



DAV Auxiliary C.A.R.E.S.

By Kathleen Wenthe, National Commander

As we close the DAV Auxiliary Fall Conference, we do so with full hearts, renewed purpose, and wonderful memories. What a joy it was to come together, share fellowship, and learn from one another. The fun, laughter, and connection throughout the conference reminded us of why we serve, and the knowledge shared by each presenter was truly outstanding. Every session offered valuable insight, encouragement, and tools we can carry back to our Units and communities.

I want to extend a heartfelt thank you to everyone who supported the DAV Auxiliary C.A.R.E.S. T-shirt idea. I created the T-shirt as a reminder to everyone that the DAV Auxiliary still C.A.R.E.S. and to share what it stands for: **Communicate, Advocate, Recruit, Educate, and Serve**. Your support means so much and helps keep the spirit of C.A.R.E.S. moving forward. I want the Auxiliary to be at the forefront of veterans' organizations, and I believe that with C.A.R.E.S., we can do just that!

For this article, let us focus on the first letter of C.A.R.E.S.: **Communicate**. Communication is one of the most important tools we have as an organization. It connects our members, strengthens our Units, builds understanding, and helps ensure that every voice is heard. When we communicate clearly, respectfully, and consistently, we create a stronger foundation for teamwork, service, and success.

Communication helps create a better organization because it allows us to share ideas, solve problems, celebrate accomplishments, and support one another through challenges. It keeps members informed, encourages participation, and reminds each of us that we are part of something greater than ourselves. When communication is open, members feel included. When communication is honest, trust grows. When communication is consistent, progress follows.

As DAV Auxiliary members, we know that our mission is strongest when we work together. That begins with taking the time to talk with one another, listen to one another, and understand one another. Communication is not only about speaking; it is also about listening with respect and responding with purpose. When we communicate with one another, we can accomplish anything together.

Let us continue to communicate with kindness, lead with understanding, and serve with unity. Together, through DAV Auxiliary C.A.R.E.S., we will keep moving forward—stronger, louder, and more united in our commitment to those who have given so much for our freedom.

Help Us Preserve Memories of National Commander Wenthe

by Wyatt Putnam, National History Chair

Please help us preserve and share the memories of National Commander Kathleen Wenthe's service and visits across the country.

If you have photos of Commander Wenthe from her current Commander year—or from any past visit she has made to your Auxiliary, Department, conference, convention, constitutional meeting, or other DAV Auxiliary event—please upload them to the National photo collection.

📷 Upload photos here:
<https://pixbearer.com/e/davauxcmdrwenthe>

We welcome both recent and past photos that capture her dedication to our organization, our members, and the veterans and families we serve. Please include any helpful details with your upload, such as the event name, location, and date, if known.

Thank you for helping us celebrate and document National Commander Wenthe's leadership and the many places she has touched throughout her service.

Fall Conference Donations:

General Fund: \$3,075
Family Assistance Fund: \$4,100
Winter Sports Clinic: \$850
Caregiver Fund: \$11,139
Education Fund: \$4,450
Disaster Relief Fund: \$1,950
DAVA 4 Kids: \$6,100
Camp Corral: \$1,550
Total: \$33,214



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Junior Activities

by Kimberly Knowlton, National Chairperson

As autumn arrives, October brings wonderful opportunities for our DAVA Juniors to dive into meaningful service while enjoying the spirit of the season. Engage your Juniors with hands-on fall projects like crafting seasonal thank-you cards for local VA hospital patients, teaming up with adult members to assist elderly veteran families with autumn yard cleanup, or organizing a harvest food drive for a local veterans' pantry.

October is also prime time for recruitment through autumn community events. Set up an interactive game or craft table at local fall festivals and trunk-or-treats to introduce neighborhood families to our Junior program. Hosting a seasonal "Bring a Friend" meeting featuring pumpkin decorating and sweet treats is another great way to make prospective members feel welcome and eager to join our ranks.

Finally, October is the ideal time to begin preparing our youth for Veterans Day activities in November. Encouraging our Juniors to take ownership of these fall projects helps build leadership skills and deepens their appreciation for our veterans.

Be sure to capture plenty of photos of your Juniors in action this month and share them with National so they can feature your Juniors online. Also, remember to log all volunteer hours so they can be included in the annual Junior Activity Report.

Thank you for all you do to inspire our youth!

Community Service

by Aura-Lee Nicodemus, National Chairperson

Fall is the perfect time to enjoy community service as an individual or with your unit or State Department. In many communities, the leaves will begin to fall, showing us, how beautiful change can be. In others, lawns may still need to be mowed. Raking leaves for elderly veterans, widows, or caregivers can be combined with creating holiday décor, such as scarecrows, to be used at locations where veterans gather.

You can also sponsor a pizza party and pumpkin-decorating contest for the children of veterans or create an old-fashioned Halloween party. You could even offer to provide fall holiday decorating at your local veteran's home.

This is also a great time to plan a breakfast or luncheon honoring veterans on Veterans Day. Members can bring an item to serve, helping keep out-of-pocket costs low. Be creative!

Now that you have planned your events, be sure to keep track of the hours, miles, and costs associated with your service. Your creative events can make a meaningful difference as veterans and their family members enjoy the activities and support your unit provides!

National Convention Winners!

Congratulations to our 2026 National Convention Program Winners!

Americanism:

Mayo SE Rochester #28, Minnesota; Besty Layne #169, Kentucky; Carroll E. Prosser #30, South Carolina; Glendale #20, Arizona

Special Americanism:

Crookston #14, Minnesota; Cactus #2, Arizona

Community Service:

F MC Lhinney #15, Maryland; Rogers County #44, Oklahoma; Victoria County #169, Texas; Glendale #20, Arizona

Junior Activities:

Dick M. Lynch #27, Georgia; Knob Hill #26, Colorado; Jack Redell #20, Louisiana

Junior Unit History Book:

Pittsburgh Co. #20, Oklahoma

National Junior Awards:

Ke’Niya L., Georgia; Jennika R., Minnesota; Zachary P., Massachusetts

Legislative:

Scott Vetterling #33, Massachusetts; James D. Wessinger #19, South Carolina; Elizabethtown #3, Kentucky; Glendale #20, Arizona

Mae Holmes Outstanding Unit:

Eastern Shore #24, Maryland; Michael J. Thomas #5, North Carolina; Millington #116, Tennessee; Glendale #20, Arizona

Membership:

Benton #118, Kentucky; Ridge #49, Florida; Cedar Hill #240, Texas; Florida Parish #50, Louisiana; Somerville #27, Massachusetts

State Membership:

Louisiana

VAVS:

Custer County #41, Nebraska; Simpson-Turner #27, Arkansas; Al Bartraw, Jr. #50, Virginia; Titusville #109, Florida

A Note of Thanks!

What a wonderful week! A heartfelt thank you to everyone who joined us for the DAV Auxiliary National Fall Conference!

Members from across the country came together to learn, share ideas, make new connections, reconnect with friends, and celebrate the incredible work being done for our veterans and their families.

Your enthusiasm, participation, and dedication are what make our Auxiliary strong. Whether you attended sessions, shared your ideas, volunteered, cheered on fellow members, or simply enjoyed spending time with your Auxiliary family, you helped make this conference a success!

We hope you returned home feeling inspired, energized, and ready to take what you learned back to your units and communities. Together, we can continue making a difference for those who have served.

Thank you for being part of the DAV Auxiliary family. We can't wait to see you again!