suicide, Homelessness and delays in VA benefits
- educate Auxiliary members and the community about homeless veterans with information from the County Veterans Service Officer or the homeless coordinator from the Veterans Affairs Medical Center
- start a Homeless Veteran Grant Fund with poppy monies and donations to build a source for giving financial help to veterans who are in danger of losing their residence or need a little help to acquire a new one.
- host parties and get-togethers at the post inviting all veterans in the community, whether a post/unit member or not
- host and participate in stand down events; invite community members to assist
- encourage the local Veterans Administration Medical Center to start local VCAF programs.
- apply for the Local Veterans Creative Arts Festival/ Creative Arts Workshop Grant to get started with an art festival
- remind members to visit veterans in hospitals on Memorial Day, Veterans Day, and other days

**Activities to involve JUNIORS:**

- ★ visit your local senior center or nursing home to inquire if it would be possible to start a "Veterans Voice" roundtable where veterans and those that support veterans can share conversation and stories with the Auxiliary women and junior members
- ★ if allowed, bring special treats made by the Auxiliary to veterans in nursing homes and senior centers
- ★ identify service projects that are suitable for Junior members
- ★ remind members to visit veterans in hospitals on Memorial Day, Veterans Day, and other days

# C & Y-- Children & Youth

## PURPOSE:

- to improve conditions for all children, especially veteran/military children

## ACTIVITIES THAT CAN BE DONE WITH THIS PROGRAM:

### Activities ONE member can do:

- ✓ meet with other local agencies to discuss ways to meet the needs of military children; other agencies can include Boys/Girls Clubs, school counselors and personnel, Family Readiness Group representatives, Operation: Military kids representatives, Big Brothers/ Big Sisters
- ✓ to help understand the challenges of military children, download the free .pdf "Military Teen Toolkit" and "Military Kid Toolkit" documents from the National Military Family Association website. The toolkits offer information and ideas to help members and units develop appropriate and relevant resources to connect with military families in their communities. [www.militaryfamily.org/publications/kids-toolkit/](http://www.militaryfamily.org/publications/kids-toolkit/) or [www.militaryfamily.org/publications/teen-toolkit/](http://www.militaryfamily.org/publications/teen-toolkit/)
- ✓ participate in the National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day in May
- ✓ support the "GI Josh" program to connect with military children and donate the plush pups to a local military installation, Family Readiness Group or the USO so service members can take a "Josh" pup home as a gift for their children

### Activities for 2-3 members:

- ❖ with the cooperation of the Family Readiness Group and local social services, host a family resources and services fair for military families

### Activities for the UNIT:

- provide cash assistance/ temporary aid for children and families of veterans
- plan safe celebratory events for community children such as a Halloween party, Post-Graduation party, Fourth of July celebration, charity walk/run/roll, board game night, sports days
- support the "GI Josh" program to connect with military children and donate the plush pups to a local military installation, Family Readiness Group or the USO so service members can take a "Josh" pup home as a gift for their children

**Activities to involve JUNIORS:**

- ★ encourage Junior members to bring a friend (member or non-member, eligible or not eligible) to participate in volunteer activities
- ★ participate in the National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day in May
- ★ plan safe celebratory events for community children such as a Halloween party, Post-Graduation party, Fourth of July celebration, charity walk/run/roll, board game night, sports days
- ★ with the cooperation of the Family Readiness Group and local social services, host a family resources and services fair for military families
- ★ support the "GI Josh" program to connect with military children and donate the plush pups to a local military installation, Family Readiness Group or the USO so service members can take a "Josh" pup home as a gift for their children

# National Security

## PURPOSE:

- To maintain and promote a strong national defense by strengthening and supporting military servicemembers and their families.

## ACTIVITIES THAT CAN BE DONE WITH THIS PROGRAM:

### Activities ONE member can do:

- ✓ work with the local Family Readiness Group of the National Guard to identify off-base families of active duty service members who are most in need of our help.
- ✓ help that can be offered: provide childcare, meals, run errands, help with lawn mowing and home repairs.
- ✓ see ALA "How to Identify Veteran and Servicemember Families who are In Need of Assistance" resource.
- ✓ "Adopt a Platoon." You/ the unit will be assigned an individual, family or platoon and that you/ the unit can send care items to once per month, etc. This is handy if there are no bases nearby and the community does not have a large military population. <http://www.adoptaplatoon.org/> Give community members a way to participate—i.e., drop off toiletries, donations, etc to the local post by (date) for the next shipment
- ✓ adopt military families to help them make it through a holiday without their loved one
- ✓ distribute blue star and gold star banners, and educate community on their meaning
- ✓ partner with other organizations that serve/support the military such as USO and ROTC/JROTC
- ✓ the U.S. Army's Community Covenant program partners communities with the Army in order to improve the quality of life for soldiers and their families <http://www.army.mil/community/>
- ✓ raise money for The Legion's Operation Comfort Warriors
- ✓ work with Education counterparts to make school guidance counselors aware of the stress on military children during a parent's deployment. Identify junior members of the Auxiliary who might be willing to serve as peer mentors and friends to these students.
- ✓ collect items to ship to deployed service members-especially in anticipation of holidays
- ✓ organize community events to pack supplies for shipping to our servicemembers and submit photos to the event to local media.
- ✓ volunteer to participate in CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) training.
- ✓ use the National Military Family Association's community toolkit with ideas for organizing support to active military <http://www.militaryfamily.org/publications/community-toolkit/> Partner with local businesses, schools and leaders to get everyone involved.

- ✓ use the POW/MIA ceremony and empty table to promote awareness

#### **Activities for the UNIT:**

- host community send-off or welcome home events for deployed military service members

#### **Activities to involve JUNIORS:**

- ★ help that can be offered: provide childcare, meals, run errands, help with lawn mowing and home repairs.
- ★ "Adopt a Platoon." You/ the unit will be assigned an individual, family or platoon and that you/ the unit can send care items to once per month, etc. This is handy if there are no bases nearby and the community does not have a large military population. <http://www.adoptaplatoon.org/> Give community members a way to participate—i.e., drop off toiletries, donations, etc to the local post by (date) for the next shipment
- ★ adopt military families to help them make it through a holiday without their loved one
- ★ raise money for The Legion's Operation Comfort Warriors
- ★ work with Education counterparts to make school guidance counselors aware of the stress on military children during a parent's deployment. Identify junior members of the Auxiliary who might be willing to serve as peer mentors and friends to these students.
- ★ collect items to ship to deployed service members-especially in anticipation of holidays
- ★ organize community events to pack supplies for shipping to our servicemembers and submit photos to the event to local media.
- ★ encourage local children to draw and design cards of support to be sent to servicemen and women
- ★ use the POW/MIA ceremony and empty table to promote awareness

# Americanism

## PURPOSE:

- To promote a spirit of patriotism and encourage responsible citizenship through example and education

## ACTIVITIES THAT CAN BE DONE WITH THIS PROGRAM:

### Activities ONE member can do:

- ✓ encourage entries for the Americanism Essay contest with its annual theme
- ✓ fly your flag on the front of your home.
- ✓ support any legislation pertaining to the American Flag
- ✓ donate flags to schools and other civic organizations.
- ✓ create flag bookmarks and donate them to local libraries and schools.
- ✓ create education programs around our country's important documents-The U.S. Constitution, The Bill of Rights
- ✓ offer to train school students on proper display of the American Flag (including a ceremonial raising or retiring of the flag)
- ✓ encourage community participation in deployment ceremonies through yellow ribbon programs. More information is available through the local Family Readiness Group support person or online at [www.armyfrg.org](http://www.armyfrg.org)
- ✓ enable citizens to vote by registering voters, hosting debate nights for the candidates, and offering to drive people to the polls.
- ✓ fold and send pocket flags to deployed service members. Online contact is [www.pocketflagproject.com](http://www.pocketflagproject.com)
- ✓ support American Legion Americanism programs, especially the Oratorical contest, which helps students develop a deeper understanding of the U.S. Constitution.
- ✓ learn about the Flag Amendment and support the Citizens Flag Alliance. Write congress to urge them to support an amendment to protect the flag. Templates can be found on line at [www.cfa-inc.org](http://www.cfa-inc.org)
- ✓ develop a flag program for your community urging local businesses to fly a US flag or display a flag decal prominently on their store front.
- ✓ prepare and distribute certificates of appreciation in recognition of businesses that fly a US flag.
- ✓ actively observe patriotic holidays and invite the community to join the observance; Remember the Maine Day, National Medal of Honor Day, Hug a GI Day, Loyalty Day, Flag Day, Patriot Day, Day of the Deployed, Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day

- ✓ be an involved citizen. Visit local governmental groups in action: school board, city council, county board, town meeting

**Activities for the UNIT:**

- actively observe patriotic holidays and invite the community to join the observance

**Activities to involve JUNIORS:**

- ★ encourage entries for the Americanism Essay contest with its annual theme
- ★ donate flags to schools and other civic organizations.
- ★ create flag bookmarks and donate them to local libraries and schools.
- ★ offer to train school students on proper display of the American Flag (including a ceremonial raising or retiring of the flag)
- ★ fold and send pocket flags to deployed service members. Online contact is [www.pocketflagproject.com](http://www.pocketflagproject.com)
- ★ prepare and distribute certificates of appreciation in recognition of businesses that fly a US flag.

# Poppy

## PURPOSE:

- to honor veterans for their service and sacrifice by educating the community through the use of the Auxiliary's poppy

## ACTIVITIES THAT CAN BE DONE WITH THIS PROGRAM:

### Activities ONE member can do:

- ✓ solicit donations for the purpose of supporting veterans' issues
- ✓ plan and promote their local poppy days. Expand the poppy donation activity to 2-3 activities per year. Memorial Day(May), Flag Day (June), Fourth of July, Patriot Day (September), Veterans Day (November), Presidents Day (February).
- ✓ Have a "Support the Poppy in Winter" campaign! One month...plant the poppy seeds, then the next month ...fertilize the poppies,...next month water the poppies. Publicize the poppy garden and get the community involved to help grow the garden!
- ✓ connect with a local bakery to encourage them to design a Poppy Cookie. The bakery could promote the cookie with proceeds going to the unit for their Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation activities.
- ✓ ask the local coffee shop to develop a unique coffee drink. Proceeds for the coffee beverage to go to the unit
- ✓ develop a "We Remember Campaign" and work it all year long. Shirts, balls, coffee cups, napkins, bookmark, buttons can all be marked with "We Remember."
- ✓ plan a "We Remember" activity every month
  - *September* – Patriot Day (September 11) – Kids are back in school. Design "We Remember" bookmarks with the poppy and pledge of allegiance and distribute to area schools.
  - *October* – October 26 is "The Day of the Deployed." Paint your pinky orange in honor of our veterans.
  - *November* – "We Remember" special veterans in our lives. Wear a commemorative honor button in honor of special veterans in your life.
  - *December* – "We Remember" our veterans over the holiday season.
  - *February* - "We remember" the families of our military on Valentine's Day.
  - Get some stencils...make some posters and plaster your town with "We Remember!"



- ✓ find a younger member of the SAL or young age appropriate boy and make him a Prince. Distributing poppies is gender neutral and is a great activity for all young people.
- ✓ leave a bouquet of poppies at the gas station, bakery or post office right next to a donation can that is covered in a Pringle can poppy print-out.
- ✓ adopt a School. Let children know the story of the poppy, read the poem Flanders Field, provide simplified poppy pictures for students to color; encourage students to write their own poems and stories about the memorial poppy, to draw their own pictures, or to make a shadow box scene with poppies as the main focus.

#### **Activities for the UNIT:**

- plan a “We Remember” activity every month
- adopt a School. Let children know the story of the poppy, read the poem Flanders Field, provide simplified poppy pictures for students to color; encourage students to write their own poems and stories about the memorial poppy, to draw their own pictures, or to make a shadow box scene with poppies as the main focus.

#### **Activities to involve JUNIORS:**

- ★ solicit donations for the purpose of supporting veterans’ issues
- ★ plan and promote their local poppy days. Expand the poppy donation activity to 2-3 activities per year.
- ★ have a “Support the Poppy in Winter” campaign!
- ★ paint Your Pinky RED during Poppy Month (May) to promote and bring awareness to the poppy campaign.
- ★ develop a “We Remember Campaign” and work it all year long. Shirts, balls, coffee cups, napkins, bookmark, buttons can all be marked with “We Remember.” Plan a “We Remember” activity every month.



# Junior Activities

## PURPOSE:

- to develop life-long relationships with young members so they can carry on our mission

## ACTIVITIES THAT CAN BE DONE WITH THIS PROGRAM:

### Activities to involve JUNIORS:

- ★ encourage Juniors to participate in Auxiliary programs and activities that serve veterans, military, and their families
- ★ adopt a deployed company, a deployed soldier, or the family of a deployed servicemember and provide care packages, holiday treats, babysitting services
- ★ participate in the Library of Congress' Veterans History Project by interviewing a veteran [NOTE MINIMUM AGE LIMIT FOR PARTICIPATION IN THIS PROJECT] [www.loc.gov/vets/](http://www.loc.gov/vets/)
- ★ promote Auxiliary scholarships to eligible Juniors
- ★ encourage Juniors to Tweet and use social media to inform their friends of their Auxiliary activities
- ★ ask Junior members to teach internet use to Senior members
- ★ teach internet safety to Juniors
- ★ become involved in an Operation: Military Kids project [www.operationmilitarykids.org](http://www.operationmilitarykids.org)
- ★ earn Junior Patches in areas of interest [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org)
- ★ Develop a day in the summer where members of the Unit and Post can serve as mentors and leaders at a local "Patriot Camp." Activities can include: History of the Poppy, Meet a Veteran, Folding Pocket Flags, etc. Encourage Juniors to bring a friend.
- ★ During Maxwell Street Days set up tables where junior members can color poppy pictures or draw pictures of veterans. Invite the children of passers-by to join in the fun.
- ★ Invite junior members to bring one of their friends along, a friend that may or may not be eligible for Auxiliary membership, to participate in the activity side-by-side with senior members. Activities can include: salad luncheon, poppy distribution, an activity to aid a veteran.
- ★ Spend a Junior meeting checking out the Tweets and YouTube videos from the National Junior Meeting

## Activity Idea:

- ★ “Activist, Advocate, Patriot” - Develop tier participant levels to encourage junior members to participate in activities that will earn them completion recognition/ certificates and allow them to move to the next level. Each unit can develop the criteria that works for them. Have a sign-off sheet to be signed by an adult as each activity is completed.
  
- ★ *Tier 1: ACTIVIST LEVEL:* Develop two or three activities that are appropriate for junior members in the “activist” tier to include at least two American Legion Auxiliary programs. Examples:
  - Poppy: Actively encourage the Junior members to learn the story of the poppy and tell others. Young members can color poppy themed coloring sheets.
  - Constitution and Bylaws: Learn about Roberts Rules of Order and develop 5 criteria that young people can understand and complete that are related to parliamentary procedure: How to make a motion, What is a resolution etc. Create coloring sheets for younger children to include parliamentary images (a gavel, a podium with a woman standing behind it, people at a meeting, etc.)
  
- ★ *Tier 2: ADVOCATE LEVEL:* Develop two or three activities that are appropriate for junior members in the “advocate” tier.
  - Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation: Ask the juniors to color and create greeting cards for veterans at Veterans Administration facilities or for active duty military.
  - Legislative: Write letters to local representatives, senators or local politicians to remind them of the importance of taking care of veterans and active-duty military.
  - Auxiliary Emergency Fund: Discuss the Auxiliary Emergency Fund program and encourage the juniors (with senior members) to hold a fundraiser with the proceeds to go to the American Legion Auxiliary Emergency Fund.
  
- ★ *Tier 3: PATRIOT LEVEL:*
  - Americanism: Hold a junior “pocket flag”folding meeting and encourage each junior to “bring a friend.”
  - National Security – Hold a yellow ribbon campaign and invite the junior members to distribute yellow ribbons.

# Education

## **PURPOSE:**

- encourage scholarship opportunities for education beyond high school, especially for military children

## **ACTIVITIES THAT CAN BE DONE WITH THIS PROGRAM:**

### **Activities ONE member can do:**

- ✓ educate school administrators about the mental health issues facing military children
- ✓ hold fund-raising activities to secure scholarship funds
- ✓ support state and national legislation which promotes scholarship opportunities and college funding, especially for military service members and their families
- ✓ notify high school guidance counselors, veterans, and servicemembers of available Auxiliary-sponsored scholarships at the unit, department, and national levels
- ✓ encourage Juniors to provide peer support for military children
- ✓ collect Box Tops for Education for schools, especially those near a military base
- ✓ volunteer to help with literacy programs for pre-kindergarten through adult
- ✓ ask local veterans and military to participate in "Veterans in the Classroom," sharing their experiences with students
- ✓ collaborate with Americanism committee to promote familiarity with the U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights
- ✓ partner with schools to build an alliance between the unit and the school; for instance connect with the art, technology, English, history teachers to get student help developing a media campaign for the unit

### **Activities for 2-3 members:**

- ❖ hold fund-raising activities to secure scholarship funds
- ❖ receive and judge scholarship applications

### **Activities for the UNIT:**

- hold fund-raising activities to secure scholarship funds

**Activities to involve JUNIORS:**

- ★ encourage Juniors to provide peer support for military children
- ★ collect Box Tops for Education for schools, especially those near a military base
- ★ ask local veterans and military to participate in "Veterans in the Classroom," sharing their experiences with students

# Girls State/ Girls Nation

## **PURPOSE:**

- to provide young women an educational opportunity to explore their civic responsibility

## **ACTIVITIES THAT CAN BE DONE WITH THIS PROGRAM:**

### **Activities ONE member can do:**

- ✓ inform attendees of the availability of appropriate scholarships
- ✓ partner with local Girls State Alumnae, providing opportunities for them to publically share their experience of this Auxiliary-sponsored program
- ✓ partner with alumnae to continue their involvement with the Auxiliary's mission