

AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY

A Community of Volunteers Serving Veterans, Military, and their Families

March 2026

Issue #6

NATIONAL COMMUNITY SERVICE NEWSLETTER

Upcoming Events

NEW DATE!

Q-3 Zoom Call
Tuesday
April 21, 2026
7:30pm EST

American Legion
Family Day
April 25th

Department
Chairs Reports
Due to Division
Chairs by May
15th



Community Service National Chair John R. Tester

Greetings ALA Community Service,

Wow — almost 200 people on the February 10 webinar, *Planning and Hosting a Successful American Legion Family Day!* That's fantastic!

This turnout really shows how much passion and commitment our ALA Members have.

The webinar recording is now available on the American Legion Auxiliary website. This gives members who couldn't attend a chance to catch up — and lets others go back and revisit those helpful planning tips.

Now we're on the home stretch — American Legion Family Day on April 25th will be here before we know it. If you haven't already started planning, now's the time! Reach out to your Legion Family, reserve your location, and start spreading the word.

And speaking of important dates — awards season is right around the corner. All award submissions are due no later than **June 1st**. Don't wait until the last minute. Take time now to gather your reports, photos, and supporting documentation. Your hard work deserves to be recognized.

Most importantly, keep those community service projects going. Whether big or small, every effort makes a real difference in your community. What you do matters — to veterans, to families, and your community. Your *are* making a difference!

Keep the momentum going — you're doing great work.
Thank you .

John R. Tester
National Chair



NATIONAL COMMUNITY SERVICE NEWSLETTER



Amy's Angle....

Thank you to everyone who participated in the *How to Host a Successful American Legion Family Day* webinar. As we connected members shared thoughtful questions that highlight the dedication and passion behind our community service efforts. A few common questions are listed below:

Q: Must the American Legion Family Day (ALFD) event be held on Saturday, April 25?

A: No, you can hold an ALFD event anytime near April 25. It can be the week before, the week after or even on a Sunday.

Community Service National Vice-Chair Amy Luft

Q: Does the ALA unit have to be the organizer of the event?

A: No, it is not the ALA who organizes ALFD event. It should be a collaboration between all factions of the Legion Family (ALA, Legion, SAL, Riders).

Q: We do not have a SAL squadron or Riders. Are we able to still host an ALFD?

A: Yes! Work with your Legion and/or partner with another local American Legion Post family.

Q: Should we have an underlying theme or message when promoting to attendees during the event?

A: Although a theme is not required, hosting a ALFD is a wonderful time to work the

ALA missions! Collecting clothing items for homeless veterans or gathering non-perishable food items for a food pantry are great ways to work our programs while celebrating ALFD.

If you missed the webinar, it is now available in the ALA Academy, Meanwhile, get your plans started now for your ALFD event. Not sure what to do? Start with something simple like an ice cream social. Every gathering no matter the size, strengthens the bonds that unite the American Legion Family.

Amy Luft
National Vice-Chair

Have you joined the Community Service Facebook page? It is a great place to post your community service events and see what other Units are doing.

Ask to join by going to

www.facebook.com/groups/ALACommunityService



Southern Division Community Service

The Southern Division continues to shine as a powerful example of what can be accomplished when compassion, commitment, and community come together. Across our Departments, members are demonstrating the true spirit of community service — strengthening neighborhoods through meaningful acts of service.

From statewide celebrations and collaborative projects to personal outreach that touches individual lives, the Southern Division remains united in purpose and proud of the impact we make every day.

As Departments in the Southern Division prepare for upcoming American Legion Family Day and continue their year-round service initiatives, one theme remains constant: the Southern Division's unwavering dedication to serving with heart, honoring our mission, and building stronger communities across every corner of our region.

Department of Alabama

The Department of Alabama has taken community service to a heartfelt new level by embracing a member of the community who is visually challenged and recently widowed. After losing her spouse—who had always driven her to her favorite weekly bingo nights—she suddenly found herself without transportation and

without the companionship she cherished.

One Alabama unit stepped forward without hesitation. Each week, members pick her up and bring her to an evening filled with fun, food, and fellowship. What began as a simple act of kindness has grown into a meaningful bond that she looks forward to with joy and anticipation.

The highlight of the season came when she won the bingo jackpot—an exciting moment celebrated by everyone in the room. Her happiness became the unit's happiness, a reminder that service is not only about programs and projects, but also about human connection, dignity, and love.

Alabama continues to embody the American Legion Auxiliary's mission through consistent, heartfelt service. Their efforts reflect a deep commitment to ensuring that every member of the community feels supported, valued, and remembered.

Department of Florida

The Department of Florida's Community Service program has continued its mission of providing "Compassionate Community Service" throughout the state, and this Valentine's Day that compassion was on full display as units honored Florida's First Responders.

Tice Unit 351 delivered stacks of Valentine candy boxes to fire departments, offering a sweet reminder of how much their service is appreciated. Brookville Unit 186 in Brooksville also visited the Hernando County Fire House, presenting trays of cookies as a heartfelt thank-you for the firefighters' dedication to their community.

Unit 348 added a creative twist to their project by hosting a "Snack Drive" to collect healthy treats and small goodies from members. 100 decorated bags filled with care and gratitude were delivered to the Cocoa Beach Police Department.

Across the Department of Florida, members have long been steadfast supporters of First Responders—the men and women who risk their lives daily to protect and serve, and who stand as a critical lifeline during hurricanes and severe weather events that strike the state far too often. This Valentine's Day, ALA Florida made certain these heroes felt the full measure of appreciation and compassion they so richly deserve.



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NATIONAL COMMUNITY SERVICE NEWSLETTER

Department of Mississippi

Mississippi began the arrival of the new year with a renewed spirit of unity, reflection, and service.

Across the Great State of Mississippi, communities gathered to celebrate the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., filling the streets with supporters committed to his vision of love, justice, and togetherness.

In Columbus, MS, members marched from the Columbus Municipal Police Complex to the James M. Trotter Convention Center in the heart of downtown. The celebration continued with banquets, food pantry donations, community breakfasts, and other acts of service hosted by local units and organizations—each one reinforcing Dr. King's message that service is the heartbeat of a strong community.

Department of South Carolina

South Carolina remains steadfast in its commitment to supporting veterans and strengthening our communities. Easley Unit hosted a community spaghetti dinner, creating the perfect opportunity to share stories, exchange ideas, and learn more about the wonderful work happening across our units.

The evening was a tremendous success, marked by strong attendance, heartfelt fellowship, and a delicious meal enjoyed by all. Moments like these remind us of the incredible impact we can make when we come

together, support one another, and celebrate the mission we proudly share.

South Carolina takes tremendous pride in lifting up our veterans, our units, and the communities we serve. By learning from each other and promoting each other's efforts, we continue to build a stronger, more connected American Legion Auxiliary family.



Department of Virginia

Hopewell Unit 146 is committed to ensuring that no one in their community faces the winter cold alone. Through their Winter Community Service Project, members collected gently used coats, hats, scarves, and gloves to support individuals and families in need. This thoughtful effort reflects the unit's dedication to providing comfort, dignity, and warmth during the coldest months of the year.

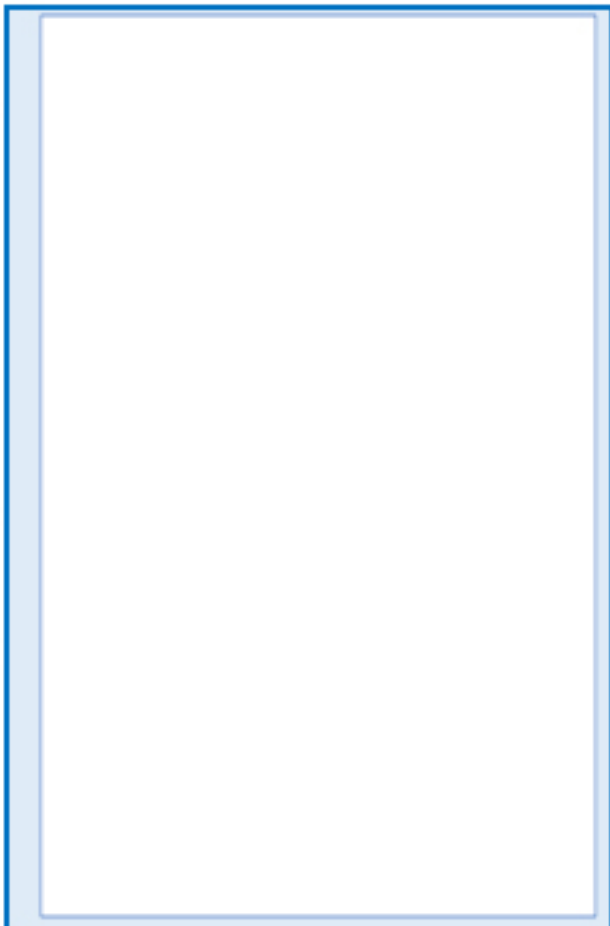
Their work is a reminder that even simple acts of kindness—like sharing a warm coat—can

make a meaningful difference in someone's life.



Pamela Elam-Lipscombe

Southern Division Chair



NATIONAL COMMUNITY SERVICE NEWSLETTER

Central Division Community Service

I understand the webinar hosted by our National Chairman, John Tester was very successful! Did you get lots of ideas? This chairman can't wait to see what your units and departments do.

Mission Training in the Central Division was a packed house. Every topic was touched on and the speakers were great. During Mission Training I had the privilege of meeting Jan Mort, Department of Indiana Community Service Charman and Tracy Brown, Indiana 2nd District Chairman.



During the Community Service portion of Mission Training, ideas were flowing. One Department makes Hospice Bags for families staying with loved ones. These bags contain snacks, puzzle books with pencils, Kleenex, toothpaste / toothbrushes, dry shampoos, blankets, neck pillows, travel size deodorants, etc. Items can be dropped off at area Hospital Centers. Don't forget to put a note card in each basket/bag stating who donated these items.

It is that time of year when communities start up softball and baseball leagues. Contact your area community center. You may be

able to sponsor a team and have your name on the back of a jersey. What about a banner to be placed on the fences in the outfield? Good ways to get or name and branding out in the community.

Community Easter Egg hunts are around the corner? Does your community have one. Donate the eggs with the candy, have a bake sale with flyers of our youth programs. Do a pancake breakfast or donuts with the Easter Bunny.

The units of the 2nd District of Indiana, teamed up and held a Snacks and Diapers Food Drive for their Food Pantry. Thank you Monticello Unit #81, Syracuse #223, Portage #260, De Motte #440 and West Lafayette #492.

Members of the Legion Family in Ozaukee County, Department of Wisconsin collected and delivered over 1200 pounds of food to 3



local Food Pantries, along with dog and cat food and nearly \$1000 in donations. The American Legion, the American Legion Auxiliary and the Son's of the American Legion were asked to collect and

donate 250 food items as part of the Community Service 250 Challenge. They did an awesome job.

Department of Ohio, 13th District, Berea Unit 91 met and made no sew fleece blankets.

These blankets will be given out to local charities.



Department of Ohio, 3rd District, Unit 776 donated bags to the Riverside Police Department to help with the homeless initiatives.

Everyone did a great job sending



pictures and articles. Keep sending them to me and don't forget to download them on the ALA Community Service Facebook page. Brag about your Unit and Departments.

Reminder! It's almost reporting time.

Cindy Masowick
Central Division Chair



NATIONAL COMMUNITY SERVICE NEWSLETTER

Western Division Community Service

The Western Division remains very busy. Even with crazy weather we were all able to conduct our business.

We had many fundraisers in our division. From car washes, bake sales, quartermanias, bingo, craft fairs, many delicious baked goods and meals serving our communities.

We had many opportunities to gather and be entertained. Departments held Valentines dances and Mardi Gras events.

The Department of AZ had a pet food drive. The Dept of CA had a shopping spree with senior high

school girls living in group homes. Our first responders are never forgotten, meals, desserts, equipment such as ping pong balls and board games were delivered.

AGAIN, Western Division, no report received means the rest of the Departments don't get to hear of your great work. Not to mention, I am about to miss a deadline awaiting your newsletters. If it is easier for you, you can send a quick email, text with a photo as you go. However I can help.

Teresa Nunez-Lugo
Western Division Chair

Unit 86 Pet Food Drive Fundraiser



Northwestern Division Community Service

Hope you were able to join us for our Community Service Webinar in February. There was a lot of useful information provided so that you can plan a successful American Legion Family Day. The date is April 25th but if you are unable to hold it that day, please plan it for a date that works for your Legion Family. For those that were unable to join us look for the recording at ALA Academy. There is a citation for each American Legion Family Day Post but in order to qualify to receive this citation, signed by the National President, National Commander and the Sons National Commander, all parts of your Post family need to participate. So, if there are only a Legion and Auxiliary in your post, all must be a part

of the event. If you have all four groups in your post, then all four need to participate.

Our next quarterly zoom meeting is on April 21st at 7:30 ET. I will get the link to sign up for this mandatory meeting as soon as it is available.

Soon you will be seeing the reports from your units. You will need to combine all the reports into one report to send to your Division Chairman by May 15th. Stay on the lookout for outstanding community service unit program in your department for the Community Service award. There are also the Best Community Service Department award and the Best unit award for the best American Legion Family

Day. These awards need to be submitted no later than June 1st at 5:00 pm ET. The submission for the award is completed online through Formstack. The link is on the National website under the program.

Please keep up the great work Northwestern Division. Keep sending me summaries of events and photos, in the highest resolution available. Pictures cannot be ones that have been posted on Facebook, they need to be the original photo, jpg.

Ann Ritacco
Chairman Northwestern Division

Eastern Division Community Service

The members of the Eastern Division Community Service Team certainly shared the LOVE during the month of February!

Department of Pennsylvania

Members of ALA Department of PA Unit 360 assisted the Lehigh High Valley Health Network with their “SAFETY TOWN” presentation at the Weatherly Elementary School in February.

Some members helped to guide 169 students in grades Pre-K through 2nd grade through the various safety presentations. After the program, each student received a “Certificate of Achievement” and a ABC’s of Safe Kids Activity Book. The stations included auto and car seat safety (including car seat requirements), school bus safety, classroom safety, Emergency 911, playground safety, unfamiliar animal (much as a dog) safety, Stranger Danger safety, bicycle safety, pedestrian safety, home and kitchen safety, and backyard safety including sledding and snow tubing. Each station included a short Q & A segment.

ALA Unit 360 – Department of PA



With the combined efforts of ALA Department of PA Unit 773 Juniors and All Saints Companions on the Journey, 164 Valentines were hand-made and donated to WCTL Healing Hearts program in February.

On February 10, several Eastern Division Community Service Chairmen attended a national webinar on how to successfully plan, organize, advertise, and host an American Legion Family Day. American Legion Family Day will be held in late April. During the webinar, we learned about the American Legion Family Day Citation that National President Pam Ray is promoting this year. After the webinar, listeners walked away with a list of ideas to help them host an American Legion Family Day event. Learning Objectives were: How to start the planning process: first steps, who to contact, etc. as well as best practices for promoting their American Legion Family Day event. We also discussed how to get organized: timelines, invitations, set up, etc. In the next few weeks, the webinar materials will be available on the ALA Academy website. Be sure to check them out!

Please continue to post articles and pictures on the ALA National Community Service Facebook page. Everyone wants to see what your units, districts, and departments are doing. Everyone who visits this page can get great ideas from just scrolling.

Keep being mission-driven!

Yours in Service,

Paulette Caron

ALA Eastern Division Community Service Chairman



HOW TO ACCESS THE WEBINAR ON THE ALA WEBSITE

The webinar held on February 10th, “*How to Plan and Host a Successful American Legion Family Day*” is now available on the American Legion Auxiliary website. Following are the steps to access the webinar.

- ◆ Access the ALA website at <https://member.legion-aux.org/>
- ◆ Click on **Member Log In** (upper right hand of page)
- ◆ Enter your log in information
- ◆ Click on **Meetings/Trainings** (upper right side of page)
- ◆ Click on **ALA Academy** under Online Training
- ◆ Click on **Launch ALA Academy** (box on left side of page)
- ◆ Click on **Browse Catalog**
- ◆ Click on **ALA Academy Live Recordings** (left sidebar)
- ◆ Scroll and find “*Planning and Hosting a Successful American Legion Family Day*”
- ◆ Click on **Enroll** (right side, blue/green box)
- ◆ Click on **Launch** (right side, blue/green box)
- ◆ On the left sidebar, you can select “Webinar Recording” to watch the webinar, or select “Resources and Conclusion” to download the PowerPoint presentation.

Reports are Due in May!

ATTENTION ALL DEPARTMENT CHAIRS!

Your annual reports are due to your Division Chair no later than May 15th. Your Division Chairs will be sending out reminders several times over the next two and half months.

Any questions regarding what your reports should contain can be directed to your Division Chairs.

We are expecting **100% reporting** for Community Service, so start reminding your Unit’s about getting their reports to you so you can complete your Department Report.

Annual reports from the Division Chairs are due to the National Chair no later than June 1st.

Thank you!

