

# PUBLIC RELATIONS CURRENTS



## KINDNESS IS LEADERSHIP

*By Virna Luke*

Public Relations is more than press releases and Facebook posts, it's the compassion we show each other. A kind word, a welcoming smile, or an encouraging gesture builds trust and sets the tone for everything we do. True leadership isn't about position; it's about how you make others feel.

### Ways to Lead with Kindness:

- **Welcome warmly.** Greet every person who walks into your Unit meeting, especially new faces.
- **Celebrate others.** Recognize small acts of service and say thank you often.
- **Be inclusive.** Invite different members to share ideas or lead projects, everyone's voice matters.
- **Stay calm and gracious.** Even in disagreements, kindness can keep the focus on solutions, not conflicts.
- **Send thank-you notes.** A handwritten card or personal message of appreciation to your members shows their time and service truly matter.

Kindness is a leadership strength. When we lift each other up and lead with dignity, we create a culture that reflects the very best of the American Legion Auxiliary.



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## COMMUNITY OUTREACH WINS

By Virna Luke

Big or small, every act of service tells the Auxiliary's story. **Outreach builds bridges, strengthens trust,** and helps the community understand who we are, what we do, why we matter. Here are some easy, meaningful projects your unit can take on this fall:

- **Thank First Responders.** Deliver a basket of snacks, bottled water, or handwritten notes to your local fire or police department. A small gesture goes a long way in showing appreciation.
- **Veteran Connection.** Host a coffee hour for veterans at your Post home. Invite the community to join in listening to their stories and building friendships across generations.
- **Clothing or Food Drive.** Partner with a local shelter, food bank, or church to collect non-perishable food, coats, or children's clothing. Share photos of your donation day to inspire others to give, too.
- **Youth Engagement.** Sponsor an essay, art, or coloring contest at a local school on patriotism or "Celebrating America's 250th Birthday & the Veterans who fought for our freedom." Recognize participants publicly to encourage pride and creativity.
- **Flag Etiquette at Schools or Scouts.** Offer a short flag-folding or etiquette demonstration. It's a powerful way to teach respect for our nation's symbols.
- **Cards of Caring.** Host a card-making day for members. Send uplifting notes to Veterans in VA facilities or to deployed servicemembers overseas.
- **Partner with a Library.** Set up a "Veterans Corner" with donated books or create a patriotic display for Veterans Day.
- **Adopt-a-Veteran.** Encourage members to "adopt" a local veteran for the year with monthly calls, visits, or cards.
- **Community Clean-Up with Pride.** Organize a clean-up at a park, cemetery, or Post grounds. Invite Scouts, ROTC, or youth groups to serve alongside Auxiliary members.
- **Welcome Home Bags.** Assemble small bags with toiletries, socks, or snacks for homeless Veterans moving into housing programs.
- **Share a Skill.** Host a free workshop at your Post home (cooking, resume writing, knitting, or social media basics) and invite community members to join.

Every one of these "wins" spreads awareness of the Auxiliary's mission. Remember to always take photos and write a short paragraph afterward. Share it with your local paper, Facebook page, district leaders, and [Passionate Posts](#) (department newsletter).

When the community sees the Auxiliary serving, they see kindness in action. And when we invite them to join us, **we strengthen our mission and grow our membership.**



## YOU ARE THE VOICE & FACE OF THE ALA

By Virna Luke

Every member is a walking, talking Public Relations representative for the American Legion Auxiliary. Whether you're at a community event, speaking with neighbors, or posting online, **your words and actions reflect the heart of our organization.** Be positive, be kind, and be proud to share our mission: serving veterans, military, and their families. Sometimes, the only impression someone has of the American Legion Auxiliary is **you**. Let's make it a lasting and meaningful one.

### Tips to Represent the ALA with Pride:

- **Lead with kindness.** A warm smile or genuine welcome can open more doors than a polished speech.
- **Share your "why."** When someone asks about the Auxiliary, tell them why you joined and what keeps you passionate. Personal stories stick.
- **Keep it simple.** Use short, clear phrases like "We serve veterans and their families" or "We help children and strengthen communities."
- **Be visible.** Wear your Auxiliary pin, shirt, or poppy when you attend community events, it sparks conversations.
- **Stay positive online.** Think before you post. Ask, "Does this reflect the mission and values of ALA?" Share uplifting stories, photos of service, and encouragement.

Public Relations is also about building relationships. Every time we share kindness, tell our story, and show our passion for veterans, **we build a stronger future for the Auxiliary and those we serve.**







## START PLANNING FOR THE HOLIDAYS

By Erin Hoffer, APR, CAPC

We can't believe it's that time already! The stores are already carrying pumpkin spice and Halloween decorations. It's a good reminder that September offers a time for holiday planning. Early preparation ensures that your unit can create joyful experiences that **honor veterans and bring people together**.

What does your unit do for the holidays? Do you send holiday cards overseas to veterans? Do you run a canned food drive or host bake sales just before Thanksgiving? Do you adopt military families for Christmas? As the PR Chairperson, we recommend you start working with your Unit officers and committee chairpersons on the activities that they are planning. If they form committees focused on logistics, outreach, and donations - **be sure to join those committees so that you stay in-the-know..**

Get a head start on identifying the media outreach you'd like to do for these events and activities. Start designing the flyers and drafting social media posts. You'll appreciate that you did this prepwork well in advance so that when it's time, you aren't feeling crunched.

Most importantly, keep the mission front and center. Every event should reflect our **commitment to service, compassion and community**. By starting in September, we can build momentum and ensure no veteran or child feels forgotten this holiday season.





## SHORT-FORM VIDEO: A POWERFUL TOOL FOR STORY TELLING

*By Erin Hoffer, APR, CAPC*

In today's fast-paced digital landscape, short-form video has become a cornerstone of effective public relations strategy. With platforms like **TikTok, Instagram Reels, and YouTube Shorts** dominating user attention, PR chairpersons have an opportunity to create short term videos to tell the story about their unit's successes.

**Prioritize authenticity over polish.** Don't get caught up on creating high-budget production. Just use your smartphone to capture real moments that resonate emotionally. The key is to create content that feels **relatable, shareable and visually compelling**.

Here are some **best practices**:

- **Keep it short:** Videos under 30 seconds perform best, especially when optimized for vertical viewing (turning the phone "hotdog" - versus "hamburger" which is horizontal).
- **Lead with visuals:** Strong imagery and movement should carry the message.
- **Tell a micro-story:** Even in 15 seconds, a clear narrative arc—problem, solution, payoff—can drive viewer retention.
- **Platform-first formatting:** Use trending hashtags to increase discoverability and reach.
- **Engage actively:** Timely responses to comments and shares can amplify visibility and foster community.

**Editing tools:**

- **iMovie** - Comes standard on most Apple phones.
- **CapCut and InShot** - Both apps are great for creating short videos for social media and work on both Apple and Android phones.

**Short-form video is no longer optional, it's essential.** For PR chairpersons, mastering this format means embracing **agility, creativity, and a willingness to experiment**. We hope you play around with this technology, and are sure you'll enjoy the results.

