

Battalion to local units and posts to help them fully integrate into their new communities.

Oregon

- Received corporate and individual donations and distributed 96 holiday baskets to military families in need.
- Organized military child mental health awareness project with Portland Public Schools, Portland Children's Museum and a local art therapist.
- Organized a gift box packing party for the Auxiliary in partnership with Operation Homefront and Portland Community College.

Washington

- Provided orientation to VA Voluntary Service volunteer opportunities at two regional trainings.

Wisconsin

- Recorded and distributed DVD of Welcome Home briefings for Wisconsin National Guard members and their families.
- Organized and implemented statewide series of 19 veteran and family member job fairs across the state. More than 800 veterans have attended thus far.

PROJECT IMPACT

Outcomes from the American Legion Auxiliary Call to Service Corps VISTA Project in the 2009-2010 period:

- 76 VAVS regular volunteers recruited and placed by a Call to Service Corps member.
- 947 Auxiliary members, Legion members and general community members participated in a service project for veterans, military servicemembers and/or their families and organized by a Call to Service Corps member.
- 3,178 veterans, military servicemembers or family members received a resource or service generated by a Call to Service Corps member.
- \$31,520 cash donations generated by a Call to Service Corps member.
- \$65,300 in-kind donations generated by a Call to Service Corps member.

PARTICIPATING DEPARTMENTS

The American Legion Auxiliary commends the following Auxiliary and Legion departments for their participation as inaugural field sites in the Call to Service Corps VISTA Project:

Department of Arkansas
Department of Connecticut
Department of Florida
Department of Michigan
Department of New Mexico
Department of New York
Department of Ohio
Department of Oregon
Department of Washington
Department of Wisconsin
Legion Department of California

CALL TO SERVICE CORPS MEMBERS

The inaugural American Legion Auxiliary Call to Service Corps consisted of 19 Americans from diverse academic and professional experiences and walks of life. Among our 19 Call to Service Corps members, six were veterans--three of whom were women. Twelve were relatives of veterans. The American Legion Auxiliary extends its eternal gratitude to the following individuals for their service as members the 2009-2010 Call to Service Corps:

Jari Billiot

Nicole Bucholtz

Roberta (Bobbie) Davis

Grafton Day

Mia Dimas

Diana Lazzell

Paul Lutson

Boyé McGee

Nick Kelley

Nick Linkenhoker

Elaine Parker

Adriel Person

Ryan Pulver

Sharon Riegsecker

Debra Roesler

James (Mike) Rohan

Aryn Schounce

Matthew Shea

Betsy Vctor

CONTACT FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

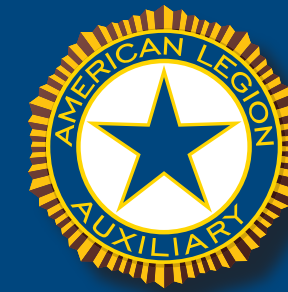
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AUXILIARY**

Serving veterans, their families and their communities

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American Legion Auxiliary Call to Service Corps VISTA Project

2009-2010 Report of Accomplishments



VISTA
Volunteers In Service To America



HISTORY

The American Legion Auxiliary traces the history of the Call to Service Corps VISTA Project to a Memorandum of Agreement with the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) entered into by then-National President Jan Pulvermacher-Ryan and then-CNCS Chief Executive Officer David Eisner at National Convention 2008. The memorandum, later affirmed by the National Executive Committee at Convention 2009, pledged collaboration between the Auxiliary and CNCS on matters of volunteer management and service project development relating to veterans and their families. The Corporation for National and Community Service is the federal agency responsible for the promotion of national and community service.

The first concrete opportunity for collaboration emerged in 2009 due to the enactment of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. The Recovery Act included a special appropriation to CNCS to expand its AmeriCorps programs. The Corporation invited the American Legion Auxiliary to submit an application for AmeriCorps VISTA Recovery funds. The AmeriCorps VISTA program is a full-time national service program for individuals interested in developing lasting solutions to poverty in America.

In summer 2009, CNCS approved the Auxiliary's application for Recovery Funds to establish the American Legion Auxiliary Call to Service Corps VISTA Project. The project was just one of five national, multi-site projects to receive Recovery Act funds through the AmeriCorps VISTA program. The CNCS award enabled the Auxiliary to recruit 19 full-time, full-year volunteers to serve the Auxiliary in capacity-development functions. The award also included a cash grant to assist the Auxiliary in program costs. The total value of the VISTA Recovery award was approximately \$643,000 for a one-year project period.

Then-National President Desiree Stoy launched the American Legion Auxiliary Call to Service Corps VISTA Project at Convention 2009. Joining the special announcement were CNCS Board of Directors member Eric Tanenblatt and Miss America 2009 Katie Stam. The Auxiliary also received written greetings from First Lady Michelle Obama.

PROJECT PURPOSE AND STRUCTURE

The American Legion Auxiliary Call to Service Corps VISTA Project seeks to enhance the capacity of the Auxiliary to generate volunteer service targeted toward poverty alleviation by and for veterans, military servicemembers, and their families.

The project takes a two-pronged, mutually supportive approach to accomplishing the project purpose. In 2009-2010, seven AmeriCorps VISTA members placed at National Headquarters developed training, technical assistance, tools, and resources for use by Auxiliary departments and units for volunteer recruitment, retention, engagement, management, and program development. An additional 12 members placed in Auxiliary and Legion departments implemented volunteer generation,

volunteer management, and community service activities, in partnership with Auxiliary and Legion volunteers operating at the field level.

PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Through the American Legion Auxiliary Call to Service Corps VISTA Project, the Auxiliary is pursuing the development of a number of capacity-building products and services, of which will endure for the Auxiliary beyond the VISTA project period.

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS ACTIVITIES

Call to Service Corps members at Auxiliary National Headquarters completed a range of activities in the areas of volunteer development, program development, fundraising, collaboration development, and communications. Major activities at Headquarters were as follows:

ALA Volunteer Recruitment and Placement System – Call to Service Corps members developed a system and support tools for recruiting and placing volunteers, whether they be Auxiliary members or members of the general public, into Auxiliary volunteer opportunities. We now have in place a system for routing inquiries from individuals interested in voluntary service to an appropriate department contact for follow-up. Call to Service Corps members developed a recruitment guide and a training module on recruitment, again for use in the field.

Gateway to Services – Call to Service Corps members built and now maintain an online directory of resources and services for veterans, military servicemembers, and their families with economic and social support needs. The Gateway to Services offers resources from birth to death and in between and currently lists more than 100 unique resources.

ALA KIDDS – Call to Service Corps members developed a new Auxiliary brand for a military children and youth program – ALA KIDDS. An acronym for Kids In Danger of Depression and Suicide, ALA KIDDS seeks to raise community awareness of the mental and emotional health challenges facing military children. The program also encourages the provision of recreational programs for military families to build resilience and promote family strength.

Auxiliary Support Tools – Call to Service Corps members developed a set of more than 30 instructions and guides – collectively called “Auxiliary Support Tools” – to help departments and units mobilize members and other volunteers to serve veterans, their families, and their communities by strengthening their implementation of Auxiliary brand programs. Sample titles of Auxiliary Support Tools include Auxiliary Emergency Fund (AEF) Roles and Responsibilities; American Legion Auxiliary: Caring for Homeless Veterans; How to Identify Veteran and Servicemember Families in Need of Assistance; How to Invite Community Support for Those Serving; How to Partner with Organizations for Community Outreach; How to Volunteer with Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service; and Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service Volunteer Expectations. The Auxiliary Support Tools will be released in late 2010 on the Auxiliary's forthcoming redesigned website.

Fund Development Plan – Call to Service Corps members developed a long-range strategic development plan for the Auxiliary to chart a course toward fund diversification and long-term financial health.

VSO/MSO Capacity and Needs Assessment – The Auxiliary is conducting a survey and preparing an analysis of the volunteer capacity and volunteer management needs of Veterans Service Organizations, Military Service Organizations, and grassroots veterans and military support groups. Results of the survey will assist the Auxiliary in forming new collaborations with other VSO/MSO partners.

FIELD SITE ACTIVITIES

Call to Service Corps members in the project's field sites completed a range of volunteer recruitment, service project development, collaboration development, outreach, fundraising, and communications activities. A sample of their many activities follows:

Arkansas

- Raised funds for purchase of vans to transport needy veterans from rural part of the state to VA Medical Centers. Recruited and certified volunteer drivers to meet transportation assistance requests.
- Organized fundraiser dinner for a local veteran family whose home was destroyed by fire. Raised more than \$4,000 in cash donations, clothing and temporary rent-free accommodation.
- Organized bi-weekly breakfasts at a rural post home as a socialization and information-sharing opportunity for older and unemployed veterans and their families.

California

- Co-organized a “Vet Connect” homeless veteran Stand Down in San Francisco.
- Assisted OEF/OIF veterans and their families in accessing Legion Family programs and services.
- Coordinated a cookout for residents of the Palo Alto VA home for severely disabled veterans.
- Represented the Legion Family at meetings of the East Bay Collaborative, a coalition organized to better support military families in the San Francisco Bay area.
- Participated in an Operation: Military Kids project at a San Francisco Coast Guard Facility.
- Coordinated and provided transportation for the Ride 2 Recovery races in Texas and California.

Florida

- Built a new website that employs social media to encourage volunteering, communication and innovation among veterans and military families.
- Orchestrated blood drives in several locations throughout state.
- Organized a 5K race to raise awareness and funds for VA domiciliary program.

Michigan

- Established poppy-making program at homeless veteran residence.
- Organized assembly of ditty bags for homeless veterans and homeless youth.
- Partnered with three Lansing elementary schools to complete art action projects for National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day, May 6. The art was prepared for books that will be donated to National Guard Family Readiness Groups to be given to young children in military families who may be experiencing the deployment of a loved one.

New Mexico

- Recruited volunteers for launch of homeless veteran assistance center.
- Recruited and supported unit-designed community service projects for the MLK National Day of Service observance.
- Developed a Gateway to Services listing of resources and services for New Mexico veterans and their families.

New York

- Redesigned and revitalized the department's Warriors Family Assistance program. Managed promotion of the fund, screening of applications and administrative support; coordinated the dispersal of more than \$46,000 in financial aid for the year.
- Developed department's Facebook page and Twitter account.
- Organized free museum tours, lunch, prizes and fun activities for military families in connection with ALA KIDDS and National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day.

Ohio

- Developed department website and social media tools to promote the department and its programs and services to veterans and their families and to retain Junior members.
- Created a group of Auxiliary members to attend Regional Inter-Service Family Assistance Committee Meetings to plan resources and services for military families.
- Linked servicemembers from the Cleveland Recruiting

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