American Legion Auxiliary Department of North Carolina Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation 2019-2020

Chairman: Service to Veterans Director:

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**Mission Statement**:

The ALA VA & R program is dedicated to promoting the mission of the American Legion in providing for and enhancing the lives of all Untied States Veterans, Military and their Families.

**How does the American Legion Auxiliary Carry out this mission?**

The ALA is one of the primary supporters of the veterans’ hospitals and extended care facilities. We collect funds, provide goods and services as the need for these arise.

Our initial Obligation is financial through payment of the **Fair Share Assessment**. We request that each unit pay $2.00 per unit member, as per the June 2019 membership. This includes both Junior Members & Senior Members. Therefore, if your membership was computed to be 40 members, the unit’s Fair Share would be $80.00. The projected goal for 2019-2020 is $11,774. Since this is our Centennial Year, it would be great to exceed this goal, and also have 100% of the units pay their obligations.

Let us all make this a landmark year. There will be incentives all year to encourage payment of this obligation. All units who have paid their Fair Share by Fall Conference will be entered into drawing for a cash prize.

**Units**

Familiarize yourself with the service of the VA caregiver support program & with the Military and Veteran Caregiver Peer Support Network. Become a veteran caregiver peer support trainer or volunteer. Become a Legacy Corps AmeriCorps member if the Legacy Corps project is offered in a state or locality near you.

Volunteer as a VA Voluntary Service volunteer support caregiver if the VA health care system closest to you offers such volunteer opportunity. Familiarize your unit and community with the services of the VA caregiver support program.

Invite the VA caregiver support coordinator in the VA healthcare system closest to you to make a presentation to your unit, district or community-wide meeting.

Identify the Homeless Veteran coordinator and Veterans Service Officer in your area & make referrals as needed.

Prepare Blessing bags to distribute to a homeless veteran , containing some comfort items, like socks, toothbrush, & tooth paste, soap, lotion shampoo

Assist your Legion posts, districts & divisions in their efforts to raise funds for veteran causes.

Collect hats , scarves, gloves & other warm clothing for homeless veterans & place them in areas that are accessible to these veterans.

Volunteer time at Stand Downs, events at the VA hospitals, such as the Creative Arts Festival.

Units, either alone or other units can sponsor bingo, a special meal, deliver treats.

**VA&R Department**

Prepare information for units concerning the needs of caregiver support.

Familiarize yourself with the Elizabeth Dole Foundation for caregivers.

**Special Requests from each of the Hospitals**

The Finance Committee has cut the Department budget for the four Veterans Hospitals. The impact of these cuts affects each facility in their ability to provide for specific needs of each. The following hospitals have made requests for the following :

**Salisbury** is collecting Briefs for the Brave- men’s & women’s underwear & women’s sports bras. They also need donations of coffee & filters for each unit additional events on their calendar include Fall Festival on September 18th at 1 pm Halloween Party on October 28th at 6 pm . They need regular candy and sugar free candy for this. Basket Bash will be November 14 & 15 – any unit can make and donate a basket with a value of $25.00 or in lieu of the basket make a donation for items to go into a basket. More about this at Fall Conference. (basket due to VA/Martha Corriher by Nov 8 Open House Holiday Party on December 18th at 1 pm Creative Arts Festival will be held on February 8th at 1:30 pm

**Ashville** 1- Heroes Welcome   each patient is welcomed on his first day in the hospital. a letter of welcome is hand delivered in addition  to a small gift for each one (patriotic cap, coffee mug, insulated cup,etc.) all of the gifts we have to purchase – since we started this in February, over 750 patients have been admitted to our VAMC

2-  Robotic pets      These are cats and dogs the size of small puppies and full size cats. These are given to our dementia patients that need something to pet and take care of.  These pets are amazing, they will act like they are sleeping and all of a sudden they will wake up, turn over, stretch and cry.  They come with a small carrying case and collar with their name on it ( we use the “owners” name so there is no confusion as to who the owner is)  These cost $150 each

3-   We are currently working on the Christmas bags for 1250 patients.  They will cost $30-35 each.  The CLC and hospice patients will each receive and hand picked gift instead of the bag. these gift will also have a value of $35 (some maybe a little more but none less )

4-   Arts and Humanities   of course Creative Arts (this will cost a little more this year since the budget was cut)  but also, we have veterans that have art included in local and state contests that cost money for  entrance fees, supplies, etc.   We also have local teachers that come in to teach musical instruments  so we need music and equipment.  The PRRC group has their own garden going and is also learning to sew.  So there is all sorts of needs there – sewing supplies, fabric, thread, etc, even sewing machines in good working order.

**Durham** holds a monthly pancake breakfast, they could use donations of funds or gift cards to purchase the needed supplies.

This list will be updated as additional needs are identified.

**VA&R Resources You Can Use For Additional Ideas**

1. Homeless Veterans Coalition: [www.nchv.org](http://www.nchv.org)

2. Other “How to Sheets” can be found at ALAforVeterans.org

3. Quilts of Valor: [www.qovf.org](http://www.qovf.org)

4. VA Homeless Programs: [www.va.gov/homeless/](http://www.va.gov/homeless/)

5. HUD Homeless Assistance Programs: https://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program\_offices/comm\_planning/homeless/pro grams

 6. On-Call: Handbook for Homeless Veterans and Service Providers [www.legion.org/publications/168493/homeless-veterans-handbook](http://www.legion.org/publications/168493/homeless-veterans-handbook)

7. The American Legion Family Support Network: [www.legion.org/familysupport](http://www.legion.org/familysupport)

8. American Legion Auxiliary Veterans Creative Activities Action Guide, [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org)

9. National Veterans Creative Arts Festival, [www.creativeartsfestival.va.gov](http://www.creativeartsfestival.va.gov)

10. The national VA&R Committee Facebook group, search ALA Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation (VA&R)

11. Your national VA&R committee members (see VA&R program page on the national website or Annual Supplement for contact information)

**VA & R Challenges for the 2019-2020**

All units which have paid their ‘Fair Share by the Fall Conference will be placed in a drawing for a cash prize to be awarded at that time.

The unit which has exceeded their Fair Share by the greatest percentage by the Annual Convention will also be placed in a drawing for a cash award.

Since this is our Centennial Year, the unit that has exceeded their Fair Share by $100 by Convention will also be placed in a drawing for a cash prize.