

Membership Moment – Five Ways to Thank Members

As we gather with family and friends next week to celebrate Thanksgiving, it is a great time to make sure that our VFW Auxiliary members know they are appreciated. Each Auxiliary member brings ideas, enthusiasm and a different perspective to our organization. They volunteer for our programs and events without any promise of a reward, and while “thanks” has a nice ring to it, words don’t carry the same weight as our actions. As President John F. Kennedy once said, “As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them.” As you interact with your VFW Auxiliary Brothers and Sisters, strive to show your gratitude to them in fun and memorable ways.

Here are five great ways to show your appreciation:

1. **Spotlight members on social media.** Recognize members on social media to let them know how much they mean to you. Remember to “tag” the member(s) so they are notified of your post. Make it brief, personal and leave them smiling!
2. **Send a thank you note in the mail.** Go “old school” and handwrite a note to thank your Auxiliary members. It’s surprising how rarely this proven way of showing gratitude is actually used. A thank you note can make your members feel very special. In the note, write down how much you appreciate their efforts, and how their specific contribution is making a difference for the Auxiliary. A personalized hand-written note will make someone feel much more appreciated than an email or text message.
3. **Give members gifts of gratitude.** Who doesn’t like gifts? If you can afford it, a small token can be very meaningful such as flowers, a houseplant, or a gift card to McDonald’s, Starbucks, Walmart or Target. Reach out to stores in your community – you never know what might get donated.
4. **Thank them publicly.** If an article is written about an Auxiliary event where members helped, make sure they are mentioned and thanked. You can also take photos of your members to be included in the article. Members love seeing themselves in the local newspaper, and will be glad to know you thought to mention them.
5. **Feed them.** People love food. If a group of members is helping prepare or organize an event, order them lunch. If a meal is out of your budget, do something simple like bring snacks, cookies or coffee. This gesture will make them feel appreciated, motivated and energized.

Regardless of the way you say “thanks,” it must be relevant, personal and sincere. These simple rules will ensure your show of gratitude hits home with members.