

“BEE OF SERVICE TO YOUR COMMUNITY”



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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 ALA 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 ALA is well-positioned, due to our history and reputation, to mobilize our communities in support of Veterans, service members 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 service members and supporting them, with practical and tangible services. The ALA is "Making our communities better places in which to live is something Auxiliary members strive for each day across this country."

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. Either big or small sum of numbers are added to the collective numbers and are known as Impact Numbers. Impact numbers proclaim 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 *Brilliantio* (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, 2026 - Designated Day of Service

The American Legion Family is dedicated to honoring the victims of the September 11th attacks. Members are encouraged to plan annual patriotic or memorial events in the community on that Day of Service and 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 of and encourage others to join you. ALA encourages its members to share their 9/11 day of service pledge on social media sites. This year marks the 25th anniversary of the 2001 terrorist attacks.

October 24, 2026- Make a Difference Day

National Make a Difference Day is a day to recognize the importance of volunteering and making a positive impact on communities. It encourages people to participate in acts of kindness, community service projects and volunteering work. Some examples of projects that have been done in the past include painting a bandshell and planting vegetation at a school. Some say it builds camaraderie, unites communities, extends the importance of volunteerism and creates lasting, positive changes in the world.

November 21, 2026- 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 20, 2027 -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. ALA 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 19, 2027- 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 18-24, 2027-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.

SUGGESTIONS TO HELP UNITS PARTICIPATE IN COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECT

- Blankets for the homeless
- Christmas gifts for hospitalized children
- Poppies on graves
- Wreaths Across America
- Clean Veterans headstones
- Donations to Ronald McDonald House, St. Jude's and other organizations
- Donate to food banks
- Donate or participate in Relay for Life
- Gift basket for the first baby born on Veteran's Day
- Participating in parades
- Sponsor blood drives
- Do breakfast for Veterans, seniors, the community and first responder's
- Drive neighbors, friends and seniors to appointments
- Participate in Community Beautification Projects by picking up trash, cutting grass and planting trees and flowers
- Help at senior centers or nursing facilities doing crafts or giving gifts
- Donate and/or participate in Special Olympics
- Adopt a family for Christmas
- Contribute to youth organization
- Donate money so that the homeless can wash their clothes
- Have a day to recognize the police, firefighters and EMT.

- Participate in trunk or treat in your communities

ANNUAL REPORTS AND NARRATIVES

UNIT CHAIR: send your narratives and Community Service Unit Report Form to your District Chairman by APRIL 30, 2027.

DISTRICT CHAIR: send the Community Service District Report Form and up to 5 narratives (one/ award) with a completed Green Sheet for each, to Department Chair by MAY 15, 2027. District Chairs are encouraged to include a copy of all Unit narratives.

DEPARTMENT OF MICHIGAN COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARDS

1. Wilber M. Brucker Cup: to the Unit with the best all-around report.
2. Lida Murphy Cup (Named for Past Department President Lida Murphy, Northville Unit 14 1937-1938): 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.**
3. Earl L. Stewart Cup: to the Unit with less than 50 members for the most outstanding Community Service report.
4. Betty Cline Community Service Citation (Named for Past Department President Betty Cline, Port Huron Unit 8 -1980-1981): to the Unit with over 200 members for a single program that has benefited or assisted their community during the year.
5. Patricia Jewell Award (Named for Past Department President Patricia Jewel): For Units under 200 members for the most outstanding single program that has benefited the community.
6. Most Creative Community Service Project: The narrative may be green sheeted for any of the above Department Awards or separate(additional) award submission. The winning unit will receive a \$50 gift card for Flag and Emblem Sales.

NATIONAL COMMUNITY SERVICE RECOGNITION'S

Unit Award: Most Outstanding Unit Community Service Program (one per division). All Unit entries must be submitted by the District Community Service Chair with a completed green sheet. Entries must be received by Department Chair Debbie Weatherbee by May 15, 2027.