

KANSAS VFW AUXILIARY HOSPITAL PROGRAM

Kelle Brewer-Brown, Chairman – August 15, 2026 – School of Instruction Promotion

Good [morning/afternoon]. Today, I will provide a brief overview of the Kansas VFW Auxiliary Hospital Program. All of the information discussed today is available on the KS VFW Auxiliary website. Read the monthly Sunflower Express articles for updated information on this program, project ideas and patient / facility needs.

The VFW Auxiliary Hospital Program, a long-standing initiative dedicated to supporting hospitalized veterans through volunteer service, donations, and community engagement. This program is more than just volunteer work; it's about compassion, dignity, and honoring the service of our veterans.

Established in 1914, the Hospital Program has been a cornerstone of the VFW Auxiliary's mission. Originally, members rolled bandages, served meals, and provided bedside comfort to wounded soldiers. Over time, the program expanded beyond wartime needs to serve veterans in VA Medical Centers, state veterans' homes, rehabilitation facilities, and community hospitals.

Today, the mission remains the same at its core: to uplift and enhance the quality of life for hospitalized veterans in VA Medical Centers, state veterans' homes, and other care facilities.

How can VFW Auxiliaries and members participate in the Hospital program?

Volunteer: Members contribute thousands of hours to visit patients, assist with recreational & patient activities, and provide companionship, and support hospital staff. Nationwide, Auxiliary members contribute over 400,000 hours annually, with Kansas Auxiliaries making a substantial contribution. Many veterans report improved morale, reduced loneliness, and a stronger sense of community connection after program visits. Hospitals and care centers gain additional support for non-medical needs, allowing staff to focus more on clinical care. Even a few hours a month from just one person can make a BIG difference. There is no minimum hourly requirement to be a hospital volunteer. Whatever works for you. Weekly, monthly, or only for specific events. You will never forget how good it made you feel. Be sure to nominate a deserving hospital volunteer for the Outstanding Hospital Volunteer of the Year award.

Material Donations: Items such as toiletries, books, games, snacks, socks, underwear, adaptive equipment, etc. can be collected and distributed to improve comfort and quality of life. The KS VFW Auxiliary website has a veterans needs list you can refer to should you need ideas on what type of items are needed. Read the Sunflower Express articles and watch for email blasts from me and/or your District Hospital Chairman for updated and/or immediate needs.

Morale-Building Activities: Organizing holiday celebrations, birthday recognition ceremonies, and activity days to create a positive environment and boost morale. Sending monthly thinking of you/birthday cards is the simplest project any Auxiliary can do to support the Hospital program. Be sure to read the information on the website about **Operation: SPARKLE 250** The Mission is to: Reach for the Stars...and Leave a little Sparkle Wherever You Go ! Adding Sparkle and joy isn't always about big gestures or expensive treats, it's just about giving of yourself by being a little weirder, a little sillier, and a whole lot more you. Maybe the Valentines for Hospitalized Veterans initiative will be the perfect Operation: SPARKLE 250 project for your Auxiliary. Don't forget there is a National award for the most creative/unique activity and/or event to interact with and provide happiness to veterans in hospitals. You must fill out the form to qualify.

Fundraising: Hosting raffles, benefit dinners, and drives to fund the Department Hospital General Fund to cover patient needs not covered by standard hospital budgets. **All Auxiliaries and Districts** should be making a donation to the Department Hospital General Fund. A fun way to fundraise....Check out the **Give & Glow** Challenge on the KS VFWA website. Glow up, send \$5 and a photo for a chance to win a prize...and bragging rights.

Community Partnerships: Collaborate with your VFW Post, local businesses, schools, and civic groups to expand hospital volunteerism and financial resources. Spread the word about the hospital program and encourage others to get involved. Don't forget to nominate a deserving member for the National Outstanding Hospital Volunteer Recruiter of the Year.

Report: Auxiliaries need to report at least two projects this term. First reporting deadline is October 31, 2026 and second report deadline is March 31, 2027.

District Chairman should send copies of their School of Instruction presentation to me and information on their District Hospital fundraising project (what you did), including how much was donated.

Our Goals:

1. 100% Auxiliary REPORTING & PARTICIPATION by January 31, 2027.
2. 100% District REPORTING & PARTICIPATION by March 31, 2027.
3. Department Hospital General Fund Donations \$250.00+ above Dept Hospital Program budget.
4. 2,500 Valentines for Hospitalized Veterans presented.
5. 500 reported projects for the Hospital program.

The Kansas VFW Auxiliary Hospital Program continues to be a vital source of support for hospitalized veterans. Through volunteerism, donations, and advocacy, the program ensures that those who served our country receive the care, respect, and recognition they deserve. The Hospital program is proof that kindness heals. By giving our time, talents, and hearts, we honor those who gave so much for us. Let's continue to stand by our veterans — not just in words, but in action.

Thank you.
Kelle Brewer-Brown
Dept Hospital Chairman

If you have pictures from Department Hospital Workshop held in Topeka in June 2026, please forward to me.