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**HISTORY**

In 1936, Eta-Akron member Ruth Billow’s plea to the Convention body to adopt sight preservation and aid to the blind was adopted as Delta Gamma’s philanthropy. To help accomplish the Delta Gamma Foundation’s mission, service to those who are blind or visually impaired is encouraged.

Founded in Fall 2012, the Service for Sight: Joining Forces Program offers an opportunity for volunteer service by helping visually impaired military veterans who have given so much serving our great nation.

**PURPOSE**

Service for Sight: Joining Forces is an extension of the existing Delta Gamma Service for Sight philanthropy. The purpose of this initiative is to present a vehicle for Delta Gamma collegians and alumnae to support and give back to service men and women who have experienced vision impairment, eye trauma or vision loss.

This is accomplished through service given by collegiate and alumnae chapters and individual members throughout North America as well as through philanthropic grants provided by the Foundation to organizations that share our Service for Sight mission.

Through the Delta Gamma Foundation’s Grant Program, organizations which have programs to better the lives of service members with eye injuries may be granted funds. Grant proposal criteria is listed on the Delta Gamma website under the Foundation Applications tab. Grant proposals are due to the committee by January 15 of each year. Organizations which meet the criteria are encouraged to submit an online grant application.
SERVICE PARTICIPATION
The Joining Forces program volunteer service component is available to our collegiate and alumnae members. This offers alumnae and collegians an opportunity to work together and develop their own meaningful service project.

Service projects should complement existing programming. Collegians can offer the program so members can earn Service for Sight hours; alumnae may opt to use the program for a “Do Good” event or incorporate it into a Special Interest Group as a means to attract members with a specific interest in the program. The Joining Forces program represents an ongoing commitment to serve blind or visually impaired military personnel.

Collegians should invite local alumnae to participate in their Joining Forces events by contacting the alumnae president and/or presenting the program during an alumnae group meeting. Through this contact they should make alumnae aware of future Joining Forces events scheduled on their calendar. Collegians should contact their local alumnae group in late summer to allow the alumnae groups to incorporate the Joining Forces event into their calendar and publicize it in their newsletter.

Delta Gamma insurance covers our members when they are doing service for Delta Gamma. This coverage is for liability; members must be self-insured while driving their own vehicle. The Risk Management Policy of FIPG Inc. includes the provisions that follow and shall apply to all fraternity entities and all levels of fraternity membership. For more information on FIPG, visit www.fipg.org.

If you have questions regarding Delta Gamma insurance policies, risky events or purchasing additional insurance, please contact our representative at MJ Sorority Insurance, Ruth Akers, ruth.akers@mjsorority.com.

ANCHORBASE/SERVICE HOURS
To receive credit for the service hours a chapter or group is doing with the Joining Forces program, they must be accurately recorded in Anchorbase. To do this, complete and update the Log Service/Awareness Hours task throughout the year. Make sure to include all Joining Forces service opportunities under the corresponding section. Joining Forces hours are one part of total Foundation hours, for which chapters and groups are eligible for awards.

PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION
If you have any questions regarding Joining Forces, please contact joiningforces@deltagamma.org or by phone at 1-800-644-5414.
FINDING AN ORGANIZATION TO SERVE

It is suggested that each participating group select only one organization to serve. Because there are a number of ways to select an organization, consider all factors and research a variety of sources before making a decision. Investigate to see if another local collegiate chapter or alumnae group is interested in participating. Combine efforts and make the Joining Forces program a success!

Word of Mouth: Ask Delta Gamma members, family members and friends living in the area to recommend an organization that serves blind or visually impaired military personnel.

Internet: The following website links may provide a list of organizations in your area:
- Joining Forces Service Centers: This map offers a list of organizations that have requested service opportunities. Click the link above to see if your chapter is near one or more of these organizations.
- Department of Veterans Affairs
- Blinded Veterans Association
- The National Association of Blinded Veterans
- The Hadley School for the Blind
- Veterans Nursing Homes

(Please keep in mind that the web is ever-changing. Conduct a search by city name to narrow the results.)

University Resources: Check with local colleges and universities at the Veterans Services Offices.

Many of these offices are connected to the veterans who are students on campus and may be able to connect your chapter with blind or visually impaired military personnel that you may be able to serve with as a mobility guide to show them around campus.

Community Services: Check with local, town or city government for Veteran’s Affairs offices. Many communities provide programs and activities for local veterans and service members.
DISCUSSION TOPICS FOR INITIAL VISIT – POTENTIAL ORGANIZATION

When you visit a potential site to work with, ensure you are familiar with the following information so you may share it with the site. Begin the discussion with a brief overview of Delta Gamma, its “Do Good” motto and Service for Sight mission. Make sure you talk about how Delta Gamma can assist the organization and make sure to leave your name and contact information.

Overview and Motto
Delta Gamma was founded by Anna Boyd Ellington, Eva Webb Dodd and Mary Comfort Leonard in 1873 in Oxford, Mississippi, at the Lewis School for Girls near the University of Mississippi. The Founders sought to maintain high ideals and standards and to encourage intellectual growth and service in order to exemplify college women at their best.

Service for Sight Mission
Altruistic work during the First World War convinced Delta Gammas that service was an important part of their Fraternity life. Service for Sight was born out of a suggestion in an alumnae workshop at Convention in 1936. The enthusiasm of one particular member, Ruth Billow, Eta-Akron, who was blind and spoke from notes typed in Braille, was the spark which brought acceptance of Service for Sight as our international project.

Joining Forces Mission
The Delta Gamma Fraternity and Foundation are taking their dedication to helping those with visual impairments a step further. The Joining Forces Program seeks to support and serve military persons in both the United States and Canada who are blind or visually impaired.

Questions to Consider when selecting a location:
- What volunteer programs, if any, are already in place?
- What needs can Delta Gamma volunteers address?
- Does the organization have a mobility guide program?
- Is there interest in partnering with the Delta Gamma Foundation for volunteer services? (Be specific about what schedule volunteers can guarantee, such as “biweekly visits or monthly”)
- What time of day is best for volunteers?
- What is the approximate number of volunteers who could participate in the program?
- Are there other activities for volunteers with low-vision veterans?
- Does the organization require any pre-screening of volunteers prior to providing volunteer service?
PROGRAM SUGGESTIONS

- Choose a site that is conveniently located to the majority of volunteers supporting the program.
- Choose a site where the volunteer coordinator or point person indicates a willingness to work with DG volunteers and will assist in developing a program beneficial to all participants.
- Plan ahead and always include the organization’s volunteer coordinator or point person. They can provide valuable information about risk management and liability issues during volunteer activities.
- Promote the activities. List program events on Anchorbase calendar, your chapter’s website, and ask the organization for information to promote volunteer time.
- Schedule volunteers! Create a sign-up sheet online. Remember to include the local alumnae group in the event by asking them to sign up for a time commitment as well.
- Enter all planned Joining Forces volunteer events in Anchorbase and enter the hours in the Log Service/Awareness Hours task.
- Remind members of the time commitment with the organization.
- Rotate volunteers to ensure an ongoing program of activities.
- We do ask that all of our members be especially careful about the locations used for reading or meeting.
  - Location suggestions include: libraries, student centers, restaurants and other public places. It is not recommended that the reading or meeting take place in chapter houses, suites or lodges. Reading or meeting at a person’s home should only occur after a relationship has been well-established. In this case especially, members should always use the buddy system and never go alone.

If you have any questions, please contact the Foundation Director: Collegiate Service, at collservice@deltagamma.org or Foundation Director: Alumnae Fundraising and Service at alumservice@deltagamma.org.

Take pictures if approved by those photographed and send them to joiningforces@deltagamma.org for publication in any of Delta Gamma’s media publications.
FUNDRAISING

The Delta Gamma Foundation is formed under section 501(c)(3) of the tax code, which allows donors to take a tax deduction for gifts to the Foundation. The Delta Gamma Fraternity and its chapters are formed under section 501(c)(7) of the tax code and as such, gifts to the Fraternity are not tax deductible.

Gifts restricted to the Delta Gamma Foundation Service for Sight: Joining Forces program are tax deductible in the U.S. as allowed by law. The gifts will be distributed through our well-established grant program for organizations that share our mission of Service for Sight. Vetted organizations that directly help service members who have lost their vision may apply for grants from the Delta Gamma Foundation. One hundred percent of every gift made to Joining Forces will go to one of these 501(c)(3) organizations to assist blind or visually impaired service members. The Grant Committee is headed by the Foundation Director: Grants (grants@deltagamma.org) and reports to the Foundation Board of Trustees. Each year the Foundation Grant Committee recommends organizations to be grant recipients after receiving applications that meet the Foundation’s Service for Sight grant criteria. The Board of Trustees studies the recommendations of the Grant Committee and votes to approve those grants that meet the criteria.

Funds raised for the Delta Gamma Foundation through collegiate fundraising events can be designated for Joining Forces (if a chapter votes to restrict some of the monies raised in that manner). The fundraisers must be advertised as benefiting the Delta Gamma Foundation and Service for Sight: Joining Forces to help service members who are blind or visually impaired (or language describing the program to that effect.) Please see the Foundation Focus Handbook located in the website library for further information about the Chapter Giving Program or contact fundraising@deltagamma.org.

Gifts from individuals, alumnae groups and house corporations are also welcome. Please include a memo on the check or in an attached note to designate the gift to the Service for Sight: Joining Forces. Fundraising questions can be directed the Foundation Director: Service, Awareness and Fundraising at alumservice@deltagamma.org.

Other questions can be directed to the Regional Foundation Coordinators at rfncX@deltagamma.org (insert your respective region 1-8 for X).

Proceeds (no cash) should be sent within two (2) weeks of the event to:

Delta Gamma Foundation
3250 Riverside Dr.
Columbus, OH 43221

Please include your completed Foundation Fundraising Report Form (FFRF). The alumnae form can be found on the Delta Gamma website library. Collegiate chapters can print off their completed form in Anchorbase.
KEY FACTS AND STATISTICS

According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, there are currently more than 158,000 legally blinded veterans in the United States and 700,000 veterans with low vision.

An estimated 17%- 20% of all injuries incurred in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars have been vision-related. More than 7,000 veterans become blind or visually impaired each year from non-combat causes.

In current battlefield conditions, ground soldiers face a variety of assaults that could potentially damage their eyes and impair visual function short- and long-term:

- Traumatic eye injury from explosive devices/ projectiles and visual disorders associated with Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI, with visual symptoms reported in 85% of all TBI cases)
- Eye injury from chemical, biohazard and laser exposure
- Corneal (front-of-eye) and retinal (back-of-eye) injuries that are often not evaluated until a soldier’s vital signs are first assessed and which, if not stabilized, lead to vision loss.

Website Resources

These are some additional resources that may be able to assist you in locating Veterans organizations who may need volunteer service. Please note that these organizations are for possible volunteer service not for Delta Gamma to fundraise on their behalf.

- National Library Service for the Blind: http://www.loc.gov/nls/
- http://www.bva.org/vabenefits.html
- http://www.bva.org/links.html (List of other resources )
- http://www.bva.org/support/
- Veterans Affairs: http://www.volunteer.va.gov/index.asp
- Veterans Affairs Student Volunteers: http://www.volunteer.va.gov/StudentProgram.asp
- United We Serve: http://www.serve.gov
- USO: http://www.uso.org
- Operation Homefront: http://www.operationhomefront.net/howwehelp
- Wounded Warriors: http://www.woundedwarriorproject.org
Frequently Asked QUESTIONS

1. Will writing letters or sending packages to military members count as Service for Sight: Joining Forces hours?
   Yes - but you need to fine tune your activity! How do you do that? If you work with your campus ROTC, campus office of Veterans Affairs or a local or state veteran’s facility, and you send holiday cards (Halloween, Christmas, New Years, Valentine, etc.) AND include a sight saving eye tip, Service for Sight bookmark or Joining Forces bookmark - the activity could be counted as service hours.

   If your group wishes to write letters, cards or send packages to our military men and women serving overseas: In order to be eligible to receive service hours for Joining Forces - those letters, cards and packages need to each include a sight-saving eye tip, Service for Sight bookmark or Joining Forces bookmark.

   Please note that we do encourage our members to be involved in actual volunteer opportunities through hands-on service in their local communities. The organizations listed in this guide may be a resource to help you locate active military or veterans who are blind or visually impaired. Check them out! Please refer any questions regarding the eligibility of an activity/event for service hours to the Foundation Director: Alumnae Fundraising and Service at alumservice@deltagamma.org. For collegiate questions, contact the Foundation Director: Collegiate Service at collservice@deltagamma.org. It is recommended to contact the appropriate Foundation Director prior to organizing your activity or event.

2. If a VA hospital or military organization asks who authorized this program from their end, do we have a name to give?
   Former Fraternity Executive Director, Colleen McGuire, Pi-Montana, met the Joint Staff. While this program isn’t “endorsed” it is acknowledged and accepted. It is up to the individual VA groups in each town to determine if they want our help.

3. Our group contacted a local VA hospital, but they were not interested in working with our group. Why?
   Some VA hospitals are very protective and don’t take on volunteers. They do, however, accept funds from fundraisers. It is up to each individual chapter to investigate and to approach each group with options for service or fundraising. Look for veterans’ retirement homes also.
4. If we have a veteran who is blinded or visually impaired or a combat medic speak at our event does that count as service?
Yes, it would count as awareness hours, which are rolled into service hours, which are learning opportunities about Joining Forces.

5. Can this program be used in Canada?
Yes, this is definitely a program that is designed for both the United States and Canada.

6. My chapter is holding a Joining Forces fundraising event and we want to give some of the proceeds to a local VA hospital. Can we do that?
Yes! When you have completed your fundraising event, you should send all of the proceeds (no cash) within two (2) weeks to the Delta Gamma Foundation. Indicate on the Fundraising Finance Report Form (FFRF) located in the website library (alumnae) and Anchorbase (collegians) that you wish to use our Chapter Giving Program to donate to a local VA hospital. By using our Chapter Giving Program, collegiate chapters may designate a percentage of the proceeds (collegiate chapters - up to 50%; alumnae chapters up to 90%) to a local VA hospital. The Delta Gamma Foundation recognizes your chapter with 100% gift credit and then the Delta Gamma Foundation will send a check for the designated amount to the VA hospital on behalf of the group. For questions, email fundraising@deltagamma.org.

7. Can we create a donation/campaign page on memberplanet for our Joining Forces fundraising event?
Yes! Using the Delta Gamma Foundation’s online fundraising vendor - memberplanet - is the best way to guarantee that your donor’s gift is tax deductible. It is easy to create a donation/campaign page for your chapter. Contact fundraising@deltagamma.org for assistance. Reminder: Due to trademark guidelines please refer to this program as Service for Sight: Joining Forces in all advertising and communications.

Have other questions on Joining Forces? Email joiningforces@deltagamma.org for assistance, and also copy collservice@deltagamma.org or alumservice@deltagamma.org.