

## Veterans & Family Support January Newsletter

Happy New Year! This year is coming to an end quickly.

Did you know that Veteran Care giving is a part of Veterans and Family support?

At the heart of the VFW Auxiliary mission is caring and support to Veterans and their families. Remember that many of our own members are caregivers to their veteran making sure they are happy, healthy and ensuring their own well being.

What a typical day might look like for a family caregiver?

**Mornings:** The average family caregiver is a working mother of school-age children. Mornings become a tricky balancing act of getting the kids ready for school, making sure your loved one has what they need for the day, and then getting yourself out the door for work.

**Throughout the Day:** Up to 70% of the time, the family caregiver manages the medications. This means ensuring their loved one is taking medication correctly and maintaining an up-to-date medication list.

**During the Workday:** Six out of 10 family caregivers work full or part time in addition to juggling their care giving responsibilities at home. Most say they have cut back on working hours, take a leave of absence, or quit their job entirely.

**Evenings:** Evenings are for family time and mealtime. Nutrition is as important for caregivers as it is for their loved ones. Proper nutrition helps maintain strength, energy, stamina and positive attitude.

**Late at Night:** This might be the only time that family caregivers get a few minutes for themselves to rest and recharge. The chance to take a breather and re-energize is vital so they can be as good a caregiver tomorrow as they were today.

**Middle of the Night:** If loved ones may need to go to the emergency room in the middle of the night on occasion, family caregivers should be prepared ahead of time with what they need to know and what they need to have with them.

Things that may help a Caregiver:

**Attend a care giving conference or workshop:** Attend an online workshop for Care giving with the National Alliance for Care giving. The most important thing is to remember that you are not alone.

**Take naps:** One of the healthiest things you can do for yourself is to fit naps into your weekly schedule. Round-the-clock care giving is never easy. When your loved one takes a break, don't do other task – take a break too. It's important not to wear yourself down, who will take care of you?

What are some things that we can do to help a Caregiver?

Here are some ideas for gifts and services to let them know you care.

1. Prepare a package of bath salts, oil and lotions with a card of appreciation and a reminder to care for themselves.
2. Send an aroma therapy diffuser and essential oil. Lavender is great for promoting sleep, while rose is great for relaxation.
3. Give them a break by making and delivering a home-cooked meal.
4. Offer to take over the care givers duties for a short period or offer to come by and assist

- them. Sometimes a few hours of help can make all the difference.
5. Create a gift basket or purchase a gift of the month subscription for them. Send cheese and crackers, cookies and other sweet treats, paired with some wine or beer; this can lift their spirits.
  6. Offer to help them decorate for Thanksgiving and/or Christmas. This can bring joy to their holiday experience.
  7. Connect by phone, text or email. Let them know you are there to help and/or listen.
  8. Mail a card; send flowers or a gift card to their favorite store/restaurant.
  9. Host a dinner or luncheon in their honor.

Did you know that there is a change in the VFW Auxiliary Bylaws for a Caregiver? Sec 909 -- Children, Caregivers of Members and Members that are Caregivers Attending Meetings

- Caregivers of a member may attend an Auxiliary meeting when accompanied by the Auxiliary member.
- Members performing the task of a Caregiver for a non-member may bring that individual to the Auxiliary meeting when accompanied by the Auxiliary member.

Veterans and Family Support Reports: 21 Auxiliaries have sent in GOOD reports, I have contacted 8 Auxiliaries that have sent reports on wrong form, missing documentation or emailed. I have heard back from 4 of these Auxiliaries to get the reports done correctly. The correct Report Form has the email address: [scauxbshuler@yahoo.com](mailto:scauxbshuler@yahoo.com) on the bottom.

Only 9 Auxiliaries have sent in reports from sending a Veterans spouse get well cards from her hospital stay. Please remember to report, report and report.

If you need any help with reports or anything I'm just a phone call away.

“We Bee – lieve in our Veterans”

Barbara Shuler

Department Veterans and Family Support Chairperson

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