



From the AUXILIARY NATIONAL COMMANDER WILLIAM CRAIG JOHNIKEN

Focus on caregivers, junior members

I'm honored to have been elected in New Orleans as your DAV Auxiliary National Commander. I'm very grateful and humbled at the trust you've placed in me.

Our organization has a rich history and has changed with the ebb and flow of time alongside our parent organization. We were founded in 1922 at the Disabled American Veterans of the World War's second national convention in San Francisco.

At the time, members of our organization were limited to wives, mothers, sisters and daughters of disabled veterans.

For 95 years, our DAV Auxiliary indeed had a wife, mother, sister or daughter at the helm.

Continuing wars, carried on the shoulders of the relative few who serve, affect the entire family. Now more than any other time in our history, wives, mothers, sisters and daughters wear the uniform and often find themselves in harm's way. When these heroes return home seriously injured, we see husbands, fathers, brothers and sons thrust into the role of caregiver. The sacrifices all caregivers make on behalf of the veterans they love

are tremendous. It's my intent to continue our fight beside DAV to ensure our government enacts legislation for caregivers of all generations.

I also believe it's paramount to the continued success of the DAV Auxiliary to bring junior members into our ranks. These young men and women are often at the forefront of volunteer efforts at nursing homes, VA medical centers,

Forget-Me-Not drives, Honor Flight events, Local Veterans Assistance Program efforts and much more. I've found that they get very enthusiastic with the right leadership and encouragement, and their positivity is simply contagious. I encourage everyone to look for these young patriots in their communities and tell them about what we do.

And once we get young people involved,

their parents tend to follow. This is a potential way to fuel our work on behalf of veterans and their families.

It's an honor to be your DAV Auxiliary National Commander and the first male to hold this position. I look forward to working with and meeting all of you as I represent our organization and continue our work.

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