

Home is where the heart starts!

Take a moment and look around the town where you live. For most people, where they've chosen to live is special to them. We love our hometowns. This is where our cherished memories are built. It's our comfort zone. Granted, all places come with their own pros and cons, but we strive to make our surroundings be the best that it can possibly be – not just for ourselves, but also for friends, neighbors and others that live in our hometown. That is where the Community Service program comes in, playing a vitally important role in bettering the lives of those in our communities.

In this year of passion, you are encouraged to take that passionate motivation for action and use it for advocating for a positive, compassionate change in our hometowns. Compassion is defined as the feeling that arises when you are confronted with another's suffering and feel motivated to relieve that suffering. Compassion is about taking action to improve a situation...to bring light to another's darkness. As a member of the American Legion Auxiliary, you already have a built-in sense of compassion for those in need – you wouldn't be involved in this great organization if you felt otherwise.

For many of us, it is only our own personal circumstances and obligations that hold us back from doing more when we see a need in our communities. The struggle is that our hearts are many times bigger than our purses or wallets! But there are so many things that can be done that don't require funds that will still make a difference. The various Community Service projects that you participate in, such as some that are mentioned in this Program Engagement Plan, are aimed at making a positive impact on the hometowns in which you live, as well as improving the lives of those that live there. Whether it is a big project that requires a lot of details and planning, such as a fund-raising walkathon, or just a simple gesture of helping a sick or elderly neighbor with putting the trashcan out, these actions make our hometowns an even better place to live.

To be that point of light in your community, below are just a few examples that you can take part in that will positively impact the lives of others and contribute to the betterment of your community.

- Volunteer at a food bank or soup kitchen
- Clean up public spaces like parks or beaches
- Doing yardwork for elderly/ill neighbor
- Participate in Blood drives
- Assist with local animal shelters
- Read to children at libraries or hospitals
- Put together first aid kits for homeless shelters
- Volunteer at a local nonprofit or community center
- Plant trees or a pollinator garden
- Encourage voter registration

I ask you to take the time to read through this Program Engagement Plan and let it inspire you to look around your hometowns and find ways to be a point of light for those who may need help in finding their way out of the darkness.

For God and Country,
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