

Auxiliary Outreach Promotion #1 | July 2023
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My name is Sandra “Sandy” Pinsonault and I am the 2023-2024 National Ambassador for Auxiliary Outreach.

I joined the VFW Auxiliary in 2009 under the eligibility of my husband Danny. Danny served in the U.S Army Reserves from 1976 to 2006. His career began at the beginning of our relationship. Danny went off to bootcamp three months after we started dating and after he returned our friendship continued. We were married in 1982 and as his career grew within the ranks of the Army, my involvement took off. I became the Family Readiness Coordinator and along with our two children, became very active on drill weekends. We served breakfasts, helped with lunches, organized many family activities and my children served as elves for Santa at the holiday parties. Danny and his unit were deployed to Kuwait during Operation Iraqi Freedom, where they built the bases for incoming soldiers, tarmacs for the planes and helicopters and roads to the other base camps.

I have served as Auxiliary Secretary, Junior Vice-President, Senior Vice-President and President. At the District level, I served as President and currently as a Trustee. On the Department level I have previously worked my way through the ranks beginning at Guard. I served as Department President during 2020-2021. The COVID year! When our Department Junior Vice-President seat became empty, with no one wanting to fill it, I immediately asked for endorsement so that I could become the President that I know I can be and fulfilling the obligation for my Department without the interruptions of COVID. At our Department Convention this past weekend, I was sworn in as Senior Vice-President.

Giving back to the Army Reserves unit and serving our veterans is a great honor and privilege that I enjoy each and every day. Danny passed away in April 2023 from complications of Glioblastoma brain cancer. His doctors believe he contracted this from the burn pits in Kuwait and the other countries Danny and his unit served during his 30-year career. I made a promise to Danny to continue our fight against the burn pits to ensure that all veterans receive the benefits they are entitled to and to continue my involvement with the VFW Auxiliary. My lifetime commitment will be to continue to serve all our veterans in honor of Danny.

Auxiliary Outreach – when your Auxiliary helps another organization have a successful event. It is giving of your time on the day of the event. You are not the organizing entity, and no expenses are given in order to make the event successful.

As Webster’s Dictionary says “Partner”: *one associated with another especially in action*

Auxiliary Outreach is a *PARTNERSHIP* where one or more of your auxiliary members help another organization or group make their project/event successful. Like us, many organizations are short on volunteers. Form a bond with the other organization and help whenever possible.

To have an outstanding Auxiliary Outreach Program, you must reach out into your community and find local groups and organizations in need of assistance. Ask what your Auxiliary can do to help them. Take the idea to your next Auxiliary meeting and ask to have it approved. Once approved, form the partnership and report back to your Auxiliary with the details.

Where do you find these partnership opportunities?

Most Auxiliary members belong to other organizations and may need some extra hands. Look at your local newspaper for upcoming events, check your local community bulletin boards, town/city websites calendar of events and friends.

Suggestions for VFW Auxiliary Outreach

Work with local police, fire and EMT on their activities; local parks and recreation clearing trails, planting trees and beautifying parks; serve food at the local soup kitchen, drive for Meals on Wheels or help prepare the food, assist with local fundraising walks as a volunteer; help your local library with a book fair; assist local youth groups or senior centers, help your town or city with elections, but remain non-partisan and remember that partnerships can be a single day event or ongoing events throughout the year.

Benefits of the Auxiliary Outreach Program

You will be helping others, learning new skills, meeting new people, developing a sense of purpose and will have personal growth.

Keys to making your Auxiliary Outreach Program successful

Find organizations that need your help, vote on the activity at your meeting, one or more members must participate, wear your VFW Auxiliary attire (name badge, hat, shirt, jacket, etc.), and remember to report the details of the event.

Events that are held at your Post Home are allowed

If your VFW Post or Auxiliary did not plan the activity, nor does it benefit us, it can be held at the Post Home. The organization is only using the facility to hold their event and has completed all of the preliminary planning on their own and we are there only as volunteers to help make their event successful.