

VETERANS AND FAMILY SUPPORT BULLETIN 2

Dear Members of the VFW Department of Washington Auxiliary,

Happy Holidays! We're currently busy assisting veterans and their families, especially as they recover from the government shutdown. If you've helped out, please send photos and details of your efforts so we can share them and inspire others.

This year, our National Ambassador Annie encourages us to prioritize VFW Veterans Assistance Programs like the Help-A-Hero Scholarship, working with Veteran Service Officers (VSOs), promoting mental health awareness, and supporting employment for veterans and their spouses. Numerous resources are available; you just need to know how to find them. Each auxiliary should have received a packet from me with Service Officer details, a list of grants, additional resources, and the School of Instruction presentation. If not, please verify your contact info in the Department Roster.

The Help A Hero Scholarship accepts applications from January 1 to April 30 for the fall semester, with awards given in August. For eligibility and details, visit <https://www.vfw.org/assistance/student-veterans-support>.

The VSO program now includes Post Benefit Advisors (PBA) alongside VSOs. PBAs are local VFW ambassadors who connect veterans and families with resources, offer guidance on benefits, and help them contact accredited representatives for federal benefits. PBAs must be knowledgeable about local resources and the VA claims process. I have attached a sheet explaining the difference between a VSO and a PBA.

The VFW Unmet needs program has been replaced by Financial Assistance for Service Members. This program offers financial assistance of up to \$2,500 for daily necessities in the form of a grant, not a loan. The VFW pays the creditors directly. You can find out more information by following this link <https://www.vfw.org/assistance/financial-grants>. A copy of this change went out to every auxiliary president.

In recent months, the auxiliaries have been diligently promoting Suicide Awareness. VFW Auxiliary #1474 created suicide awareness pins, discussed suicide awareness at their September patriotic program, and sponsored a member's 44-mile walk in September, which raised \$200 for the Spokane VA's Suicide Awareness program. Several auxiliaries participated in standdowns, namely Auxiliary #1045, #1474, #239, #2669, #3067, #4992, and #10082. VFW Auxiliary #10882 and #1045 assembled purses with various essential items for female veterans. Although there may be other participants, these are the only ones that reported back to me. Furthermore, multiple auxiliaries organized food drives or provided meals for families on Veterans Day and Thanksgiving, including Auxiliary #91, #239, #318, #1435, #1474, #2669, #4760, #4992, #5924. We commend all participants for their dedicated efforts.

The Mid-Winter Conference is approaching. We're expecting guest speakers, including one on Suicide Awareness and a VSO to discuss the VFW VSO Program. Limited coins remain for VMS/NVS support. Thank you to VFW Posts #1435, #2669, #4760, #7392 and auxiliaries #1045, #1435, #2669, #3386, #7392, #10882, plus VFW Auxiliary #9972 of Sierra Vista, AZ for backing the **COIN CHALLENGE**. Your post or auxiliary are entered into the drawing to receive five free coins. The drawing will be held at Mid-Winter.

The Zodiac Bottles Raffle tickets and quilt raffle tickets will be available at the Veterans and Family Support booth at Mid-Winter. Please stop by to support **YOUR DEPARTMENT PRESIDENT'S SPECIAL PROJECT. Heroes Homestead.**

We're planning some Mental Health giveaways at Mid-Winter and are eager to see you there. We're also excited to hear how you're supporting Veterans and their families. Wishing you safe travels.

"Rising Tide Lifts All Veterans to Success" and you and your auxiliary help "Keep the Home Fires Burning"

Dedicated to Serving,

Rose Green

VFW Department of Washington Auxiliary Veterans and Family Support Chairman