



AMVETS Post I Ladies Auxiliary

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Auxiliary #1 - State of Affairs – reported at the March 6th 2021 Spring DEC Conference

(355) days ago: WA's Governor mandated a temporary "Stay At Home" order; AMVETS Post I closed its doors; a global pandemic crisis was upon us; and our world changed "as we knew it."

Within six weeks, six Ladies reached out to our membership with "Wellness Checks." Within six months, our Membership Officer launched her mailings of letters & masks to 380 Ladies: reminding some to renew, others to update their profiles, and to all "wishing them well & thinking of you" greetings. (48) members sent in their dues. (59) gave us their new email addresses. And (29) moved to "parts unknown."

Pre-pandemic, we'd see members at our monthly meetings, occasionally in Post I's lounge, or annually at Post's events. Today, we have regular ZOOM meetings, volunteer remotely, and team-up with others to aid Veterans & our Community.

Our American Lake VA facility has been closed to non-emergent care. And our area Soldiers' Homes are closed to non-essentials. So, our Auxiliary donors sent cash, CDs, food, goods, supplies & toilet paper (all that would withstand the 14 days quarantine) to American Lake's VASH Veterans Families, Seniors residing at the VA CLC Building 200, and the Veterans in the VA TR-Housing homes.

Our schools have been closed. We collected art supplies for the Community In Schools – Tacoma, to give relief to kids from their on-line learning. We donated funds to "Caring For Kids," a local volunteer charity, to buy pre-schoolers hardcover "First Books." (Each book weighed 2.2 lbs.) Our earlier efforts (assembling care packages of new stuffed animals, miniature metal cars & blankets) were distributed to (90) Tacoma Police Officers, to carry in their patrol cars. These "Bears & Blankets" provide comfort to young, traumatized children upon their rescue. We also procured and delivered table games, sports balls & winter wear to the Children's Treatment Study Center at Western State Hospital.

(80) Pandemic Comfort Kits were packaged for veterans at the Tacoma Rescue Mission, the VA Homeless Outreach program, and AMVETS Service Office. (40) "Santa for Seniors" gift bags were distributed to Veterans-In-Need and Auxiliary members.

With everyone affected by the Pandemic closures & restrictions, we chose to “Take Care of Our Own.” Funds for Pandemic Adaptation, Recovery & Relief were given to Post I. Essential Auxiliary volunteers are at the Post, weekly, helping at the VA-accredited AMVETS Service Office or helping to “keep their lights on.” Since March 16th 2020, Auxiliary #1 members have volunteered (735) manhours to keep AMVETS Post I & Ladies Auxiliary active, viable, compliant and safe.

A noteworthy Auxiliary I contribution was our 2020 Thanksgiving & Christmas “Holiday Meals” food baskets community-project. Auxiliary I budgeted & funded \$400 total for both holidays. “Taking Care of Our Own:” (49) Veterans Families, (9) laid-off Post I employees, and (6) other families-in-need were given “Turkeys & Fixings” (breakfast to desserts) food baskets. Thanks to (2) nonprofits, (2) major cash donors, (1) AMVETS food donor, and numerous Auxiliary & Post I donors...Auxiliary I fed (64) families. An approximate food value @ \$3,800.

We did not forget the National AMVETS Auxiliary projects. We contributed funds to each of the (5) national projects: Freedom Foundation, St. Jude, PAWS with a Cause, John Tracy Clinic, and the National Auxiliary Scholarship Fund. And we contributed funds to the Gary Sinise Foundation, for Veterans-Related projects.

In 2020 – 2021, we draped the charter for (4) Auxiliary I members.

One member, Donna Buck, was active with (26) AMVETS, Veterans & Community projects. She was the 2017 – 2018 Dept of WA Auxiliary Member of the Year. She is the “2020 WA Dept of Veterans Affairs & Veterans Affairs Advisory Council’s Distinguished Service Award” Winner, posthumously.

We, the Ladies Auxiliary of AMVETS Post I, thank *you*...for your service.