

COMMUNITY SERVICE 2025-2026
JOANIE WHITSETT, DEPARTMENT CHAIRMAN

The Arizona American Legion Auxiliary is proud to support and focus on veterans, their families, senior citizens and local community members. This Department of Arizona Community Service chairman has received community service reports from 38 units with several detailing their efforts in volunteering and logging many miles on their vehicles to support our veterans and community.

Unit calendars were active with programs supporting patriotism, service, community, veterans and members. Samples of these programs were; homeless shelters, nursing homes, local schools, churches, senior centers, food banks, adopt-a-family, school scholarships to students at local schools, military care packages, children's Christmas parties, American Legion Family Day, teacher appreciation breakfast, woven rugs made from grocery bags for veterans, highway cleanup, recycling cans, Heritage Presentation Commission, ice cream social, blood drives, Mayors Military Mission facilitating events to Veterans, raised money and had projects for the Presidents Special Project, Trivia games, Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners, Christmas meal baskets for veterans, monetary donations to various Veteran programs, car shows, Dream Flights, Donated to Honor Flights, donated Baby Packs with necessities of baby supplies, and a pet food collection.

Some of these unit programs had participation from American Legion Families i.e., Legionnaires, S.A.L., and Riders.

Units who stood out:

Unit 2 collected grocery bags that were woven into mats for homeless Veterans. This unit was also represented at a Gold Star Medal presentation at the Phoenix VA hospital dedication ceremony honoring Major Frannie McClendon, the last remaining WWII survivor of the Women's Army Corps.

Unit 27 for their collaborative effort with the Apache Junction Public Library Canvas Project, called America's Future in celebration of the United States 250 Semiquincentennial Anniversary. Several titles/canvases in red, white and blue tiles were created by Army Of Torches (AOT), ALA Unit 27 and the local youth and families. This unit raised \$1000 for the Apache Junction Library projects, \$3000 in donated items for the Women's Hope Charity, organized a military supply drive where 2800 items were collected for care packages, and had collaborations with JROTC.

Unit 86 put together a community pet food drive that generated a pickup truck bed full of donated pet food, harnesses, leashes, treats and beds for the local pet store to give to community members in need for free. For the Presidents Special Project, this unit purchased items for 30 caregiver baskets and delivered them to Hospice and Caregivers in the local community. This unit worked together with the community to gather donated items for approximately 150 military care packages that were prepared for a Soldier R Us project. Unit 86 put together a planning committee for Family Day involving 27 Legionnaires, S.A.L., Riders, Auxiliary and community members. A bounce house was donated for this event by a local business, there were game booths and prizes, a bake sale, raffles, 10 local craft vendors and 3 food vendors. A unit member coordinated a program with the local Senior Center and Post 86 to make available daily meals to veterans in need. These meals are available for dining in at the senior center or for takeout. This program has provided meals to 41 veterans monthly this past year.

Unit 4 helped the residents and businesses of Globe clean up mud and debris from the September and October floods. Donations of items were coordinated for 70 Christmas gift bags that were delivered to the local nursing home.

Unit 44 worked closely with the City of Scottsdale and the Veterans Advisory Commission who are committed to providing resources and support to the lives of our military and veteran community.

Unit 53 involved Blue Star Mothers in events raising awareness and fundraising to support the care package program. Auxiliary and Post members work with the City Patriotic Committee to bridge communications between the city and the American Legion Families. Collected blankets to donate to Festival Veterans Club for their holiday service project. Introduced the POW/MIA table to High School and youth programs.

Unit 65 put on a Family Day event with many community service groups to present resources, games and activities and food. All American Legion families were present to answer questions about the American Legion.

Unit 81 coordinated with the Dream Flights program to offer flights to a total of 9 veterans from WWII, Korean, Vietnam, and Desert Storm for an experience they will never forget.

The American Legion Auxiliary is a proud organization spending many hours dedicated to supporting veterans, their families, and local communities through various service and outreach programs.

It has been an honor to serve as Department of Arizona Community Service Chairman. Working with American Legion Auxiliary members in all levels has been an amazing experience.

Listed below are the combined numbers for each of the 38 units that reported:

Total Mileage: 71,147

Total Donations: \$212,969

Total Volunteer Hours: 124,044