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| --- | --- | --- |
| Chairman | Member | Member |
| Carol Burke | Mary Rogers | Ann Marie Stevens |
| 1304 Collegewood | 13194 M- 151 | 4316 Morawa Trl |
| Ypsilanti MI 48197 | Erie MI 48133 | Hale MI 48739 |
| ck323@msn.com | Jkrogers802yahoo | annmariestevens1964@gmail.com |
| 734 546 2604 | 419 392 8412 | 248 259 7222 |

National Committee Contact Information: [communityservice@ALAforVeterans.org](mailto:communityservice@ALAforVeterans.org)

**What is this program, and why do we have it?**

The purpose of the Community Service Program is to promote the American Legion Auxiliary’s commitment to making our communities better places to live by supporting local service projects. A major outreach program of the Auxiliary since 1926, Community Service also demonstrates our longstanding commitment to supporting the work of American Legion posts and other organizations in aiding with blood drives, first aid and CPR training, child safety programs, support for women in shelters, and disaster and emergency preparedness programs.

The American Legion Auxiliary is well-positioned, due to our history and reputation, to mobilize our communities in support of veterans, servicemembers and their families. Units and departments should closely examine the needs of their communities and organize programs either of their own initiative or in cooperation with the American Legion or other organizations to cultivate a patriotic community. Cultivating patriotism in the community involves acknowledging our country’s military history, saying “thank you” to veterans and servicemembers and supporting them, with practical and tangible services.

**Why do we track hours and money?**

Every hour, every dollar that Auxiliary members invest, adds up. It not only gives each member a sense of pride in belonging to the organization, but it allows us to demonstrate our effectiveness to the world. Each small sum of numbers are added to the collective numbers, and are known as Impact Numbers.

Impact Numbers proclaim our importance and help make membership in the ALA meaningful. These numbers are also reported to The American Legion, which includes them in its annual report to Congress. **If you aren’t sure of your actual numbers, giving an estimate is better than not reporting at all.**

**Why do we Volunteer?**

Auxiliary members are naturally volunteers; we volunteer to make a difference in the lives of others. And yes, one person can make a difference. You are making a difference and if you doubt that, stop for a moment, and reflect on the efforts of Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr, George Washington and how they made a difference. Interestingly our motivation to make a difference, has been defined by Valerie Forgeard in Brillantio (April 6, 2022):

The true definition of “making a difference” is that which makes the soul feel alive and the inner light shines brightest. The reason we want to “make a difference” is that when we do, we become happier – and often the people around us are happier, too.

So simply put, one reason we volunteer is for the personal benefit that we receive, happiness.

**Community Service Calendar**

**Opportunities to Serve**

***September 11,2023 - Designated Day of Service***

The American Legion Family is dedicated to honoring the victims of the September 11 attacks. Members are encouraged to plan annual patriotic or memorial events in the community on that date, so that the memories of the victims do not fade. For your ease, The American Legion offers a comprehensive guide to planning an “A Day to Remember” event to commemorate September 11, 2001, on its website.[*https://www.legion.org/publications/252926/nine-eleven-911-2021*](https://www.legion.org/publications/252926/nine-eleven-911-2021)This guide includes a sample timeline and schedule, talking points and remarks, ways to get students and groups involved, and public relations sample. To get involved in the 9/11 Day of Service, consider making a pledge to serve others on or around 9/11. You can participate in a volunteer activity or project of which are already a part and encourage others to join you. ALA encourages its members to share their 9/11 day of service pledge on social media sites.

***October 28, 2023- Make a Difference Day***

This year let’s celebrate **Making a Difference** for the entire year Join the Facebook Group: *Michigan ALA Makes a Difference*. (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/79896247814342>) and share how both you are individually and as a Unit are making a difference in your community. Your service to others will not only make them happy, but it will also bring you happiness as well

***November 18, 2023- Family Volunteer Day***

For many volunteers, the family giving season begins the Saturday before Thanksgiving, when the United Way and others across the U.S. celebrate National Family Volunteer Day. Created in 1992, National Family Volunteer Day invites families to use the day to introduce children to volunteering and teach them valuable lessons about compassion and caring.

**January 15,2024 -Martin Luther King Jr Day of Service**

In 1994 Congress passed the King Holiday and Service Act, designating Martin Luther King, Jr., Day (observed on the third Monday of January) as a National Day of Volunteer Service. Instead of a day off from work or school, Congress asked Americans of all backgrounds and ages to celebrate Dr. King's legacy by turning community concern into citizen action.

The American Legion Auxiliary promotes patriotic community service activities and the building of community partnerships. Our service on this day elevates our presence in the community while focusing on the needs of our national heroes.

**February 16, 2024- National Caregivers Day**

There are many ways to celebrate National Caregivers Day. The most important part of celebrating this date is showing appreciation and thanks to the caregivers you know. You can give gifts and words of gratitude to professional care providers, as well as family caregivers who offer ongoing support.

**April 21-27, 2024-National Volunteer Week**

National Volunteer Week was established in 1974 by the United States government. Today, the holiday is organized by Points of Light, the world’s largest organization dedicated to volunteer service. Community-based organizations across the country celebrate National Volunteer Week in recognition of “the power that volunteers must tackle society’s greatest challenges.

National Volunteer Week formalized the recognition of volunteers in our communities. Organizations of all scopes and sizes should take the time to thank our neighbors, strangers, friends, and family who selflessly give their time to help others.

***May-National Military Caregiver Month***

The month of May is used to honor more than five million military caregivers in the United States. It is important that we pay tribute to those who care for the veterans of our country.

Generally, caregivers are relatives of the wounded veteran. However, sometimes friends, neighbors, and co-workers take on the responsibility as well, this care and assistance provided promotes faster recovery.

This observance raises awareness for both wounded veterans and those who care for them.

**May 10, 2024- Military Spouse Appreciation Day,**

This appreciation day is traditionally set for the Friday before Mother’s Day. This is a day to honor military spouses and recognize the important role military families play in keeping our Armed Forces strong and our country safe.

**May 18, 2024- Blue Star Salute Day**

It is only natural that The American Legion family should lead the way in organizing an event for the entire community to say “thank you” to a new generation of American veterans and their families.

With history tracing back to the World Wars, a Blue Star Service Banner signifies that a loved one is serving in the Armed Forces. Each blue star represents one family member serving. Banners are available with up to five stars. If the servicemember is killed or dies while deployed, a smaller golden star is placed over the blue star. Blue Star Banners can be purchased through Emblem Sales. Blue Star Banners can be presented to family members with deployed loved ones year-round without ceremony, or you can hold a Blue Star Salute.

The American Legion offers a comprehensive guide to planning a Blue Star Salute event as an Armed Forces Day Celebration @ *https://www.legion.org/sitesearch?s=blue+star+salute*. The guide includes a sample timeline and schedule, talking points and remarks, as well as public relations samples.

Certificates for servicemembers and family members also can be downloaded from the event planning page of The American Legion’s website. Many of these certificate templates recognize the efforts of the entire Legion Family.

Annual Reports and Narratives

**UNIT CHAIRMAN** sent your narratives and Community Service Unit Report Form to your District Chairman by MARCH 30,2023

**DISTRICT CHAIRMAN** send the Community Service District Report Form and up to 5 narratives (one/ award) with a **completed Green Sheet for each,** toDepartment Chairman by APRIL 15, 2023. District Chairman are encouraged to include a copy of all Unit narratives.

Department Chairman

Carol Burke

1304 Collegewood St

Ypsilanti MI 48197

ck323@msn.com

734 546 2604

**DEPARTMENT OF MICHIGAN COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARDS**

1. The Wilber M. Brucker Cup: to the Unit with the best all round report.
2. The Lida Murphy Cup: for the greatest number of hours reported on community service programs. Include number of hours for each event. \*\***Without number of hours the narrative will be disqualified for the Lida Murphy award.** *Named for Past Department President Lida Murphy, Northville Unit 14 1937-1938*
3. The Earl L. Stewart Cup: to the Unit with less than 50 members for the most outstanding Community Service report.
4. The Betty Cline Community Service Citation: to a Unit with over 200 members for a single program that has benefited or assisted their community during the year. *Named for Past Department President Betty Cline, Port Huron Unit 8 -1980-1981*
5. The Patricia Jewell Award: For the Units under 200 members. For the most outstanding single program that has benefitted the community.

*Named for Past Department President Patricia Jewel*

1. The Most Creative Community Service Project: The narrative may be green sheeted for any of the above Department Awards or separate(additional) award submission. The wining unit will receive a $50 gift card for Flag and Emblem Sales

NATIONAL COMMUNITY SERVICE RECOGNITIONS

U**nit Award: Most Outstanding Unit Community Service Program** (one per division): All unit entries must be subbmitted by the District Community Service Chairman with a completed green sheet. Entries must be received by Department Chairman Carol Burke by April 15,2024.

**Unit Award: Best Promotion of American Legion Family Day** : Entries must be received by Department Chairman Carol Burke by **May15,2024.** The event can occur on or before May 1, 2024. More than one unit entry per district is permitted. Department Chairman

Carol Burke

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