PLAN OF ACTION PROGRAMS 2022-2023

VA HOSPITALS AND VA CENTERS

Oklahoma City VA Hospital

VA Rep: Debbie Bertolasio (405) 229-6522 da.bertolasio@gmail.com

9906 Hefner Village Blvd., Oklahoma City, OK 73162

"A Donut Day at the OKC VA!" Starting Now, we are looking for Units across Oklahoma to assist with funding and serving Coffee and Donuts every other Friday at the Oklahoma City VA Hospital – in person or virtual. The hospital provides the coffee, paper napkins and cups – the American Legion Auxiliary will provide the donuts.

Our Department donates \$80.00 every month to each of the seven VA Centers and both VA Hospitals located in Oklahoma for a total of \$720.00 per month (Oklahoma City VA Hospital, Muskogee VA Hospital, Ardmore VA Center, Claremore VA Center, Clintion VA Center, Lawton VA Center, Norman VA Center, Sulphur VA Center and Talihina VA Center). At Christmas time Department donates \$100.00 to each facility. Additionally Department donates \$1,500 yearly to the Buddy Fund for the annual Christmas VA&R Tour. **This brings the total yearly Department donation to \$10,320 of which only \$2,850 comes from mandatory unit donations**. Donations made by the units to the VA&R General Fund will be used to help offset these costs and will be greatly appreciated.

AMERICANISM

Chairman: Sherree Cagle (405) 889-1313 sybinmwc@att.net

4805 East Avenue, Oklahoma City, OK, 73129

<u>Overview</u>: We must all do what we can to promote patriotism, provide care and comfort not only for our veterans, but to the families and communities who do so much for our great nation as well. Americanism includes many things such as: Independence Day, Memorial Day, and Veterans Day. Other things are not so widely known such as Flag Day (why do we call her "Old Glory"?); Constitution Day (when is it?); what is the symbolism of the 13 folds of the United States Flag?; what star represents Oklahoma?

The goal of the Americanism program is to teach others how to be knowledgeable on flag history, flag etiquette, and proper disposal methods, and promote the observation of patriotic holidays so your community will look to the ALA for information. We also want to increase participation in the Americanism Essay Contest and participate in the promotion of The American Legion Americanism programs such as the Legion's oratorical contest.

Report Due Dates: End of Year Report due by MAY 26, 2023

Award Due Dates: Send to Department Chairman

Americanism Essay Contest –due by MARCH 31, 2023

Unit Award: Most Outstanding Unit Americanism Program – due by MAY 19, 2023

AEF - AUXILIARY EMERGENCY FUND

Chairman: Brenda Harvey (918) 360-7066 brendajh@sbcglobal.net

4130 Howard Street, Muskogee, OK, 74401

<u>Overview</u>: Members helping members – that's the American Legion Auxiliary's mission of Service Not Self in action. Hard times can fall upon us at any moment. That's when the American Legion Auxiliary is committed to help. The Auxiliary Emergency Fund (AEF) is a national grant assistance program that provides temporary emergency assistance to eligible members of the American Legion Auxiliary who have endured a significant financial setback as the result of an act of nature or other personal crisis. Your donation to the AEF may help make those grants possible.

Basic Criteria for Qualification: The applicant must be an American Legion Auxiliary (ALA) member. Applicant must have maintained ALA membership for three consecutive years (the current year and immediate past two years). Application must be received within 6 months of disaster. One grant per grantee in a 12-month period will be awarded.

Report Due Dates: End of Year Report due by **MAY 26, 2023**

Donations Accepted all year

CHAPLAIN

Chairman: Lorraine Kruskopp (405) 496-2035 patzi99@sbcglobal.net

18651 Alameda Street, Norman, OK, 73026

<u>Overview</u>: The chaplain should attend all meetings and have an opening and closing prayer at each meeting. These prayers may come from any source: Reflections in the quarterly Auxiliary magazine, www.ALAforVeterans.org, self-composed prayers, or those found elsewhere.

As a chaplain, the most important thing for you to remember is that the American Legion Auxiliary does not promote any one religion. We must not offend anyone by promoting our own religion.

Suggested activities:

- Reporting the names of members who are ill and sending them cards.
- Sending sympathy cards to family members. If possible, visiting the funeral and doing a memorial service for the deceased member.
- Being in charge of religious services for the unit.
- Visiting members and veterans in nursing homes or those who are shut-ins.
- Keeping in contact with Gold Star Families and remembering them on holidays.
- Volunteering at community projects.
- Making a prayer book or devotional book. In doing this, encourage member participation.

Ceremonies may be found in the Manual of Ceremonies of American Legion Auxiliary.

Report Due Dates: End of Year Report due by **MAY 1, 2023**

Award Due Dates: Chaplain Books judged at 2023 July Convention

CHILDREN & YOUTH

Chairman: Carol Blosch (405) 714-1310 bloschs@yahoo.com

5421 W 8th Avenue, Stillwater, OK, 74074

Melissa Green (580) 371-1166 melissakgreen326@gmail.com

2066 Petti John Springs Road, Madill, OK, 73466

<u>Overview</u>: The Children & Youth program emphasizes protecting, caring for, and supporting children and youth, particularly those of veterans' and military families. The American Legion Auxiliary Children & Youth program strives to support and promote the Children & Youth program of The American Legion.

- To recognize and reward the positive actions of our children and youth, the American Legion Auxiliary has two special national awards bestowed to youth nominated by units: the Youth Hero Award and the Good Deed Award.
- Kids of Deployed are Heroes 2 (KDH2) is an initiative honoring military children who may be experiencing a separation from one or both parents, whether deployed to a war zone, having a short tour or on an extended temporary duty assignment.
- Purple Up! Day for Military kids is April 15.

Report Due Dates: End of Year Report due by **MAY 26, 2023**

Award Due Dates: Unit Award: Most Outstanding Unit Children & Youth Program (per division).

Due to Chairman by MAY 15, 2023.

Department Award: Best Department Children & Youth Program (per division).

Due to Chairman by MAY 15, 2023.

CHILD WELFARE FOUNDATION - LIASION TO TAL

Chairman: Billie Reid (405) 880-4403 billie_reid2003@yahoo.com

PO Box 52, Blackwell, OK, 74631

<u>Overview</u>: To educate members and the general public about the Child Welfare Foundation (CWF), its mission, and to provide financial assistance to The American Legion in their efforts to award grants to youth-serving nonprofit organizations.

Established in 1954, The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation was developed as a repository of funds from individuals who wished to contribute to the betterment of children in this country. The priority is to contribute to the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual welfare of children and youth by aiding progress in the field of child welfare through dissemination of knowledge about research, studies, surveys, projects, or by supporting programs and activities benefiting the welfare of children and youth.

Not all American children grow up inside the comfortable definition of normal childhood development. For thousands, each day is a challenge marked by pain, prayer and perseverance. Many of these children require specialized care. To overcome their obstacles, they need help from you and The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation.

Report Due Dates: End of Year Report due by MAY 26, 2023

Donations Accepted All Year

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Chairman: Donna Snodgrass (405) 788-6521 donnasnodgrass@yahoo.com

2404 Libra Street, Shawnee, OK, 74804

<u>Overview</u>: The Community Service program promotes the American Legion Auxiliary's visibility within our localities through our commitment to community, state and nation.

What can you do? Become visible within your community as a link to the veteran community. Get involved in community service projects to bring awareness of our mission to support veterans, service members, their families and the community. Always wear your American Legion Auxiliary apparel or pin while volunteering in the community; it reinforces our brand promise by telling people who we are, what we do, and why we matter.

Report Due Dates: End of Year Report due by MAY 26, 2023

Award Due Dates:

Unit Award – Most Outstanding Unit Community Service Program

CONSTITUTION & BY-LAWS

Chairman: Patsy Chinn (918) 906-2048 patsyvarnell@aol.com

16341 Hubbard Road, Claremore, OK, 74017-1153

<u>Overview</u>: The Constitution & Bylaws program informs and educates members of the American Legion Auxiliary on the importance and power of having properly written and regularly reviewed and updated governing documents at all levels of the organization.

- Your governing documents include your articles of incorporation (if incorporated), constitution, bylaws, standing rules, and policies.
- These fundamental rules of the organization state how the membership agrees to govern itself, how it will choose its leaders, hold its meetings, and policies of the administration of the organization.
- Knowing the non-profit laws in your state provides the essential foundation for your governing documents at the department, district, county, and unit level.
- The importance of having governing documents in place to allow operations to continue in an emergency has become absolutely vital.
- Keeping your governing documents up to date and making them available to all members are key to a healthy organization that functions as a team to support our veterans, military, and their families.
- Remember that department, district and unit constitution, bylaws, and standing rules cannot be in conflict with national governing documents.
- When the national constitution, bylaws, and standing rules change, departments, districts, counties, and units should automatically update their governing documents.
- Contact your Department Constitution & Bylaws Chairman for assistance.

EDUCATION/SCHOLARSHIPS

Chairman: Debbie Bertolasio (405) 229-6522 da.bertolasio@gmail.com

9906 Hefner Village Blvd., Oklahoma City, OK, 73162

Overview: To promote quality education for children, especially for military children, and adults.

■ To encourage schools to invite veterans to speak in their classrooms.

- To provide scholarships for students who desire a college education.
- To Support legislation that establishes new scholarship opportunities.
- To support the Education program and scholarship opportunities of The American Legion.

Scholarships can be applied for online at our National Website (ALAforveterans.org). They include (1) Children of Warriors National President's Scholarship, (2) Spirit of Youth Scholarship for Junior Members, (3) Non-traditional Student Scholarship, and (4) Junior Member Loyalty Scholarship.

Award Due Dates: Scholarships due to Units by **MARCH 1, 2023**

Report Due Dates: End of Year Report due by **MAY 26, 2023**

GIFTS FOR YANKS

Chairman: Jody Chisolm (918) 808-7033 ala_jw@yahoo.com

PO Box 457, Wilburton, OK, 74578

<u>Overview</u>: The "Gifts For Yanks" program was started in 1944 to remember our hospitalized veterans. We solicit donations each year to give gifts to our veteran patients & residents at all VA hospitals and centers in Oklahoma. Here are several ways to participate in this program:

- 1) Contribute to the Department Headquarters to help with the crisp \$1 bill gifts they give to veterans at the VA Hospitals and Centers during Christmas Tour.
- 2) Contribute to either El Reno Unit 34 and/or directly to El Reno High School for their "Gifts For Yanks" (Christmas) Program. The school has done this program continuously from its inception! They raise money, buy gifts, and deliver to the Oklahoma City VA Hospital.
- 3) Have a fundraiser and solicit donations from individual, local businesses, and other veterans' organizations to help your unit's efforts to hold a "Gift Shop" at your local VA hospital or center so patients & residents may select and send gifts to their families. Typically done at Christmas time yet may be done all year long for other holidays. The Clinton VA Center ALA Representative does a "Gift Shop" at their Christmas party and the residents enjoy this. Other ALA VA Representatives, and Units, are encouraged to do this at your local VA Hospital or Center! If a unit does this, please notify the ALA Representative so she can put it on the monthly report!

Report Due Dates: End of Year Report due by MAY 26, 2023

Donations Accepted All Year

GIRLS STATE

Chairman: Jennifer Shaw jenn.okgs@gmail.com

Natalie Wood natalie.okgs@gmail.com

<u>Overview</u>: Female high school students who have completed their junior year are competitively selected and sponsored by American Legion Auxiliary units for this program, where they learn about the political process by electing officials for all levels of state government and actively running a mock government. The girls are assigned to mock cities and either the "Federalist Party" or "Nationalist Party."

Assistance from dedicated ALA volunteers ensures the program's nonpartisan governmental, patriotic, and civic objectives are carried out through interactive learning. Though the week is filled with many learning opportunities, there is always time for fun and the formation of long-term friendships.

Candidates should be keenly interested in government and current events, and show strong leadership abilities. Because the structure of state and local government varies, ALA Girls State programs may vary in content and method of procedure, but each adheres to the same basic core values.

If your unit has not sponsored a delegate to Girls State in the past, or if you have any questions regarding the program, please email one of the Chairmen listed above.

GOLD STAR

Chairman: Nanci Galatian (918) 729-2431 ngalatian@yahoo.com

519 E 6th Avenue, Bristow, OK, 74010

Overview: Gold Star Mother's and Family's Day is Sept. 26

It's a group of women you don't *want* to be part of but are glad they are around when you need them most. Maybe you've seen their gold star pins and wondered what they represented. Or maybe you have seen the Gold Star banners in the windows of homes and wondered what they meant.

Gold Star Mothers are women whose son or daughter became missing in action, died while on active duty, or died as a result of such service. The American Gold Star Mothers, Inc. is a mission-compatible organization to the American Legion Auxiliary, these women are also eligible for ALA membership.

When a Gold Star Mother is recognized, you do not clap for her. She has lost a loved one from her life and it is not something we celebrate, nor does she celebrate the loss of her loved one. We bow our heads in reverence and comfort her.

If you know of any Gold Star Mothers, please forward their information to the Department Chairman and the Department Chaplain so they can be recognized.

HISTORIAN

Chairman: Ilene West (918) 852-8085 impwest67@gmail.com

1597 S Elm Ave., Bartlesville, OK, 740033

<u>Overview</u>: An organization's history is valuable for many reasons. For instance, it can simply remind our members "who we are," thereby creating a strong bond that unites and inspires. We can draw lessons from understanding how previous members confronted challenges and opportunities, as well as how they responded to them. History can also answer the question, "How did we get to this point?" These are some of the reasons a history should be recorded. March 15th is National Women's History Day.

Your unit Historian should record events and activities performed by your unit throughout the year. The recording of the American Legion Auxiliary's history at all levels (unit, district, department, and national) is important so that everyone will know who we are, what we do, and why we matter. Other responsibilities of a historian are:

- Assist in developing a system to archive important communications such as newsletters, handbooks, guidebooks, brochures, and program information.
- Participate in and promote the "Members Remember" history project.
- Work with the Junior Activities chairman to promote the History Patch available to Junior members in $9^{th} 12^{th}$ grades.
- Encourage Senior and Junior historians to participate in the Veterans History Project.

Report Due Dates: End of Year Report due by **MAY 26, 2023**

Award Due Dates: History Books judged at 2023 July Convention

JUNIOR ACTIVITIES

Chairman: Lisa Roark (918) 440-8863 lisa.roark3@gmail.com

1307 Sumpter Street, Pawhuska, OK, 74056

<u>Overview</u>: The purpose of the ALA Junior Activities Program is to inspire active participation in members age 17 and under so that they will become engaging, productive members who will want to continue their American Legion Auxiliary membership into adulthood.

- To build the Junior Activities program one member at a time by giving Junior members a voice and an opportunity to participate.
- To promote and encourage Junior participation in the Patch Program in order to teach them about the mission of the American Legion Auxiliary.
- To make Junior meetings fun and informative.

Social media sites for junior members can be found at https://www.facebook.com/alajuniors/ and https://www.instagram.com/alajuniors/

Report Due Dates: End of Year Report due by **MAY 26, 2023**

<u>Award Due Dates</u>: Check the National website for information on the Junior Activities Patch Program and the many scholarship opportunities available to our junior members.

LEADERSHIP

Chairman: Susie Bevel (918) 381-8237 jsbala@aol.com

68490 S 318th Court, Wagoner, OK, 74467

Overview: The Leadership Committee raises awareness of leadership development opportunities.

Promotes participation in the ALA Academy.

• Enhances knowledge about ALA history, programs, and organization.

There is an online Senior Leadership Basic Course available in both Power Point and Word. This course provides information on the formation of the ALA, why we do what we do, and how to accomplish those goals set by National. Every member is encouraged to take the course and complete the quiz at the end. They will then qualify to receive a Leadership Course Completion Card.

<u>Award Due Dates</u>: The Unit Member of the Year award recognizes those serving at the unit level who exemplify the values and ideals of the Auxiliary and whose accomplishments significantly impact the program work in their units.

Recognition of the winners occurs at the American Legion Auxiliary's national convention. The application deadline is June 1 of each calendar year. Therefore, you must submit your application to the Department Chairman prior to June 1 so that it be can reviewed and forwarded to National.

Report Due Dates: End of Year Report due by MAY 26, 2023

LEGISLATIVE

Chairman: Ilene West (918) 852-8085 impwest67@gmail.com

1597 S Elm Ave., Bartlesville, OK, 74003

<u>Overview</u>: In local Congressional Districts and in Washington, D.C., American Legion Auxiliary members work to keep veterans' issues in front of legislators, strengthening our mission to serve veterans, servicemembers, and their families.

While we may think that one voice may not make a difference on its own, that one voice added to the voice of others quickly becomes a collective power of influence that can impact the decisions of our elected officials.

Joining together, Auxiliary members can and do make a difference when they advocate for veterans, servicemembers and their families.

MEMBERSHIP

Chairman: Tracey Smith (918) 577-0650 traceyann0830@sbcglobal.net

320 Heritage Court, Fort Gibson, OK, 74434

<u>Overview</u>: Every member should be aware of how vital Membership is to the American Legion Auxiliary. Not only does it help with revenue, it provides us with volunteers to help achieve the goals set for the units throughout the state. Talk to people in your communities – let them know what our organization does for our veterans and their families. Ask if they would be interested in attending a unit meeting to get them involved. Our membership has dropped since the Covid pandemic so we need to recruit as many new members as possible, and retain the ones we already have in our units.

<u>Award Due Dates</u>: Special gift presented by National Membership Chairman to members who recruit 10 NEW senior members and 3 NEW junior members by **JUNE 1, 2023**.

Unit 100% award for units that reach 100% of their 2023 membership goal by November 11, 2022.

Unit award presented to NEW units chartered between 9-1-2022 and 7-31-2023.

NATIONAL SECURITY

Chairman: Tracey Smith (918) 577-0650 traceyann0830@sbcglobal.net

320 Heritage Court, Fort Gibson, OK, 74434

<u>Overview</u>: The National Security program maintains and promotes a strong national defense by strengthening and supporting military servicemembers and their families. We can support active-duty military families by working with an installation Family Readiness Group (FRG). Contact the Family Readiness Center on your nearby military installation for more information.

The National ALA website has many guidelines for supporting the National Security Program, such as:

- How to welcome home separating servicemembers.
- How to support troops and their families on military installations.
- How to train for FEMAs Community Emergency Response Teams.
- How to collaborate with the Red Cross' service to armed forces.

<u>Award Due Dates</u>: Unit Award: Most Outstanding Unit National Security Program (per division) Deadline **MAY 15, 2023**. All department entries must be sent by the department chairman to their national division chairman.

Department Award: Dorothy Pearl Best Department National Security Award (per division) Deadline MAY 15, 2023. All department entries must be sent by the department chairman to their national division chairman.

Salute to Servicemembers Award Deadline MAY 15, 2023. All department entries must be sent by the department chairman to their national division chairman

POPPY

Chairman: Deborah Glen (918) 397-0655 ddglen@gmail.com

2211 S Osage Ave., Bartlesville, OK, 74003

Overview: Connecting the visual image of the poppy with the sacrifice of service made by our veterans has been an important goal of the American Legion Auxiliary Poppy Program since its inception in 1921. On Memorial Day and Veterans Day, millions of red crepe paper poppies—all handmade by veterans as part of their therapeutic rehabilitation—are distributed across the country in exchange for donations that go directly to assist disabled and hospitalized veterans in our communities.

Millions of American Legion Auxiliary poppies are distributed annually by ALA units, raising money for veterans, active-duty service members, and their families. Children are involved in spreading the poppy message, too. Poppy Poster Contests are held in local schools for students in grades 2 to 12. The Little Miss Poppy Contest is a fun event for Junior Auxiliary members ages 6-12 who promote the Auxiliary memorial poppy.

The Friday before Memorial Day is National Poppy Day.

Report Due Dates: End of Year Report due by **MAY 26, 2023**

<u>Award Due Dates</u>: May 26, 2023 is National Poppy Day. Poppy posters, awards and Little Miss Poppy winners are due to the Chairman by **APRIL 21, 2023**

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Chairman: Eldonna Deer (417) 209-1255 deereldonna@gmail.com

2908 E 60th St. N., Muskogee, OK, 74403

Overview: The purpose of the ALA Public Relations Program is to spread the word about the American Legion Auxiliary: *A Community of Volunteers Serving Veterans, Military, and their Families*. We can do this by using some of the following tips:

- Write and send articles to your local newspapers about activities your unit does for our veterans and the community.
- Check with your local newspaper to see if they have a "Free" section in their paper to advertise upcoming events. Surprisingly, most do.
- Encourage ALA members to be visible in their communities through valuable, distinct branding.
- Share the latest news from ALA volunteer national leadership and ALA National Headquarters.
- Develop a face book page for your unit and post about upcoming activities or past accomplishments for your unit.
- Start a monthly newsletter for your unit and send by email to your members.

Using social media is a great way to get the word out quickly to your members and the community.

Report Due Dates: End of Year Report due by **MAY 26, 2023**

<u>Award Due Dates</u>: Yet to be determined by National – check with the Department Chairman. Public Relation scrapbooks to be judged at department Convention in July 2023.

VA&R – VETERANS AFFAIRS & REHABILITATION AND SERVICE TO VETERANS

Chairman: Kim Vincent (619) 807-8431 hobvin10@yahoo.com

919 N. 21st Street, Guthrie, OK, 73044

<u>Overview</u>: Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation means the complete restoration of the veteran and his or her family to normal function and adjustment, physically, mentally, socially, and vocationally for the fullest possible life, compatible with his or her abilities and disabilities.

One of the programs of Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation is that of Service to Veterans. Service to Veterans is the combination of both the Field Service and Home Service Programs. It is in part a volunteer program similar to that of the Hospital Volunteer program, but conducted in community nursing homes and non-VA facilities. It also includes hours, cost of materials and supplies of work done for veterans, such as sewing, knitting, cooking, teaching the Internet, shopping for materials and supplies and other services performed by the volunteer in their own home. Service to Veterans 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. There are both National and State Directors for the Service to Veterans program.

- Support rehabilitation and healing of veterans through arts, crafts, and hobbies.
- Support veteran caregivers, family members and survivors.
- Enroll Auxiliary members as VA Voluntary Service (VAVS) volunteers at VA health care facilities.
- Help The American Legion, State Department of Veterans Affairs and Chamber of Commerce promote job fairs for veterans and their families.
- There is not a VA hospital close to your community? Find opportunities for Auxiliary members to serve veterans.

<u>Award Due Dates:</u> Unit Award: Most Outstanding Unit VA&R Program (per division). Send to Department Chairman by May 15, 2023.

Department Award: Best Department VA&R Program (per division). Send to Department Chairman by **May 15, 2023**.

NVCAF Award: NVCAF Support Award. Send donations to the ALA Foundation to Department Headquarters. Department will forward to National Headquarters for 2022-2023 by December 31, 2022.