

American Legion Auxiliary Department of California Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation

February 2023

Bulletin #6

Happy Valentine's Day!

It was great to see many of you the DEC Depot last month. It is also good to finally be able to put a fact to a name. To those who were unable to go, I hope to see/meet you at the June Convention in Visalia.

I also would like to thank those of you who took the time to do the Mid-Year Reports for your units and districts. I see that the first question, "How has your Unit participated in our National President's Special Project 'National Veterans Creative Arts Festival Companions'?", was not completely understood. National President Vickie Koutz's project is to assist every companion who is medically needed by a National Veterans Creative Arts Festival veteran. Donations will help to pay for the companion's travel with the veteran, pay for a meal plan, and pay for a separate hotel room (depending on relationship with the veteran). If you are interested in donating to this Special Project, please send your donation to:

ALA National Headquarters
Accounts Receivable
3450 Founders Road
Indianapolis, IN 46268

The memo line should read: 2022-2023 National President Special Project.

There are many vacant positions at the various VAMCs and CALVet Homes. In fact, there is almost a 50% vacancy rate. District and Unit Presidents and all VA&R Chairmen and committees are responsible for helping to recruit and retain volunteers. Please help us fill the vacancies with unit members who may be or are interested in a worthwhile and rewarding volunteer position. You can also contact me at 661-209-4365 or var@calegionaux.org; or contact a Representative or Deputy from a VA Medical Center near you.

News Flash: Starting Jan. 17, Veterans in acute suicidal crisis will be able to go to any VA or non-VA health care facility for emergency health care at no cost – including inpatient or crisis residential care for up to 30 days and outpatient care for up to 90 days. Veterans do not need to be enrolled in the VA system to use this benefit.

Reminder: Keep tracking of the work you do for veterans by filling out the *tracking worksheets*. It will help you fill out the End-of-Year **Impact Report**.

Happy Valentine's Day to YOU!

**"God Bless This Endeavor. God Speed the Train. God Speed the Peace."
--Rev. Clarence H. Parlous of St. Mark's Episcopal Church regarding
the Friendship Train of 1947**

Yours in Service,

Linda Hayes, VA&R Chairman
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Veterans Valentine's Week February 12 through 18



February is a fun and exciting month to share with our veterans. The simplest things mean so much and can go a long way for our Veterans. For example, celebrating Valentine's Day with our Veterans. In preparing for Valentine's Day, here is a few ideas for "Valentine's Day in a box for Veterans" this will help make the day special for veterans in your community.

1. Hit the stores, looking for cardboard boxes you can decorate with a Valentine's Day message and then fill with Valentine's Day surprises.
2. Choose a location to spread the love, such as your local VA Medical Center (VAMC) or Veteran Homes. You may want to check with the volunteer services to find out how many veterans you should plan to create valentine boxes for.
3. Consider asking your church, coworkers, or American Legion Family for donations to include in the boxes (socks, books to read, magazines, etc.) Provide them with a list of things you would like to receive. For ideas, ask the volunteer coordinator from the VAMC.
4. A fun way to involve your community is to ask elementary classroom teachers to participate by giving their students the opportunity to make Valentine Day cards for veterans.
 - Give the teacher an idea of how many you will need and ask that the children sign them with their name and grade level.
 - When you assemble the boxes, make sure each box contains at least one valentine from a child.
5. Ideas of items to include:
 - Different types of prepackaged snacks (When selecting snacks, consider that some veterans may have food allergies or may not be able to eat sugary and salty treats. The volunteer coordinator may be able to let you know about such restrictions among the veterans).
 - Donated items.
 - Valentine's Day cards/messages from elementary school students.
6. Arrange a time to deliver the boxes on or before Valentine's Day.