

MENTORING FOR LEADERSHIP AMBASSADOR

STEPHANIE KRUEGER

10165 Fairview St.
Taylor, MI 48180-3295

313.585.5066

stepherthevfer@aol.com

Of all the areas of our organization that are important to our success and our future, I can think of none that will have more of an impact on the Auxiliary than this one. Mentoring for Leadership is as simple or as complicated as we choose to make it. But the bottom line is this: We should devise a succession plan.

Make no mistake, a volunteer job is an important role. Finding our successor while we are still able to teach them is the best way. Simply put, we are the experts in our field. It does not matter if we are a Floor Officer, Chairman or elected Officer, or whether we serve on the Auxiliary, District or Department level. We all know the pitfalls, as well as the best methods, in our area of leadership. We need to make it our plan to find someone who is interested in our area of expertise and slowly mentor them to take our place. Of course, no one likes to be replaced, but the reality is we need to prepare for the future in all aspects of our organization and on all levels.

Training is imperative and learning by the seat of your pants leads to frustration. A gentle training, day by day, and week by week will lead to a stronger future.

Leadership comes in many packages. You have the Trustee who knows that job completely. That's a leader in that area. The Conductress/Conductor who is amazing on the floor and knows all the rules and protocol of their job - again they are a leader in that job. Chairmen, Treasurers, Secretaries, as well as Presidents, are leaders. No one can be an expert (or a leader) their first day in the Auxiliary and no one should be left alone with a new job when we have resident experts to teach them.

Mentoring is the responsibility of all of us and we need to begin today. We need to find our replacements and train them to be better than we are. We need to share our knowledge. What good does it do anyone for us to keep the information to ourselves? How does that make for a successful organization?

This year I ask you to look around and see how YOU can help this organization by mentoring. Hold a training event for members - on your local level, join up with other Auxiliaries. Make a game out of it. Make it so enjoyable to learn that others will want to be a part of it.

Team building is important for all aspects of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary. So why not create mentoring teams. Remember we all had a teacher we never forgot. Why? Most likely because they saw something in us and nurtured it. They made us feel special, important. That's what we want to do during our 2022-2023 Program Year - make our mentees feel special and important. We want them to become the next experts and to feel special enough to want to share what they were taught. Work together to make the next term of office and terms for many years to come, a little bit better than the last one, and we have done our job.

Leaders are not born, they're made. They may have gifts that make them better able to lead than others, but the truth is leaders are only as good as the ones who taught them, encouraged them and brought out their true potential.

We have many resources available on the VFW Auxiliary National website's Program & Publicity Resources page at vfwauxiliary.org/resources. They did not just appear there magically. Someone worked to start writing them down, another added to them, and then another and each year they are fine-tuned just a bit more. Everyone needs a starting point to learn. You can be that starting point for someone. Others may not be sure that they can be a mentor; show them they know more than they think.

An event to train mentors is a great plan for a Department event. Get together and get going. A mentor needs to be taught how much they have to share, so help them.

Using the TEAM approach for Mentoring for Leadership will lead to success.

- T** – Teach someone what you know and are passionate about.
- E** – Everyone deserves to find their joy in our organization.
- A** – Always be on the lookout for the next leader.
- M** – Mentor all of the time since success is best when it is shared.

Individually we are one drop, but together we are an ocean!

Remember that a TEAM is a group of people who trust each other. Create your team!

MENTORING FOR LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

Ensure a Positive Member Experience • Engage in Learning and Training Opportunities Develop and Empower Members for Leadership Roles

Mentoring helps broaden leadership skills and leadership provides guidance for mentoring members; they work hand in hand.

Mentoring

A stronger membership on every level of our organization will be accomplished through mentoring. Mentoring for Leadership will enhance all types of Program activities. Vigilance in mentoring will make the difference in obtaining and maintaining members; since a large number of other organizations are vying for our members' time and talents.

Through the mentoring process, extending the hand of friendship to a new member or even a tenured member who has been inactive for a while can create a strong and vibrant organization. Providing a positive and organized meeting experience will leave members wanting to come back, especially when good communication and respect for each other is demonstrated.

By engaging in mentoring activities you will build a stronger relationship amongst new and tenured members. Whether you create a formal or informal mentoring program, every Auxiliary should have a type of resource to assist in communicating and motivating members to better understand the organization. Utilizing the *Mentoring at VFW Auxiliary: Relationship Building for the Future* document will help you get started in creating a program for your Auxiliary. Through this Program you will be encouraged to embrace and promote the CARE concept.

- **Catch** the member when they first join.
- **Ask** them to participate.
- **Remember** what it felt like to be new.
- **Engage** them in a program that fits them.

Some individuals may be hesitant to take on the task of being a mentor; however, keep in mind there are also silent mentors amongst our members.

A mentor who is able to communicate, energize interest and is patient will enrich the member experience. The majority of our members have had someone who took interest in them, is knowledgeable

about the Auxiliary, willing to explain meeting proceedings, the *Podium Edition: Bylaws and Ritual* and National Programs.

Over time the mentee may express interest in going beyond just attending meetings. They may even realize they have gained confidence to take the next step in entering a leadership role. This may consist of holding an Officer position, Chairmanship or becoming a committee member.

Leadership

Leadership can be difficult in any organization. Through mentoring, willingness to listen to the suggestions of others and following the guidelines set in place for the office or position held, leadership is easier.

A mentor who uses the *Building on the VFW Auxiliary Foundation* is the key to creating a successful leader. This resource should be shared on each level of the organization. The guidebooks provide suggestions and examples for Officers, Chairmen and members to understand their duties according to the National Bylaws and the best practices discovered during the 100-plus year history of the organization. The goal of the guidebooks is to develop and maintain consistent practices across the organization, to train and equip leaders of today and tomorrow, and to strengthen the basic building blocks of the organization: the foundation.

Mentoring for Leadership resource materials may be found at vfwauxiliary.org/resources.

- *2022-2023 National Program Book.*
- *Mentoring at VFW Auxiliary: Relationship Building for the Future.*
- *Building on the VFW Auxiliary Foundation.*

Please be aware the Mentoring for Leadership and Chief of Staff Programs utilize many of the same tools and resources. Reviewing and sharing the various Membership materials available shall create dialogue and interest to the mentee and future leaders.

Listed within the Chief of Staff Resources:

- VFW Auxiliary Acronyms and Common Terminology
- Healthy Auxiliary Tool Kit
- Auxiliary Meeting Checklist
- Communication Phone/Text Tree
- Healthy Auxiliary Checklist – Auxiliary To-Dos and Deadlines
- VFW Auxiliary Meeting Challenges & Solutions
- VFW Auxiliary Member Questionnaire

Utilize the various Membership Recruitment and Retention Tools:

- Membership Engagement Packet
- Membership Moments
- VFW Auxiliary Fact Sheet
- Member Benefits One-Sheet
- Cultivate Engagement by Asking “How would you like to contribute?”

- Matching Member Talents to Leadership Success
- Engaging Existing Members
- Know your National Bylaws
- Understanding Auxiliary Traditions video
- VFW Auxiliary National Programs Overview

Additional beneficial resources for the mentor, mentee and leader may be found at the Online Auxiliary Academy.

- MALTA (Membership Auxiliary Leadership Technology Access)
- Administrative & Instructional
- Social Media (Facebook)
- Membership & Leadership

Goals + Mentoring + Leadership = Healthy Auxiliaries

DRAFT

MENTORING FOR LEADERSHIP PROGRAM AWARDS

AWARDS FOR MEMBERS

1. Citation awarded to the first, second and third place member in each Department who is instrumental in fulfilling the role as a mentor/leader. Three nominations from each Department Mentoring for Leadership Chairman are due by April 30, 2023, to the National Mentoring for Leadership Ambassador Stephanie Krueger. Nomination form (required) available at vfwauxiliary.org/resources. Citation will be mailed directly to the member.

AWARDS FOR AUXILIARIES

1. Most unique activity or training in the Auxiliary to show members how to find and train mentees.
 - Citation to every Auxiliary that has an activity or training in the Auxiliary to show members how to find and train mentees. Criteria and entry form (required) available at vfwauxiliary.org/resources. Auxiliaries must send the entry form to their Department Mentoring for Leadership Chairman by March 31, 2023.

The Department Mentoring for Leadership Chairman must send a copy of all submitted entry forms to National Headquarters by April 30, 2023.

Citations will be mailed directly to participating Auxiliaries from National Headquarters.

- Citation and \$25 to one Auxiliary in each of the four Conferences with the most outstanding activity or training in the Auxiliary to show members how to find and train mentees. Winners will be announced and awards presented at the 2023 National Convention in Phoenix, Arizona.

The Department Mentoring for Leadership Chairman must sign and send a copy of the completed Department-winning entry form to the National Mentoring for Leadership Ambassador by April 30, 2023 for judging.

AWARDS FOR DEPARTMENTS AND DEPARTMENT CHAIRMEN

1. Citation to each Department Mentoring for Leadership Chairman for participation in this Program. Citation will be presented at the 2023 Department Convention.
2. \$25 VFW Store Gift Certificate to one Department Mentoring for Leadership Chairman in each of the 10 Program Divisions who has the best mentoring activity or training about how to mentor future leaders for a specific position within the VFW Auxiliary. Winners will be announced and awards presented at the 2023 National Convention in Phoenix, Arizona.
3. Outstanding Performance Award in each of the 10 Program Divisions based on criteria listed on Page 5 and for the promotion of Program Goals listed at the top of Page 48. Winners will be announced and awards presented at the 2023 National Convention in Phoenix, Arizona.