



Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary

Publicity Resource Guide

The information in this guide is a resource to assist the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary state departments and units to help you get the word out about your auxiliary and the many projects and services you are providing. It will also provide you with ideas of events, projects and types of activities the media may be interested in along with samples you can easily adjust to your needs.

Ways to get Publicity:

- Select a contact person for the media to call to get information related to your Auxiliary.
- Introduce yourself and the organization to members of the media.
- Get news releases to the media on a regular basis.
- Call the media when something unexpected or unique is happening.
- Maintain contact by email with your TV stations, newspapers, and other publications.
- Present the media who have helped publicize your auxiliary and events a Communications Award or Certificate of Appreciation (certificates are available from national headquarters).
- Remember your activities may seem routine to you but could be of interest to the media.
- The media looks for many factors: if local people are involved, uniqueness, interest to non-members, timeliness, helpful to the community, or new/different ideas.

Types of Events the Media finds Newsworthy:

- Activities relating to helping the troops while they are serving our country. (care packages, phone cards, etc.)
- Meeting & greeting the troops as they return home.
- Projects you may be doing to assist the families who are deployed. (picnics, baby sitting, yard work, home repairs, etc.)
- Members and juniors who may be participating in your Forget-Me-Not sale, and other ceremonies such as Veterans Day, Memorial Day, and Naturalization.
- Award winners.
- Flag presentations to schools or community groups.
- The election of your officers and chairmen.

Who to Contact:

Newspaper: At a daily paper, ask for the city or metro editor, or columnist for the section where you want your article to run. For a weekly paper, ask for the editor. Find out from your local newspaper what their preference is—do they want you to send only to one certain editor and then the information is channeled to the proper person or do they want you to contact the editor and the appropriate columnists.

Radio: Ask for the News Director, if it is newsworthy; Program Director, for a talk show or the calendar.

TV Stations: Talk to the News Director or Assignment Editor if you want the station to cover an event (see Example later in these guidelines). For a TV talk show, speak to the Program Director or the Producer of the show. If you do not know who to contact, ask the person answering the phone.

Keep a current list of the contacts for your local TV, radio, and newspapers so it will be easy to use each time you need to notify them.

How to Write a New Release:

Examples of news releases are included in this resource guide. They are just examples so if you want to use them, you need to adjust them to your needs.

Press releases should be typed on 8½” x 11” sheet of paper, double-spaced or at least 1½” spacing. Be sure to include your name, title, telephone number, email address, and fax number. Be as brief as possible but if it is necessary to go to two pages, type (MORE) on the bottom of the first page and identify the release on top of Page 2. See the samples for examples on accepted newspaper style. The symbol # indicates the end. Be sure to put it at the end of your news release.

When writing a news release on the first reference to the organization the name is entirely spelled out, but if it is going to be repeated, it is abbreviated in parentheses. Ex. Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary (DAVA or DAV Auxiliary). This makes the name of the organization clear to the reader.

Look at your own newspaper for clues to the style they use. Pay attention to how they address men and women. For a man, it will always be just his last name; papers differ on the way a woman’s name is handled.

It is a good idea to end your news releases with a statement explaining who the DAV Auxiliary is and what we do.

Promotion of Programs:

Keep a list including the event name, date, and who to contact for programs and projects your unit or state department needs to publicize to help get the word out of what the DAV Auxiliary is doing in your area. Examples: Forget-Me-Not Sales promoting the sale and also the results following the drive; election of officers; participation in ceremonies such as Veterans Day, Memorial Day, and Naturalization. Events: bingos you sponsor at veterans homes, hospitals & nursing homes; activities with the schools teaching patriotism, flag etiquette, and flag folding demonstrations; work with the senior centers, and other organizations in your community such as Relay for Life, Heart Association, boy and girl scouts, etc. Programs: welcoming home troops, care packages, assistance for natural disasters, community service work, coupon collecting, donations you make, check presentations to various causes, etc.

Time Frames:

60 Days Prior to Coverage:

- Secure public service time on TV and/or radio.
- Arrange interviews on TV or radio talk shows.
- Send information to all area TV, newspaper, radio, community calendars.

30 Days Prior:

- Mail the first of at least two news releases about the event to the newspapers, TV and radio.

14 Days Prior:

- Mail second news release to newspapers.

7-10 Days Prior:

- Mail a **Fact Sheet** to Assignment Editors at TV and radio stations to encourage them to cover the event.

5-7 Days Prior:

- Follow-up** calls to Assignment Editors at TV/radio and Editors at newspapers to see if someone will be covering the event. Only do this if it is really an important event, and if there is something that is particularly newsworthy about it. If you know of a photo or video opportunity, mention it.

1-2 Days Prior:

- Fax or email a reminder one or two days prior to the event. The media schedules can get very busy especially on weekends so a reminder can help.

Make an appointment with your local media outlets to visit with them to find out how and when they like to receive information. Many now prefer receiving information by email so they don't have to retype the information and can make changes easily so see what their preferences are.

Local Fact Sheet:

The Local Fact Sheet is a list of local facts you should develop and take with you when you visit with the media. Type the information on an 8½" x 11" sheet of paper: Auxiliary Commander's name, address, telephone number; your name, address, telephone number, and email address and fax number. List your total membership, projects you do for the troops, programs and projects of your unit or state department; VA, hospital, veterans home, nursing home, volunteering, etc. your unit does.

Event Fact Sheet:

An Event Fact Sheet is helpful when trying to get TV, radio stations, and newspapers to cover a specific event. The purpose is to give the facts and anything that might spark their interest.

Examples:

Examples of fact sheets, news releases, public service announcements, and sample media interviews are provided on the following pages. Be sure to use letterhead and the auxiliary logo, (if possible) on the information you are using for the media.

Example of Event Fact Sheet:

EVENT FACT SHEET

WHAT: 4th of July Parade & Patriotic Rally sponsored by the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary (DAV Auxiliary) Unit #2 of Centerville, Massachusetts

WHO: Sgt. Bill Olson, who has just returned from Afghanistan, will be Grand Marshall of the parade. Keynote speaker at the rally will be Major David Larson.

WHERE: Centerville High School Auditorium, 11 Main Street, Centerville, Massachusetts.

WHEN: Saturday, July 4, at 1 pm.

WHY: To demonstrate our pride in America and honor those from the surrounding area who are serving our country.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Free 3 1/2" x 5" American Flags will be given to all who attend. The Second Grade children from three area schools will recite the Gettysburg Address. The mayor and other city officials will also dedicate the recently constructed Veterans Memorial in honor of all those from this area who have made the ultimate sacrifice for America. Several area bands will also perform.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT: Mary Schultz, Publicity Chairman, Centerville DAV Auxiliary. Telephone 000-111-0000, Cell Phone: 000-222-0000, Email: mary@aol.com, Fax: 000-111-1000

Example of New Release:

TO: All Area Media

Date: September 12, 2009

For Immediate Release

Pancake Breakfast

The Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary Unit #2 (DAV Auxiliary) will be holding its annual Pancake Breakfast on Sunday, October 18 from 8:00 am – 11:30 am at the Applebee's Restaurant located at 212 North 1st Street, Fosston, TX.

Come and enjoy a great breakfast including pancakes, sausage, scrambled eggs, juice and coffee for just \$5.00 per person.

Funds raised will be used to assist with their numerous programs to assist our veterans and their families.

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For further information please contact Jody Smith, DAV Auxiliary Adjutant, at (Home) 000-222-3333; Cell 111-222-3333 or by email at jody@aux.com

Example of News Release:

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS AUXILIARY (DAVAuxiliary)

Election of 2009-2010 Officers

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 12, 2009

Sue Palmer, Sun Beach, FL, was elected Commander of the Sun Beach DAV Auxiliary Unit #31 at its recent meeting held at the Memorial Club Room of the Sun Beach County Office Building.

“This year our emphasis will be on starting a program to send care packages each month to our troops,” said Palmer, who has been an Auxiliary member for 18 years. “This program will start immediately and donations are always welcome. In addition, of course, we will continue to volunteer at the VA Hospital, and veterans’ home, and continue to raise funds with various other projects to help our veterans and their families.”

Also elected were: Samantha Stewart, Senior Vice-Commander; Shelly Phillips, 1st Junior Vice-Commander; William Hill; 2nd Junior Vice-Commander; Carol Meyers, Treasurer and Connie Blair, Chaplain.

The DAV Auxiliary helps our veterans by volunteering in hospitals and veterans homes, legislative efforts to help encourage our legislators to pass legislation for the health care and benefits our veterans have earned, promotes patriotism, and several projects throughout the year to help raise funds to help our veterans and their families.

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For further information contact: Beth Miller, Adjutant, 333 Long Shore Drive, Sun Beach, FL 92345. Phone: 000-111-6666; Fax: 000-777-1111; E-Mail: bmiller@aux.com

Example of Public Service Announcements:

FOR RELEASE: JUNE 15-JULY 4, 2010 (15 SECONDS)
LOCAL 2nd GRADERS, SEVERAL AREA BANDS,
AND THE MAYOR WILL HEADLINE A VERY SPECIAL
4th of July PARADE & PATRIOTIC RALLY SPONSORED BY DISABLED AMERICAN
VETERANS AUXILIARY UNIT #2 OF CENTERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS. JOIN IN
THE FUN AND RECEIVE A FREE FLAG AT CENTERVILLE HIGH
SCHOOL AUDITORIUM ON JULY 4 AT 1 P.M.
FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL 000-555-0000.

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For more information contact Mary Schultz, Publicity Chairman, Centerville DAV Auxiliary.
Telephone 000111-000, Cell Phone: 000-222-000, Email: mary@aol.com, Fax: 000-111-1000.

Media Interview Questions:

Follow is a list of examples of media interview questions you may be asked. The better prepared you are the easier it will be. You should prepare your answers to these questions and take them with you to interviews to assist you in answering their questions. It is very easy for forget important items during an interview and if you have prepared answers it will be much easier.

1. Who belongs to the DAV Auxiliary?
2. How many members do you have?
3. What are your eligibility requirements?
4. Can males belong?
5. Why should a person join the DAV Auxiliary?
6. Discuss what you do for veterans and their families.
7. What do your junior members do?
8. How do you work with the VA Medical Center and Veterans Home?
9. What other projects do you do throughout the year?
10. What do you do with the funds you raise?
11. Many of the things you've mentioned provide service to the community...What other types of community service does your organization perform?
12. Don't we usually see you marching in the parades?
13. Are you the ones with the blue Forget-Me-Not flowers?
14. Do you ever need help with any of your programs?

15. If someone is interested in joining, what would you say are the benefits of belonging to your organization?
16. Who could our (listeners/viewers) contact if they wish to become a member or want more information about your organization?

Tips for Publicity Chairmen:

1. Be sure the media understand what you want. If you would like them to cover your event, ask them. When they do come, be prepared.
 - **Be prepared for their arrival.** Have a reserved area close to where the main activities will take place. Make sure they will have a clear view for taking pictures and shooting footage. A table to the side can be helpful for making notes and laying expensive camera equipment.
 - **Greet them** as soon as they arrive. Introduce yourself. Let them know where their reserved area is located, the agenda for the event, and ask what you can do to help them. **If asked, assist in rounding up people** to be photographed or interviewed. Always be polite but do it as quickly as possible because they may need to leave early to cover another event.
 - **Obtain correct identification** of people and ask if there is any other information you can provide. Even if you don't have agendas to give to everyone you should give them to the media. **Present a written sheet of information**, giving names and titles of all who are scheduled to speak. Make sure the information is legible, typed if possible and names are spelled correctly.
 - **Introduce the media** to key people such as your Commander, guest speakers, etc. Introduce them in a traditional way: "I'd like you to meet Sue Olson, our Unit Commander. This is Joe Johnson, editor of the *Daily Journal*." Don't be condescending but also don't assume that the media person knows what is going on, who people are, or why they are important to the organization. If your hospitality makes them feel welcome, it will be easier for you to get them back again for other stories. Give them the facts they need; they will write the story for you. Don't bog them down with every little detail but give them information they will need.
2. Meet face-to-face with the various media in your community. Go to their office and introduce yourself and ask how they prefer to receive information from your organization. Today many prefer email so they don't have to retype the article and can make changes they want easily. When you develop a personal connection with someone, you have a better chance of getting your articles published or event covered by TV and radio. Another nice gesture is to send a thank you note to the media when they have published an article for you or covered a story. Everyone likes to be thanked. Also, at the end of the year you can present them with a Certificate of Appreciation. They are available from National Headquarters.