

Veterans & Family Support: How to Participate

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2021-2022 National Veterans & Family Support Ambassador

I hope your Auxiliary has hit the ground running on assisting our veterans and their families this Program Year. Please share your Auxiliary's projects with me! I would like to SWAP many ideas in my blogs this year.

Veterans & Family Support is the heart of what this organization is all about. There are many ways to help groups within this Program.

Homeless Veterans – Assist current homeless veterans initiatives in your area.

- Local homeless veteran housing/assistance programs
- Faith-based programs
- Local community services
- Other opportunities in your area

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Veteran and Family Caregivers – Caregivers are often unsung heroes. They care for the ones who served, care for the ones who were left at home or loved our veterans after they returned. National Family Caregivers Month is observed each November. Think of ways to support and recognize these individuals this November.

- Be a listening ear. Visit with them in-person, by phone or electronically.
- Bring or have delivered a meal or a gift card to a local eatery.
- Mail a thinking of you card or flowers.
- Personal care gift cards for a spa day.

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Veterans and Military Support

- Get the word out about the VFW Service Officers.
- Know the eligibility of the Unmet Needs program to refer veterans and families that qualify.
- Adopt a Unit in your area.
- Support Sport Clips that generously donates to the Help A Hero Scholarship.
 - Ex: Your Auxiliary could purchase a gift card for VFW members, have a drawing for the gift card or purchase gift cards to be given to veterans centers in your area.
- Provide feminine hygiene products to a homeless shelter or to give to women veterans.
- Know the number to the Veterans Crisis Line: 800-273-8255, Press 1.

•Know the five signs:

1. Personality change
2. Agitation
3. Withdrawal
4. Poor self-care
5. Hopelessness

SWAP: Our Auxiliaries are already working hard assisting veterans!

VFW Auxiliary 5675 in Odessa, Missouri, hosted its 10th Annual Poker run on May 8, 2021, to support the [Veterans Community Project](#) in Kansas City, Missouri. The Auxiliary's goal is to never let any veteran fall through the cracks.

The day started with rain showers, but when it came time for the event to begin, the sun came out and riders on 50 bikes and 19 riders on a bus were able to enjoy clear blue skies.

Auxiliary members and riders both enjoyed a roasted whole hog dinner and auction following the 110-mile round-trip ride. Items for the auction were donated by members as well as businesses and individuals from the community.

The event, now in its 10th year, typically generates \$10,000 in donations each year. This year (2021) an amazing total of \$20,000 was given to the Veterans Community Project!

This is just one example of how you can assist veterans in your area.