

## Auxiliary Expands Membership Eligibility

**A** recent amendment to the DAV Auxiliary National Constitution will allow a wider range of veterans advocates to join the organization.

The change, which required the consent of 75 percent of the Auxiliary's chartered Units, allows extended family members of U.S. military veterans — living or deceased — who weren't dishonorably discharged to join.

Examples of extended family members now able to join include step-children, step-grandchildren, step-siblings, step-parents, step-grandparents, uncles and aunts, great uncles and aunts, nieces, nephews, cousins, sons- and daughters-in-law, fathers- and mothers-in-law, brothers- and sisters-in-law.

"Our goal with this initiative is to attract new members and volunteers who support our mission," said Auxiliary National Adjutant Judy Hezlep. "It's important that we make a place at our table for more men and women who want to become involved."

The amendment, according to Adjutant Hezlep, expands from the 2005 change that allowed men to join the Auxiliary.

"Auxiliary membership is a tangible way someone who cares about disabled veterans and their families can show their support. With so many needs in our community, it is time for us to be more inclusive," said Auxiliary National Commander Susan M. Henry.

"We need to change the way people see the Auxiliary. We are a service organization. We are the nation's authority on caregivers. We are a legislative force," said Commander Henry. "If someone steps forward who has a reasonable connection with our cause, we need to bring them on board and make their voice, talents and energy a force behind our agenda."

In recent years, membership in the Auxiliary has fallen. While the organization continues to provide grants to needy families and dedicated support of DAV Voluntary Services, Commander Henry said the Auxiliary is fighting a misperception based on a stereotypical view of the organization as a "wives club."

"We're evolving. We're not abandoning our traditions. We're adapting to new times and gaining momentum. We're going to find new ways to serve our cause and expand on the services we provide our members," Commander Henry said. "This is a calculated decision our leaders have made to improve our organization."

The Commander said initiatives like the Local Veterans Assistance Program, which allows a creative variance in how

volunteers can support veterans and their families gives Auxiliary members increased opportunities to serve. Units have greater latitude in terms of service initiatives and a broader talent pool to tap for ideas and assistance.

"This is about energy and resources. This is our chance to expand and reach out. It is a message from Units nationwide that the Auxiliary is ready to get growing. Now is the time to engage people who share our beliefs and want to make a difference for disabled veterans and their families," Commander Henry said.

Patti Davis, a member of Unit 19, Oak Creek, Wis., said she believed the change was overdue. "For some people, it was hard seeing the Auxiliary add men. Now we have men serving as Auxiliary National Chaplain and as Unit Commanders. Two of our state Commanders are men. We're focused more on who can contribute than what gender they are. This is one of those decisions that just made sense," Davis said. "The Auxiliary is changing. And the changes are going to make a big difference as we move forward."

Information on eligibility and membership can be found at [www.davauxiliary.org](http://www.davauxiliary.org).

<b>DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS AUXILIARY</b>	
MEMBERSHIP YEAR IS JULY 1ST TO JUNE 30TH OF THE FOLLOWING YEAR.	
Date: _____	
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION IN UNIT NO. _____ STATE _____	
NAME _____	
ADDRESS _____	
CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP CODE _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> NEW LIFE (\$20 DOWNPAYMENT)	<input type="checkbox"/> LIFE PAYMENT
<input type="checkbox"/> NEW ANNUAL (\$15)	<input type="checkbox"/> ANNUAL RENEWAL
<input type="checkbox"/> NEW JUNIOR (\$3)	<input type="checkbox"/> JUNIOR RENEWAL (\$3)
ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP PAID THROUGH JUNE 30, 2012	AMOUNT PAID \$ _____
IF ANNUAL/JUNIOR PAYMENT SPECIFY YEAR	DATE OF BIRTH (REQUIRED):
JULY 1, 20 _____ TO JUNE 30, 20 _____	_____
	PHONE: _____
IF THIS IS A RENEWAL OR LIFE MEMBERSHIP PAYMENT SKIP TO THE SIGNATURE LINE	
ELIGIBILITY THROUGH:	
NAME _____	RELATIONSHIP _____
SPONSOR'S SIGNATURE _____	APPLICANT'S SIGNATURE _____
SPONSOR'S CODE NUMBER _____	AE / VISA / MC / DISCOVER # _____ EXP. DATE _____
<b>SEND TO: DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS AUXILIARY 3725 ALEXANDRIA PIKE, COLD SPRING, KY 41076</b>	