



Kitty Tales

Americanism Chairman Lynn C. Pierre

It is a new year and we are so excited to present two new opportunities to all our Auxiliaries regarding the Americanism Program.

First, how many of us pay little attention to our Patriotic Instructor? This is the person who educates members and the community about the proper salute to the Flag, the Federal Flag Code, and the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance! Flag Etiquette covers everything from proper display to caring for and retiring our Flag. Patriotic Holidays are an awesome time to recognize people in the Community for their honorable display and caring for our Flag as well as instructing children, members, and all folks how extremely important our promotion of Patriotism is. This year, there will be a National Citation given to one Patriotic Instructor in each of the 10 Program Divisions for the best Patriotic Education. Please find entry forms available at vfwauxiliary.org/resources.

A Patriotic Instructor may even consider doing a Facebook Live instruction regarding these all-important items that other Auxiliaries may even ask to utilize. What a wonderful way to get out into the community!

Secondly, we have a new and innovative “use of the #AuxiliaryPatriotism hashtag in a social media post. Here are some ideas for using the #AuxiliaryPatriotism hashtag.

- 1) Host some of your especially notable events, i.e.; Flag raising ceremony out in the Community, maybe a huge ceremony on 9/11 regarding that 20th anniversary. “Buddy Poppy” drives, or something for military caregivers.
- 2) Do not forget we need our Star Family Events, so try to embed the Art of Auxiliary Traditions in these events.
- 3) Pair up with educators to get the word out regarding the importance of Flag Etiquette and our Pledge of Allegiance.

You may post any of these events on the #AuxiliaryPatriotism hashtag on Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube.

What a fantastic way to get our information out and be sure to let us know about awesome feedback you may receive.

Please don't forget that we have some huge patriotic holidays coming up. Not only the 4th of July, but Patriot Day on September 11th, (this will be the 20th anniversary), and POW/MIA Recognition Day the third Friday in September. Please plan accordingly regarding the education of our communities. Something as simple as a huge balloon release may be a way to recognize what our Auxiliary Patriotism is all about.

Finally, do your easy Project Report within the first week of completing your event and send it to that Chairperson, then be sure to post your #AuxiliaryPatriotism hashtag event on Social Media to share and educate us all. We truly appreciate all your Veteran-focused efforts and this will be a fun, rewarding year for us all! I look forward to making even more life-long friends and seeing all our great activities!



Kitty Tales
Auxiliary Community Outreach
Chairman Bambi Johnson

Auxiliary Community Outreach is *volunteer work performed* by one member, a group of members or an Auxiliary for the benefit of their community or its institutions.

At your Auxiliary meeting, it is important that a motion is made on the floor that when members volunteer their time for a *civic* program, school program, youth program, etc., they are representing the VFW Auxiliary and should turn in their hours served to be reported for Auxiliary Community Outreach.

Your Auxiliary should approve and record in the meeting minutes that they want to volunteer to assist an outside organization prior to the event.

Ideas:

Assist Police with Child ID kits – assist EMTs hosting CPR training – assist Fire fighters with fire prevention information

Volunteer at a Senior Center – teach a basic computer class or simply read to those with vision challenges

Volunteer at an animal shelter

Have a group of members do a cleanup of a public area or adopt a section of road in your community

The Community Outreach Program is about giving our yourself and your time. The gift of caring time to others is priceless!



Kitty Tales
Buddy Poppy and National Home
Rhonda Follett – Chairman

Schedule a **Buddy Poppy Drive** – Make the decision where and when you want to hold it. Ask the VFW Comrades to get involved with you.

If you want to add another program in Membership would be a good one.

Advertise it in your local paper or with flyers around town as to when and where. Remember to wear your Auxiliary Shirts to help identify what organization you are representing.

Have a copy of the Buddy Poppy Story on the Table.

National Home we want to get more lifetime members this year.

Go out into your town's business and explain the Associate's Membership and remember to know the story of the National Home as to how it started and where we are today in helping Veterans and their families.



Kitty Tales

Chief of Staff/Mentoring for Leadership

Reba Dermody

Websites

VFW Auxiliary Department of Arizona

www.vfwauxaz.org

VFW Auxiliary National

www.vfwauxiliary.org/resources

Chief of Staff:

Please use the Healthy Auxiliary Toolkit

Please download Building on the Auxiliary Foundation

Please download and use the R U Healthy Auxiliary Checklist

Please download and use the Auxiliary Meeting Checklist

This year as a mentor practice the 3 C's.

- Consultant that is the most obvious role of a mentor
- Counselors listen to your mentees.
- Cheerleaders give constructive feedback, advise, and provide support and enthusiasm.

Mentoring for Leadership:

As a mentor, you can provide support and encouragement, instead of discouragement and criticism. Extend the hand of friendship to a new member or even a tenured member who has been inactive for a while. Use the CARE concept.

- Catch the member when they first join.
- Ask them to participate.
- Remember what it felt like to be new.
- Engage them in a program that fits them.

Everybody, Somebody, Anybody, Nobody

A team had four members called **Everybody**, **Somebody**, **Anybody**, and **Nobody**. There was an important job to be done. **Everyone** was sure that **Somebody** would do it. **Anybody** could have done it, but **Nobody** did it. **Somebody** got angry about that because it was **Everybody's** job. **Everybody** thought **Anybody** could do it.

Nobody realized that's **Everybody's** job.

Everybody wouldn't do it. It ended up that **Everybody** blamed **Somebody** when **Nobody** did what **Anybody** could have done.



Kitty Tales

Historian and Media Relations

Chairman Irene Nowacki

This year a goal will be to keep your social media updated and current. The more you post to your social media feed the more you will be in the public eye. Post about everything that you are doing. Celebrations, Meals, Awards Ceremonies, Family Freedom Festivals, Parades.

Take lots of pictures! There is no such thing as too many pictures. Have multiple people, if possible, walking around capturing all of the moments your events have to offer. Remember the 5 **W**'s – **W**ho is in the pictures, **W**hat the event was for **W**hen the event was, **W**here the event took place, and **W**hy it was done. Make sure that you advertise and share with the Department what you are doing. Remember to hashtag **#AuxiliaryPatriotism** with your posts.

Tools to Tell Your Story

Digital Media, Traditional Media, Traditional Memory Keeping, Email, Newspapers, Journals, Website, Magazines, Scrapbooks, Facebook, Flyers, YouTube, Door Hangers, Twitter, TV News, Snapchat, Radio, Instagram, TikTok, Monthly E-Newsletter, Creating Videos and then posting on Facebook, YouTube, etc. and sharing via social media.

Be proactive in helping your Auxiliary to record your history so that it is available for years to come.

Let's make some History together



Kitty Tales Hospital Melissa Martin

Honors Escort Program:

New to the Hospital Program this year is the Honors Escort Program found in some VA facilities. In the spirit of patriotism and respect for those served, the VA Honors Escort is aligned with the Department of Veteran Affairs Mission Statement:

To fulfill President Lincoln's promise "To care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan" by serving and honoring the men and women who are America's Veterans.

This program teaches the following:

- The Flag Code
- Proper Etiquette and handling of the Flag
- American Flag – The meaning of each Fold
- Steps of the Honors Escort

To learn more about this initiative and how we can educate the facilities in our Communities how to properly give our veterans their "final salute." Visit vfwauxaz.org

Volunteer Recruitment, Recognition and Support

New volunteers are needed every day across the nation in our communities. Volunteers create a friendly and caring environment for veterans and their families. Here are a few tips for recruiting and maintaining volunteers:

- Contact volunteers by email or phone for special events.
- Monthly signup sheet for regular events.
- Celebrate your volunteers with a thank you event.
- Recognize your Hospital volunteers.
- Ask someone to volunteer, they may have never been asked before.

For more information on how to become a volunteer, download the Hospital Program Guide and VAVS Participation Guide at vfwauxaz.org/resources.



Kitty Tales Legislative Chairman Connie Hargreaves

There are fantastic resources out there to educate members and the community about the VFW Advocacy for Legislation.

Print the new VFW Priority Goals for 2021 and hand them out to members and the community.

Signup members and community members for Action Corp Weekly. You don't have to be a member to signup for Acton Corp Weekly.

Attach stickers to water bottles and pamphlets "Vote with a Veteran in Mind"

Provide members and community with information about how to find their representatives/legislators from the local to national to national level.

Check for local Forums, Fundraisers, events where you can meet and greet with legislators and upcoming candidates. Yes, we will be heading into an election year in 2022 and it will be another interesting voting year.

Check out all the resources on vfwauxaz.org, information is abundant.

Put out voter registration forms at Flag raisings.

It is Woman's Veteran Month, please include information from Action Corps Weekly in regards to some Bills that are being considered concerning Woman's Health or check out Newsletter Article vfwauxaz.org for August.

Add Legislative and Americanism materials for students. Word search, coloring books, SOS booklet, Constitution booklets. Remember September 17th is Constitution Day and it is a great way to inform students on how a bill becomes law.



Kitty Tales

Membership

Jeanne Hampton

Retention- We have been asked this year to focus on retention- retaining our membership, bringing them back actively to the Auxiliary. Contact them! Send them a card, a text, make a phone call, an email, put it on Social Media- ask each member to contact just one other member to reignite our passion for service to Veterans Programs.

Early Bird Incentives- Some suggestions for Early Bird Incentives have been:

- *Discount the annual Membership dues for your Auxiliary
- *Offer drawings- a Drawing for Annual Members who pay their dues early to receive a Life Membership to the VFW Auxiliary.
- *Don't forget your Life Members should be included in Early Bird Incentives, too. If they pay their CAR, National Home Health & Happiness, and Aux Cancer Grant- hold a drawing for a Life Membership to the VFW National Home OR a Gift Card to a local establishment. Early Bird Incentives DO Work!

Puzzle Pieces- National VFW Auxiliary President Jean Hamil and National Membership Ambassador Debbie Tilley- both have incorporated a Puzzle Piece theme for Membership- They compare Auxiliary members to the puzzle pieces- the puzzle being strongest at its center and as we retain members our Auxiliary grows stronger. By adding new members, the puzzle expands in new directions.

Recruiter Awards- Each of the District Presidents have been given the graphic of this year's Department of Arizona Membership Theme- Recruit 5 new members and receive President Janae's pin. Recruit 10 new members and receive the 2021-2022 recruiter pin and rocker- as is represented on the graphic.



Kitty Tales Scholarships Janice Robertson

This year's theme for **Voice of Democracy**, open to students in grades 9, 10, 11, and 12 is, "**America: Where do we go from here?**" it is a recorded, oral essay, 3 to 5 minutes in length.

The theme for **Patriot's Pen**- a written 300-to-400-word essay, for students in grades 6, 7, and 8, "**How can I be a Good American?**". Both Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen entries are due to the local VFW by October 31, 2021. We as an Auxiliary assist the VFW with these 2 scholarships.

Let us not forget that we also have the

- **Young Creative Patriotic Arts Contest**, open to grades 9, 10, 11, and 12 due March 31, 2022.
- **VFW Auxiliary National Continuing Educational Grant** open all VFW Auxiliary members, their spouse, son, or daughter due in February of 2022
- **Dept. of Arizona VFW Auxiliary Educational Grant** open to any Arizona Auxiliary member due to me by April 1st, 2022
- **Dept. of Arizona VFW Auxiliary Merit Scholarship** open to High School Seniors graduating in 2022- son, daughter, sister, brother, grandson, granddaughter of an Arizona VFW or VFW Auxiliary member. also due to me by April 1st of 2022.

Links to many youth organizations as well as Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen criteria and application information are on the website vfwauxaz.org under Programs then Scholarships.

Let us make this the PurrFect year as we care for our veterans and their family members and show our Patriotism in everything we do.



Kitty Tales

Veterans and Family Support Program

Chairman PDP Stephanie Morris

steff.morris@gmail.com

520-452-0741

Veteran Homelessness

In the National Program Book National Ambassador Nelda Clifton writes:

“In the article “Homeless Veterans in America” published on June 12, 2020 in The Military Wallet, a personal finance and benefits website for military, veterans, and their families, writer Ryan Guina states there are more than 630,000 homeless individuals in America, and more than 67,000 are veterans. Veterans comprise 10.6% of the homeless population. That is an average of one in every 10 homeless individuals being veterans.

Studies show the veteran population is two times more likely to become chronically homeless than any other American group. Contributing factors include long periods of unemployment, foreclosure, mental illness and poverty. Seventy-six percent (76%) of homeless veterans experience alcohol, drug, or mental illness struggles and 30% of veterans ages 18-24 are unemployed.

Of homeless veterans:

- *89% received an honorable discharge*
- *67% served three or more years in the military*
- *47% are Vietnam veterans*
- *15% served before Vietnam*
- *5.5% are Iraq and Afghanistan veterans*

This means nine out of 10 homeless veterans received an honorable discharge and two out of three served at least three years.”

The statistics are eye-opening. **15% served before Vietnam and 47% are Vietnam veterans.** These two numbers shocked me. That means 62% of homeless veterans are senior citizens.

What can you do this year?

- Hold or work at Standdowns in your area. I know a lot of you held or worked standdowns this past year, please continue to work these events. Pinetop and Tucson will be having standdowns in August

and there will be a Resource Fair in Sierra Vista in August. To see upcoming standdowns go to <https://www.va.gov/homeless/events.asp> and scroll down to events, about halfway down.

- Check with your local VA and see if they need items for their homeless program.
- Check in your local area and see if there are organizations helping homeless veterans that you can donate money, needed items, and/or your time.
- For more information go to: <https://www.va.gov/homeless>



Kitty Tales
Youth Activities
Chairman Brenda Kinghorn

Set out a big box for donated school supplies at the Post, your work, and add some to a backpack and hand them out at Family Freedom Festival.

Adopt a classroom, brand new teacher, ask them what they might need to help them supply their room. ie: hand sanitizer, Kleenex, copy paper, etc. Make sure you asked them if you can take a picture of them with you. Project report - Media, and Youth

Hand out "Pledge of Alliance" bookmarkers to the classrooms. Project report - Americanism and Youth

Print out the application and rules for "Get Excited for the Red, White, and Blue: Take them to the schools in your area and if possible, hand them to the music teachers, also maybe the churches that have choirs.

Deadline to local Auxiliary March 31st, 2022.