

The American Legion Auxiliary (ALA), Department of Wisconsin, Centennial Strategic Planning Committee continues to rethink with a SMILE: *“Where we are; Where are we going; How do we get there; and How do we know we are there?”*

The committee continues to work on Strategies and Initiatives that support the five-year National ALA 2014-2019 Centennial Strategic Plan Goals which support the ALA Mission and Strategic Vision.

Goals

1. Enhance Membership Strength
2. Create an Internal Culture of Goodwill
3. Develop Leadership at all Levels
4. Strengthen Department and Units
5. With The American Legion,
Raise Awareness to Build Brand Loyalty

Department of Wisconsin Goal Champions ~ Advisor

- Char Kiesling / Mary Petrie ~ Teresa Isensee
Sue Hembrook / Diane Weggen ~ Joyce E. Endres
Amy Luft/ Lorrie Barber ~ Laura Calteux
Becky Mueller / Judy Kuta ~ Jan Pulvermacher-Ryan
Linda Coppock / Danie Wilson ~ Julie Muhle
Entire SP Committee roster available upon request

Goal 5: With The American Legion, Raise Awareness to Build Brand Loyalty

Incentives, actions, comments:

- 1: Promote ALA magnetic emblems and Centennial products to proudly raise brand awareness
ALA magnetic emblems flew off the shelves as numerous WI ALA units and members ordered the emblems to wear everywhere. ALA apparel was also promoted and worn to promote the American Legion Auxiliary and The American Legion Family.
Centennial American Legion Family magnetic emblems, shirts and coins were promoted to raise awareness and build brand loyalty with a focus on The American Legion Family's 100th Anniversary.
- 2: Promote the Poppy a symbol of freedom, as another branding tool
The goal of this initiative is to raise awareness of the American Legion Auxiliary through the Poppy Program and encourage members and/or the Goal team.
 - Place the ALA Poppy Brochure in public locations (*e.g. doctor/dentist offices, libraries, schools, etc.*)
 - Provide Poppy placemats and worksheets (*i.e. Crossword puzzles, word search, maze, and coloring pages*) to school children on National Poppy Day or all year to teach the history of the poppy
 - Create Poppy Placemats to use as a Poppy Coloring Contest for Junior members or in local schools
 - Encourage place mats to be colored by grade-school students for use at local Posts for meal functions
 - Promote Poppy Program efforts as an asset to the Veteran in the Classroom Program

Goal 4: Strengthen Department and Units

Incentives, actions, comments:

- 1: Strengthen WI county organization; Analyze roles and responsibilities.
 - Define the purpose and function of the County Councils, one being membership
 - Requested team members to share their good/bad experiences with county organizations
 - Their vision for a 'perfect' county organization and ideas to make county groups a resource for local units, districts and department
 - Create a guide of best practices for county organizations (*e.g. define officer/chairman roles*)
 - Create an organizational chart for chain of command; people more comfortable with visuals.
 - Consider change to current structure (*e.g. similar to National with Divisions; Units to Districts, Districts to Divisions, Divisions to Department*)

Goal 4: Strengthen Department and Units, continued

- Define the responsibilities of the County Councils and their leaders.
 - Build stronger Councils by enhancing understanding of ways to improve leadership at this level (*e.g. share successes and work with SP Goal 3 team*)
 - Get county organizations more involved and active while not adding more responsibilities on units that may be very busy/stressed or small units without many active members
 - Develop accountability scale (*e.g. County President mentors Units; encourage more familiarity with units needing assistance*)
 - Encourage county presidents to report to their district president about their unit's welfare to help district president know quickly that a unit is doing well or has problems.
- 2. Develop a County Program Committee Application to help incoming County President:
 - Define members interested in Program Chairmanships
 - Know who is interested in a specific program and what experience she has to encourage member and unit interest define in Program Plan of Action
 - Encourage more members to get involved. Consider a program vice-chairman to help strengthen bigger programs? (VA&R, C&Y etc). Build accountability for program chairmen
- 3. Hold County focused ALA training sessions
 - Requested ideas from team members to help ensure training opportunities are productive and meaningful meetings.
 - Create a training session in each district for county presidents so they may become front-line resources for the Units.
 - Hold a session at the 2019 American Legion Mid-Winter Conference. Consider a joint session with TAL family with a Motivational Speaker or holding Team Building exercises.
- 4. Share county organization success stories to strengthen member experiences.

One Success Story:

In keeping with Strategic Planning incentives, Outagamie County Council started a new program to engage members, encourage attendance, and support ALA programs to promote leadership and educate members all at the same time.

The Outagamie County President, Linda Coppock, started a new format. She assigned all county units to prepare a presentation on two ALA Programs and asked the unit to present an assigned program, at a Outagamie County meeting, in an educational, yet fun way.

During 2017-2018, the county has had presentations for VA&R, Parliamentary Procedures, Leadership, Poppy and AEF. At every meeting they also have a Membership report/update, as one of the County functions, is to help with membership!

Units were encouraged to invite Department Program Chairmen to attend County meetings for their given programs. Department Leadership Chairman Rose Heinz and Department Poppy Chairman Maggie Geiger both attended, gave presentations and answered questions pertaining to their programs.

To date, units that have given presentations, quizzes, power point presentation, used a Legionnaire to read Flanders Field, and were human puppets! They also had a "Roast" for a 97 year old Past Department President, Anita Kapp, a 69 year member of Unit 38, Appleton!

Results of this effort: *Photos are available from some of the meetings*

- Increased member attendance at Outagamie County meetings. Members enjoy the presentations and each Unit has taken a very active roll to prepare their presentations which promotes leadership and engages members.
- Members are excited to see what the next meeting will bring as Units try to raise the bar
- Member comments: A lot of fun, entertaining and educational. Actually learning things we didn't know or just took for granted. Learning and enjoying the process of teaching each other

Goal 3: Develop Leadership at all Levels

Incentives, actions and comments:

- 1: Review WI leadership curriculums. Ensure training is complete, fresh and exciting.
 - 2018-2019 year Wisconsin will test the updated Leadership Training curriculums
 - Six ALA in-the-Know sessions were held in 2017-2018 to further develop leadership.
2. Help Goal 4 with County Organizational Analysis and Implementation
3. Enhance Junior Program

We hear and say Junior members are our future. The time is now to do more than lip service. We must make the Junior's Activity Program a PRIORITY for the American Legion Auxiliary. We must realize the need to invest money and time to make it happen.

 - Get Senior members excited and help them realize the need for and value of Junior members
 - Hold Junior Workshops for Seniors; Include Junior presenter in ALA in the Know sessions
 - Welcome Seniors to Junior Conferences (both district and department)
 - Send department representatives to District Spring Conference with a focus on juniors
 - Recruit Junior members from the community
 - Hold free events for the community where area youth can be introduced to all the benefits of American Legion Family membership. *Suggestions: Mother Daughter Tea, paint party, brat fry with activities, sock hop, just use your imagination.*
 - Encourage Units to invest a little money in community Junior focused events. In business you need to "spend a little money to make money"; the same goes here.
 - Promote unit Miss Poppy/Poppy Princess. This honor might be a reason to join the auxiliary. If you get youth involved, it's a good chance the rest of the family will join in.
 - Make unit meetings, projects, events, and activities Family Friendly. Family time encourages community involvement in an organization when quality family time is involved
4. Involve Junior Members
 - Make Junior member meetings FUN and meaningful
 - Do activities that are fun yet are tailored to accomplishing our mission (*e.g. Learn the preamble using a Preamble Scramble Contest. Cut up the preamble into sections and have the juniors along with the help of seniors put it back together.*)
 - Make cards for Veteran (e.g Red, white and blue Marble Art for their card front and back)
 - Fill bags for Homeless Veterans and citizens. Turn it into a relay race.
 - Include juniors in Senior meeting, events, and activities to energize Unit meetings
 - Encourage two-way mentors ~ Senior/Junior have much to offer; learn from each other
 - Juniors need volunteer hours. Ask them to help you with events and projects
 - Juniors are knowledgeable in electronics and social media; ask them to teach seniors
 - Share Juniors enthusiasm, youth and energy with the American Legion Family
5. Let Juniors pick their projects. Make suggestions, if needed
 - Juniors get excited about a project if they chose it!
 - They really like doing things for other kids
 - Build on their great ideas. Be open, even if you don't think it will work; help improve ideas
6. Use the Patch program to involve Junior members
 - Include juniors that live close and those that don't live in your area
 - Encourage juniors to work independently to gain knowledge about/involvement in ALA mission
7. Publicize Junior Activities
 - Help them develop newspaper and social media releases. Media is where the kids are.
 - Make sure you have media releases from the parents before you publicize junior pictures.
 - Get volunteer and scholarship opportunities out to the public. May get new juniors.
8. Recognize Juniors for their accomplishments. Like Senior members, they like rewards/awards

Goal 2: Create an Internal Culture of Goodwill

Incentives, actions, comments:

1. Wrote articles to spread news about Goodwill acts of kindness for the *Wisconsin/Unit* mailings
2. Re-energize Team
 - Sent out a challenge to team members to re-energize ourselves. Due to timing of e-mail, goal champions plan to send message again to continue energizing efforts.
 - Goal Champions are working together come up with other avenues to recharge their team
 - Goal two is a very challenging avenue, that is very abstract
 - Team thinks however, it's one of the most crucial goals for the betterment of the Auxiliary
 - Hope now that spring is here the committee will become recharged into action

Goal 1: Enhance Membership Strength

Strategies, incentives, actions and comments:

- A. Promote membership and create opportunities to attract, engage and retain members:
 - Conduct a membership survey with new/Junior members to help the ALA further understand needs of a new generation of members. Began survey process with local members
 - Mentor by orientating new members to various aspects of the ALA and their unit
 - Use new member packets filled with major information (*e.g. unit/ALA pamphlets/emblem*)
 - Provide officers names, phone numbers and emails at very first contact to potential members
 - Remind members OFTEN why they joined, the results of their efforts and the value of working as a team toward the SAME goals.
 - Carry applications for The American Legion Family. Sometimes you need to sign a Legionnaire to get the Auxiliary member
 - Challenge the norms, retain needed traditions, and implement effective change
- B. Reward and recognize members, units, counties, and districts
 - Honor your Veteran(s)!
 - Reward Volunteers (Hospital/CBOC/Crafters for VAMCs)
 - Take the lead offered by National/Department; Set up awards at unit, county, district levels
 - Encourage rewards/recognition for going 'above & beyond' or for a project well-done
 - Give a 'Pat on the Back'. Recognition goes a long way to encourage continued involvement
 - Recognize members at a meeting or event (*e.g. celebrate Member of the Month or Year*)
 - Offer certificates or small gifts (*e.g. provide to first three members to sign-up a new member*)
- C. Expand internal and external alliances.
 - Share your own ALA story, interests, activities, excitement, and reason(s) for membership
 - Share opportunities for Legion Family Scholarships with students and young adults
 - Develop a Unit newsletter ~ USPS mail and E-mail to members
 - Keep members updated; especially long-distance members or shut-ins
 - Start with three or four newsletters a year to keep members informed
 - Keep newsletters brief: A single two-sided page works; Interest wanes quickly
 - Ask volunteers to write articles that are concise, well written and promote interest
 - Work with the unit public relations and program chairmen to submit articles/info to the local newspaper, cable station, chamber office, social media, etc. on activities to inform the public/reminds member

The Department of Wisconsin is proud of our Strategic Planning efforts. We have a great Strategic Planning team of volunteers who **S.M.I.L.E:** Support Member Involvement; Lets Encourage.