

Honor and appreciate veterans all year



Community and Membership Outreach Coordinator Pam Donato

As we approach Veterans Day on Nov. 11, many of us are looking for ways to specially recognize those who have served in our country's military. Some we know gave the ultimate sacrifice, while others live with disabling medical conditions. All served, swearing to secure and defend the U.S. They left families and hometowns and submitted to the will of their military branch's chain of command, whatever that would bring. No matter when they served, veterans gave more than most others could fully understand. But it's easy for all of us to ensure that veterans are recognized and honored, not just for one single day, but all year long:

- **Attend a Veterans Day event.** There are usually several local indoor or outdoor events. Smiling and applauding at a parade or service for veterans may seem simple, but it's truly priceless for veterans in attendance. Make this a family event—take your children and grandchildren with you, too.

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- **Ask a veteran about their service.** What military branch did they serve in? What did they do in the military? What's their favorite memory from their service? Why did they choose that branch? Expressing interest in their service is incredibly respectful; it also could provide unique insight. These can be magical moments that will be remembered for a long time—by both sides of the conversation.
- **Donate time.** There are many charitable veteran organizations that need people power more than money. Check with the Department of Veterans Affairs (volunteer.va.gov). Try your local VFW (vfw.org), American Legion (legion.org), Amvets (amvets.org), or local veterans' homes or hospitals. There are many volunteer organizations worthy of your consideration, such as the Honor Flight Network (see page 14), Wreaths Across America (wreathsasscrossamerica.org), The Mission Continues (missioncontinues.org) and Team Rubicon (teamrubiconusa.org). You and your family can volunteer for one hour, one day or on a recurring basis to support veterans and your com-

munity as a whole. These opportunities can be individual or organizational; your NALC branch could coordinate a group project. Regardless, personally getting involved with these organizations can be life changing, for you and for those receiving your help.

- **Donate money.** Most all veterans' events and services need operating funds for supplies, food (including refreshments for volunteers), materials and administrative costs. Many need technological assistance or building space. Money is always a welcome gift. There are hundreds of veterans' services charities in the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) alone. A bit of research with any veterans' organization can lead you to discover many others. When you find one that fits your interests, donate money to it. Take a step further, if you're so inclined, and get your branch involved in a larger fundraiser. There's no better cause to work for than one you're passionate about, especially if it provides help to people and places important to you.
- **Help us recognize NALC's military veterans.** We have well more than 10,000 members of NALC's Veteran Group, though we believe there are likely more than 75,000 actual members who are military veterans. Help us reach and recognize these members by asking veterans in your branch to join the group. A simple sign-up card is available for download from nalc.org/veterans. You can also request sign-up cards by calling 202-662-2489. There is no cost to join, and each group member receives a lapel pin and card.

Thank you to all of NALC's military veterans. Your service and sacrifice are sincerely appreciated, as is your membership in NALC. And let us all recognize and honor veterans—this Veterans Day and all through the year—as we also enjoy the freedoms they helped provide.

