

VETERANS AND FAMILY SUPPORT (V&FS)



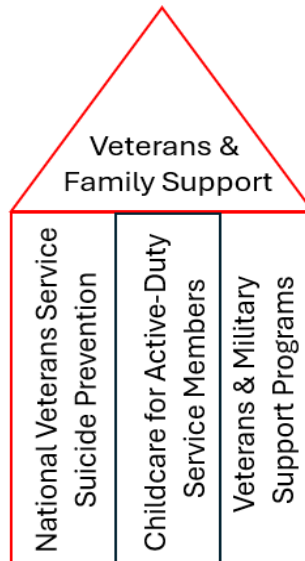
Missi Palmore
7165 Lazy Meadow Lane
Frisco, TX 75033
469-337-0463
txvfwauxgirl@yahoo.com

This year, "*From Our Roots to Our Branches, Extending Service to Our Veterans*", will be our theme as we advance to another year of service to our Veterans, service members, and their families. Veterans & Family Support **IS THE CORE** of everything that our organization stands for and was built upon. Almost anything and everything that our membership does can fall under this Program.

We were all called to join this great organization for many reasons and with many faces of great service members in our minds & memories. Those Veterans have sacrificed so very much for us and many continue to do so as we all go through our daily lives. As we look ahead for this year's planning of our program, think about how you can show THEM how much you are **Thankful & Grateful for their Sacrifice** yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

The 2024-2025 Veterans and Family Support (V&FS) program is focused on three main points, think of it kind of like the V&FS house you built for the year!

“Thankful & Grateful for the Sacrifice”
“From Our Roots to Our Branches, Extending Service to Our Veterans”



Let's look at the bones of this fabulous program house we are building:

- **National Veterans Service Suicide Prevention**

Many of our Veterans returning home do so with heavy hearts and minds. It's critical that we, as an organization, take a stand against the stigma of mental health. Be mindful of the characteristics associated with thoughts of suicide and be watchful of our Veterans mental health. *ONE VETERAN lost to suicide, is one Veteran too many!*

I don't care how squared away, polished, organized, happy, on top of their "life" a person appears you do NOT know what any moment in their life looks like, feels like, or how close they are to breaking. More than 16 Veterans commit suicide each day, and both the VFW and VFW Auxiliary are committed to helping change the conversation and the stigma surrounding mental health in the United States.

As Auxiliary members and leaders within our organization, we must keep vigilant at this forefront and fight for this cause. Our Veterans fought for so much and are so worthy and should not feel that they are not—tomorrow needs them!

Ideas, conversation starters, or meeting ideas:

- Spotlight ***Veterans Crisis Line***: Connects Veterans with qualified Department of Veterans Affairs responders through tollfree hotline, online chat, or text.
 - **1-800-myVA411** to access all VA departments
 - Call **988** and Press 1
 - Chat online via veteranscrisisline.net
 - Text via **838255**
 - Deaf and hearing-impaired options available

- Spotlight any or all of the following resources to support your community:
 - vfw.org/assistance/mental-wellness
 - changedirection.org
 - giveanhour.org
 - patientslikeme.com/join/vfw
 - onemind.org
 - elizabethdolefoundation.org
 - healvets.org
 - veteransvoices.org
- Spotlight Women Veterans
 - 855-829-6636 |855-VA-WOMEN
 - www.womenshealth.va.gov/WOMENHEALTH/index.asp
- June is PTSD Awareness Month | September is Suicide Prevention Awareness Month—sponsor an activity, fundraiser, connection activity.
- Connect with your Post Service Officer on any Mental Health discussions with the Auxiliary and/or Post.
- Donate craft kits (healvets.org) or work with homeless shelters to supply vets with kits they could use.
- Inspire others—create Buddy Check In’s and create atmospheres for everyone
- Post resource details in the Post, social media, out in the community, etc.
- Connect/Reach out to those that have become suddenly distant and know the 5 signs of emotional suffering:
 - Personality Change, Agitation, Withdrawal, Poor Self Care, Hopelessness

○ **Childcare for Active-Duty Service Members**

As we diligently work toward our mission of serving Veterans, we often overlook those the Veterans support themselves—their children. A targeted focus this year for V&FS is giving back to these families. Providing ways to offer peace and stability for those to give those options to us every day.

Ideas, conversation starters, or meeting ideas:

- Posted babysitter list that includes hours available, age ranges, etc.
- Host a Diaper/Formula drive for a family or families in need.
 - Could have a fun “race day” Indy 500 watch party, donate formula/diapers entry gets prize or canteen token.
- Stock a “stork closet” of new and gently used items for families in need.
- Support National Madam Presidents special project, Operation Bottom Cover.
- Parent Night Out event—partnering with your youth organizations.

- After-school Shuttle service? Sometimes there is just 1 car, and you could help simply with a pickup.
 - Don't forget your Single Parent Service members!
- **Veterans and Military Support Programs**

It is our duty to ensure that our Veterans and their family members are aware of the aid available to them in times of need, such as financial assistance with mortgage/rent payments, vehicle expenses, utilities, food, or clothing. Now more than ever, we need to guide Veterans and their family members in efforts to obtain their VA benefits by pairing them with VFW Accredited service officers. With that, as Auxiliary members, it is important that we educate ourselves about Veterans benefits as well.

As members and leaders within our organization, we should know these programs are driven via donations. Seek ways to fuel donations to LIFT our Veterans and their families when they are in need or reward the AMAZING HERO with a scholarship! For donations there are two options:

- Online:
 - vfw.org/ways-to-help
 - Select the **applicable program** and follow the prompts.
- Mail: VFW National Headquarters
 Attn: **"XXX applicable program"**
 406 W 34th Street, 11th Floor
 Kansas City, MO 64111

Ideas, conversation starters, meeting ideas:

- **Spread the word about NVS (National Veterans Service)**
 - Each year, our nationwide network of VFW Accredited Service Officers assist hundreds of thousands of Veterans nationwide. From assisting Veterans in filing for disability compensation to requesting hearings before the VA Board of Appeals, these skilled professionals garner billions of dollars in compensation benefits for Veterans annually.
 - Have your Post Service Officer come speak to during Auxiliary meeting regarding VA benefits. Or if they visit the community at an event, listen to what they are being asked—you could hear the same from spouses or family members.
- **MAP (Military Assistance Program)**
 - Your donations help provide financial assistance and lift the morale for the troops and families of those service members leaving or coming home. For guidelines to apply for funds contact 816-756-3390.
 - What have you done to familiarize your Auxiliary with the program and spread the information with your community?

- **Unmet Needs**
 - What have you done to familiarize your Auxiliary with the program and spread the information with your community? vfw.org/assistance/financial-grants
 - Have someone from the Post or District come talk to your Auxiliary about the program and how you can assist with Veterans. How can you help with your community?
- **VFW Sports Clip Help a Hero Scholarship**
 - VFW.org/student-veterans-support
 - Become familiar with the eligibility criteria and scholarship details.
 - Post on your social media, display in your post, community, etc.
- Support and Honor your **Military Families**

<i>Color</i>	<i>Information</i>
Blue	Family member is an active-duty service member.
White	Military, or first responder, family member lost to suicide.
Gold	Military family member killed in the line service.

State Project:

1. Raise funds to support Texas Veterans Suicide Prevention. Work with your Post to co-host activities to raise awareness of Military Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Awareness. Submit your checks(s) to department earmarked “Texas Suicide Prevention”.

***I have given you your 2024-2025 V&FS Program.
So, TEXAS you gonna help me build this house???***

State Awards:

Best Promotion Activity Raising Military Suicide Prevention Awareness. Plaque to the Auxiliary in each membership Division. Citation to 2nd & 3rd.

Most Contributions Earmarked for “Texas Suicide Prevention.” Plaque to the Auxiliary in each membership Division. Citation to 2nd & 3rd.

Best Promotion & Supporting Blue/White/Gold Star Military families within your communities. Plaque to the Auxiliary in each membership Division. Citation to 2nd & 3rd.

National Award:

Auxiliaries:

1. A Citation and \$25 for Most Outstanding activity and/or event to increase awareness of suicide and mental health for Veterans, military, and their families.

Entry form required and available in MALTA-Member Resources-Veterans & Family Support-Award Forms. VFW Auxiliaries must send the required entry form to their Department Veterans & Family Support Chairman by March 31, 2025, for judging. The Department Veterans & Family Support Chairman must sign and send a copy of the completed Department winning entry form to the National Veterans & Support Ambassador by April 30, 2025, for judging.

Veterans and Family Support Mid-Year & Year-End Report

Mid-Year Report must be received by District President by ***December 10, 2024***

Year-End Report must be received by District President by ***April 10, 2025***

District President forward to Department Chairman by December 20 and April 20 respectively

Auxiliary Name: _____ Number: _____ Date: _____

Please attach copy of pictures, check images, receipts, VPRs when working with Posts, and any other relative social media (news clippings) where applicable.

1. Number of Auxiliary members promoting, participating, hosting/co-hosting with VFW Post, activities for any VFW Program? (Examples: Disaster Relief, Military Assistance Program (MAP), National Veterans Service (NVS), Unmet Needs, Veterans & Military Suicide Prevention and Mental Awareness)

List Program: _____ Number of Members: _____

2. Number of Auxiliary members that provided direct aid to Veterans, service members, and/or their families? (Examples: Meals, transportation, cards, packages, donations, etc.)

Aid Description: _____ Number of Members: _____

3. Approximate number of Veterans, service members, and or their families assisted during events? (Does not have to be inclusive of #1 or #2 above)

Number assisted: _____

4. Total monetary donations and/or value of donations and goods/services provided to Veterans, service members, and or their families?

Total Donation/Value: \$ _____

Auxiliary Chairman: _____

Phone Number: _____ Email: _____