VAVS means VETERANS AFFAIRS VOLUNTARY SERVICE
Representative and Deputy Representatives Certification or Re-Certification Information

You must be a member in good standing in the Marine Corps League Auxiliary to become a VAVS Representative or Deputy Representative at a VA Medical Center (VAMC) or Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC). An Associate member is welcome at a VA Hospital or Clinic, and her volunteer hours can be reported by the hospital for Auxiliary credit.

The certification/re-certification procedure is separate from registering as a volunteer. The certified Representative and Deputy Representatives are members of the VA facility Advisory Board, attend the quarterly meetings, and in October conduct the Annual Joint Review with the VAVS staff. They represent the MCLA and liaison with the facility. They keep the Unit and the MCLA volunteers informed about volunteer opportunities and recruit MCLA volunteers as needed for VA organized events.

Where a Unit exists, recommendation as a Representative or Deputy Representative must come from the Unit (Enclosure #35). The exception is in Departments whose Bylaws state they have the right to appoint a Representative or Deputy Representative, in which case the request for certification comes from the Department.

There is only one MCLA Representative and up to three Deputy Representatives at the hospital. The Unit President must complete **MCLA VAVS Enclosure #35** to the MCLA National VAVS Representative (address is on form), when requesting Certification of a member of the Auxiliary as a Representative or Deputy Representative to a Dept. of V.A. Medical Center as per the DVAMC rules. The DVAMC rules apply to every Veterans organization including the Marine Corps League Auxiliary. If more than one Unit volunteers at the same hospital, the Units should jointly select one Representative and each Unit name separate Deputy Representatives. One or both Unit Presidents will sign the request form. If the Department Bylaws state they have the right to appoint a Representative and Deputy Representatives, then the certification is signed by the Department President. The Representative and Deputy Representatives may not be a VA employee or represent another organization per DVAMC rules. The telephone number or e-mail address on the form is for the VA's use and our files only. The facility and address is especially important if there are several in the area.

The certification is for a two (2) year period with re-certification after each two-year period as long as that person is serving the Veterans in a proper manner. This also assures contact on a timely basis. National Representative should be advised of any changes in name, address, phone number or e-mail as soon as possible. She will contact the Manager of Voluntary Service to accomplish this as the expiration date draws near. It is at the discretion of the National Representative when a certification is for an indefinite period. Recertification is not automatic; it is done only after a request is made to the National Representative.

Representatives and Deputy Representatives must be regularly scheduled volunteers at a VAMC or Clinic. The Hospital Staff determines duties at the Hospital or Clinic. The Department of Veterans Affairs makes the rules and every Veterans organization follows the same rules.

Advisory committees are held quarterly. All VAVS Representatives and Deputy Representatives are required to attend on a regular basis. It is only necessary that one of those certified attend a meeting. The VA Central Office monitors the attendance of all organizations at the quarterly meetings. The VA staff has the right to cancel certification of the organization if there is no representation at three consecutive quarterly meetings. Any individual may be dropped as Representative or Deputy Representative if she misses 3 consecutive scheduled meetings. This rule applies to all the organizations that make up the National VAVS Advisory Committee.

One of the required duties of the MCLA Representative is participating in the Annual Joint review (AJR) held in October with the VA Volunteer staff. The resulting **VA 10-1240 Summary Review Form** is a recap of current year's participation by the MCLA. It also lists the program needs of the facility for next year and the MCLA commitments in the form of supplies, volunteer participation and funds. The appointed Representative receives a copy of the VA 10-1240 after the meeting to share with the Unit. The MCLA National VAVS Representative receives a copy of the AJR review directly from the hospital. She endorses it and forwards it to the Unit Representative.

Should a problem occur which cannot be resolved between staff and volunteer, the National Representative must be contacted for assistance. Do not go directly to the Central Office of VAVS, since it would only be referred back to the MCLA National Representative. This seldom happens as most of our volunteers have a good relationship with the VA Staff and each other.

THE VAVS PROGRAM NEEDS YOU!
VOLUNTEERS ARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN VA HEALTH CARE

The VAVS program provides a role for all who desire to volunteer. The gift of your time is the greatest gift one could possibly give. Won't you consider the hospitalized veterans?

No qualifications are needed except to CARE and SHARE and want to help the hospitalized veteran. The time given by the volunteers does aid the professional staff and does make the veterans' stay I the hospital much more pleasant. The staff will give information on what can and cannot be done. Each Medical Center does have its own programs, and this information will be given to the volunteers.

Volunteer assignments can be during days, evenings, nights and weekends in medical centers, clinics, and community based programs. Some assignments involve direct patient contact; others do not. If you are interested in the VAVS program, read the following to find out how you can become one of those WHO CARES.

The Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS) program is one of the largest volunteer programs in the Federal government. Our mission is to enhance the veterans' health care experience through utilization of volunteers and donations.

The generosity of the volunteer's time allows us to provide many of the additional niceties that otherwise could not be accomplished by the paid staff on a day-to-day basis. VAVS offers volunteer assignments that fulfill the volunteer's desire to make a difference in a veteran's life. The program can be tailored to meet the volunteer needs of an individual student, family, large group, or corporation.

The benefits of volunteering include health benefits by increasing your physical and mental activity, improving your physical and mental health, and extending your life. The social benefits help you make new friends, be part of a team, feel needed by making a positive impact and gaining a sense of pride, satisfaction, and achievement. The civic benefits let you share your skills, fulfill our civic duty, serve those who have served our country, and set the example for family, friends, and co-workers. Your career benefits may be to explore career paths, learn new skills, build your resume, and earn volunteer hours.

There are many volunteer opportunities by greeting patients at the information desk; a guest services ambassador delivering personal hygiene items, magazines, etc. to all inpatients; assist staff with feeding veterans who are not physically able to feed themselves; drive a transport van; teach veterans skills in indoor and outdoor sports; provide comfort in the hospice to families; escort patients to and from hospital appointments via wheelchair or gurney.

Individuals of all backgrounds and abilities are welcome. All volunteers are carefully screened and may be required to complete an interview, volunteer application, background investigation, general orientation, job specific competencies. This process is not only to ensure the safety and well-being of our veterans, but to provide a successful volunteer experience as well.

Contact the Voluntary Service staff at a VA facility near you if you are interested in volunteering or would like more information about volunteering.

The James H. Parke Memorial Youth Scholarship Award

James H. Parke was the first Director of Voluntary Service and the founding father of the Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS) National Advisory Committee (NAC). The James H. Parke Memorial Fund, comprised of VAVS NAC member organizations, was established in 1976 to serve as the non-profit source of funds for a VAVS Youth Scholarship. Organizations, volunteers, VA staff and others continue to contribute to the Fund.

The board of directors of the Fund annually establishes (in the early spring) the amount of the primary award and any secondary scholarships. The Fund communicates such and provides a nomination form to the Director, Voluntary Service office (10C2) for distribution to Voluntary Service Field Staff. The scholarships may be used for tuitions and fees, books, supplies and/or room and board or other educational needs purchased through the school of the students' choice. All scholarship winners must use their awards by their 24th birthday. All winners receive detailed guidance concerning scholarship utilization from the Treasurer of the Fund.

Each medical center may nominate one VAVS student volunteer for receipt of the award. Recommendations may be made by any VA staff member who acts as a supervisor of the student volunteer or a member of the local VAVS Committee. This recommendation should be discussed with the Chief, Voluntary Service, before submission to the Medical Center Director.

To be eligible, candidates must have completed 100 hours of regularly scheduled VAVS volunteer service during the calendar year prior to September 1, be a student in the 10th grade or above, and have not reached their 19th birthday.

Nomination

The Medical Center Director nominates a candidate for the award by submission of the nomination form to the President of the Fund by November 1. Nominations received after that date will not be considered. The nomination form should be completed to reflect the volunteer service and background of the candidate and include: age, years of volunteering, number of volunteer hours, areas of service, and affiliated/supporting organization, if any. Criteria on which candidates are evaluated for consideration of awards include: Scholastic Activity, Dependability, Fulfillment and acceptance of responsibility, Personality and pleasantness to patients and staff, Leadership capability, Inspiration to patients through service performed and Appearance.

The National Winner receives a plaque and a letter of commitment. This presentation is usually made at the Annual Meeting of the National VAVS Advisory Committee. All personal information contained in the nomination form for the James H. Parke Memorial Youth Scholarship Award, as well as any photograph, may be used by the Fund and VA for promotion and publicity purposes. None of the information is required by law and is, therefore, disclosed voluntarily. A consent form (VA Form 10-3203) is available in all medical centers and should be attached to the nomination package.

For additional information, contact your local VA Voluntary Service Office.

*** VAVS SERVICE AWARD ***

MARINE CORPS LEAGUE AND AUXILIARY VOLUNTEER AWARD
FOR EXCELLENCE IN SERVICE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
VOLUNTARY SERVICE PROGRAM

The Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service Award for Leadership was first presented in 1963 by Hy and Sue Rosen, Past National Commandant and Auxiliary President, as a trophy to be awarded each year at the National Assembly to the League or Auxiliary member chosen by the VAVS Committee as most deserving of this award for leadership in the VA Hospital program. Volunteers in our VAVS Program are the key people who represent us at the VA Medical Centers, Outpatient Clinics, and the many Community programs sanctioned by the Department of Veterans Affairs. We believe they should be given special recognition for outstanding activities, excellence in carrying out their programs, as well as providing leadership when necessary, in order to make life easier for the hospitalized veteran, outpatient, homeless or one in a nursing home under the jurisdiction of the Department of Veterans Affairs. In years past, there were trophies presented to the winners but they have not been given since 1999. To preserve the record of winners, a large plaque showing winners should replace the trophy, and be displayed permanently at National Headquarters, with individual plaques or certificates given to winners at discretion of the National VAVS Representatives and Deputies of the League and Auxiliary and past winners.

Criteria for eligibility to be chosen as the outstanding volunteer of the year in the VAVS Program are:

1. Must be a member in good standing to be chosen as the outstanding volunteer of the year.
2. Must have served on a regular basis in a VA Hospital, Outpatient Clinic, or other properly certified area for a period of at least three (3) years.
3. Must meet attendance requirements for VAVS quarterly meetings if a currently certified Representative or Deputy.
4. Must have a letter of recommendation submitted to the Committee by a VAMC Director, Manager of Voluntary Service, or other qualified staff; and by the Unit or Detachment describing works, programs, special activities, which they feel make that person an excellent nominee.
5. Qualifications should include one or more of the following: outstanding hours, special program, leadership, manner in which patients are cared for, or other service provided which significantly adds to the better care of veteran patients under the VAVS Program.

Department Conventions are an excellent time to consider selecting a volunteer for this award. Recommendations should be sent to your National League or Auxiliary VAVS Representative no later than July 10. Winners each year at National Convention shall be chosen by the National VAVS Representatives and Deputies of both the League and the Auxiliary, and any interested previous winners present at that Convention. Names will not be divulged until the annual VAVS meeting during Convention, and shall be included in the printed proceedings of both the League and Auxiliary Convention. If no current nominee is able to meet the criteria, the Committee may review nominees for the 2 previous years. The committee reserves the right to choose one who has not been properly sponsored but meets other criteria by 100% vote.

ENCLOSURE #34