

Thank you to all units and members for your donations to the Department earmarked for Gift Shops at the North Dakota Veterans Home in Lisbon and the VA Medical Center in Fargo.

Residents of Lisbon were treated to a catered dinner on Friday, December 22, 2023, and each received a blanket for Christmas. Patients at the VAMC were given the opportunity to choose a gift for themselves and a family member. After three years of COVID shutdowns, it was a pleasure to be able to sponsor an in-person gift shop again!

The Philanthropy and Youth (PaY) group from Northern Cass High School donated tie-blankets to the VAMC Gift Shop. We also received a wonderful donation of vintage wrapping paper for the project from Jim, a veteran who attended an early morning appointment at the VA that day. Jim heard about the 'gift shop' and donated several rolls of embossed red and green paper. A great team of ladies assisted veterans in choosing a gift, wrapping them, and preparing them for mailing. Santa is proud of his VAMC elves.

A Creative Arts competition is planned and will be held at the VAMC in Fargo on September 10, 2024. Any veteran enrolled in the Fargo VA system is eligible and encouraged to participate. More information can be found on the VA's website at [www.va.gov/fargo-health-care/](http://www.va.gov/fargo-health-care/). Look under the programs link for the Creative Arts competition. The last competition was held at the Fargo VAMC in 2018, so this is exciting news that it is happening once again.

The 2024 National Creative Arts Festival is being held in Denver, Colorado, in May. The date for the 2025 festival has not yet been announced. Winners from the 2024 competitions will participate in the 2025 festival.

Please be sure to report your Year-End volunteer hours and funds spent in support of our Auxiliary mission to your unit president. In turn, we can report your good deeds to our Northwestern Division and National Headquarters.

Thank you.

LaVonne Matthews

VA&R Chairman