

HOSPITAL July 2024

This year's Hospital Ambassador Paulette McCord has once again reminded us that the Hospital Program is one of the oldest programs in our organization.

She goes on to say that we hold fundraisers and say all right, we did our part. But there is more to the Program. It is about the veteran. You can read Paulette's entire program sheet on Malta so I will just paraphrase parts of her program.

This year we are going back to the basics. We are going to be their little ray of sunshine. We know what the veteran has done for us, now it is our turn to do for the veteran.

For the veteran who does not have family near enough to visit, we are the ones who bridge the gap between the family and the veteran. We share of ourselves. Imagine going into a veteran's room with a huge smile and a cheerful hello. You don't have to do anything but visit with them. "Good morning, I am with the Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary and would love to visit you." Ask a few general questions about their service, their family, etc. Before long, you will see a grin on their face. When a veteran goes into the VA, all they have is their memories. You are helping them remember.

The staff at the various homes do a fantastic job but they don't always have time to just sit and visit. The residents are the same as you and me, we like to visit with someone different once in a while. YOU can be that someone.

I know that everyone cannot visit a veteran's center, but you can participate by making things and sending them. Get in touch with the activity director at the local facility or your VAVS Representative for the facilities the department supports, they can inform you of different items they may need. Remember there are male and female veterans. Sometimes the smallest things mean the most because they know someone cares.

You can recruit members and non-members to be volunteers. Let them see how important they are and how one person can make a difference. You can volunteer at VA, non-VA hospitals or nursing homes. Just make sure at an auxiliary meeting that you vote to participate.

Every Auxiliary has older members who no longer attend meetings but would love to still be involved with their Auxiliary. Ask them if they sew or knit and would they want to make items for our veterans.

Think outside the box. Remember, veterans' hospitals and nursing homes are more than brick buildings. It is the home of a veteran.