

# American Legion Auxiliary

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August 2021 \$3.75



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**Retaining ALA  
Members to Serve  
Our Mission**

**HOME** is where  
is set in stone, it's where  
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thank god you're home  
Sophie and I no longer  
alone WELCOME  
**BUT** because  
want to be



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# Auxiliary

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**ON THE COVER:** A Marine with Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force Crisis Response-Africa is welcomed home by his family as he returns to Camp Lejeune, N.C., in 2017. During the nine-month deployment, Marines and sailors served as the logistics combat element supporting operations and training exercises across Europe and Africa (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Alexander Mitchell). **ABOVE:** A classic children's toy now reflects the reality of today's United States military.



**SHARING OUR MISSION:** My travel buddy these past two years was Cornelius, pictured here with me and some of the friends he met during official ALA visits, events, and business meetings.

Perseverance. Determination. Commitment. Generosity.

These are just a few of the words I'd use to describe American Legion Auxiliary members as they continued to put the mission first these past two years.

It was an unprecedented time in our organization's history, with all national Auxiliary officers and chairmen staying in place for two terms rather than the typical one-year role.

Although the reason for extension of my time as national president was due to a virus that impacted the entire world, I am forever grateful for the opportunities to meet *more* of our grassroots members, visit *more* departments, and celebrate so many *more* mission-driven moments on my travels.

Speaking of traveling, that changed drastically throughout my term as president. There was a time when I couldn't travel at all due to the pandemic. This was very difficult for me because I always enjoyed meeting members, learning about an area of the country I'd never been, and of course, all the cake to celebrate our 100th anniversary!

My travels have included such a variety of neat experiences — visits to U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers, the 86th and 87th Annual Lincoln Pilgrimage events, 100th anniversary celebration parties in person and on Zoom, learning to perfect a delivery routine to help out my Sons of The American Legion squadron with their fish fry, themed dinners, learning to kayak at Walter Reed Medical Center, and so much more.

These past two years, we learned and grew as an organization and as a continued pillar in our communities, helped our veterans, military, and their families. A silver lining in all of this — many members across the country were introduced or re-introduced to The American Legion Family, whether through branded face masks or food distribution to those in need or hosting blood donations at post homes. At the same time,

relationships among the Family strengthened throughout the nation as we all focused on helping our communities thrive again. My fellow members and I took part in both of National Commander Bill Oxford's 100 Miles for Hope campaigns, further bolstering Family ties.

The ALA developed unique and different ideas to continue doing the things we do. Using virtual platforms, members embraced technology in order to continue holding meetings and moving the mission forward; distributing poppies turned into a drive-thru event for some units; conferences and dinners were held on a smaller scale with masks and social distancing; and many more of our usual events and fundraisers were modified and continued to take place.

We have had many positives to celebrate in these past two years and a focus on forward momentum that I hope will continue for the ALA as we work together to gain more members, more community involvement, and more donations to our cause.

Cornelius and I are very thankful for my time as national president, and I appreciate each and every one of our members who put their hearts into our mission while *Celebrating a Century of Service*. Although my term is coming to a close, I will continue to be an active part of the American Legion Auxiliary now and for years to come.

So, it's not goodbye ... but instead, see you soon!

*Nicole Clapp*  
Nicole Clapp  
National President

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# BEHIND THE *scenes*

NOTES FROM NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS



**YOUR LEGACY:** Learn how you can join the Legacy Society. Visit [ALAFoundation.org/planned-giving](http://ALAFoundation.org/planned-giving).

## PLAN AHEAD SO YOUR WISHES ARE MET

When you read through this issue of *Auxiliary*, you'll see a story about how ALA members adapted through the pandemic over the past year, and how they kept the mission moving forward despite obstacles and numerous ongoing challenges. But when we talk about the more encouraging outcomes of COVID-19, there is a slightly gloomy side — how our lives and our loved ones' lives can turn on a dime.

If COVID taught us anything, it's that life can change quickly and unexpectedly, and that long-term planning is a must, no matter your age.

"Advance directive" is a term we're seeing more and more these days as the world digs out of the pandemic. What does that term mean? It's basically a statement indicating your last wishes. The main categories of an advance directive include living will, power of attorney, and health care proxy.

Planning ahead is a must. Doing so can help curb stressful moments and burdens placed on family members during unexpected emergencies. When everyone knows your

advance directive, you get the treatment you want, your preferences and expectations are met, and your loved ones don't have to make tough decisions on your behalf.

This is an American Legion Auxiliary publication. What do these things have to do with the ALA? For starters, the Auxiliary has relied on generous donations to help continue the support of veterans, military, and their families. These gifts have allowed the ALA to provide hope in times of need, support for education and youth leadership programs, grants for veterans' art therapy, and much more. You can join us in this mission by becoming a part of the Legacy Society, a group of people dedicated to the promise of *Service Not Self*, who have chosen to include a planned gift to the American Legion Auxiliary or the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation in their estate plans. The gift — no matter the size — will provide future financial support to the Auxiliary. Learn more at [ALAFoundation.org/planned-giving](http://ALAFoundation.org/planned-giving).

Second, as an ALA member, you've likely amassed a collection of Auxiliary-related items over the years. Think national and department president pins, branded jewelry, scrapbooks, photos, and other memorabilia — these things have sentimental value to you, and you want them to end up in good hands after you decide to downsize your home, or you pass away. Will a family member want any of those ALA belongings? Will other members be interested? Where should you donate? Check out page 32 in this issue of *Auxiliary* to learn how you can prevent your ALA keepsakes from ending up in thrift stores.

## ALA ON THE GO

*Auxiliary* magazine is fully digital and available for download at [www.ALAForVeterans.org](http://www.ALAForVeterans.org).

## TOOLS & TIPS IN A CLICK

In addition, you'll find expanded magazine content, valuable unit and department resources, plus downloadable templates, news releases, and other ALA promotional materials available on the ALA website 24/7.



# American Legion Auxiliary

A Community of Volunteers  
Serving Veterans, Military, and their Families  
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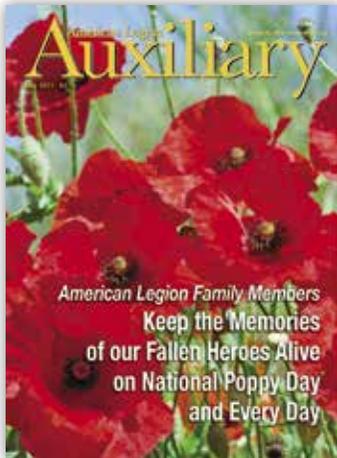
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# FROM OUR *readers*



**TLouise Campbell**

I'm a new member, so this was my first mag. The whole poppy info inspired me to shop sites for poppy earrings, etc. Can't wait to wear and be able to break conversations and awareness.

## **Deep appreciation for February magazine cover art**

I am a member of ALA Unit 276 East Fultonham, Ohio. I would like to purchase a copy (print) of the original art on the February 2021 cover. If the price is affordable, I may purchase more than one. I believe this should hang in all posts. I am a proud daughter-in-law of a veteran who landed at Normandy, and wife of a Cuban Missile Crisis veteran (the stress on veterans and families, especially SAC personnel, seems not to be remembered) who also served in the Vietnam War. Our son served on a submarine during Desert Storm and after. Army, Air Force, and Navy ... all proud Americans and families.

We all need to be reaching to God. May God bless us all.

— Phyllis Shoemaker, Ohio

*Editors' response: We greatly appreciate your feedback about the February cover, as well as*

*your family's military history. Unfortunately, we cannot grant access to the artwork because it was done by a veteran of the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival, not a member of the ALA National Headquarters staff, but we can send you a copy of the magazine cover. Please feel free to contact us at [ALAMagazine@ALAforVeterans.org](mailto:ALAMagazine@ALAforVeterans.org).*

## **Longtime member says adapting to new things part of her longevity**

Betty Ruth Ayer Crews, 95, has been a member of American Legion Auxiliary Unit 108, Hampton, S.C., since April 15, 1932. She joined at 7 years old and was one of 16 charter members.

Crews has seen many changes in the Auxiliary since the 1930s, but is proud that so many of the basic goals and principles have remained the same. The ritual for beginning a meeting has not changed since 1932, and this Hampton Unit 108 has kept that as an important and necessary part of their meetings. Other activities that have remained the same throughout the years are preparing and delivering holiday food and personal items to disabled veterans every Christmas.

"A major difference from the early days of the ALA is that there is less discussion of wars than we have now," Crews said. "In the 1930s, we had a significant number of World War I veterans in our community. That war was still fresh in people's minds, and then there was talk of WWII coming up. During WWII, there were always discussions of WWII and what we could do to help. As I recall, Unit 108 never missed a meeting during WWII.

The programs were more elaborate in the 1930s and 1940s as major political figures would come give reports on the war. In the 1930s, the Veteran Affairs Office programs were instituted, and the ALA members helped locate veterans in our area.

"I am often asked about the secret to my longevity of life. I believe I have been fortunate to have lived this long and still have my good mind. I believe one of the keys to my enjoyment of this long life has been the ability to adjust to different changes in my personal life, changes in my community, and adapting to all of these new gadgets I now have in my home. I even have a cellphone.

"Another key has been that I love people, and my family has always said talking is my number one hobby. The third key has been trying new things. For example, I have never been a birdwatcher. I am now learning to identify South Carolina birds out of my back window. I have had four birdfeeders installed, and my family has printed articles about our birds.

"The American Legion Auxiliary has been a wonderful part of my life, and I appreciate the many opportunities this organization has given me to give back to my town, county, and state."

*Editors' response: A special thank-you to Nick Ginn for submitting this story.*



**Betty Ruth Ayer Crews**

*(Photo: Natural Graphics Photography, Varnville S.C.)*

# WE WANT TO HEAR FROM *you*

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# JUNIOR *members*



## JUNIORS HOST TEA PARTY FOR THEIR COMMUNITY

Many organizations throughout the country host mother/son and daddy/daughter dances for younger children in their communities, but you don't often hear about mother/daughter events.

Natalie Young of Unit 351 in Indiana wanted to change that. With COVID making it difficult to do some of the unit's normal activities, Young thought outside the box for an event the Juniors could host — a tea party. The event was planned for a late Sunday afternoon to avoid interfering with weekend activities so more people could come. The tea party was held at Unit 351's post home.

"Once I put that vibe out there and started promoting what we were doing, people wanted to be part of it," Young said.

Purchased tickets and RSVPs were required.

"I made it RSVP so I could put the tables together and everyone had name cards and felt special like 'This is my seat,'" Young said.

To avoid everyone sharing the same serving utensils, every table

had a mini buffet of all the food offered — fruit tray, veggie tray, cookies, and more.

In addition to sipping tea and other drinks, the event included a few activities hosted by the Juniors.

"We wanted to make sure there were enough activities and it's not a stuffy event and you're just sitting staring at each other," Young said.

Activities included a cake walk, sugar cube stacking contest, and cookie and cupcake decorating. The cakes were donated, and a local baker, Lucy Lou's Sweets, donated decorating supplies and cookies for the party. A photographer was also on hand to capture posed photo opportunities.

The event wrapped up with bingo.

"Everybody really got into that and participated," Young said.

The tea party had over 70 people attend, many from outside of The American Legion Family.

"We didn't know how well it would go, but my Juniors were great," Young said. "They served drinks the whole time so people didn't have to get up from their tables, they ran the games, and helped the younger kids with cookie decorating."

The event was so popular they barely had room to fit everyone. Young said she is definitely planning a two-day event for the next tea party. Another planning lesson for next time is to have ALA membership applications available for those interested in joining.

participated in the ALA Junior Jamboree this summer.

The book is a wonderful resource to promote Americanism and patriotism. Order a copy (while supplies last) at American Legion Flag & Emblem Sales at emblem.legion.org or 1-888-453-4466.

## APPLYING FOR THE JUNIOR MEMBER LOYALTY SCHOLARSHIP: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

American Legion Auxiliary Junior members are the future of our organization. To reward those who retain their membership into adulthood, the ALA offers the Junior Member Loyalty Scholarship to current college students.

Ten scholarships, in the amount of \$2,500 each, will be awarded to current college students for 2022. Two scholarships will be awarded in each division of the American Legion Auxiliary. The scholarship is a grant, not a loan.

Scholarship applications will be due March 1, 2022.

Here are some basics of what you need to know:

### Who should apply?

Any ALA member who was a Junior member, is a current member (2022), and has been a member for the past three years (2019, 2020, and 2021). She must also be a current, traditional college student studying for an undergraduate degree.



## JUNIORS ADD LOCAL FLAVORS TO CARE PACKAGES

Thanks to Juniors from Maryland Unit 166, members of the U.S. Coast Guard stationed in Hawaii got to experience a "taste of Ocean City."

### How should you apply?

Fill out the application at [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org). Make sure everything is complete and all items are attached. Submit the application to the local ALA unit you are a member of no later than March 1, 2022. Each unit differs, so check with them to determine how they want it submitted (email, USPS, in-person, etc.).

### What should you expect after you apply?

Units will select an application to forward to the department for the next round of judging. Departments then select an application to submit to national for judging. Winners and their submitting units will receive a letter via USPS in early May notifying them that they were selected as a national scholarship winner. Winners' names will also be posted on the national website, social media, and other publications. Due to the sheer volume of applications, non-winners will not be notified.

### Why did the ALA add this scholarship?

A few years ago, we received a call

at National Headquarters from a family who wanted to discontinue their membership. When asked why, they responded that their daughter had won the national scholarship so there was no reason to continue belonging.

Around the same time, we received a letter from a proud grandmother whose granddaughter had been a member since she was a young child, was very active in the ALA, and was a current college student. She lamented the fact that her granddaughter was not eligible for any of the national ALA scholarships. These two stories inspired the development of the Junior Member Loyalty Scholarship as a way to honor our current members who have retained their membership into adulthood and to encourage our Junior members to seek a higher education.

You can help support our former Junior members with their education by donating to the Spirit of Youth Scholarship fund at [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org).



Junior member Emmy Martin of Montana wears the Junior patches she's earned to her high school graduation. Martin was accepted into West Point and the U.S. Air Force Academy and left for the Academy in Colorado in June.

A handful of Juniors created care packages to send to servicemembers. The boxes included several local staple items such as popcorn, saltwater taffy, and a crab seasoning donated from area businesses. The quarterly newsletter for The American Legion Family, signed cards, and Girl Scout cookies were also included.

The Maryland to Hawaii connection is thanks to a new unit member whose daughter is stationed in Hawaii with about 50 other members of her crew.

Putting together care packages for servicemembers has been a tradition for Unit 166 Juniors. It started with Junior adviser for Unit 166 Jessie Wolfe-Parsons' daughter who was a Girl Scout for many years and the troop would help with the care packages and donate Girl Scout cookies.

The boxes were put together at the Juniors' monthly meeting.

"The girls got everything separated out," Wolfe-Parsons said. "They've done it so many times, they know what to do. They organize it into piles and know how to pack the boxes to make sure they are OK to mail."

A service project like this can be a learning lesson for Juniors.

"I think it gives them a connection to people in other parts of the world," Wolfe-Parsons said. "Oftentimes we get pictures back from units we send stuff to, and this helps them see the big picture. It's not just people in faraway places — they are actual soldiers' lives we are touching and making a difference."

To help with the process, Juniors are always encouraged to invite friends when they are doing

service projects. Non-ALA members who volunteer are also taught how to properly fold the U.S. flag.

For Juniors at other units who may want to undertake a similar project, Wolfe-Parsons offers advice.

"Start small," she said. "It really helps to find somebody so it's not quite so anonymous. Maybe use a local theme like we did — sometimes we send specifically to female veterans or a Christmas theme. Or join a program that is doing a bigger project than trying to take a gigantic project on yourself."

Wolfe-Parsons said she hopes the girls enjoyed putting the care packages together for the Coast Guard.

"It helps them make a connection and appreciate what our troops do," she said. "It helps them understand the sacrifices when people have to be so far away."

Give the gift of education. Donate to the ALA scholarship funds today at [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org).

# I AM THE ALA

*“I am proud to be part of the Auxiliary. When the American flag goes by during a parade, I get tears in my eyes.”*

## MARJORIE COSTELLO



### **Why did you join the American Legion Auxiliary?**

My father signed me up because the Auxiliary needed one more member! I became a member of the Kirkland American Legion Auxiliary unit at 4 years old, right after my Jan. 11, 1934, birthday. Dues were 50 cents. My mother's dues were \$5 a year.

The Junior Auxiliary Unit 161 started in 1939. I started out as a color bearer at 9 years old. It was fun. We didn't have TV in those days. Unit 161 was famous for fabulous dinners and dessert parties. The Auxiliary would decorate tables and help serve dinners. At times, there would be 300 to 400 people during holidays and district meetings. Our uniforms were a white blouse, navy blue skirt, and a red grosgrain ribbon around the neck.

We had mother silver teas for the Gold Star Mothers. We made our own cookies. The silver tea party taught us how to honor the mothers and serve formal tea.

### **What influenced you to keep your ALA membership all these years?**

I have always felt honored to serve our veterans. We girls had so

much fun — the senior Auxiliary made it fun. We met so many good friends. They were like family. My folks loved it. My four brothers belonged to the Legion, and my sister was in the American Legion Auxiliary.

In 1947, I attended the first ALA Washington Evergreen Girls State, held in a Bellingham, Wash., Teachers College.

We marched in the annual Memorial Day and Redmond Bicycle Day parades. For the three-day Bicycle Day event, we served homemade pies with ice cream (35 cents), cake, cookies, soda pop, coffee, and tea at our homemade booth.

After school during World War II, we would go over to a neighbor's house to learn first aid and attend cooking class to help at home.

I received a 1,000-hour pin after serving 1,000 hours of volunteer service at the VA hospital. We had an ALA Christmas Gift Shop every year at the VA. We used Unit 161 Auxiliary money to buy items. All during the year, we purchased sweaters, bathrobes, towel sets, books, art sets, dress shirts, wallets, children's toys, embroidered pillowcases, vases, rings, and jewelry. We would always have cookies, coffee, tea, and punch. The veterans would pick out items at the gift shop to give to their own families. So much fun! I miss those days.

### **How has being in a military family impacted your ALA membership?**

My love of helping people, my love of the flag, and love of my country.

### **What leadership roles have you held as an ALA member?**

I've done it all — officer positions in the Junior Auxiliary, all officer positions (except secretary) in the senior Auxiliary, and worked on many committees. I was president 17 times. When I was 19, I was president of the senior Auxiliary.

### **What projects are you working on now?**

Membership, historian, and ALA Girls State.

### **What does the ALA centennial celebration mean to you?**

We have successfully kept an organization together to help veterans and their families.

### **What does your ALA membership mean to you?**

I come from a military family. My dad was in the U.S. Army Engineers during WWI; brother Don was in the U.S. Army during WWII; brother Richard was in the U.S. Army paratroopers overseas and wounded in the Philippines; brother Jim is a 20-year retired P-3 flight engineer in the U.S. Navy in Vietnam; brother Neal was in the U.S. Navy on the USS St. Paul in Korea; my son Michael was a cook in the U.S. Army; son Richard was in the U.S. Air Force; and son James was in the U.S. Coast Guard in Alaska. I am proud to be part of the Auxiliary. When the American flag goes by during a parade, I get tears in my eyes.

**AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY UNIT:**  
Unit 161 in Redmond, Wash.

**ELIGIBILITY THROUGH:**  
Halvor Stensland, father  
(U.S. Army Engineers veteran, WWI)

**YEARS IN THE ALA:** 87



### **SHARE YOUR MEMBERSHIP STORY!**

Tell us about yourself and how you support the American Legion Auxiliary as a unit member who also loves the ALA's mission of serving veterans, the military, and their families. Contact us at [ALAMagazine@ALAforVeterans.org](mailto:ALAMagazine@ALAforVeterans.org) or (317) 569-4500.

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Renew your American Legion Auxiliary membership at [www.ALforVeterans.org](http://www.ALforVeterans.org) or call us at (317) 569-4570.

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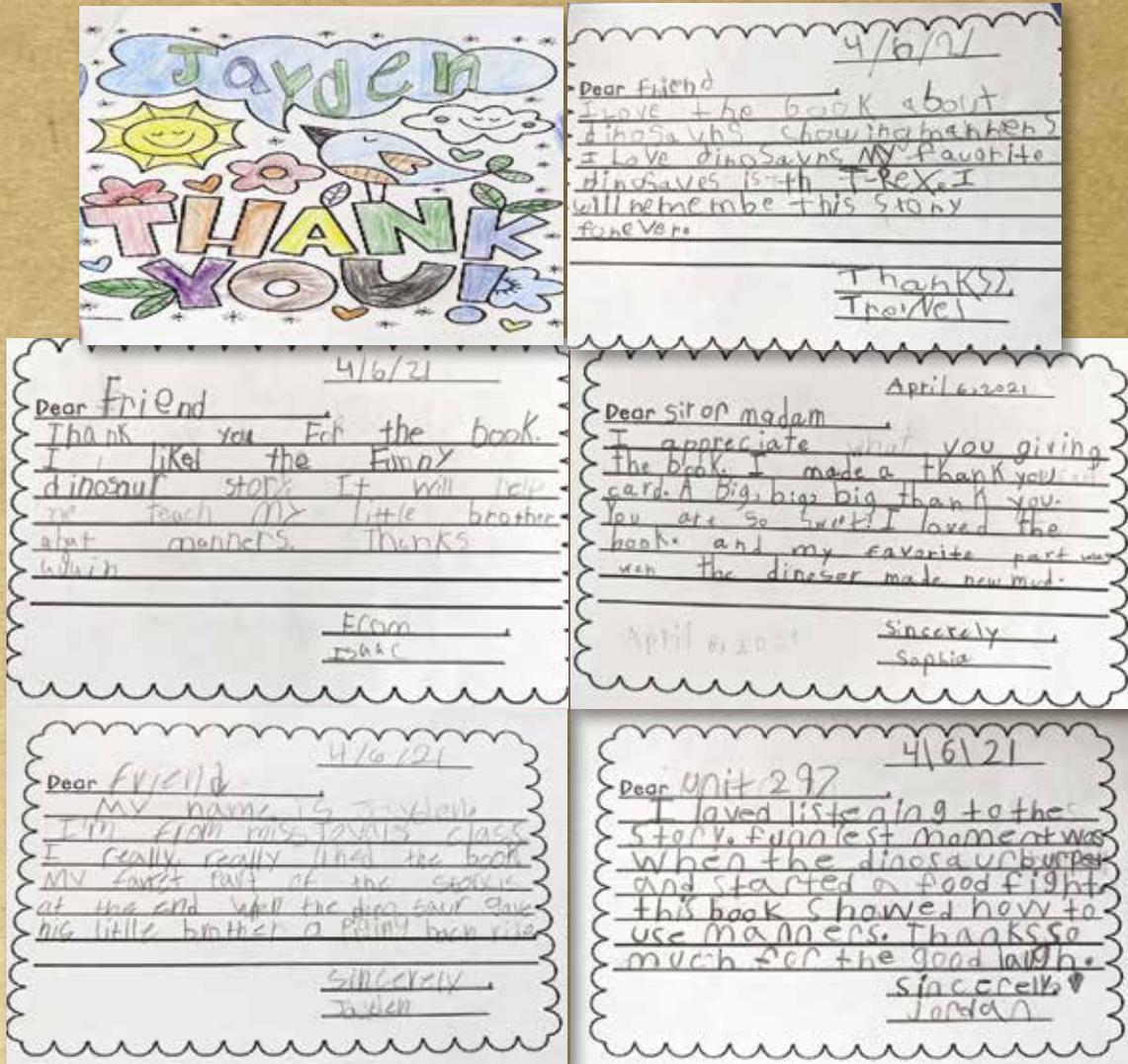
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**“Perhaps the reward of the spirit who tries  
is not the goal but the exercise.”**

— E.V. Cooke, poet



Joining the American Legion Auxiliary and serving its longstanding mission of course brings about feelings of good — we often touch the hearts of those we serve. But there’s another reason to be part of our fine organization: the benefits, both personal and professional. How has being a member of the ALA boosted your career? How do your member benefits provide you with regular conveniences and amenities? Maybe the network of friends in your local unit energizes you? Tell us about the strong points of your membership! Contact us at [ALAMagazine@ALAforVeterans.org](mailto:ALAMagazine@ALAforVeterans.org).

*Above: American Legion Auxiliary Unit 297 in Benbrook, Texas, purchased a book for each classroom at Chapel Hill Academy from teachers’ wish lists at a Scholastic Book Fair. These are just a few of the handwritten thank-you notes from second-graders. “We really do make a difference,” read a post on the unit’s Facebook page.*



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## IT'S ALL *good* GOOD ADVICE FROM ALA MEMBERS

### Tell us your biggest accomplishment as we close this ALA administrative year.



“Staying positive and remaining active in our community during the pandemic. We completed more projects and raised more funds than in past years at ALA Unit 36 El Paso-Eastwood.”

— Maria Delgado Cazares, Texas



“Our biggest accomplishment was to learn how to activate and use virtual meetings during the pandemic. Once we learned how to use this new tool, we were able to successfully communicate with each other virtually, allowing us to think outside the box.”

— Charline Gladden, New Jersey



“Revitalization of eUnit 424. Holding monthly meetings, passing Constitution & Bylaws, elections, and continuing to work on growing membership. It has been a journey and great learning experience that I feel is a great accomplishment.”

— Tracy Kinnick, Kansas



“Our ‘Honoring Those Who have Served: Helping Veterans in Need – New Clothing Drive’ was a success! Unit 407, Winsted, Minnesota, collected over \$5,000 worth and supported veterans at three VA facilities.”

— Ginny Lind Schuelke, Minnesota



“Surpassing our 100% membership goal for Unit 400 in Fish Lake, Indiana. Our members have worked so hard to keep in contact through newsletters and social media.”

— KayAnn Marcum, Indiana



“The biggest accomplishments for Department of Kansas, District 2, Unit 156 out of Paola, Kansas, were signing 14 new members during a pandemic and providing home-cooked meals once a month to local veterans or their widows who hadn't been getting home-cooked meals during the pandemic.”

— Kristen Hensley, Kansas



“Our Unit 357 biggest accomplishment was working together and fundraising to be sure that we could purchase items for our veterans in homes. Our community has been amazing in helping with fundraisers. We also did a poppy walk fundraiser, in person and virtually.”

— Tina Haggerty, Pennsylvania

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## TRADITIONAL TOY NOW REFLECTS REALITY

Remember the little green Army men you played with as a child? For generations, these plastic soldiers have been found in children's toy boxes. They are part of our pop culture, even having a role in Disney's *Toy Story* movie franchise. In 2011, *Time Magazine* named Army men to their list of 100 most popular toys of all time.

But did you ever notice these toys did not include Army women? If you did, you're not alone.

Women and girls have been asking for a female version for years. Now, a wish has been granted and Army women are now available. It took the actions of a little girl and the media to catapult this toy wish into a reality.

Jeff Imel, president of BMC Toys, was often asked if he would add a female version to his product lineup. He knew that one day he wanted to take on the project. He just didn't realize how soon "one day" would come.

The project gained traction in 2018 when retired Master Navy Chief Joann Ortloff sent a letter to Imel explaining why Army women were needed and why they would

be a great product. She backed her reasoning with statistics about women in the military.

Imel started taking a closer look at the idea and even had sketches made. He wrote a blog post to gauge interest and created a mailing list for those who wanted a female version of the toys. Ortloff was instrumental in drumming up interest, but despite those efforts, the idea didn't fully take off at the time.

In 2019, 6-year-old Vivian Lord set a chain of events into action. Vivian sent a letter to toy makers asking for Army women. Only one company responded — BMC Toys. Imel wrote back saying he had hoped to add a female version in a couple of years.

Vivian's letter and Imel's response gained national attention. "Then the media storm happened, and I got propelled along on this wave of media interest in the story," said Imel. "I figured, 'Well, I'm going to be on the *CBS Evening News*. This is a now-or-never moment.'"

Imel sprang into action, and he started a Kickstarter campaign to help fund the product development. The funds raised helped Imel make

Vivian's wish come true, and he delivered her a set of Army women by Christmas 2020.

The wish was not only Vivian's. Since the toys' launch, Imel has received many thank-you letters from females of all ages who had always wanted Army women. Imel is glad he could deliver.

"My intention with this toy was not to make any sort of statement or anything like that. I just wanted to add a toy that would be kind of part of the pop culture universe of plastic Army men," said Imel. "My hope is that they just blend into the background over time, and we forgot that this was ever a story. Another generation will be finding these at the bottom of toy boxes that their parents had and think they're from the '70s or the '60s — not realizing that it was kind of a big news story in 2020 that there were women toy soldiers for the first time."

The 36-piece set includes 22 different figures, plus a military working dog with leash and stretcher. The toys come in two shades of green, as well as tan, blue, red, and pink.



An unexpected spinoff of the Army women project is the creation of Rosie the Riveter figures. The sculptor of the Army women, James Van Schaik, suggested the Rosie figures as an incentive to help promote the Kickstarter campaign. They were so popular that Imel decided to add Rosie to the product line.



The products are available in 36-piece sets and 100-piece buckets, and are manufactured in Scranton, Pa. For more information and to order, visit [www.BMCToys.com](http://www.BMCToys.com).





**ART HONORS VETERANS:** Lake Geneva Unit 24 dedicates a poppy sculpture to the city to honor veterans.

### WISCONSIN POPPY SCULPTURE HONORS VETERANS

Wanting to spread awareness and the meaning of the poppy, American Legion Auxiliary Unit 24 in Lake Geneva, Wis., had a poppy sculpture created and placed near the local veterans memorial.

“The community just needs to be educated about those veterans who gave the ultimate sacrifice for us and our veterans need to be honored; they need to be recognized,” said ALA Unit 24 member Mary Schlehlein.

The project began when Schlehlein saw that something similar was done overseas and decided Wisconsin needed a symbolic poppy sculpture to honor our nation’s heroes. She pitched the idea to her fellow Unit 24 members, and everyone was on board to jump in and help where needed.

“I knew this would be a good project for us to work on and to dedicate to the city of Lake Geneva,” said Schlehlein. “Everyone was involved. It was a unit effort.”

Their first step was finding an artist. Luckily, John Larkin, an artist in the area, was more than willing to help. Larkin is a lifelong resident

of Lake Geneva and ended up donating his labor to this project.

“He was very instrumental and a great guide for us. It was our lucky day when he said he’d be happy to take this on,” said Schlehlein. “He was very happy to do this for the veterans.”

Thankful for his donation, Unit 24 still needed money to buy metal and material for the sculpture. The unit began fundraising campaigns to help

with finances. They sent mailings and invitations to all American Legion Family members in their town, all dignitaries, and local businesses. Schlehlein reached out to Lake Geneva’s local newspapers and television stations to help spread the word of the poppy sculpture project.

Unit 24 held a fundraiser at the local Culver’s to help raise money for the sculpture, and part of the proceeds went to the Auxiliary. They plan to continue fundraising throughout the year to take care of the cost.

After updating and meeting all of the city’s regulations, the sculpture was dedicated to the city of Lake Geneva in May during a small ceremony. The sculpture consists of 13 big, brilliant red poppy flowers made out of aluminum. The 13 poppies symbolize the stripes on the American flag. It is seven-and-a-half feet tall and is placed by the Lake Geneva lake in Library Park near the veterans memorial.

“It’s really beautiful because you look at the poppy sculpture and see this beautiful lake in the background,” said Schlehlein. “I couldn’t have asked for a better outcome. It’s just beautiful.”

### ALA UNIT HELPS VETERANS HOCKEY TEAM

American Legion Auxiliary members have had to adjust and expand their efforts to serve the ALA’s mission due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

American Legion Auxiliary Unit 849 in Richland Pa., continues its hard work and dedication to veterans in the community, with a special focus on the local veterans hockey team.

Unit 849 member Kelly Moyer, eligible through her grandfather James Howard Hadfield who served in World War II, is public affairs officer for the veterans hockey team, the Johnstown Generals.

“The purpose of the team is to give each member a safe environment for stress relief, promote brotherhood and commodity with their peers, and grow mentally and physically to be productive members of society,” said Moyer.

After going to a hockey tournament last year, Moyer noticed there weren’t very many people there supporting the veterans and decided that needed to change. She also knew hockey was an expensive sport and that the veterans



**OPENING:** Alley-White Unit 52 members Suzan Kaye and Nancy Stang open the post home’s food pantry.

### FOR VETERANS: PANTRY AT THE POST HOME

American Legion Auxiliary members across the country continue to demonstrate creative and helpful ways to serve our nation’s veterans, military, and their families. Alley-White Unit 52 in Mountain Home, Ark., started a food pantry at its post home to help make a difference for veterans in the community.

“It’s something that has always been important to me: that veterans don’t go hungry,” said unit member Suzan Kaye. “This is one project that has fallen into

Good works to share? Visit [www.ALForVeterans.org/magazine](http://www.ALForVeterans.org/magazine) for details.

needed help paying for expenses. Wanting to help financially and publicize the Johnstown Generals, Moyer came up with an idea to do a gift basket party to help raise funds for the team and local veterans.

“There are teams all over the place, but they don’t have a lot of recognition,” Moyer said. “And hockey is a very expensive sport. Our own city didn’t know we had a veteran hockey team — they do now.”

The basket party was led by Moyer and ALA Unit 849 member DJ Wagner, eligible through her father C. Thomas Sturtz who served during the Korean War. The two Auxiliary members brainstormed the idea and then presented it to the rest of the unit — everyone was on board. They started sending letters to area American Legion and VFW posts asking for help and utilized Facebook to help spread the word. Local newspapers helped share the event as well.

“Facebook was our biggest thing,” Moyer said. “Sharing the event,

getting people to like it, inviting people — that was the key. The more people who invite people, the more people who see it. I may invite 30, and someone may invite 30 more, and the number just grows and grows — and it’s absolutely free.”

The basket event, benefitting area veterans and the Johnstown Generals, was held during the Heroes Cup Tournament at the local arena in downtown Johnstown. There were 110 baskets donated from the community and area businesses. In addition, 10 larger items were raffled, including a signed Mario Lemieux jersey from the Pittsburgh Penguins. Some of the baskets were children-themed, and there were lottery baskets, plant baskets, hardware baskets, kitchen baskets, gift card baskets, and more.



**GOAL FOR VETERANS:** DJ Wagner; John Kovac, president of the Johnstown Generals; and Kelly Moyer help raise funds for the local veterans’ hockey team.

“There was such a broad spectrum of items — there was something for everybody,” said Wagner. “All of the residents and the community came together and helped us 100%, even during COVID.”

Unit 849 was able to raise \$5,000 from the basket party. Since the event was hosted during a tournament, visitors were able to watch the veterans play, which helped raise awareness for the team and all veterans hockey teams.

place like it was meant to be. This is the sort of thing the American Legion Auxiliary was meant to do.”

Before a pantry at the post home was available, Kaye noticed a spike in veterans visiting a local food bank where she volunteered. Originally, there was a plan to open another food bank at a veterans center in the community, but because of COVID, all projects were put on hold. Kaye knew there was a need for a food pantry in their small community and took the idea to her fellow members, and then the executive board at The American Legion post home. The Legionnaires thought it was a great idea and have been assisting the Auxiliary members since.

“We have about 15-16 volunteers which are half our Legion and half our Auxiliary,” Kaye said. “We have enough volunteers that no one has to volunteer more than once a month unless they choose to. We were very happy to have the Legion help — I’m just very, very happy that I’ve got so much support. We have a great committee, we’ve got great people,

and a great community.”

To help with the cost of starting a pantry at the post, Kaye applied for a Veteran Projects Fund grant through the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation. With assistance from the grant, they were able to purchase heavy-duty shelving, large plastic totes, a scale to weigh the donations, and a small file cabinet to maintain records.

**“A huge thank-you to the ALA Foundation for making the grant available.”**

“When you find a grant opportunity, go for it — you might get lucky! A huge thank-you to the ALA Foundation for making the grant available. It made all the difference,” said Kaye.

After acquiring the grant, Unit 52 publicized the project through Facebook and email. They had business cards made to hand to veterans in the community, and Kaye also went on a local radio show to spread the word to a larger audience.

Their marketing efforts succeeded; they received over 5,000 pounds of food for their pantry.

“Our pantry room looks like a convenient store; we have a little bit of everything,” said Kaye. “We have canned fruits, vegetables, and meats. We actually have everything except for perishable items. We don’t usually keep things that require refrigeration.”

Some other items donated have been diapers, over-the-counter medications, baby items, laundry detergent, dish soap, bleach, snacks, etc. There are also nine donation boxes throughout the Mountain Home community.

The pantry opened its doors earlier this year and is open every Saturday from 9 to 11 a.m. Before opening, the Auxiliary hosted two food drives in February to help stock shelves. The pantry accepted more than 1,000 pounds of food from the drives and then added another 1,000 pounds the first week it was open. Unit 52 consistently has been able to assist about three to four veterans each week.



**ALWAYS REMEMBER** (top): U.S. Marine Corps Cpl. Daniel Lee Tatum during his second deployment to Iraq; (bottom): the 2020-2021 National Executive Board of American Gold Star Mothers Inc. at the 2020 Gold Star Mothers and Family's Day commemoration in Washington, D.C.

## SUPPORTING VETERANS HELPS HEAL MOTHERS OF THE FALLEN

### 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.

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

In 1917, Grace Darling Seibold began visiting returning servicemen in hospitals when her 23-year-old son, George Vaughn Seibold, volunteered to join the military. He regularly wrote home to his family, but one day, the letters stopped coming. Grace continued visiting hospitalized veterans with a twofold mission — to serve veterans and look for her son. In 1918, the family received news of his death.

Knowing there were other women in the same situation — volunteering

and grieving the loss of a child(ren) — Grace helped organize and became the first national president of American Gold Star Mothers Inc. The organization was incorporated in 1929.

There are approximately 1,100 moms who are part of American Gold Star Mothers Inc. The organization was named after the Gold Star Banner that families hung in their windows in honor of the deceased veteran. Service flags with a Blue Star are for each living member in the service.

"Grief can overcome you easily if you decide not to do anything about it," said

Cindy Tatum, current American Gold Star Mothers Inc. national president. "That mission of service and volunteering at hospitals across the country has continued. It's just a primary focus that we have as moms, and I think most moms will tell you it's a very healing process for you to be able to do something for someone else."

Tatum's eligibility is through her late son, U.S. Marine Corps Cpl. Daniel Lee Tatum.

"He was very funny," she said. "He could walk in a room and give this big, big smile and this big, big bear hug and anyone who was in there would have a great day."

On Dec. 24, 2007, a Marine buddy of Daniel's drove his vehicle through the guardrails for the commuter trains in San Diego, killing both men. Tatum was notified Christmas morning with a knock at the door.

"The words no mother wants to hear — 'We regret to inform you,'" she said.

Tatum struggled for a few years while a Gold Star Mother kept calling, inviting her to join. Eventually, she did.

"I had to try to do something that Daniel would say, 'Hey, good job, Mom. You didn't just sit and let the grief overwhelm you,'" she said. "I made a conscious decision to do something different."

This is how many mothers end up as part of the organization.

"You can walk in a room full of moms and you know they have all experienced that same loss that you have, and that somehow they have all managed to keep moving forward," Tatum said.

Mothers and family members who have suffered from loss are recognized annually on Gold Star Mother's and Family's Day, which falls on the last Sunday in September. This year, it will be Sept. 26.

American Gold Star Mothers Inc. annually holds an event in Washington, D.C., where a wreath is placed at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, and a ceremony to honor the mothers and families of those fallen takes place. Officially including families was added in 2009.

In addition to that Sunday event, on the day prior, the organization holds a walk-a-thon to raise awareness of veterans who are dying by suicide. The



walk is 2.2 miles, referencing the 22 veterans who die by suicide every day.

To learn more about American Gold Star Mothers Inc., visit [www.goldstarmoms.com](http://www.goldstarmoms.com).

"We are proud of the service of our children, and we don't ever want our children to be forgotten," Tatum said.



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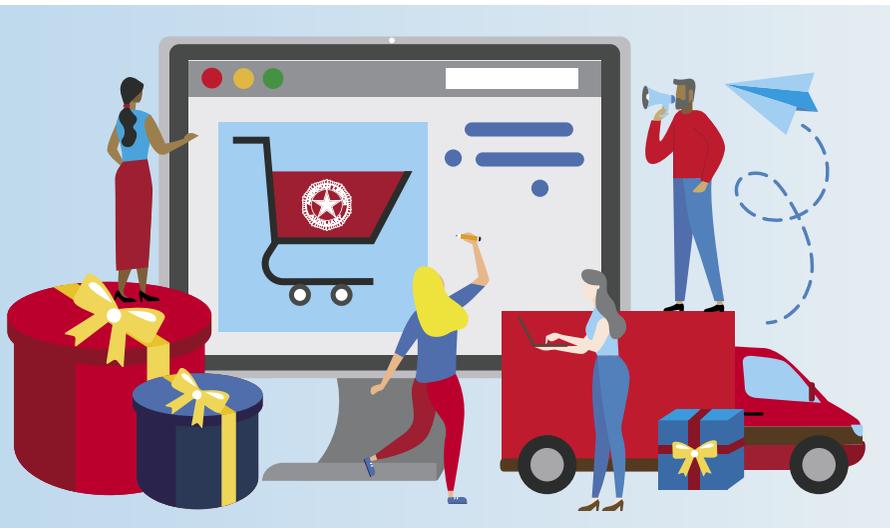
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## TWO SIMPLE WAYS YOU CAN IMPACT OUR NATION'S HEROES IN NEED

Supporting our heroes has never been easier. There are so many ways you can have an amazing impact on veterans, military, and their families — all from the comfort of your own home. You could be like Geraldine Hince and start a monthly gift to the American Legion Auxiliary or the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation that helps veterans and servicemembers all over the nation. Or you could be like LuAnn McDonald and support the ALA Foundation with every Amazon purchase through AmazonSmile! Just as Hince and McDonald say: When it's this easy, why not?

### Texas member helps veterans nationwide with her monthly gift



Geraldine Hince has a unique perspective when it comes to the American Legion Auxiliary. She is eligible for membership as the daughter

of a World War II veteran, the spouse of a U.S. Army veteran, and the mother of two sons in the

U.S. Air Force. Not to mention she is a veteran herself, having spent 31 years in the U.S. Army. Being a veteran and the daughter, spouse, and parent of veterans and active-duty military, Hince has more knowledge than most when it comes to the problems our nation's heroes face.

For Hince, the families and spouses of veterans and military are particularly important. Hince and her husband depended on each

**"I don't think military spouses get the proper recognition. They just don't."**

other greatly as they raised their children throughout their careers in the Army. There were times when hard decisions had to be made, but they made them together.

"At one point, I took one of my boys with me and we moved to Arkansas because I was sent there, and John stayed with the other two in Virginia because they were in high school and needed to stay in the same high school," she said. "I don't think military spouses get the proper recognition. They just don't."

Hince has a soft spot for ALA

Girls State, thanks to the program's impact on building strong female leaders. Suffice to say, she is excited for her granddaughters to get to participate.

"It's an opportunity for [the Auxiliary] to become very involved with young people's future, because that's a week they give to us to frame them, to educate them on how to really be Americans."

Even with her soft spot for ALA Girls State, Hince devotes plenty of time to the Auxiliary's other programs and events. Whether it's the Poppy Program, or her unit's ever-so-popular weekly donuts and coffee, Hince is usually there, building the ALA's presence in her community.

"Every Thursday at our post, we have free donuts and coffee for veterans and anybody who wants to be around veterans," Hince said. "Before COVID, we averaged about 150 [attendees]. It has made such a difference in this community."

"When our congressman comes to town, one of the things on his to-do list is donuts and coffee. That's pretty important," she said.

Even though Hince gives so much of her time volunteering with the ALA, she is also a monthly donor — giving every month to the Auxiliary Emergency Fund and providing long-term support for veterans, military, and their families who have been affected by a natural or financial disaster.

When asked why, Hince says a resounding "Why not?"

"Some people can't afford to do that, and I understand that completely. They give their time. But if you can afford to help out with finances, we need to do that," she said.

Hince has made a tremendous impact on her community through her time volunteering, and just by donating each month to an ALA program of her choice, she has spread that impact to veterans, military, and their families nationwide.

*Be like Geraldine Hince and change the lives of our nation's heroes by making a monthly donation at [www.ALAforVeterans.org/monthly-gifts](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org/monthly-gifts)*

and join fellow Heroes Giving Hope members — a group of monthly donors changing the lives of veterans, military, and their families one monthly donation at a time.

### American Legion Auxiliary member turns Amazon purchases into veteran support



LuAnn McDonald grew up in what could only be described as a quintessential military family.

Both of her grandfathers and her father served in the U.S. Army. Her grandmother served in the U.S. Marines. Two of her brothers served in the U.S. Navy. Then she started her own family, with a husband who served in the U.S. Air Force, a son who served in the U.S. Army, and a daughter who served in the U.S. Navy.

“My daughter and son were serving at the same time, they were overseas, and war was getting ready to break out,” McDonald said.

“I was always so close to the TV to see what they were going to do, and that was one of things I remember the most because it was so scary, knowing I had two kids over there who would hopefully come back to us.”

At every stage of her life, McDonald has lived the sacrifice and struggles of our military servicemembers and their families. These experiences gave her a passion to serve veterans in all places of their journey to recovery and integration into civilian life. That’s why she became a member of the American Legion Auxiliary over nine years ago.

“I’m proudful; that’s the best way to describe it,” McDonald said. “I would never miss a chance to brag on them. I mean, they are out there serving for us, and they deserve the recognition.”

Since joining the ALA, McDonald has worked alongside her Auxiliary unit to raise money and awareness for veterans in need. They sponsor veterans in their

local nursing homes, host meal fundraisers, and last year, they raised awareness and almost \$2,400 for homeless veterans by spending the night on the sidewalk.

Members of McDonald’s Auxiliary unit also honor veterans after they pass away. Some of her most profound memories have been from visiting funerals of local servicemembers, speaking to their families, and gifting them a poem to show the Auxiliary’s appreciation for their sacrifice.

Now the president of her ALA unit and district, McDonald has seen the growing need for all of these programs, and how getting the Auxiliary name out in the community and raising money is vital for continued success.

“There are so many veterans out there who need financial help,” McDonald said, “so by giving donations through whatever means, we can support them.”

That’s why she has her Amazon account working double duty — getting her the materials she needs and supporting the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation. With just a few clicks, McDonald turned her Amazon obsession into a revenue stream for programs that support veterans, military, and their families.

“I love Amazon. If there’s not an Amazon package on my front door, my husband thinks something is wrong,” McDonald joked.

“So for me, it was not a question of why use AmazonSmile. The real question is, why not?”

AmazonSmile is free and gives .5% of qualified purchases back to the nonprofit organization of your choice. Since 2014, supporters have raised over \$21,500 for the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation just by making their regular Amazon purchases!

Get started today at [www.ALAForVeterans.org/Amazon-Smile](http://www.ALAForVeterans.org/Amazon-Smile). AmazonSmile has recently been updated and can now be used on the app, as well as on your desktop, so all purchases, even on the go, can make an impact on our nation’s heroes.



## ALA ACADEMY REVAMPED!

# Have you checked out the new ALA Academy?

What can you do?

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- Take the newly revised ALA 101 course
- See the new look and ways to engage with content
- Leave reviews from courses

Stay tuned for more ALA Academy Live courses and self-paced content by going to [www.ALAForVeterans.org/ALA-Academy](http://www.ALAForVeterans.org/ALA-Academy)





**SERVICE NOT SELF:** Donna Ray and Nicole Comer, Chief of Volunteer Services at the Cincinnati VA.

**MORE THAN THREE DECADES OF SELFLESS DEDICATION TO VETERANS  
ALA MEMBER DONNA RAY RECEIVES VAVS  
FEMALE VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARD**

American Legion Auxiliary members are known for their dedication to veterans, military, and their families. This year, one ALA member is being recognized for going above and beyond to serve veterans.

Donna Ray of Ohio has been named the VAVS National Advisory Committee Female Volunteer of the Year, an honor bestowed upon those who have given extraordinary service to our nation's veterans. The award — given by peers — is the highest honor for VAVS volunteers.

"I was in a state of shock, to be honest with you," Ray said. "I feel that having this honor isn't really for me. It's for everyone who has worked with me and supported, and just done everything for our veterans. This award is awesome." She also said she is proud to be an American Legion Auxiliary member.

Ray is a 36-year member of the Auxiliary and has been volunteering at the Cincinnati VA Medical Center for 35 years. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, she spent countless hours at the VA.

"If they needed me there five days

a week, I was there five days a week," said Ray.

Her husband Bob also volunteers at the VA.

"My husband is my biggest supporter," Ray said.

The pandemic didn't stop the couple from serving. Instead, they thought outside of the box and found a way to continue to reach veterans — from a distance.

"I've missed my veterans this year because of the COVID pandemic," Ray said, "but I've still been able to be at the hospital since last March."

Despite not being able to have in-person contact with the veterans, every week the Rays deliver personal care items and snacks to the VA.

"Even though we can't be near them, or get close to them to talk to them, at least they know that we're there," Ray said.

The veterans miss having Ray and other volunteers in the

center. Before the lockdowns began, volunteers would host parties with holiday themes and decorations in the community living center. Since the beginning of the pandemic, veterans have been asking when the volunteers would be coming back.

Those who know Ray know that volunteering runs deep in her soul.

"She first and foremost always wants to take care of our veterans and our servicemembers. She is the physical embodiment of our mission," said Chrystal Daulton, Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation program manager at ALA National Headquarters. "Donna's energy, her dedication, her devotion doesn't know any limits. It seems to go forever."

"I can walk in the hospital and not feel good, I can be exhausted, and when I walk out of that hospital, I am cheerful, I am happy, and I feel like I've made a difference," said Ray.

She encourages others to give volunteering a chance, even if it is just one day a month.

"Veterans need somebody, and I want to try to be that person. And when I can get other people to get involved, that makes it even better." She says once you try it, you'll want to stay.

Ray's dedication is not just to the act of volunteering, but to the difference she can make in a person's life and the connection that can be created.

"She gets to know the veterans, bonds with them, and genuinely loves each

and every one of them," said Daulton. "She's what the veterans deserve, and I'm so proud of her for winning this award. I'm just delighted that she's being recognized for who she is and the job she does."



**VAVS VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARD**

• Last ALA member named female Volunteer of the Year: Patti Williamson of Illinois (2015)

- VAVS has more than 63,000 volunteers
- VAVS National Advisory Committee consists of 240 veteran service organizations

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 – Sherri H., Granville, NY

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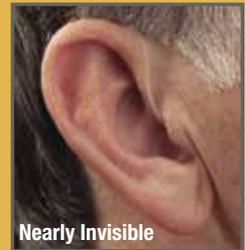
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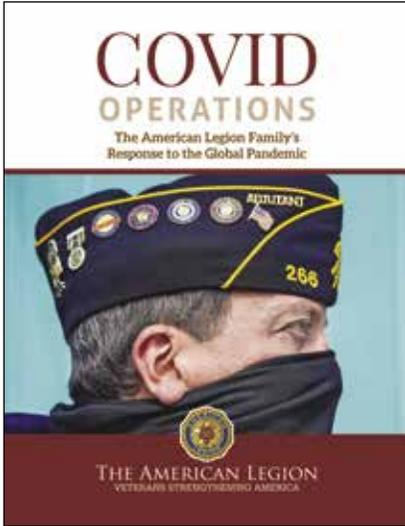
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**NEW BOOKAZINE SHARES LEGION FAMILY STORY OF MISSION PERSEVERANCE DURING PANDEMIC**

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the way of life for millions of people worldwide. Adapting to the crisis, The American Legion Family continues to serve communities, states, and a nation in need.

In a limited-edition 84-page bookazine with photo-filled pages, The American Legion Family tells the story of how we have continued our mission to serve despite the pandemic obstacles. The bookazine, *COVID Operations: The American Legion Family's Response to the Global Pandemic*, describes hundreds of ways the Family has confronted the coronavirus challenge. The bookazine is available from American Legion Flag & Emblem Sales at [www.legion.org/emblemsales](http://www.legion.org/emblemsales).

The *COVID Operations* publication, American Legion National Commander James W. "Bill" Oxford explained, "not only says what The American Legion Family did during this time; it illustrates who we are, and why it matters."

Throughout the book, American Legion posts, American Legion

Auxiliary units, Sons of The American Legion squadrons, and American Legion Riders chapters all have stories of feeding the hungry, making hundreds of thousands of protective face masks, food distribution, blood donations, Buddy Checks, and so much more. The "100 Miles for Hope" chapters show veterans strengthening America through individual commitment to community, state, nation, and around the world.

The tireless effort shown by the Legion Family throughout the COVID-19 pandemic has been inspirational. The "100 Miles for Hope" challenge provided members and their families a healthy outlet during the difficult time, one that nearly 5,000 enjoyed as the pandemic wore on.

The American Legion Family prepared and distributed meals throughout the country in creative and safe ways. Each state had their own way of contributing food throughout their community — from statewide support services in Michigan to free hamburgers alongside highways for truck drivers passing through New York and snacks for quarantined troops in Alaska.

Virtual or socially distanced meetings, veteran career fairs, memorial ceremonies, and drive-by birthdays became standard practice throughout the organization, conducted safely to reduce spread of infection. Some posts offered COVID-19 testing. Others later became vaccination sites.

"From donating scarce PPE early on to conducting virtual Buddy Checks, hosting vaccine and COVID testing clinics, and many other services to their communities, American Legion Family members have played a vital role in our nation's efforts to defeat this horrific virus," Oxford said.

**AUXILIARY WORD SCRAMBLE**

Terms associated with perseverance:

1. taceyint \_\_\_\_\_
2. snesuesr \_\_\_\_\_
3. egseserna \_\_\_\_\_
4. nndciceofe \_\_\_\_\_
5. roitetdfu \_\_\_\_\_
6. mtiraoedientn \_\_\_\_\_
7. sseneitrcpe \_\_\_\_\_
8. snpaios \_\_\_\_\_
9. iteonsoulr \_\_\_\_\_
10. idrev \_\_\_\_\_
11. nnuearedc \_\_\_\_\_
12. preuspo \_\_\_\_\_
13. eatwmkro \_\_\_\_\_
14. attfedsas \_\_\_\_\_

Answers are found on page 57.

   **JOKES**   

The first rule of passive aggressive club is ... You know what? Nevermind. It's fine.

I got called pretty today. The full statement was "You're pretty annoying," but I only focus on positive things.

Knock knock. Who's there? To. To who? Don't you mean "to whom"?

What do you call first President George Washington's false teeth? PRESI-DEN-TURES!

Source: [www.ajokeaday.com](http://www.ajokeaday.com)

Please note these items are not an exact reproduction of the Flag, and therefore does not violate the covenants of the Flag Code

# Honor The Strength OF OUR NATION IN POWERFUL STYLE

## Never FORGET

Women's Hoodie



Available in  
7 Women's Sizes S-3X



American Pride Sneakers  
Available in Women's Whole and Half Sizes 5-10

## PROUD AMERICAN STYLE REMEMBERS 9/11

We will never forget! Today, The Bradford Exchange proudly presents the "Never Forget" Women's Hoodie and the "American Pride" Sneakers, custom apparel designs created to honor all of the American heroes who fought terrorism, and to remember all of those who lost their lives, on the unforgettable 9/11.

### HOODIE

Crafted in an easy-care cotton-blend knit, the back of our navy blue hoodie displays an eagle flying over the New York City skyline and the illuminated Twin Towers memorial with an American Flag in the background. The phrase "Never FORGET" is embroidered below. The front has an embroidered American Flag patch with "Never FORGET." On the silver-toned Pentagon-shaped zipper pull, red twin towers serve as the number 11 in the 9/11 design. Design details include a red jersey knit lined hood, 2 side slit pockets, rib knit cuffs and hem, and a full front zipper. Imported.

### SNEAKERS

Our sneakers feature canvas uppers covered in an American flag-inspired print that has a distressed denim look. The heel and toe are adorned with diagonal red and white stripes. The body is blue with white stars with the pattern reversed to blue stars on white under the laces. White rubber soles and foam insoles provide superior comfort. "I ♥ The USA" is written on the sides. A silver-toned heart embossed with "USA" dangles from the laces.

### AN OUTSTANDING VALUE, NOT SOLD IN STORES

This hoodie is available in women's sizes S-3X at \$79.95\*, payable in 3 easy installments of \$26.65 each. Women's sizes 1X-3X, add \$10. The shoes are available in women's sizes 5-10 (size 5½ is sold out) for \$79.95\*, payable in 3 easy installments of \$26.65 each. Both are backed by our 30-day guarantee. To order, send no money now; just return the Priority Reservation today!

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Mrs. Mr. Ms.

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**E24501**

### CONSTITUTION & BYLAWS ADVICE



**KEEPING UP TO DATE ON THE C&B** (top): California eUnit 472 members reading the C&B on Zoom; (bottom): Unit 250 members in Louisburg, Kan., working on the unit's C&B; Vicki Paddock of Wyoming reading the C&B at Devils Tower National Monument; Jeri Greenwell of Maine reading the C&B in front of a lighthouse.

### THE IMPORTANCE OF REVIEWING YOUR GOVERNING DOCUMENTS

As department conventions are underway, many departments are taking actions to update their governing documents and catch up after missing 2020 conventions.

Understandably, we have all been focused on making provisions for operating in emergencies as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, but let's not forget about business that was put on hold during the pandemic.

Remember The American Legion's mandated eligibility changes that occurred at the 2019 National Convention (1: "wives" to "spouses" and 2: Legion eligibility for veterans extended to all service since World War II)? Unless you have a provision in your bylaws that automatically amends them to be consistent with the national bylaws, your unit or department has to vote the changes into your governing documents. Does that surprise you?

The national governing documents clarify that departments and units are separate legal entities that operate independently as affiliates. However, as affiliates of the national organization, their governing documents cannot conflict with the national governing documents.

Not updating your governing documents with membership eligibility changes is an example of how a unit or department's governing documents would be "in conflict" with the national governing documents.

When it comes to governing documents, the national organization does not require departments to submit their governing documents for approval or even review. That would be an overreach of its authority over an independent affiliate.

Carrying that concept forward, a department or district should not require units to submit their C&B and standing rules for approval or review. Would it be helpful for the unit or district? Sure! Constitution & Bylaws are complicated. However, because units are independent affiliates, doing so would be an overreach of department authority, and it runs the risk of assuming liability for the unit.

Let's take a look at the relationship between the levels of the organization. Units should have their own governing documents, elect their own officers, and make their decisions independently. Does that mean a unit can do whatever it

wants? Well, not exactly. A unit of the ALA cannot declare that its purpose is now to support the red-feathered whistler and protect its habitat. The whistler is probably very deserving of conservation, but support of veterans and their families is the purpose of the American Legion Auxiliary. So, any change to the purpose in a unit's governing documents would be null and void.

A department cannot dictate to the unit that all units will have Taco Tuesdays. Or meet on Tuesdays. Or wear only purple shirts. Units are independent affiliates, and their members vote to make those decisions themselves.

The national organization is not the grandparent, the department is not the parent, and the unit is not the child. Think of our relationships in the ALA as what we all are — friends with a common mission — to help our nation's heroes: its veterans and their families.





# The Truth about Planned Giving



*It's not as difficult as you think!*

Lots of rumors circulate around planned giving, when, in reality, leaving a legacy gift can be easy. Check out the truth behind these misnomers that might be holding you back from making a planned gift to the American Legion Auxiliary or the ALA Foundation:

**MYTH:** It's only for the wealthy.

**FACT:** You don't need to be wealthy to have a will or indicate a charitable bequest. No matter the size of any individual donation, collectively, every gift adds up to help ensure the Auxiliary is here for the generations to come.

**MYTH:** I must have a will in order to donate.

**FACT:** There are various ways to donate without a will, including your retirement plan or life insurance policy.

**MYTH:** It costs way too much money to make a will.

**FACT:** The average cost for a basic will is \$375 and ensures your assets are distributed according to your wishes.

Start your planned gift by visiting [www.ALForVeterans.org/Planned-Giving](http://www.ALForVeterans.org/Planned-Giving) or calling (317) 569-4500.



*Membership retention by using your voice*

# When was the last time you reached a fellow member by phone?



When we call members who regularly renew their dues, as well as those who lapsed in their membership, it shows we care. A simple thank-you or “How are you doing?” goes a long way. A quick phone check-in with unit members makes them feel

they are a dynamic part of our organization.

Rally around our veterans, community, and members. Take the time to personally reach out to those who have dedicated their time to the Auxiliary.

Learn how you can connect even further:  
Visit [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org)

## A DEEPER LOOK INTO THE ROLE OF A SERVICE OFFICER

### How Auxiliary members can offer support

They're similar to American Legion Auxiliary members in how they make sure veterans and their families are taken care of. They offer a listening ear, and sometimes, a shoulder to cry on. They're often unsung heroes.

Accredited American Legion service officers are specially trained to provide expert assistance, free of charge, to veterans and their families.

"I primarily deal with disability and compensation claims — getting people in the VA," said Courtney VanZanten, Department Service Officer (DSO) for South Dakota. "Some of the more common benefits I help with outside of that include pension claims, some educational benefits, home loans, certificates, that sort of thing."

VanZanten, 38, is a U.S. Air Force veteran and dual member of Post/Unit 136 in Chester, S.D. Twice a year, she and other accredited service officers receive training to learn about changes in the benefits landscape, legal or medical, by attending American Legion Department Service Officer School in the first quarter in Washington, D.C., and in the summer in Indianapolis.

"You see new service officers and seasoned service officers at both courses every time just because the VA is constantly changing and evolving," VanZanten said. "There's always new case law to learn. There's never any sitting on your laurels in this job. If you are, you're not doing it right."

VanZanten said each state differs in how service officers are seen, and some American Legion posts may have certified post service officers.

"To do what I do, you have to be accredited," she said. "To do the paperwork for a veteran, you have to be able to utilize the power of attorney and help a veteran with that



**HELPING VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES:** Dual member Courtney VanZanten is the Department Service Officer for South Dakota.

paperwork. If you don't, you could get yourself into a lot of trouble. Post service officers should have good knowledge of the programs available and where to find those benefits for people."

VanZanten offers an example: "I know there is a widower's pension available for people whose spouses served during wartime periods, and Shirley's getting ready to go to a home. Let's go talk to her daughter and make sure they go over to the VSO and get signed up. While we're at it, since it's going to be a yearlong waiting list to get into the home, let's go talk to this program to get the water and heat bills frozen at last year's rate. There are different programs involved at all different levels."

But not everything in a DSO's job involves administrative tasks and paperwork.

"People don't come into my office happy," VanZanten said. "Generally speaking, they are battling things like addiction, or maybe they've lost a job and they're trying to figure out what they're going to do for health care now, or sometimes they've lost a spouse and they're trying to figure out how to pay for a funeral, or they've gotten a recent cancer diagnosis.

"I try to make it so they're leaving my office happier, but I'm not an office that people walk into with a smile on their face," VanZanten continued. "It's

helping people understand that they're not alone in the battles they're facing. Being a female veteran service officer, I do see a fair amount of female veterans, so I've seen a lot of military sexual trauma cases, and they're hard to listen to. I mean, it's hard. I think some of those cases are the most eye-opening to me. But they're the most rewarding ones too when they come back."

American Legion Auxiliary members can help service officers.

"There's a veteran service officer in every county," VanZanten said. Call and ask that county veteran service officer if there is anything your local unit can do to help, or if anything pops up that you would be willing to help with."

There's another important element for ALA members in assisting service officers, VanZanten said.

"The best thing any veteran can do for another veteran is to bring them to an accredited service officer, and I would say that for any Auxiliary member as well," she said. "One of the biggest VA benefits I see underutilized is the widow's pension. Women tend to outlive their husbands. They just don't know what they are entitled to. Make sure the spouses are going to those service officers. Be on the lookout in your Auxiliary unit not just for veterans, but for spouses too."

*Find a service officer in your area: [Legion.org/serviceofficers](http://Legion.org/serviceofficers).*



## PASSING ON YOUR AUXILIARY ITEMS WHAT TO DO WITH ALL OF THOSE ALA KEEPSAKES

You love being a member of the American Legion Auxiliary and have many ALA-related items you've collected over the years. You may have national and department president pins, branded jewelry, scrapbooks, photos, and other memorabilia. They have sentimental value to you, and you want them to end up in good hands after you decide to downsize your home, or you pass away.

Will a family member want any of those ALA belongings? Will other members be interested? Where should you donate?

Often, collections end up in estate sales, antique shops, auction sites like eBay, or are donated to thrift stores like Goodwill.

However, with a little planning, you can arrange where these keepsakes will go. Think of them in the same way you would with the rest of your estate.

This makes it easier for loved ones and prevents items from being dropped off at a unit or department with no notice and no one knows what to do with everything or has the time to go through the items.

Start by taking an inventory of what you have, and make a list. It's

also a good idea to take photos of the items. This is helpful if you are communicating through email with someone who may be interested in a donation.

Ask your family, friends, and fellow ALA members if they are interested in any of the items. Next, ask your unit and department. Your unit may be interested in photos or scrapbooks. Even news articles may be of interest because they may contain information that is not in the history books. Some departments have a history museum and may like a few items for their collection.

You can also ask local historical societies or libraries. Historical societies often take donations that help preserve the history of organizations in the community. For example, meeting minutes may not sound exciting, but they may contain information about what was happening in the community at that time. Another place to ask is your college alma mater.

If you are donating someone else's items, the suggestions remain the same. A good starting point is to contact the unit the member belonged to. Also, it's helpful if

you know whether the person was an officer and at what level. This will guide you on who's interested in the items. For example, ALA National Headquarters has interest in items pertaining to the national history of the organization. This doesn't mean NHQ can take everything, but it never hurts to ask. Keep in mind, photos and news articles are more important than you may think. The pictures may not have been seen before at the national level, or news articles can give a historian more details about a project or event.

### What to do with donated ALA items

As important as it for a member to be prepared, it's important for units to be prepared to receive these donations. As a unit takes in new items, there should be a plan to catalog the items. Cathi Taylor, American Legion Auxiliary National Headquarters' archivist, suggests keeping an inventory.

"The cheapest way for members to keep a catalog of what they have is to use an Excel spreadsheet," Taylor said. "They can take photos of the object and embed them into an Excel spreadsheet." Taylor suggests keeping track of when an item was received, who donated it, its significance,



and its condition. If you don't want to use a spreadsheet, you can use a Word document.

Keeping an ongoing record is important because as officers change in the unit, information needs to be passed on. You will also want a record in case storage boxes are damaged (e.g., a flooded basement, facility fire, etc.).



It's also a good idea to develop guidelines within your unit or department. What types of items would you like to have? How will they be displayed or stored? Planning will make the process easier for everyone.



# New ALA Recruiting Flyer for Units!



Does your ALA unit host a regular carry-out dinner night, or does your post home provide food for carry-out?

Consider adding these flyers to the takeout boxes! They're convenient, fillable PDFs with an efficient 3-up design for easy printing on a home computer. You can also take them to your local print shop so you'll always have extras on hand.

Start today:

- 1) Go to the MyAuxiliary member portal at <https://member.legion-aux.org/member/resources/flyer-templates>.
- 2) Download the PDF.
- 3) Click onto the fillable field at the bottom of the flyer to type in a unit contact person's name, phone, or email address.
- 4) Print on color paper (we suggest blue), and cut in thirds.
- 5) Tape a flyer to each takeout box.



**MEMBERSHIP: PART THREE OF A FOUR-PART SERIES**

*This year, Auxiliary magazine is publishing articles with useful information about recruiting and engaging members within the American Legion Auxiliary, and other parts of our American Legion Family. This article is about retainment. The personal and professional benefits of membership will be explored in a future article.*



# ***Membership Retainment: Back to the Basics***

**Simple ideas to keep members engaged in the mission**



**HELPING HANDS:** ALA members of New York Unit 1038 and community members are all smiles at an Operation Baby Shower event.

For some members of the American Legion Auxiliary, recruiting is the easy part. Membership retention, however, is sometimes the most difficult and important. It's great that you got those members in the door, but how do you make them stay?

As the American Legion Auxiliary learned in a nationwide survey a few years ago, former members left the ALA for various reasons. While we can't control whether people leave our organization, we can strive to offer them good reasons to stay. It starts with us keeping in mind that members are humans. People tend to want to be in places and situations where they feel valued and respected, are able to contribute to a greater good, and find fulfillment, maybe even enjoyment. Having a shared vision, along with meaningful shared experiences with peers, is also motivation to remain part of a group.

All members have a reason or multiple reasons for joining the American Legion Auxiliary. Finding out their "why" is how we retain our membership. This is true whether a member has been part of the organization for two months or for 20 years. And sometimes, it's the smallest thing that ends up making the biggest difference.

Helping veterans, military, and their families is a shared passion among ALA members. Allowing all unit members to participate in activities will keep them renewing.

Following is an example of an ALA unit event and the various ways members helped. Apply this concept to your next event or activity to help all your unit members engage in the mission.

When eligible members inquire about joining their unit, Department of New York Unit 1038 members put them at ease right away about their time commitment and involvement.

"They are told that they will be invited to all events, but they choose their level of participation," said Emmy Creskey of Unit 1038. "This simple sentence signals members that they can find a comfortable level of engagement."

By doing this, Unit 1038 is already on its way to retaining members before they even join.

"We have members who like to engage in every activity and those who are happy with participating by attending a single event," Creskey said. "In today's world where there are so many stressors, a volunteer organization needs to create an environment that members want to be a part of. That is what will make it grow and flourish."

The unit has a partnership with Operation Shower, a nonprofit based in St. Louis, Mo., which hosts baby showers for military families. What started off as a small-scale event has turned into a major one for the unit and community.

Members had the opportunity to participate in a variety of ways that fit their individual interests and availability, which has encouraged members to keep renewing because they like that they get to be involved, and they have a choice on how they participate. Some members knitted baby items while others preferred to participate by purchasing baby items to donate.

“This simple step allowed all unit members to participate depending on their interest, skill, and the level of engagement they wanted,” Creskey said.

While developing its involvement with Operation Shower, the unit knew some of the expertise of its members and put that to good use — a new member with a deep passion for knitting and a seasoned home economics teacher.

“The new member became involved and felt at ease meeting new people, and the educator had the gift of sharing her vast expertise,” Creskey said. “The members who participated enjoyed their time with each other and certainly had many laughs together.”

In addition to knitting and donating items, there were more ways unit members could get involved to match their interests.

The unit held a donation party for Operation Shower and invited members and the community. Members could help set up, pack up, and serve dinner, which encouraged even more ways to participate, depending on interest.

“Everyone could be engaged in some way,” Creskey said.

Making sure all unit members have a way to participate in events is going to keep members renewing year after year.

“Learning what passion or interest a member has greatly increases the opportunity to engage both new and long-term members in our mission,” Creskey said. “It is important for unit leadership to have casual conversations with all members, paving the way to access their skills and help them develop their own ideas of how they would like to participate. There are many members with skills they are willing to share that can benefit the organization and strengthen bonds within the unit.”

Once you know what program(s) of the ALA members are interested in, don't be afraid to ask them to be on that committee or even chair of that committee. New members may be interested in becoming an officer. Encourage that level of involvement! But also, be careful with giving new members too many tasks too quickly or

a unit role that involves too much responsibility — the member could experience burnout while still feeling obligated.

This was just one example of using an event to show how members can get involved in a variety of ways to fit everyone's interests, encouraging membership retention among our ranks. Do you need more ideas on membership retention? Read on for ways current members can keep each other engaged in our mission, and for years to come:

### **Invite them to meetings and events, but don't scold them when they can't attend.**

A member says she/he is going to attend an upcoming fundraiser event, but life happens, and that member can no longer make it. We've all been there. Instead of scolding for not being able to attend, think of alternate ways the person can still contribute — they can donate, send email reminders about the fundraiser, make a Facebook event and invite Legion Family members, community members, and local leaders, along with other ways they can help.

Many tasks can be completed without attending a meeting or event to still contribute to fulfilling the ALA's mission. Be creative, and always include members whether they are attending in person or not — you might be surprised at how much more

involvement you have because it's including all members, not just those physically present.

“It is important that we include our members year-round, and we can do this by taking an extra step to reach out to the ones who aren't able to make it to the monthly meetings and hear their ideas for different events, fundraisers, and more,” said Charlotte Purdy, ALA member of Unit 158 in Arkansas. “Keeping a strong level of communication with both active and inactive members is crucial, and if we can bridge the gap, it builds a better relationship among members.”

### **Haven't heard from them in a while? Call or text! A short but personal ping goes a long way.**

A phone call or text message takes just a few short minutes out of your day to simply check in on a member and see how they are doing and if there is anything they need help with. It shows that you care, and you don't just see them as a money box from whom you collect dues once a year and don't engage with any other time. Often, people just want to know someone is thinking about them.

**“It is important that we include our members year-round, and we can do this by taking an extra step to reach out to the ones who aren't able to make it to the monthly meetings and hear their ideas for different events, fundraisers, and more.”**

This practice was put into place in 2020 and 2021 with the ALA's Week of Caring and Sharing. The concept was modeled after the success of The American Legion's Buddy Checks — simply reaching out and checking on members.

In addition to checking in on members you haven't heard from in a while, be sure to also follow up with members who regularly attend meetings, but who have missed one or two and have gotten out of the habit of attending. Everyone has a busy schedule!

"This is when you reach out to them by phone, email, or post card saying, 'We miss you and want you to come back,'" Purdy said. "This reminds the members that they are in an organization that truly cares about them and wants them to be involved."

### **Send a greeting card on their birthday.**

So much is online these days, but it's still a heartwarming feeling to get something in the mail that's not a bill. Keep a list of unit members' birthdays, and send them a happy birthday card annually, whether they've been a member for a month or for decades. It will show them that they are valued by the unit and that you appreciate everything they do for veterans, military, and their families. Just taking the time to mail a simple card can speak volumes. This idea alone has brought members back to the organization.

Additionally, send cards on the major holidays. Even though members are often celebrating with their families at these times, receiving this card reminds them the Auxiliary is still thinking of them throughout the year.

### **Recognize continued membership.**

A token of appreciation such as a gift card or Auxiliary merchandise can go a long way toward membership retention. Recognize your unit members for their continued commitment and devotion to the ALA mission and those we serve. Have gift ideas in mind for various membership anniversaries. Recognize them monthly or annually during a meeting, or have a separate event in appreciation for those who continue to make a difference in the lives of our veterans, military, and their families.

In addition to recognizing members for their continued commitment, regularly thank all unit members, including Juniors, for joining. They were willing to make that membership commitment and devotion to the ALA mission and those we serve. The

thank-you can be done during a meeting, through a text, phone call, and more. Remember: A little gratitude can go a long way.

### **Be kind and personal.**

Pretty simple, but easier said than done sometimes. Always be kind to each other. Remember the golden rule? Treat others how you want to be treated. Being nice to all Auxiliary members will go a long way in retaining them. And this doesn't just apply to in-person, but also being nice online — it's easy to hide behind a computer screen and say whatever you want, especially not so nice words, but remember: That is only hurting the chance that a member will want to renew. We can do even more with the mission when we have more members. Don't be the cause of someone's membership not being renewed for the next year.

In addition to being kind, also be personal to each other, which in turn will give members a reason to stay.

"We have to build a personal relationship with all our members, not simply because they are a member, but because we want to build a relationship that will continue to grow and prosper," Purdy said. "If we can maintain good relationships with our members, they will feel appreciated and continue to renew their memberships."

### **Treat members equally.**

All members are more than just an ID number on the membership roster. Some ALA members are what's commonly referred to as a "card-carrying member" — they pay their dues every year and that's it. Some members are super-involved and have held every office at the unit level and even beyond. Both types of members should be treated the same. They both support the mission, just in different ways, and that's OK.

It's important to treat them equally so they both come back year after year. And who knows — if you continue to treat a card-carrying member the same as one who holds an office, that attitude may sway that member to become more involved in the Auxiliary, benefiting everyone.

### **Focus more on the mission and less on meetings.**

Business has to take place, so meetings naturally are part of the Auxiliary backbone. But make sure your unit's focus doesn't become so much about meetings that you neglect the mission of the organization. Be efficient and productive, and keep meetings short and to the point. Spend the majority of your unit's time working the mission through the various ALA programs.

**"Everyone wants to feel as though they are a part of the bigger picture, and when they feel as though their views aren't appreciated, that is when members choose not to renew."**

Feeling like they are making a difference in the lives of veterans, military, and their families, members will want to keep renewing year after year because they enjoy advocating for our veterans on Capitol Hill or distributing poppies or helping a veteran find the perfect present at the Christmas Gift Shop. Working the mission is part of, if not the whole reason, why a member joined in the first place — the mission is going to keep them going, not meetings.

### **Welcome the whole family.**

When a member joins the ALA, her/his family members are also likely eligible to join the Auxiliary or the other parts of The American Legion Family. Be welcoming to all of them! It could make the difference between a member staying in the ALA or leaving, based on how welcomed their family members are by the unit's Auxiliary. Whether they are a Legionnaire, Son, or Rider, be kind and be respectful. It will go a long way in retaining a family.

If that member's family members aren't interested in joining right away, don't pressure them or be rude. Continue to be welcoming, kind, and invite them to help on projects that involve the Legion Family. They may eventually join one of the other parts of the Family because of the way they've been treated as a non-member by the Auxiliary unit.

### **Embrace technology.**

There is nothing wrong with sending items through postal mail...but be sure to embrace technology, too! It will help retain younger members who have grown up with devices at their fingertips, as well as other members who are getting acquainted with life online.

Technology can be used for meetings, events, newsletters, social media, and more. Again, you can still send items through regular mail, like a newsletter, but give the option for an newsletter if some members prefer that. By having multiple ways to communicate, it will likely help retain multiple types of members because they are getting information in the format that works best for them.

### **Foster leadership opportunities.**

Another way to help with membership retention is through the leadership opportunities available in the ALA at the unit, district, department, and national levels. This provides members with the chance to sharpen their skills, all while making a difference to the mission. A member might not be interested in a leadership position right

away, but knowing it's an option as a member can be a motivating factor for them to continue membership.

For members who have held leadership roles, be sure to guide and mentor those who are interested in being leaders within our organization. For some, that encouragement might be one of the reasons they stay a member.

### **Provide options to be social.**

There could be ALA members who joined to honor a relative's service and enjoy the mission, but the main thing keeping them as members is the opportunity to make new friends and socialize. And that's OK too! Many lifelong friendships have formed over the years between members, all thanks to meeting each other through the Auxiliary. Continue having regular casual gatherings so unit members can get to know one another — feel free to invite another unit or American Legion Family members to join in! Having close friendships can keep members coming back year after year.

### **Don't focus on length of membership.**

In any given unit, there could be members who have been part of the ALA for eight months or 80 years. The length of membership isn't what matters — the fact that they *are* a member is what's important. You can certainly honor members for

their continued membership as stated previously, but don't get caught up in the year listed on their ALA card. All members are part of the organization for a reason. Utilize the eight-month member to talk to new members because she/he would have recently been in their same shoes. Utilize the 80-year member for the knowledge of the ALA that's been gained from decades of experience and to encourage newer members to continue being part of the organization.

### **Give members a voice.**

Everyone wants to know their voice is heard when it comes to sharing ideas. Let every unit member voice their opinion so everyone feels like they have a say, whether their idea is implemented or not. Employing this courtesy regularly is a simple, yet very effective way to retain members.

"One of the most important ways to retain membership is to include all members and ensure they have a voice," Purdy said. "Members start pulling back when they feel they are not making a difference within the organization. By allowing members to be a part of

**“There are many members with skills they are willing to share that can benefit the organization and strengthen bonds within the unit.”**

events, both within The American Legion Family and in the community, it keeps them engaged and active. Everyone wants to feel as though they are a part of the bigger picture, and when they feel as though their views aren't appreciated, that is when members choose not to renew. Overall, making sure they are appreciated and that their voice truly matters will assist us in maintaining our memberships."

### **Educate.**

It's important to educate all ALA members on our history and programs, which can help lead to a niche interest within the organization. Members don't have to work on all of the ALA's program areas; they can choose the areas that appeal to them. Through education, it will help new and seasoned members understand all we do for veterans, military, and their families and hopefully lead them to an ALA program of interest.

Educating members on who we are, what we do, and why we matter will not only help them learn more about the organization they joined, but also be more confident talking about the ALA to the public. This in turn will bring in more members, making that member feel good about bringing in more people to work our mission. Being educated and knowing it's being used to help our cause may be a motivating factor for some members to renew.

### **Empower members with information.**

For some members, being kept up to date is their reason for staying in the organization. A concept as simple as communication can be some people's reason for staying or going. So, help them to stay by regularly staying in touch with members. This can be done through phone calls, texts, emails, websites, social media, unit newsletter, etc. There are a variety of ways to communicate. Don't get so caught up in the different ways to communicate — just make sure you actually communicate!

### **Benefits beyond your Auxiliary membership.**

In addition to the benefits of being part of the Auxiliary, many members extend those benefits beyond to the professional world, giving them yet another reason to retain their membership.

All because of the involvement and nominal investment in the Auxiliary, many members have benefited from the training received over the years through ALA events and the ALA Academy, the leadership skills absorbed serving in various roles within

the Auxiliary, the confidence gained in public speaking, and more.

Members have attained a variety of skills from their Auxiliary membership, such as presenting and leading meetings, managing large projects, creating newsletters, and more. Developing yourself more makes you become a better leader. There's nothing wrong with personal fulfillment and becoming a better person. The American Legion Auxiliary has more than 100 years of strong people who have used their transferable skills in both their ALA membership and in their jobs.

For some members, these professional benefits will be what keeps them engaged in the organization.

### **Bonus tip: Working with Junior members**

Many of the ways mentioned to retain members are useful not only for our adult members, but also our Juniors. Start from the beginning with making membership in the ALA fun and informative. There are plenty of opportunities for our youngest members to participate in at your unit. While they shouldn't handle money, Juniors can do nearly everything else adult members can do. For more information, consult the ALA Junior Activities Handbook in the MyAuxiliary member portal at [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org). It's important to retain Juniors at an early age, which will encourage them to continue their membership for years to come.

### **Ready, set, go!**

Now it's time to implement these ideas in your unit and hopefully see your member retainment numbers go up! Be sure to share these ideas with each other, as well as any other ways to keep members engaged. Don't be afraid to think outside of the box and be creative with the ways you keep your members coming back year after year.

Find out why they joined in the first place and what their individual interests are. Make sure you check in with them regularly to ensure their membership experience is meeting their expectations — if not, communicate and work through how that can be fixed and improved so they have the membership experience they envisioned. Make each and every member feel like a valued part of the American Legion Auxiliary — because they are!

Remember: More members mean more opportunities to help our nation's veterans, military, and their families. We are stronger together! ★

*By Sara Fowler, Staff Writer*

**"In today's world where there are so many stressors, a volunteer organization needs to create an environment that members want to be a part of."**



# ALA during the pandemic: A look back



It has been an unusual year and a half. *Auxiliary* magazine first covered the COVID-19 global pandemic one year ago in the August 2020 issue. Each magazine issue since has reflected on how the pandemic has affected us and how the ALA and our members remain resilient and continue finding ways to serve our veterans, military, and their families.

Years from now, people will look back on these issues of *Auxiliary* magazine and see how our world was constantly changing and how new things became part of our everyday lives, such as face masks and virtual meetings — things many of us never thought about prior to 2020.

ALA members have always been resilient, and it's been proven repeatedly throughout our century of service. Members find ways to continue to serve despite obstacles.

Even though this time has been difficult in so many ways, not everything was bad. There are some good things that came from our “new way” of life ... things that will stick around for years after the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Increased inclusivity with virtual meetings

How many of you participated in a videoconference such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams before 2020? What may have been unfamiliar products are now considered commonplace as we use them to connect with others, do business, and allow kids to attend school from home.

These platforms allowed us to continue to connect, even if it was through a screen. The pandemic pushed us to use technology that has been around for a few years and get creative on how we reach members and serve our mission.

ALA units, departments, and National Headquarters turned to videoconferencing to hold meetings and events. This not only allowed those who regularly attended meetings to join in, but those who had not been able to attend the in-person gatherings previously.

“We were able to have a 90-year-old member who has not been able to attend in years,” said ALA member Doreen Gallagher of New Jersey. “The joy and the

excitement in her voice was something I will not forget. We are going to continue conference calls in the future.”

Junior members also found ways to put virtual platforms to use. Even though Juniors could not do their usual unit activities, they were still able to connect with each other and build relationships. This was valuable for many kids who lacked social interaction due to pandemic lockdowns.

Another positive to hosting virtual meetings for Juniors — the opportunity for more girls to attend. For example, if bad weather took over, or the member didn't have transportation to the meeting, members could still get together.

“Our district covers a large area, and winter weather sometimes causes low attendance because we may have to travel over an hour,” said Colleen McDaniels, New York 7th District Junior chair. “We may offer girls who need to travel, or don't have transportation, the opportunity to join the meeting portion, and this will allow us the opportunity to visit with our district Juniors more often. Also, if we have a storm, we now have another option instead of canceling.”

## Learning opportunities without the travel

ALA National Headquarters also reached more members by increasing online learning opportunities. When the pandemic started, Mission Training events across the nation were canceled. So staff had to come up with new ways to deliver the important content.

ALA Academy was already an established learning opportunity for members to take self-guided courses on subjects like leadership skills, branding, fundraising, and more. When lockdowns began, staff developed and adapted content to expand ALA Academy to include live webinars that are each under an hour.

Since the launch of ALA Academy Live, NHQ has been able to reach ALA members who were not previously able to engage with national events. The webinars allow members to take courses from the comfort of home, at no expense, no travel, and just a one-hour commitment. Topics have included mission delivery, Junior Activities leaders, and using poppy funds.

The webinars are recorded and can be found in the MyAuxiliary member portal at [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org). Go to the Meetings and Trainings tab and select ALA Academy.

Many more courses are in the works. Watch ALA media for announcements as more webinars are added.

### **Always a front-row seat to events**

The National Veterans Creative Arts Festival was hosted virtually in 2020. Despite the disappointment that artists could not gather in person, the at-home version allowed more people to watch the Festival. In the past, people had to attend in person to see the performances and learn about the artists. Through NVCAF at Home, those who had not been able to travel to an event previously were able to have a virtual front-row seat, thus exposing a new audience to NVCAF.

This year, ALA members have the opportunity to watch the ALA National Convention from the comfort of their couch. We encourage those who cannot travel to Phoenix to watch our live stream, a great opportunity for those who have not been able to watch in the past. We will be sharing details on how you can watch on [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org) and on our social media pages @ALAforVeterans.

### **More prominent speakers available**

In pre-pandemic times, many ALA Girls State programs depended on guest speakers traveling to their event. Because of the travel time, some speakers would decline. In 2020, some virtual ALA Girls State sessions discovered it was easier to get a high-profile speaker because of the convenience to the guest to speak from wherever they were based.

“Without the constraints of physical settings and work schedules, we were able to interact with leaders who seemed more accessible to us, speaking from their house or their office,” said Lorraine Boucher, director of Rhode Island’s ALA Little Rhody Girls State.

The convenience factor not only applied to ALA Girls State programs, but all of our ALA events, meetings, and programs — nationally and locally. As people became more familiar with virtual platforms, doors opened to invite speakers who could attend virtually.

### **New ways to host events**

National Poppy Day® 2020 was different than we had ever seen; however, new ideas were created. Instead of canceling poppy distribution events, units found new ways to distribute the flower in exchange for donations. Some of these events were so successful that members decided to continue them post-pandemic.

Unit 45 in Greenbriar, Tenn., hosted a contactless drive-thru poppy distribution at the Greenbrier American Legion post. It was so successful that they hosted it again this year, with a few improvements that they had time to plan for over the last year.

ALA National Headquarters also found a new way to observe National Poppy Day. In response to the pandemic, a virtual National Poppy Day program was created. NHQ plans to continue this program post-pandemic.

Units also turned to virtual events to connect and raise funds.

“Boone Unit 4, Kentucky, hosted online auctions to raise monies for our programs and activities,” said Nancy Brotherton Moses of Kentucky. “All were successful and provided an outlet for people to shop and support our cause. Each one made over \$1k.”

### **Different ways to be part of veterans’ lives**

Members who normally volunteered at U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs facilities had to put their duties on hold during the pandemic. That doesn’t mean they didn’t find ways to serve. Instead, they found alternative ways to reach out to those veterans. “Unit 360 in Weatherly, Pennsylvania, purchased gift cards to local restaurants around the VA to sponsor a ‘Take Out Wednesday’ event for veterans in their Community Living Center,” said Georgeann Herling of Pennsylvania.

Other ways members continued to connect:

- Participated in parades outside of veterans homes
- Made signs for patients
- Provided materials and prizes for events such as hallway bingo
- Delivered food and meals to veterans and their families

### **Constitution & Bylaws lessons learned**

Governing documents may not be something many of us had put a lot of thought into in the past. But the unusual circumstances brought on by the pandemic made many units, departments, and ALA National Headquarters realize their documents needed to be reviewed and updated on a regular basis.

The experience taught us that an organization’s C&B is never a one-and-done document. It constantly must be reviewed and updated.

A new Auxiliary holiday was also founded due to the pandemic. ALA National Read Your Constitution & Bylaws Day (Nov. 14) was designed to encourage members to read the C&B. Members were encouraged to share pictures of themselves reading the national booklet (available for free download at [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org)).

### **Staying connected remains a must**

One thing many of us learned over this period is the importance of human connection. A simple phone call can make a big difference in a person’s life. ★

*By Jennifer Donovan, Staff Writer*

**“Through NVCAF at Home, those who had not been able to travel to an event previously were able to have a virtual front-row seat, thus exposing a new audience to NVCAF.”**

# Want to be a States Dinner winner?

Join us for our first-ever silent auction fundraiser benefiting the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation. All items will be on display Sept. 1 during the States Dinner at National Convention.

Can't attend in person? No problem! All bidding will take place online, so even if you can't be there, you can still participate.

Here's a sneak peek at some of the exciting auction items! Be sure to watch the ALA's website at [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org) and social media @ALAforVeterans for more details.



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\*The silent auction is proudly sponsored by Lands' End Business. To view apparel and merchandise that can be ALA branded, and get ready for National Convention, visit [business.landsend.com/store/ala](http://business.landsend.com/store/ala).

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## Can You Help Us Help Our Members?

As a member or supporter of the American Legion Auxiliary, are you a business owner? Are you employed by a company looking for new customers and wanting to make a difference in the lives of our veterans, military, and their families?

ALA event sponsorship benefits:

- Company mention on ALA website, event brochures, and ALA social media sites
- Podium time at events
- Networking opportunities at events
- Company logo advertised at events
- Handouts and company giveaways for event attendees

For more information about sponsoring an ALA event or program, please visit [www.ALAforVeterans.org/sponsorship-opportunities](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org/sponsorship-opportunities) or email [development@ALAforVeterans.org](mailto:development@ALAforVeterans.org).

A close-up photograph of a hand holding a white card with the text "ALA SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES!" printed in large, bold, red letters.

**ALA  
SPONSORSHIP  
OPPORTUNITIES!**

[www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org)

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## Preparing for the ALA's 100th National Convention

### Safety measures in place for attendees

With information constantly changing about pandemic protocols, American Legion Auxiliary members have adapted and are planning to hold our 100th ALA National Convention in Phoenix.

Convention and its related meetings are scheduled for Aug. 27 to Sept. 2 with COVID-19 safety measures in place to adhere to local and state guidelines. While we are looking forward to gathering again, it is important to follow the safety protocols implemented below as the pandemic is ongoing.

Ahead of convention, regardless of your state or community's guidance and rules, The American Legion Auxiliary will follow the official guidance, precautions, and rules from our convention host city.

Following are guidelines Auxiliary members are asked to abide by during convention to protect themselves, fellow ALA members, and others. Adherence to these guidelines will help allow the Auxiliary to host the National Convention in Phoenix.

**FACE COVERINGS.** Wear protective masks or face coverings at all times — unless actively eating or drinking — and wear them the right way with masks covering your nose and mouth. Additionally, do not touch or adjust masks in public; make sure they are always clean, in good shape, and worn the right side out; and do not borrow a mask or loan a used mask to someone else. Masks must be worn on the convention stage and be removed only when at the lectern speaking. Masks will be required while riding the bus for transportation from hotels to the Phoenix Convention Center.

**SOCIAL DISTANCE.** Maintain at least 6 feet of social distance from others.

**GREETINGS.** Hold off on the hugs, kisses, and handshakes. Instead, do fist bumps, elbow bumps, waves, salutes, and tips of the hat.

**HANDS.** Follow the CDC guidelines and wash your hands for 20 seconds with hot water and soap.

**SYMPTOMS.** Don't ignore symptoms associated with COVID-19. If you have experienced any COVID-19 symptoms within 14 days of the convention — or tested positive within 14 days of departure — we need you to stay home.

**TEMP CHECKS.** Temperatures will be taken each day for all attendees who enter the Phoenix Convention Center, and common preliminary COVID-19 questions will be asked. If an attendee's temperature registers at 100.4 or higher, the attendee will sit in a control area for 10 minutes. A second

temperature screening will be administered after the wait time is over. If the temp remains at 100.4 or higher, the attendee cannot obtain entry into the convention center unless they receive a negative COVID-19 rapid test.

**LIABILITY WAIVER.** All attendees of the American Legion Auxiliary National Convention must sign a liability waiver to attend — the City of Phoenix accepts no liability and declines to indemnify anyone electing to attend the event. The waiver is in the process of being developed. Convention dignitaries will also be required to sign this waiver before attending.

**PRE-REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED.** Convention walk-ins will not be permitted this year. Those interested in attending must register in advance with their respective American Legion Auxiliary department.

**EXHIBIT HALL NUMBERS.** There will be a max number of people to be in the Exhibit Hall at one time. This number will be determined closer to National Convention.

**MEETING ROOMS.** Information on meeting rooms will not be released until early August in case changes must be made for COVID-19 distancing requirements.

**PRIVATE EVENT.** The National Convention is considered a private event and not open to the public.

*All convention information is subject to change.*

#### NOTICE: CONVENTION EVENT CANCELLATIONS

The convention parade has been canceled due to physical distancing measures. The band contest has also been canceled.

#### FOLLOW ALA NATIONAL CONVENTION DETAILS ON OUR SOCIAL MEDIA

As we get closer to convention and more information becomes available, check out National Headquarters' social media channels @ALAforVeterans for the latest updates.

#### SEE IT LIVE FROM YOUR SMARTPHONE, TABLET, OR COMPUTER

Watch the 100th ALA National Convention through our live stream at [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org), where you'll also find an updated meeting agenda. Video can be viewed on mobile devices, tablets, or your desktop computer. Unable to catch the sessions each day? Archived video also will be available for viewing.

# IMPACT ALA!

## REMEMBERING PAST NATIONAL PRESIDENT JOANN CRONIN



Missouri Auxiliary member JoAnn Cronin selflessly devoted her time, talent, and heart to make a difference in her community on local and national levels.

Cronin, 67, passed away Dec. 14, 2020, in Kansas City. She was a loving mother, sister, aunt, and community leader. She served as the ALA's national president during the 2006-2007 administrative year.

A lifetime Auxiliary member, Cronin joined ALA Rock Memorial Unit 283 to honor her father, Jack Cronin, who served as a Marine during World War II.

Cronin served in many ALA leadership roles at all levels of the organization. Once she became an adult member, she began holding offices at the unit level. She was Department of Missouri President in 1990-1991 and later became the 86th national president of the American Legion Auxiliary.

During her presidency, America was continuing to wage its War on Terror. A natural leader, Cronin urged members to keep their focus on the needs of veterans, including injured servicemembers returning home, and the troops deployed to war-torn Iraq and Afghanistan.

Adopting the theme We Can Do It!, Cronin encouraged members to spend the year reminding each other that “we can do it for our veterans” — whether that included members volunteering by distributing poppies, visiting veterans in VA facilities, serving military spouses and children, or strengthening veteran communities.

“People around the world are thankful for the men and women serving our country. And we, the men and women of The American Legion Family, are the ones who can take care of them. We say, ‘How can we help?’” said Cronin.

Cronin was elected president during the 2006 National Convention in Salt Lake City, Utah. During her remarks, she emphasized working together as a Legion Family to better serve our nation's veterans, military, and their families.

Cronin chose the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival as her special-emphasis project. By the end of her administrative year, ALA members had overwhelmingly supported the project by contributing more than \$100,000 for the annual event. “We have made a commitment to our veterans that we will support them on their road to recovery, and I don't know of a better program than the Creative Arts Festival that will help them,” she said.

Shortly after her installation, Cronin asked National Vice President Jan Pulvermacher-Ryan to lead a new initiative that would help chart a future-oriented comprehensive strategic plan. It would involve taking a broader look at the challenges facing the ALA, including ways to raise awareness, combat declining membership, and ensure that the organization continued to thrive to support future generations of veterans. A committee was appointed to set the blueprint for future strategic planning.

During her presidency, Cronin visited local units and departments across the United States and attended many events held by organizations the ALA supported. Her travels also included

international destinations, such as Germany, where she visited the U.S. military hospital in Landstuhl with American Legion Commander Paul Morin.

Cronin remained an active member of the ALA following her presidency, initiating the Strategic Planning Committee, and was instrumental in the creation of the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation. Her support of ALA Missouri Girls State was recognized in 2015 with the naming of a city in her honor.

Cronin's historical National President's pin featured Rosie the Riveter for her efforts of supporting working women during WWII who were helping with the war efforts.

“I have enjoyed every minute of support I have given to the American Legion Auxiliary. What is important are the people I have helped through our programs. I am well aware of the importance of the unit member, and I have a true appreciation of what they do,” said Cronin during her installation at the ALA's 2006 National Convention.

Cronin is survived by her mother, Adeline Cronin; brother, Gary (Karen) Cronin; and sister, Patti (Bob) Hardin. She is also survived by her nieces and nephews — Dan (Brandi) Cronin, Tracy (Daren) LaRose, Derek (Nikki) Hardin, Brian (Tierney) Cronin, and Erin (Chris) Kiella — and their children, who will miss her dearly and forever be grateful for the impression she made on their lives. She is preceded in death by her father, Jack M. Cronin. Donations may be made to the ALA Foundation at [ALAFoundation.org/donate](http://ALAFoundation.org/donate).



## MEMBERSHIP: CREATING CHANGE AND OVERCOMING OBSTACLES

 [www.Facebook.com/groups/Membership](https://www.Facebook.com/groups/Membership)

During my two years as your national Membership chairman, so much has changed. It started with the LEGION Act — the decision Congress made that we have been “at war” since Dec. 7, 1941. This makes many more people eligible for membership in The American Legion Family. Notice I said people.

The second change we had was to welcome the male spouses of veterans to our organization. At National President Nicole Clapp’s installation, she signed up our first

male ALA member, Mike Rohan, honoring the service of his wife, Past National Commander Denise Rohan.

The third change was The American Legion and Congress recognizing the U.S. Space Force as a branch of the service, therefore making members of that branch eligible for membership.

The fourth thing we experienced in the past two years: COVID-19! Many American Legion posts, restaurants, sporting events, and any

other place you might see members or potential members were closed for extended periods of time. That being said, as always, our members rose to the occasion!

We signed up new members, got renewals, and hundreds of units became 100% or better. I would say we have had a successful two years of membership!



**Pam Ray** is a 64-year member of the ALA. She belongs to Urbana Unit 71 in Illinois.

## LEADERSHIP: ALA ACADEMY PERSONALIZES YOUR LEARNING EXPERIENCE

 [www.Facebook.com/groups/Leadership](https://www.Facebook.com/groups/Leadership)

When an opportunity to attend an Auxiliary leadership training session comes along, we know we want to be there to continue developing our knowledge of this great organization. But then our reality check comes in, and we know we couldn’t possibly take time away to attend.

The ALA Academy can help you to balance your daily life with your desire for more knowledge about being a leader in our organization. Think how convenient it would be to take classes whenever and

wherever you have the time. You can build your leadership skills from the comfort of your own home.

ALA Academy courses can be done at your own pace. You can browse through the online catalog, check out what’s offered, and decide what will fit in the time you have available. We have a wide variety of classes and live recordings currently available to choose from. More classes are added periodically, so there will always be options for your continuing Auxiliary education.

President John F. Kennedy once

said, “Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other.” We need to continuously challenge ourselves to learn more. Over the 100-plus years of our history, we have seen many changes in how we communicate. Using the ALA Academy and all of the great virtual courses and webinars posted will help us continue to meet that challenge.



**Diana Sirovina** is a 33-year member of the Auxiliary. She belongs to Bixby-Hansen Unit 171 in Union Grove, Wis.

## HISTORY: KEEP YOUR HISTORICAL ALA FINDS FOR NEXT GENERATION

 [www.Facebook.com/groups/Historians](https://www.Facebook.com/groups/Historians)

Have you ever had an item you liked but knew it would bring more joy to someone else, so you gave it away? It happened twice this year at National Headquarters.

While scrolling through eBay, I found an intriguing book — *Past Presidents Parley Roster for the Dept. of Kansas*. Although it would have fit in with the History Committee’s diversity project, it belonged to the department. I contacted Kansas member Trish Ward so she could

bid. The book arrived right before Christmas.

A few months ago, Auxiliary member Kaywin Ressler of Florida Unit 69 sent me a program she had found of the 1937 dedication of the William P. Connery Jr. American Legion Post 6 home in Lynn, Mass., which is still active.

The post was excited, as the program was signed by James Roosevelt, son of President Franklin Roosevelt, and Lawrence Connery,

a U.S. House representative from Massachusetts and brother of the post’s namesake. The stains didn’t matter because it was a piece of history that had been lost to them.

So if you find a Legion or Auxiliary item, think before throwing it away. You might have something that will bring joy to someone else.



**Cathi Taylor** is a member of Unit 500 in Indiana and is the archivist at National Headquarters.

### FINANCE: NATIONAL COMMITTEE CONTINUES DUE DILIGENCE

Your national Finance Committee has met in accordance with our bylaws. I am happy to say that we will return to a “normal” budget process this year. Be assured that your Finance Committee has been and will continue to do our due diligence in guarding our finances. Each month, we are given a complete accounting of our finances from our director of Finance and our national treasurer.

The national Finance Committee consists of five members with some type of financial background, and they are willing to go the extra mile to protect national finances in accordance with our National Executive Committee-approved budget.

One responsibility is to develop

the annual budget, which is monitored closely throughout the fiscal year.

We also must ensure that the funds are available to carry out the programs and mission set forth by the program chairs and our national president.

ALA Mission Trainings, national Junior meetings, and department secretary/finance/treasurer training are programs the Finance Committee supports and looks forward to in the future. Training is what strengthens our future.

Some training may still look a little different than before, and your Finance Committee stands ready to support what is best for our membership and return to some in-person meetings to continue

to build leaders and friendships. Whether it is face-to-face training or virtual, we understand the need for all kinds of training opportunities and will be looking to support them this year and in the future.

I have learned that finance reports and financial reports can be understood if we take the time to ask questions and take the time to learn and make decisions that are best for our organization.

Your Finance Committee stands ready and willing to serve our leadership, as well as our membership.



**Sharon Conatser** is a 67-year member of the ALA. She belongs to Urbana Unit 71 in Illinois.

### PAST PRESIDENTS PARLEY: RECOGNIZING OUTSTANDING MEMBERS

While everyone recognizes this has been an unusual time in the history of our nation and the American Legion Auxiliary, many changes have come about that have made a positive impact not only in technology, but in the way we live our daily lives.

Auxiliary members nationwide found new and different ways to work the programs, reaching out in ways never before tried. Mentoring to our members, helping them to grow in leadership within their units and departments, came about in new ways as virtual meetings and classes were held with members attending and participating from their own home, and at the same time learning new technology through their laptops and smartphones.

Units were encouraged to nominate outstanding members who went above and beyond volunteering in their communities

as their Unit Member of the Year, while many departments presented candidates for the ALA's Salute to Servicewomen Award, including one from the newest branch of the military, the United States Space Force.

In celebration of the American Legion Auxiliary's 100th anniversary, units were asked to reach out to former Unit Member of the Year honorees to get their stories on what this honor had meant to them and if it had made a difference in their future volunteer work in the Auxiliary, their career, and their personal life.

LeeAnn DeWitte, Unit Member of the Year, Minnesota Unit 11, 1993-1994, said she initiated membership ideas while serving as unit membership chairman that year that helped her unit to make goal. A member since 1985, she is still actively involved.

Irene Morin was honored by the

Department of New Hampshire in 1995. Irene said the award greatly impacted her future in the Auxiliary, as she had been a member for only five years at the time, and she continues to stay actively involved in her unit and community.

Joni Giarrantano, member of Unit 2 in Pueblo, Colo., was honored in 2019 with her unit celebrating her for her 60 years of volunteer service in the local school district promoting the arts and making an impact on thousands of students.

The ALA Past Presidents Parley Committee has been dissolved after this year, and the Unit Member of the Year program will become part of the national Leadership Committee. The Salute to Servicewomen Award will fall under the National Security Committee.



**Carlene Ashworth** is a 55-year member of the Auxiliary. She belongs to Texas Unit 521 in Pasadena.

## AUXILIARY'S 'ACTION PLAN' COMES TO LIFE



The American Legion Auxiliary's mission and our core activities are consistent from year to year. However, we exist to meet the needs of our veteran and military population and those needs do change a bit from year to year depending on circumstances.

To continue the ALA's meaningful impact into our next century of service, it is vital that we carry our accomplishments across administrations, rather than starting fresh each year. When the 5-year action plan was written in early 2017, it was to provide some continuity for planning, but parts of it no longer are relevant today.

Therefore, going forward, the national president's focus each year will be conveyed through the national chairmen, national committee members, and department presidents rather than through a document called the action plan. Program resources are available in the MyAuxiliary members only section at [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org). Through our national and state leaders, ALA members will look for ways to carry out the mission using whatever local resources are most available.

Each year, the national president emphasizes a particular aspect of the ALA's mission that is timely, to keep us engaged in relevant activities.

The local organization (department or unit, for example) then considers how that emphasis could be carried out in their community, while continuing to meet the ongoing needs of the veteran-connected populations.

More important than the document itself is the communication, encouragement, and information-sharing among members so that

we continue to learn, improve, and build a sense of pride in our shared accomplishments.

We encourage everyone to begin their planning by learning about the needs of those we serve in our neighborhoods, and work with ALA members and others who share our passion to meet those needs. Our donors and our neighbors evaluate our impact based on the behavior they observe, not by our words alone.

The new format of the program resource pages is already in place at [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org). Program award information and contact info for 2021-2022 national committee members will be added to each program page after Independence Day. Please visit the appropriate page in the members only section to access this information.

To learn more about the ALA national program committees, request to join one of the many Facebook groups, which are moderated by national chairmen. Visit [www.ALAforVeterans.org/social-media](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org/social-media).

## ALA FOUNDATION BOARD APPROVES GRANTS FOR UPCOMING YEAR

The American Legion Auxiliary Foundation Board of Directors, during its April 28 meeting, approved one Veteran Projects Fund grant, one Veterans Creative Arts Festival grant, and two Mission in Action grants. The board also presented a slate of elected director nominees and board officer selections which will be put forward for approval by the National Executive Committee following the National Convention in Phoenix.

Details about the grants awarded:

- Veteran Projects Fund grant
- New Jersey Unit 158 — awarded \$1,616 to purchase two wheelchair-accessible picnic table benches for the Veterans Memorial

Home in Vineland, N.J., and two park benches for the Veterans Haven South, a veterans transitional housing program impacting approximately 220 veterans at any given time.

Veterans Creative Arts Festival Fund grant

- Department of Colorado — awarded \$2,500 to purchase art supplies, frames, display stands, rental fees, and awards for veterans for their workshops leading up to a festival at the Rocky Mountain Regional VA Medical Center in September.

Mission in Action grants

- Department of Wyoming — awarded \$5,000 to purchase a branded trailer to use as a traveling

information center to take around the state to promote programs, membership, and volunteering for the entire American Legion Family.

- Department of Illinois — awarded \$4,190 to purchase a branded cargo trailer to haul materials to department events, such as their Patriotic Conference, ALA Illini Girls State, Illinois State Fair, and the department convention.

The American Legion Auxiliary Foundation positively impacts the lives of our veterans, military, and their families by funding programs of the American Legion Auxiliary today and for future generations. Learn more at [www.ALAFoundation.org](http://www.ALAFoundation.org).

What's happening in your American Legion Auxiliary unit? Tell us about it at [ALAMagazine@ALAforVeterans.org](mailto:ALAMagazine@ALAforVeterans.org).

# IMPACT ALA! REFLECTIONS

Provided by *Mary Anne Casadei, National Chaplain 2019-2021* | [www.Facebook.com/groups/ALAchaplains](http://www.Facebook.com/groups/ALAchaplains)

## AUGUST

“May my prayer be set before You like incense; may the lifting up of my hands be like the evening sacrifice.”  
— PSALM 141-2

I think we all desire a healthy prayer life. Prayer will provide us with strength in moments of weakness, and comfort in times of sorrow. With a healthy prayer life, we can prepare for the future. The future is unknown, but we can prepare for it.

Many people will tell you that praying is a natural instinct. This may be true, but an effective prayer life is the result of a disciplined and sensitive attitude before God.

We were all taught to pray as young children. Every night before bedtime, we said prayers with our mom and siblings. We said the same prayers every night. When we are children, we pray as children. Don't get me wrong; I still say the same prayers I said as child, but now I have a deeper understanding of my relationship with God.

My attitude toward God is that of an adult. I no longer pray for a pony or a new dress. I now pray as an adult. I hope my relationship with God is that of love, trust, faith, and dependent upon a healthy prayer life.

I share my joys and sorrows with God. I share my hopes and fears. Instead of asking for a new doll, I ask for peace and understanding. I pray for my husband's health and my children's happiness.

I can share my joy with God through prayer when the sun shines, and there will be no anxiety when the storm comes.

I have the quiet conviction that God is in full control and that I have prepared for every situation.

“Thank you, God, for always being with me. I know I just need to trust in You and You will do the rest. Your great love for me has made all things possible. Continue to help me develop a healthy prayer life. Amen.”

## SEPTEMBER

“After Job prayed for his friends, the Lord made him prosperous again and gave him twice as much as he had before.”  
— JOB 42:10

It is hard not to make enemies. We all know that one person who rubs us the wrong way. When we see them in a grocery store, we go down the next aisle to avoid them. Or maybe we have that coworker who is always “Johnny on the spot,” always putting themselves out there.

We all have that one person who betrayed us and really did harm to us. God wants us to remember that it is always possible to turn an enemy into a friend, although this isn't easy, as forgiveness requires true greatness.

Only those who have undergone meaningful spiritual growth can transform enmity into friendship. One sure way to turn an enemy into a friend is to pray for them. This may sound absurd, but it is a truly wise act if you desire a pleasant life.

Prayer can work miracles. Prayer has the ability to change your attitude toward people and events, and when this happens, the battle is just about won.

This is not easy, but God forgives us for our sins and transgressions. Who are we that we should not follow in God's footsteps?

Besides, it takes so much energy to hate that it truly does not give us any benefit. We are taught to turn our troubles over to God. With God on our side, we will have the ultimate victory.

“Dear God, help me to grow in You so that I may develop a forgiving spirit. You have forgiven me through Your grace.

Help me to follow Your example and forgive my enemies. Help me to let You live through me in such a way that others may know Your love for them. Please guide me in my forgiveness. Amen.”

## OCTOBER

“Your statutes are wonderful; I obey them. The unfolding of Your words give light. Direct my footsteps according to Your word; let no sin rule over me.”

—PSALM 119:130-133

There are times in our life when we long for guidance, long for someone who clearly knows the road ahead, who can help us avoid the potholes and dead-end streets.

This is the kind of desire the psalmist had for the Word of God — that it would lead him every step of the way. He knew that the Word would lead him to true joy.

In today's world, it often seems easier to desire God's freedom than it is to follow His Commandments. The psalmist understood that God's Commandments would bring true joy to his life. We should reaffirm our desire for God's Word to be our guide through life. We should pray that God will help us resist the specific sins that cause us to stumble.

When we have a problem or are facing a difficult situation, we often seek out the easiest way to solve the situation. This is only the Band-Aid approach. It may seem better for a short time, but, before long, the problem will rear its ugly head again.

This happens time and again. We have a proven place to go to for guidance; God is always there for us. He is our safe haven. We need to avoid the quick fix at all costs. Rely on God for your fix. Rely on God to help you avoid the potholes of life.

“Dear God, let Your Word be my guide through life. Let Your Commandments guide me down the right path. Your Commandments bring true joy to my life. Through You, my problems are solved; my path is clear. Amen.”



Mary Anne Casadei is a PUFL member of Henry P. Smith Unit 24 in Rome, N.Y.



# Auxiliary Emergency Fund: the help you need, when you need it



American Legion Auxiliary members work tirelessly to help others. But what happens when they need help for themselves from a flood, wildfire, or being laid off from a job? That's where the Auxiliary Emergency Fund comes in. The AEF has helped

members for the past 50 years as a hallmark of the Auxiliary's legacy.

Don't wait to get the help you need. If you've been affected by a natural disaster or financial crisis, please apply to the AEF at [www.ALAforVeterans.org/aeef](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org/aeef) or email your application to [AEF@ALAforVeterans.org](mailto:AEF@ALAforVeterans.org).

[www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org)

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## Fun for Adult and Youth Members! Everyone Wins in The American Legion Family Branding Game



With this exciting and interactive three-round game, Legion Family members will compare and discuss The American Legion Family brand and challenge each other to care for and promote our brand with a new awareness of how others see us.

The American Legion Family Branding Game objectives:

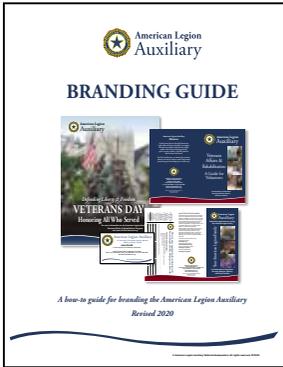
- ★ Learn more about branding and how it applies to The American Legion Family.
- ★ Discuss the importance of branding through review of company brands.
- ★ Discover the potential positive and negative consequences of branding.
- ★ Learn about and discuss public perception for both members and those who aren't familiar with our organizations.

Log in to the Members Only section at [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org) to download the free game

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# Building ALA brand loyalty

## HOW TO CO-BRAND WITH THE AMERICAN LEGION FAMILY



Many American Legion posts, American Legion Auxiliary units, Sons of The American Legion squadrons,

and American Legion Riders chapters work together on events and fundraising for the Family. When doing so, it's important to adhere to co-branding best practices.

When producing materials that are co-branded, the size of each partner's emblem/logo should be proportionate to their contribution in the partnership. When each partner has contributed equal shares, for example, emblems/logos should be of equal size. But, special consideration also should be given to each emblem/logo. The ALA emblem is unique in that it contains small, embedded text. If the

logo is printed too small, the text becomes unreadable, and therefore, the emblem does not appear as it should.

When co-branding, request high-quality or source graphics. Do not pull images or graphics from websites.

Another consideration — when producing materials co-branded with the Legion Family, all emblems should always be of equal size. The main thing to keep in mind in terms of size is readability.

### Logotype and font

Adobe Garamond Pro is the preferred font for "American Legion Auxiliary" because of its clean, professional look and readability. This type treatment in conjunction with the emblem is called a logotype.

### Placing requirements

The emblems should always be prominently displayed at the top of any production with nothing placed above them. Except in some rare instances, the American flag is permissible to be placed above the emblems.

A best practice is to avoid using

the emblems over any "busy" or colorful background (i.e., anything that will interfere with the readability or overall visibility of the emblems). If such a background is unavoidable, use the "outer glow" feature. This adds a halo effect around the emblems and softens the colors around them, thereby making the emblems appear more visible.

### The American Legion Family logo: colors and usages

There are three versions of The American Legion Family logo available for use: four-color, grayscale (black), and reversed.



In addition, the individual emblems can be rearranged for layouts that require less width, such as the backside of a Family-branded shirt.

To learn more about co-branding with The American Legion Family, visit [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org) and download the *ALA Branding Guide*.

## TIPS FOR SOCIAL MEDIA BEST PRACTICES

It's important to efficiently utilize social media to share the ALA's message of who we are, what we do, and why we matter.

Here are a few general best practices for social media when posting about the American Legion Auxiliary on pages the public sees, such as your unit/district/department pages:

### Think before you post

Use common sense. Think twice before posting something that may hurt the image of the American Legion Auxiliary or compromise your privacy, and never post confidential or proprietary information. Be aware that courts may judge certain material as proprietary, copyrighted, defamatory, libelous, or obscene.

### Start talking ... er, posting

Social media is meant to be social — think of it as an ongoing conversation. Engage with others by including a call to action such as sharing, retweeting, liking, or commenting on your posts to encourage social sharing. Comment where appropriate to keep the conversation going.

### Know the etiquette

Ever get an email written in uppercase letters and find yourself taken aback? In social media, there are also cultural norms, expectations, and conventions that govern user interactions. Failure to observe them may compromise your credibility or make you come across as a negative person when that never may have been your intention.

### Get the ALA out there

Talk about the American Legion Auxiliary, our programs, volunteers,

projects, and mission. Share examples of activities going on in your unit or department, keep your content fresh, and update it often.

### Graphics help get you noticed

Your followers see a lot of text when they sign in to Facebook or Twitter — you want to stand out! Research has shown that using visuals such as photos and videos with social media posts greatly increases engagement. See what software is available online — apps like Canva offer free, attractive templates to design, collaborate, and share on social media.

### Celebrate!

Share good news, celebrate milestones, congratulate members, and post other happy occasions. Audiences want to celebrate your victories with you, no matter how small.

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# ALL THINGS ALA GIRLS STATE



## LEAH WEST: KICKING INTO THE HISTORY BOOKS



An ALA California Girls State 2020 alumna made history at Dana Hills High School in Dana Point, Calif. Earlier this year, Leah West became the first female in the

school's history to score a point for the Dana Hills Dolphins.

This is not only an accomplishment because she is a female — West hadn't played football until her junior year.

"I have always had an affinity for sports, but I never seriously considered playing football because I didn't know girls were allowed to play on the boy's high school team. However, after attending a football game my junior year, I didn't care if I would be the only female on the team," she said. "I had a passion for the game and I had played soccer all my life, so I felt confident in my ability to be an asset for the team.

Suddenly, it didn't matter if I was a girl, because I belonged on that field."

Despite the abbreviated virtual ALA California Girls State, West said attending the event was a valuable experience that gave her the confidence to succeed on the football field.

"My ALA Girls State experience instilled in me the importance of boldness," she said. "When you want to positively change the world, you have to step out of your comfort zone. I remembered this throughout my football season. I knew all eyes were on me because I was a woman in a traditionally male-dominated sport, and at times that pressure felt overwhelming. However, the support from my team, coaching staff, family, and friends, as well as the boldness instilled in me by ALA Girls State, enabled me to persevere and make history as the first female from my high school to score a point in a varsity football game."

Leaving a legacy is important to West. She wants to leave a positive

impact on society whether it's in her hometown, at her school, while attending college, or in her future career. ALA Girls State allowed her to meet other ambitious and selfless girls from across California who are determined to make a difference in their communities. West describes their passion and self-efficacy as contagious, empowering her to civically engage with her community.

West encourages other girls to attend ALA Girls State.

"Through this program, you connect with accomplished women who will inspire to achieve your aspirations," she said. "Additionally, the girls I met through ALA Girls State were so welcoming and kind. Our city — the City of Bass — even has a group chat so that we can keep in touch."

Even though the program was online, West said she knew she belonged there. She also learned so much about inspirational and influential women of the past and present. It was proof that hard work and passion can enact positive change.

"The incredible alumnae who spoke imparted onto us the importance of perseverance to enact positive change in our communities," West said. "Listening to their stories of success in a traditionally male-dominated sphere empowered me to do the same in my community."

West plans to attend Harvey Mudd College to study computer science and mathematics with a minor in art history.

*Are you a past participant of ALA Girls State? Let us know what you are doing now and how the program impacted your life. Contact us at [ALAMagazine@ALAforVeterans.org](mailto:ALAMagazine@ALAforVeterans.org).*

AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY



American Legion Auxiliary Girls Nation returned to an in-person program in Washington, D.C., in July. The program also had a new location following the permanent closure of the 4-H Center. You can learn more about the 2021 ALA Girls Nation program in the November 2021 issue of *Auxiliary* and on social media @ALAGirlsNation.

# ALA SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

## STUDENT FURTHERS HER EDUCATION THANKS TO HELP FROM JUNIOR MEMBER LOYALTY SCHOLARSHIP



**ALA FAMILY:** Members of McKensi Spears' family (from left): Joyce Hudgens, grandma; McKensi Spears, Melanie Spears, younger sister; Chari Spears Skidmore, mother; and in front is Micah Spears, youngest sister.

It's no mystery why McKensi Spears, 21, a junior at New Mexico State University and double criminal justice and psychology major, received the American Legion Auxiliary's Junior Member Loyalty scholarship. After being introduced to the ALA by her grandmother as a young child, Spears would remain very active and give much of her time to veterans, military, and their families. When she isn't reading a good mystery novel, she's going to an Auxiliary event.

"My grandmother being in the program, it definitely left a larger

imprint, so when I was able to be involved in the Auxiliary, it really showed me how important it was and the influence that the Auxiliary can make on active military and soldiers," she said.

As Spears became more involved in the ALA, she would eventually lead her younger sisters and mother to become more active as well. As a family, they would attend many ALA functions together.

"I think my favorite memory would be going to the department [New Mexico] conference my [high school] senior year. We all went up for the conference, and a few of my friends who I got to join the ALA were there, and then my grandma was there with some of her friends from the Auxiliary, so it was just all-encompassing," she said.

Even now that Spears is in college, she and her family still make it to as many ALA events as they can.

"Every chance I get, I go back home and I see if there's an event my grandma is going to or go to one

of the weekly night dinners or all the different things. There's always something we are going to for the Auxiliary," she said.

Going to college has presented Spears with many new opportunities. However, not all of them would be possible without the ALA Junior Member Loyalty Scholarship she received. It prevented Spears from having to get a second job, which allowed her to focus on her grades. As a result of this, she was able to meet the qualification to start classes for her master's degree, but as an undergraduate student.

"This scholarship really and truly made that difference," she said. "I am taking master's classes at an undergraduate price. I was able to get into that program because I have my tuition covered and I reached the qualifications process and all that."

Starting master's degree classes as an undergraduate can be intimidating, but receiving this prestigious scholarship helped instill Spears with confidence that she has the capabilities and support needed to succeed. Just as Spears has supported the ALA throughout her life, the ALA is now supporting her and cheering her on as she pursues her education.

If you want to support other students like McKensi Spears, donate to ALA Scholarships at [www.ALAforVeterans.org/Donate](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org/Donate). Just as McKensi said, these scholarships really and truly make a difference.

## CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 2020-2021 AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

### Spirit of Youth Scholarship (\$5,000):

Madelyn Wynveen	WI	Kupfahl-Meyer-Scheib Unit 387
Rianna Garlic	NY	Liverpool Unit 188
Rachel K. Johnson	SD	Sioux Falls Unit 15
Marley A. Rokas	TX	St. Hedwig Unit 539
Harlow Thomas	HI	Unit 56 E-Unit

### Children of Warriors National Presidents' Scholarship (\$5,000):

Mattigan Haller	WI	Johnson-Nicoles-Kuhlman-Olson Unit 53
Alexis Marie Dorrell-Ruhl	MO	Clyde Gustine Unit 236
Taylor Thomas	MI	Grand Blanc Unit 413
James Conner	NY	Merrick Unit 1282
Benjamin Thomson	PA	ALA Unit 579
Benjamin Michael Sala Jr.	DE	Sussex Unit 8
Audrey Parrott	MN	Green Isle Unit 408
Rachel Herr	ND	Lloyd Spetz Unit 1
Grace Williamson	CO	Centennial Unit 209
Skylar Purdy	AR	Brown-Wright Unit 158
Danielle Miller	FL	Department of Florida
River-Allen P. Carroll-Wilson	NC	Burton-Cowell Unit 265

Lauren C. McClintock	WA	Causland Park Unit 13
Koen Ethan Overberger	NM	Roy Unit 33
William Sandy	AZ	Irving B Selmer Unit 107

### Non-Traditional Student Scholarship (\$2,000):

Lesa Jo Dingman	MI	Stanton Unit 452
Danette Smith	DC	Kenneth H. Nash Unit 8
Michelle Knecht	SD	Frederick Schauer Unit 100
Janie Wilson	AL	Lawrence County Unit 25
Elizabeth A. Hunt	WA	John V. Folsom Unit 54

### Junior Member Loyalty Scholarship (\$2,500):

Mica Allen	IN	Jack Brinker Unit 409
Haley Christine Hills	MI	Grayling Unit 106
Alicyn Gormley	MA	Eugene M. Conner Unit 193
Victoria Gorgoglione	NY	Throggs Neck Memorial Unit 1456
Kennedy Grover	MN	Irvin Blix Unit 16
Taylor Wagner	NE	Lone Tree Unit 6
Alyce Keys	TX	Col Louis A Carter Unit 832
Leah Boskovich	CA	Newport Harbor Unit 291
Isabella Couture	AZ	Oro Valley Unit 132

# Wise PERSON SAID

For years, the American Legion Auxiliary has had close ties with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs in multiple ways. One of our biggest partnerships is through co-presenting the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival.

NVCAF comes from the VA's Office of National Veterans Sports Programs and Special Events, which provides veterans with opportunities for health and healing through adaptive sports and

therapeutic art programs. ALA National President Nicole Clapp's focus has been on adaptive sports, intertwining with the VA's focus on healing our nation's veterans. Although this Auxiliary administrative year is coming to



**ALL SMILES:** Participants during rehearsals at the 2019 National Veterans Creative Arts Festival in Kalamazoo, Mich.

an end, working with the VA to help veterans through sports and the arts will continue in an effort to reach even more veterans.

## LEIF NELSON



**How long have you been in your role as U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs director of National**

**Veterans Sports Programs & Special Events?**

I've been the director for four years and working on my 17th year working for the VA.

**Do you have any connections to veterans or the military that might have sparked a passion for this line of work?**

I have a similar story to a lot of families — my dad served in the Army Reserves and my granddad served too, so I do have those family ties. A big part of my training as a physical therapy student was when I did a rotation at the VA and I really connected with the VA and the mission. I think a combination of those factors brought me to the job.

**If you could describe adaptive activities to those who have never seen or experienced activities in that way, what would you say?**

Adaptive sports are a way to

level the playing field for everyone in a world that's not designed for individuals or veterans with disabilities. We are able to adapt the sport and the equipment and environment and make it a place to thrive. Sports and arts are both very powerful.

**There are six programs you oversee as director. Can you briefly describe each?**

The National Veterans Summer Sports Clinic in San Diego is for newly injured veterans through summer sports such as surfing. The National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic is in Colorado with alpine skis and snowboarding and a realm of winter sports. The National Veterans Wheelchair Games includes over 600 veterans whose primary form of mobility is the wheelchair. The National Veterans Golden Age Games is a sports competition for 55-and-over veterans of varying levels of abilities. The National Disabled Veterans TEE Tournament is our adaptive golf program. It's in Iowa each year. And we have the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival.

**Why do you think it's important to offer this many different programs?**

We want to reach as many veterans as we can. There are a lot who still don't know about these programs, so we want to increase awareness about it. The vision is to have adaptive sports and therapeutic arts as part of every rehab plan for a veteran with a disability. I do think adaptive sports and the arts make an incredibly big impact when delivered in the medical model.

**When life gets tough, do you look toward veterans in adaptive activities for inspiration?**

I think everyone, including myself, is inspired by what the veterans we see are able to accomplish. Even they inspire themselves in some cases.

**What advice would you have for veterans who may not be sure about participating in adaptive activities?**

It's all about identifying what is your obstacle, what is your barrier you have to overcome — whatever is preventing you from putting yourself out there. But you don't have to do it by yourself; it's fine to accept the help.

**Any closing thoughts?**

There are more adaptive sports and therapeutic arts opportunities available than the readers who are reading this right now are probably even aware of. Find them, and get involved and get engaged and then judge for yourself on the impact and benefit.



Who inspires you? Do you know someone with an interesting background or spectacular life story? Contact us at [ALAMagazine@ALAforVeterans.org](mailto:ALAMagazine@ALAforVeterans.org) or (317) 569-4500.



## A SPECIAL PODCAST SERIES, 20 YEARS AFTER 9/11

In April 2020, The American Legion launched its first podcast, Tango Alpha Lima, to further connect with today's generation of veterans. Since then, the podcast has rapidly grown and is getting recognition.

The podcast is ranked No. 2 for veterans and transitioning servicemembers, according to ClearanceJobs, a website for veterans jobs.

In May 2021, the podcast had 2,265 downloads, which is the second highest monthly total.

To commemorate the 20th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks, the podcast will release a special series featuring 20 individuals sharing their stories of courage, inspiration, and hope. One episode will drop each weekday, from Aug. 16 through Sept. 10. To access this can't-miss collection of first-person stories, visit [www.legion.org/tangoalphalima](http://www.legion.org/tangoalphalima) or subscribe to the podcast on Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts, Spotify, Stitcher, and other podcast-hosting sites.

## TOOLS, RESOURCES FOR COMMUNICATORS

If you are involved with promoting your post at the local, district, or department level, The American Legion Media Alliance (TALMA) has the resources, tools, and materials you need.

TALMA is open to all members of The American Legion Family and is highly recommended for those handling communications, public relations, and similar duties. For a \$15 annual fee, members receive:

- A press credential with lanyard.
- Free entry into the annual contest.
- Access to monthly virtual training sessions.
- The ability to join the private Facebook group.
- And, of course, resources and tools.

For more information and to join, visit [legion.org/talma](http://legion.org/talma).



**FITNESS CHALLENGE:** Past National Commander Denise Rohan, husband Mike Rohan, and their grandchildren Isla and Sawyer, participate in the 2021 American Legion 100 Miles for Hope (photo: Lauren Justice/The American Legion).

## A PERFECT SCORE FOR A WORTHY CAUSE

American Legion Auxiliary member Stacey Meinders jumped into The American Legion 100 Miles for Hope challenge and hasn't stopped.

At the end of May, she was among 10 participants who had achieved the maximum number of points via activities each day.

"I learned about the 100 Miles of Hope challenge through my husband, Daniel J. Seehafer," said Meinders, a member of Horicon ALA Unit 157 in Wisconsin. "Because of his deep involvement within The American Legion and what the organization stands for, The American Legion became near and dear to my heart, and therefore motivated me to take part in the 100 Miles of Hope challenge."

Meinders does a combination of elliptical, walking, and strength training. "I have always been an advocate for exercising and keeping in shape," she said. "It is important not only for maintaining physical health, but also for maintaining positive mental and emotional health as well."

And she needs all the stamina she can muster, given her career.

"This 100 Miles of Hope will be a challenging journey for me," she said. "It does motivate me to get up every morning and be active! I am a kindergarten teacher at a Lutheran school. My class definitely keeps me on my toes, as they have lots of energy! The 100 Miles of Hope gives me energy to start my day."

The American Legion 100 Miles for Hope is not just about improving one's fitness and mental well-being. All proceeds from the challenge's donations, registrations, and merchandise purchases go directly to The American Legion Veterans & Children Foundation (V&CF).

The V&CF funds the work of accredited American Legion service officers who provide free services that help disabled veterans get the VA benefits they earned through their service. It also funds the Legion's Temporary Financial Assistance program that provides grants to military families with minor children who are facing financial distress.

For information about 100 Miles for Hope, visit [www.legion.org/100miles](http://www.legion.org/100miles).

## New member portal for Legionnaires and SAL members

The American Legion launched MyLegion.org in April 2021. A series of how-to videos has been created to guide Legionnaires and Sons of The American Legion members through the member portal. Visit [www.Legion.org](http://www.Legion.org) to learn more.

# EVERY ALA MEMBER CAN GET INVOLVED WITH GIVE 10 TO EDUCATION PROGRAM BENEFITS STUDENTS AND SCHOOLS



It's that time of year when parents and children linger in school supply aisles, scanning their lists of required items for another school year.

But what about those parents who can't afford school supplies or the school districts that can't give teachers a stipend for items needed in the classroom?

That's where the American Legion Auxiliary comes in! The ALA's Give 10 to Education program collects donated school supplies in multiples of 10 — think 10 pencils, 10 notebooks, 10 folders, etc.

"The program gives every single unit — no matter the size, age of its members, if it's an online Auxiliary unit, a unit that doesn't meet very often — everyone can do it," said Coral May Grout, who created the program as national Education Committee chairman several years ago. "I know every unit in this country can't afford to give a scholarship, so this is a less expensive way to still show your

community, your department, and the national organization you are still doing something for education."

Grout came up with the concept in 2007 when she was asked to come up with an idea that would engage members. This request resulted in Give 10 to Education.

"I'm so proud of this program," she said. "It has blossomed beautifully."

A now-retired school superintendent and still working for the Department of Education in Massachusetts as a consultant, Grout understands how budgets can impact a school's ability to afford basic supplies and the strain this puts on teachers and parents.

Auxiliary members can help ease that strain with this simple program that all members can participate in and schools will benefit from.

"One of the things [Give 10 to Education] does is it gets our name in the community schools and lets them know who we are, what we do, and why we matter," said Deb Albers, current national Education Committee chairman.

Not sure what supplies are needed? Call the school and ask the teachers. Or you can send a check to the school and help out with supplies that way. Despite the pandemic, this program has been able to continue because it doesn't require members to go inside

schools — just collect the items and drop them off.

There are many ways ALA members can help with the Give 10 program: Grout suggests placing collection boxes (with permission) at your local American Legion post, bank, grocery store, or other location; purchase school supplies yourself; collect items from neighbors; donate money; and more. Bonus tip: Encourage the community at large to donate by holding a school supply drive. You could even offer to take cash donations from folks who'd rather you do the shopping for them.

One idea that worked for Albers' unit was a simple email to members about collecting supplies for Give 10 to Education at their next ALA meeting.

"If anyone sends some kind of notice to their unit members, they can get a wide array of things," Albers said. "We have a small unit, and it was supported by nearly everyone."

Any number of items or any amount of money can and will make a difference for students across the country through the ALA's Give 10 to Education.

"It's one of my favorite programs," Albers said. "Every person who is a member can donate to this program. It's so easy and so beneficial."



## SUGGESTED ITEMS FOR GIVE 10 TO EDUCATION:

- Notebooks
- Tissues/paper towels
- Folders
- Books
- Any kind of writing utensil
- Scissors
- Highlighters
- Disinfecting wipes
- Rulers
- Glue/glue sticks
- 3-ring binders
- And many more items!

# American Legion Auxiliary social media

Visit our social media at [www.ALAforVeterans.org/social-media](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org/social-media)



**ALA MEMBERS ACROSS THE COUNTRY OBSERVED NATIONAL POPPY DAY® AND REMEMBERED THE FALLEN AND HONORED THE LIVING.**



**f @Joanne Valletta**  
American Legion Auxiliary Unit 156 in Bronx, New York, distributed poppies outside a local store.

**f @Julie Smith**  
Unit 15 distributed poppies at Nags Head Outlet Mall in North Carolina.



**f @Jeanne Ostnes**  
We had 40 volunteers place 1,650 poppy bouquets on the graves of veterans at Anchorage Memorial Park Cemetery in Alaska.

**f @Murt Foos**  
We did a poppy cemetery in Lewes, Delaware. The names of deceased veterans were written by community members.



## AUXILIARY SUMMER SHIRTS!



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**AUX MG 0821**

- Auxiliary  
Word Scramble  
answers from  
page 26:**
- |               |                  |
|---------------|------------------|
| 1. tenacity   | 6. determination |
| 2. sureness   | 7. persistence   |
| 3. eagerness  | 8. passion       |
| 4. confidence | 9. resolution    |
| 5. fortitude  | 10. drive        |
|               | 11. endurance    |
|               | 12. purpose      |
|               | 13. teamwork     |
|               | 14. steadfast    |

Keep up with the latest news between issues of *Auxiliary* magazine.

Follow us on social media @ALAforVeterans.

**“I shall find a way or make one.”**

— Robert Peary, American explorer



The people who take care of us — Mom, Dad, grandparents, siblings, spouses, and visiting nurses — they get us where we need to be, they make sure we receive our medicine, and they always know how to make us feel loved. Caregivers do so much, yet oftentimes, these heroes don't realize it. In a 2022 issue of *Auxiliary* magazine, readers will learn about caregivers: what they do, how to self-identify as one, and the support options that exist. Are you currently serving in a caregiver role? We'd love to talk to you! Email us at [ALAMagazine@ALAforVeterans.org](mailto:ALAMagazine@ALAforVeterans.org).

# ALA Blog: Big Stories in Small Reads!

Read the ALA Blog for captivating posts about members in The American Legion Family, those we serve, and much more!

**“What an uplifting article!”**  
—Christy

**“I love your blog and all that you do.”**  
—Jennie

## Teen sisters value their ALA memberships

Sisters Hope and Faith Flores, Junior members of the American Legion Auxiliary, recognize and appreciate the sacrifices made by veterans, servicemembers, and military families to protect and defend the United States. With that, these Texas teens say they are proud to be part of the ALA — a community of volunteers serving veterans, military, and their families.

“We [ALA members and non-member volunteers] are those who help veterans in need. We are the ones who spend and use our time to help them as much as we can,” said 15-year-old Faith.

“I am a part of an organization which wants to help those who helped our country. I choose to take time out of my life for those who have done the same for me and you,” added 17-year-old Hope. Hope served at the national level as the 2018-2019 Honorary National Junior Southern Division Vice President and helped lead a national Junior meeting in Charlotte, N.C., that year.

The Flores sisters were signed up for American Legion Auxiliary membership by family members when they were babies; they grew up in the Auxiliary. Each shared one of their memorable moments from their ALA experiences.

“I was 9 when the Juniors from my ALA unit went to the Vietnam wall tour, and that memory really sticks out because I saw all of the names of people who fought for us,” Hope said. The two-paneled...

*Read more online!*

**“Love this idea.”**  
—Cindy

**“Great advice!”**  
—Ken

**“Thank you so much for this article on how to help recruit new members.”**  
—Kim

## Find more ways to boost the public’s understanding of the American Legion Auxiliary

Wearing apparel emblazoned with the American Legion Auxiliary’s name and emblem is a great way to raise awareness of the ALA brand in your community — or to get people curious enough to ask about our organization. Most ALA members have mastered this traditional marketing technique.

ALA members can build on that success and find additional ways to get our name, emblem, and website address in front of the public. Don’t toss out your ALA branded shirts, jackets, hats, and accessories. Wearing or carrying these in public, especially at community-wide ALA events and activities, is still an effective marketing technique. But it is time to do other things too, taking our marketing to the next level to boost brand awareness in the communities we serve.

Let’s face it: There are other veterans support organizations out there. We must introduce, and in some cases, re-introduce, the ALA to the public. We need to show who we are, what we do, and what makes us different from other veteran auxiliary groups. In many cases, that starts with the public knowing...

*Read more online!*

Visit today at [ALAforVeterans.org](http://ALAforVeterans.org)



# American Legion Auxiliary

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Serving Veterans, Military,  
and their Families***



## The ALA Foundation wants to support YOUR unit!

Did you know the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation offers grants to support ALA units, districts, and departments?

These grants can be used for:

- Select appliances, equipment, or furniture for the veterans' home in your community
  - Craft supplies, awards, or promotional materials for your local Veterans Creative Arts Festival
  - Branded tablecloths, pop-up tents, or banners to show your ALA pride at events
- ... and MORE!

Visit [www.ALAFoundation.org/grants](http://www.ALAFoundation.org/grants) or call (317) 569-4500 to learn what the ALA Foundation can do for your unit, district, or department.