



# BLUE STAR MOTHERS OF AMERICA, INC.

## December 2023

### A message from our National President

As we have moved into the holiday season, I see many of our Chapters have been very busy with Care Packages and have participated in Wreaths Across America this past weekend. Thank you to those who were able to Remember the Fallen, Honor those who serve, and Teach the next generation. I have enjoyed seeing your pictures on Facebook.

As announced in our last Newsletter, we are planning for a great National Convention in Oklahoma City July 29 through August 2. The link to the hotel was provided and I know several of you have already booked your accommodations - WOW! We will be adding the National Convention tab to the Website soon so you will be able to check that out for additional information there as well.

Holidays can be very exciting and sometimes a little “not so much” as we have kiddos all over the world. No one understands better than another Blue Star Mother. As we each celebrate in our own way, if this time of the year is “not so much” for you, please remember you have Sisters who are here for you... a phone call, a cup of coffee, whatever you need... just let someone know.

I wish all of you and your families the very best, and pray the New Year blesses each of you with much love, happiness, and good health.

As always, my door is open to anyone who has questions. Please don't hesitate to reach out to me or any of our National Officers as we are here to serve everyone.

Yours in Service,  
*Becky*  
Rebecca Stafford  
National President



**Contact Information for National Executive Board**

**President: Rebecca Stafford - MO**  
president@bluestarmothers.us

**1st VP: Karen Stillwell - OH**  
1vp@bluestarmothers.us

**2nd VP: Karla Keller - MN**  
2vp@bluestarmothers.us

**3rd VP: Jacqueline Ransom - MI**  
3vp@bluestarmothers.us

**4th VP: Brenda Ternullo - CA**  
4vp@bluestarmothers.us

**Recording Secretary: Amy Jo Hutchinson - OH**  
recsec@bluestarmothers.us

**Financial Secretary: Sonya Kay - IL**  
finsec@bluestarmothers.us

**Treasurer: Alethea Tennill - MO**  
treas@bluestarmothers.us

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# Happy Holidays

## 1st VP Message

Hello Everyone,

I hope you are all enjoying this special time of the year with your family and friends. As this year is quickly ending and the New Year 2024 fast approaching, I just want to remind you to reach out to your members and continue to plan with them a successful year ahead.

**A few ideas to encourage members' participation:**

1. Find appointed positions to get everyone involved—keeping in mind each member has valuable attributes.
2. Send out frequent updates to all members; communication breakdown is the beginning of most issues.
3. Develop a new member packet with information or add new information to an already existing one.
4. Remember the Board serves at the pleasure of the Chapter—not the reverse.
5. Value and work beside every member; we all have children who are serving or who have served.
6. Encourage your members to tell everyone they know about BSMA and our mission!
7. Allow time for food and fellowship at meetings, perhaps combine sisterhood share time with a mission project, cards for boxes or Veterans, making scarves, toiletry kits etc.

Warm Regards, Karen Stillwell- National 1VP

# Wishing You A Healthy and Happy New Year

# From the desk of

**Anne Parker, VAVS Representative**

***Wishing all of our Sisters the very  
Best of the Season with  
Love, Joy and Happiness***

***Your VAVS team,  
Anne Parker, Doreen Berggren and Carol Sanchez***



VAVS Southeast Louisiana Veterans Health Care System Holiday Gift Bag project: LA1 and LA7 chapters donated items to fill 99 gift bags that the leadership of the medical center will distribute to inpatients at the medical center next week. Kathy Baker, one of the VAVS deputies and Ann Berkins, VAVS rep, dropped the bags off to Derrick Spears with the CDCE office at SLVHCS on December 13th. Not pictured, Sunny Senft, VAVS deputy.

**Stocking Stuffer Bundle**  
**\*\*\* Only good through**  
**December 31st**

**\$10.00**  
**Plus**  
**Shipping**

Online Store

[www.bluestarmothers.org](http://www.bluestarmothers.org)



Nail File



Stocking not  
included

Logo Pen



Proud of Our Sons and  
Daughters 3 inch Patch



Luggage Tag



**Order Your**  
**Blue Star Mother**  
**Ornament Today!**

**\$10.00** plus shipping



**3 inches  
across**

**This BSM Logo Ornament will Continue to be  
Available at the Online Store.**

**\*We can no longer guarantee delivery by Christmas**

**[www.bluestarmothers.org](http://www.bluestarmothers.org)**

**Check out all our items available and don't forget the  
bundle that is also on sale now, through December 31st**

**IMPORTANT**

# Dates

1. National Board members will be taking a break December 21st through January 5th to enjoy the holidays with their families. You can continue to send emails but you may not get an immediate reply.
2. NEB will be together February 22-26, working on important items for the organization. Again, continue to email but there may be a delay in response,
3. The Online Store will **not** be shipping orders March 3-21st, you can still place orders but items will not be shipped until after the 21st.
4. Many Blue Star Mothers will be traveling to DC over Memorial Day. Again, there may be a delay in responding to emails.
5. Watch for Convention Chatters for updates and information regarding Convention!

Don't forget to follow the "Blue Star Mothers of America Convention" Facebook Page and App!

6. National Convention July 29th through August 2nd., Oklahoma City!

\*\*Please have patience if you do not receive an immediate response to your emails. Things get very busy after New Years, we will do our best to reply as soon as we can.

**Thank you and here's to a great 2024!!**

## A message from your Mentor Chair

The mentors have all been busy checking in with their chapters and submitting reports. The mentors were asked to try to reach out early in the month and get their reports in early so the chapters, mentors and mentor committee can enjoy the holidays with family and friends.

It has been so fun reading the reports being submitted this month. So many chapters are busy, busy, busy! I wish I would have been keeping track of how many care packages have been sent. There have been thousands sent to our deserving service members!! Bravo to all of you!! I love seeing the pictures of those receiving the boxes and their big smiles! If you receive photos of these lucky service members, please share with those that have donated (with the service members permission, of course). Those that make donations love to see the results of their collections!

As the compliance is submitted and officer rosters are approved, the National 1st VP passes them on to the mentors so they have current contact information for each of the chapters they mentor. The mentors want to know that you are receiving their emails. Please respond to the emails that your chapter's mentor sends to you, so they know that you received it. It has happened that some emails go to spam and the officers never see the emails from mentors and national officers. Check your email spam to see if you have BSMA related emails waiting for you there! If you are a chapter officer and have not received emails from your chapter's mentor, please email me at [mentor.chair@bluestarmothers.us](mailto:mentor.chair@bluestarmothers.us) and I will make sure your mentor makes contact with you. If you are a member of a chapter and don't know who your chapter's mentor is, please email me and I will get back to you with your mentors contact information.

I would like to thank all of you that have helped the mentor program grow in 2023.

I want to wish you all a Very Merry Christmas and an Exciting New Year!!

Denise Guerra, BSMA Mentor Chair



# Sacramento Blue Star Moms CA7

November - December 2023

Christmas Get Together  
was loads of fun!



The signed jersey from Sacramento Kings former player, Peja Stojakovic, helped make our Moose for the Troops Fundraiser a huge success.



We assisted with many Veteran Day assemblies and events.



Check out the success of our November Packing event

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TPkpDZjey5s>

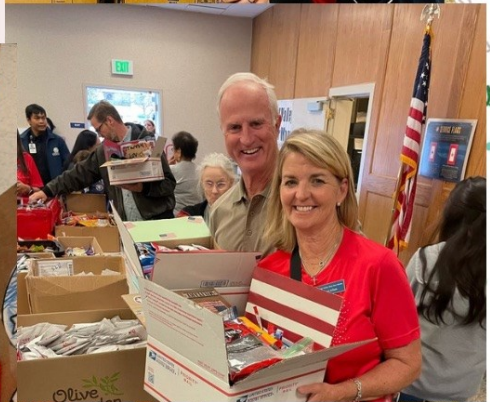


**DOLLAR TREE**

We partnered with Operation Homefront & Dollar Tree to bring toys to military families.



CA10  
Remember  
the Troops  
Package  
Drive



December 2023



Rim Blue Star Moms participated in the Pinecone Festival at Rim Nordic in Running Springs in October. It is an annual community event in which participants compete in the Pinecone Olympics, make pinecone crafts, and enter their biggest and heaviest pinecones to see who found the largest one! We set up a booth and collected donations towards our Hometown Hero Banner program. On Veteran's Day, we volunteered at the VFW Memorial Ceremony, setting up chairs and tents, serving refreshments and cleaning up. Quilts of Valor were awarded to five veterans from our mountain area. Finally, we participated in a Veterans Day parade at Lake Arrowhead Christian School.





## Blue Star Moms of California - East Bay Chapter 101: NOVEMBER 2023 EVENTS

Throughout the month, the Chapter moms continued to coordinate several efforts to set-up donation barrels in several locations, including Club Sports in San Ramon and the Moraga School District. The moms sorted and prepared the donations and boxed care packages for the holidays. We are sending 400 care packages for the holidays. The Chapter has sent a total of 700 care packages in 2023 in separate batches throughout the year.

November 11 - 13 Veterans Day Weekend at the Veterans Memorial Building. Our Chapter has had its presence in this event for many years now. This year's pop-up museum theme is "Space and Robotics" with something for everyone. We had a table at the entrance that displayed a sample of our care package, Christmas cards for the kids to write greetings to our deployed troops, and pictures of our own Blue Star Moms' veteran sons and daughters. This was a great opportunity to meet our local veterans and the community and spread the word about what we do. As a bonus, we collected generous donations from the community from this 3-day event.

Another anticipated event was the ceremonial "lighting" of The Beacon at the summit of Mt. Diablo (Danville, CA). The Beacon is only lit three days of the year - on Pearl Harbor Day, Memorial Day, and Veterans Day. Our Chapter's president was one of the officials invited to the stage for this event.



Blue Star Moms and visitors to our table at the entrance.



Ceremonial lighting of Mt. Diablo Beacon

November 11 - Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), Veterans Day Event. Our Chapter was invited to the ceremony at Carnegie Park in Livermore, CA. We also set up a table with our materials to let the community know what we do.

November 15 - Diablo Valley College (San Ramon Campus), Student Veterans Program Resource Fair. The Chapter was present at the event to support the DVC student Veterans and let them know about resources to help them.

November 15 - Las Positas College, Veterans First Program - "Honoring Heroes" Event. Our Chapter attended the event to present a \$300 and \$200 scholarship to the 2nd and 3rd place winners of the essay writing contest for the student veterans.



Nov 11 VFW Veterans Day

CO 8



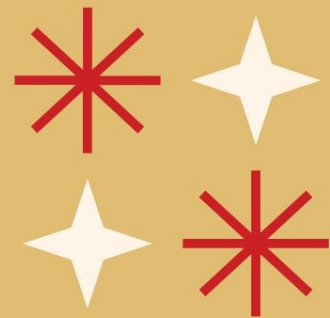
# WESTERN SLOPE BLUE STAR MOTHERS



Cookies for our recruiters!

## WISH YOU HAPPY HOLIDAYS

We still are sending off Recruits  
and we had a Christmas party for our Chapter



### Sendoff for a Gold Star family Snowball Express with Gary Sinise





# Blue Star Mothers of America, Inc.



## Middlesex County Blue Star Mothers-CT-3



### DESCRIPTION OF EVENTS

One of our members, Sue Mariani, was instrumental in getting a Blue Star Memorial Highway Marker in Old Saybrook, CT.

We held a karaoke Halloween party for veterans.

We helped pack boxes at Boxes to Boots.

We attended the Gold Star Mother's tree lighting ceremony.



Gulf Coast Florida BSM 12  
HAPPY HOLIDAYS from Florida 12

We were thrilled to participate in the 2023 Cape Coral Veterans Day Parade! Beautiful weather and lots of people out honoring our Veterans.



We are currently participating in the Operation Homefront/Dollar Tree Toy Drive, as well as helping a local Veteran's family have a better Christmas! It's our honor once again this year to partner with Southwest Florida Gold Star Mothers in providing Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners and gifts to the residents in Warriors Homes of Collier County. Our members continue to be enthusiastic, generous, and supportive in all of our projects!



# Blue Star Mothers of Louisiana Chapter 1



The past several weeks have kept us busy. With so many Veterans Day events, ranging from parades to evening Mass.



Mayors press conference designating November Veterans Month, installation of Hometown Hero Banners, collected & distributed donations,



To swapping gifts just before receiving a truck load of Wreaths..



wfbl.com  
Blue Star Mothers of La. asking for donations for Wreaths Across America

# LOUISIANA GEAUX SEVEN CHAPTER

NOVEMBER 2023

We packed 81 care packages to ship out to some of our deployed military men & women. We pray for their safety and hope they receive them before Christmas!



On November 9<sup>th</sup> we attended a Veterans Day Ceremony at one of our local middle schools. Also, a local roofing company awarded a Veteran a new roof in appreciation for his service!



Left Picture - November 11<sup>th</sup> several of our moms rode in the Annual Walker Veterans Parade.

Right Pictures – Louisiana BSM Chapters LA1 & LA7 prepared holiday cards and gift bags for the Southeast Louisiana Healthcare Systems inpatients. Gift bags will be delivered to the New Orleans medical center in December.



## Blue Star Mothers Chapter 1



Blue Star Mothers hosted a Meet-n-Greet for Veteran "Robert" who received his service dog from NEADS Service Dogs for Veterans Program. When Veterans come to the facility to train with their service dogs, the BSM's MA Ch 1 along with the BSM Central MA CH 3, prepare all meals during their stay. He was also presented with a Quilt of Valor.

## Wreaths Across America



Silverware settings were crafted for the Central MA VA HCS Community Living Center to make their tables festive for Thanksgiving!

## Military Care Packages

Over 100 boxes packed by BSM, Girl Scouts, Veterans & The Community. Boxes were sent to active military overseas and those serving stateside.



## Toys For Tots



## MA 3

We had a busy November and start of December with Veteran events. The BSM MA chapters were chosen to receive donations from a corporate organization sponsoring a team building event. Packages were handed off to the President of MA 3, and we were able to ship many needed items overseas as well as donate to local Veteran organizations.



The MA3 Chapter participated in the annual 5K for Veterans Inc, Worcester, MA. We are so happy to say registration had to be closed because there were so many walkers and runners!

We had the proud honor once again to serve over 350 veterans, families, and Jr. ROTC members at the annual Veterans pancake breakfast. We love rolling up our sleeves and seeing so many appreciative faces. Following the breakfast was a parade to honor all Veterans.



We started the month of December with a fun(d) raiser at a local greenhouse. Bemis Farms in Spencer MA holds events where non-profits are able to invite members, family and friends to spend a couple of hours being creative but more importantly, having fun with each other. Piles of greens turned into beautiful porch pots!



## MI178



Blue Star Mothers Thumb Chapter MI 178 had a tremendous turnout for their fundraising dinner at Port Austin American Legion Post #499 in November. Stuffed cabbage rolls, mashed potatoes, squash, green beans and roll with homemade desserts by the Chapter Moms were on the menu.

Each year at this time Michigan Thumb Chapter 178 continues this tradition. On Sunday November 26 the Blue Star Mothers came together to pay respect and express our gratitude to our local heroes who made the greatest sacrifice. We honored Brain Backus, Garrett C. Knoll, and Aaron Cutler Elandt by coming together to place a wreath on their grave and pray for these young men and their families. Pictured are Nic Stermer, Sherrie LaLonde, Lynne Tschirhart, Marcia Janik, Bree Witter, Grace Rosenthal and Julie Hund.



We were busy shopping December 3<sup>rd</sup> and on December 4<sup>th</sup> packing 50+ packages to send to our men and women who are deployed this Christmas. We'd like to thank all our friends and neighbors who support our fundraisers so that we can continue to send out our packages to these wonderful men and women. Your generosity for our mission is greatly appreciated!

THANKS TO : Franklin Inn, Bad Axe (our monthly meeting spot and packing spot).

Rachel's of Bad Axe (supporting us on our packing days)

Meijer 315 of Bad Axe for their support. We are blessed to live in such a wonderful community.



Pictured are Nic Stermer, Julie Hund, Donna Wolschleger, Sherrie LaLonde, Debbie Decker, Pat Rogers, Evelyn Cole Conkright, Grace Rosenthal,

**Red White & Blue  
Star Mothers  
MI-198**



**December 2023  
Newsletter**

**Recent Events**

**Painting with a Twist**  
October 8<sup>th</sup>

**Operation Handshake  
Welcome Home**  
November 21<sup>st</sup>

**Christmas Party at  
Mission BBQ**  
December 7<sup>th</sup>

**Wreaths Across  
America**  
December 16<sup>th</sup>

**Operation Handshake  
Welcome Home**  
December 20<sup>th</sup>



In September, the Red White and Blue Star Mothers MI-198 installed our new officers and we just welcomed two new sisters to our chapter. Our goals for the upcoming year are to increase outreach to new members, increase engagement of current members, and build a chapter website. We continue to focus on our mission of supporting active-duty service members, veterans, and each other. One of our traditions is to host social events every other month. We've also begun planning for our third annual "Bowlin for the Troops" fundraiser.



*Nine Blue Star Moms representing three chapters participated in the Operation Handshake Welcome Home on November 21<sup>st</sup> at Bishop Airport. It has become an annual tradition to welcome active-duty service personnel and veterans as they return home for Thanksgiving. Pictured from left to right – Bridgette Lombardi, MI198; Jeannette Brunetti, MI201; Karen Socia, MI198; Stacy Breithaupt, MI201; Theresa Monarch, MI198; Joyce Fabian, MI180; Joan Clark, MI201; Kim Benigni, MI198, Margaret Brooks, MI198.*



*The Red White & Blue Star Mothers MI-198 met for our annual Holiday celebration on December 7<sup>th</sup> at Mission BBQ. Thanks to the generosity of our sisters, we donated 45 toys to Toys for Tots this year. Pictured from left to right – Rick Dahn, Rae Dahn, Margaret Brooks, Loran Brooks, Bridgette Lombardi, Theresa Monarch, Karen Socia, Beth Tryon, Bruce Tryon, Christina Engel.*

# MN7 North Metro

*Box Packing for the Holidays!*



*Signing Holiday Cards for the Minneapolis VA.*



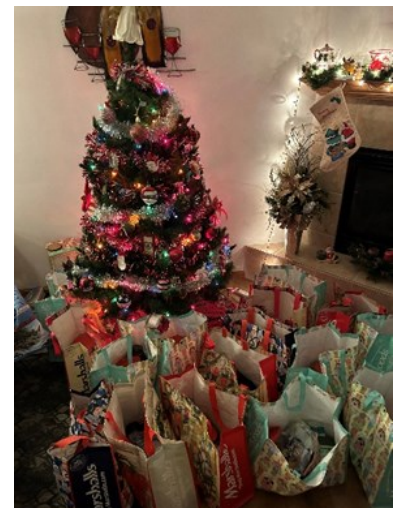
*Packing holiday bags for Veterans in transitional housing for MACV*



*Making meals at the Fisher House in Minneapolis*



[This Photo](#) by Unknown Author is licensed un-



## MN13

Wright County Area MN Chapter 13 Completed our mission of our annual Holiday Project in November. We packaged up 300 hand decorated Christmas stockings, filled them with goodies and shipped them off to deployed troops and brought some to Eagles Healing Nest.

We held our fall craft/vendor event on Saturday, November 4. There were over 20 vendors at this event this time. This event also includes a bag raffle and bake sale/free will donation table. Funds raised from this event helps to support our mission including our annual Holiday Project.

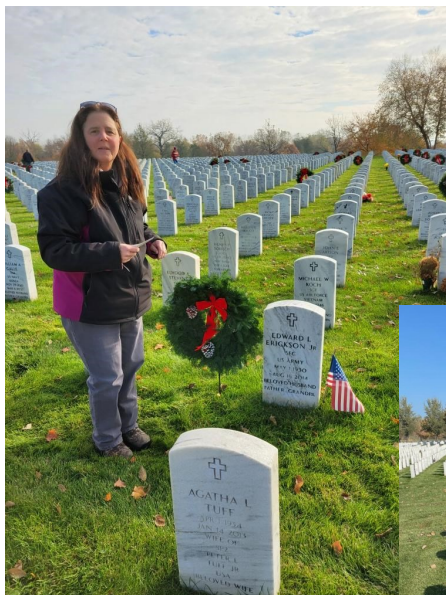
On November 4 we also had one member attend the wreath laying at Fort Snelling National Cemetery.

Veterans Day weekend we were busy attending Veterans Day events. Friday, November 10 started with a program at the Buffalo High School at 2:30 where we received recognition as Blue Star Mothers, as well as cards made by students and can for our price collected by staff and students. It was very humbling to walk into the high school with the students holding a flag line to honor Veterans. A former Buffalo High School administrator was the guest speaker.

Later that same day three moms traveled to Sartell to attend a Veterans Day event. For the first hour and a half it was a resource fair and we hosted a table with information about Blue Star Mothers. After three was a program and dinner featuring Mike Mills, a wounded Veteran as the main speaker. We say at a table with a Mom and her veteran and his sister.

Saturday morning, November 11, Veterans Day five moms attended the Veterans Day breakfast put on by the Buffalo American Legion. We helped serve the breakfast and clear tables and socialize with the Veterans in attendance. Local school students made the decorations.

We've decorated our tree again for the annual Wright County Historical Society Festival of Trees event. Community members may now view all the trees and vote for their favorite tree.





## Ohio True Blue 15



Ohio's True Blue Chapter 15's Inside Guard, Theresa Daniel (center), presents a \$1200 check to Chapter President Gretchen Schmidt (left) and Vice President, Karen High. The donation came from the Lima Fraternal Order of Eagles Auxiliary #370 as part of their "Giving Back to the Community" programs.



We participated in the 51st Annual Christmas Tree Festival held at the Allen County Museum in Lima the first weekend in December. The chapter hung wreaths for both the Gold Star Mothers and Blue Star Mothers. This year, the chapter added a white tree decorated in blue lights and blue stars with images of family and friends of members who have served or are currently serving in the military.



Debby Wadham, puts the finishing touches on the tree prior to the opening of the festival.



# Southwestern Pennsylvania Chapter PA16

- Donated: USO Thanksgiving food drive
- Volunteered: Veterans Day Women of the Arms Club Breakfast
- Attended: Veterans Leadership Program Veterans Day Breakfast
- Participated: Veterans Day Parade
- November meeting: A Night of Giving - Thanksgiving/ Friendsgiving feast and voted on making financial donations to 7 organizations
- Donated: VFW Post 7714 Season of Giving project at VA Hospital - Personal items and cookies for Bingo
- Baked: 60 Dozen cookies for Legacies Alive Gold Star Tailgate Party at Army Navy Game
- Prompted: "Bubble Gum Tales" <https://greenscenemagazine.com/cool-at-school-bubble-gum-tales-at-west-greene/>
- Volunteer: Heroes Supporting Heroes Operation Santa Huge winter carnival for military families. Wrapped presents, decorated, helped on day of event
- Met Presque Isle Blue Star Mothers PA204 for lunch



Chapter Members and Associate Members at Veterans Leadership Program Veterans Day Breakfast

## Music City Blue Star Mothers TN3

We are pleased to have welcomed another new member this month whose son is serving in the Army.

We were invited to participate in The Snowball Express sponsored by the Gary Sinise Foundation at Nashville Airport. Each December the foundation hosts 1750+ children of fallen heroes and the surviving spouse/guardian at Walt Disney World. We were honored to serve these families as they made their way to their airport gate where they were welcomed by the local Patriot Guard, military Honor Guard, and many volunteers.



We also assembled and decorated our Tree of Heroes at Nashville Airport. This is an annual event for us to honor our local military members (active and retired) and Gold Star families. The Christmas tree is decorated with red, white, and blue stars bearing the names, ranks and hometowns of our heroes. It is prominently located in the baggage claim area for all to admire. It will be on display through the holiday season until January 6, 2024.

# MOUNTAIN VALLEY BLUE STAR MOTHERS TN4



**SPONSORED A CHARITY BIKE RIDE - A VERY PROFITABLE FUNDRAISER**



**PARTICIPATED IN  
SWEETWATER'S  
VETERANS DAY PARADE**



**PACKING 160  
STOCKINGS  
FOR 3 BASES**



## Blue Star Mothers - Houston Chapter TX-2

Is it Santa? No It's the Blue Star Moms! Take a look at all of the fun activities we did on behalf of Santa in the last month!

Packing Party in November! We sent created over 200 boxes for our deployed service members



On December 12<sup>th</sup> we had our general meeting/Christmas party. We collected over 30 stockings for Veteran in long-term care at the Houston VA.





# SPRING CREEK AREA TX18

## BLUE STAR MOTHERS



Tunnel 2 Towers



Veterans Day



Veterans Day



Tunnel 2 Towers



Merry Christmas Parade



## WISCONSIN BLUE STAR MOTHERS CHAPTER 1



Over 60 care packages have been shipped overseas for the Holidays. We had many helpers from Kimberly Clark Corporation who also donated wipes and feminine products. We received a donation of beef jerky from Cabela's!



We finished our last craft show/fundraising for 2023. We will enjoy the Holiday Season and prepare afterwards for Spring shows! It has been a successful venture for awareness of our group and fundraising! Ask us how we do it!



We were invited to participate in the decorating of the Governor's Mansion. We decorated one day and went back for the tree lighting and tour. We have a Blue Star Mom's Tree and a Troop Tree. The Troop tree is camo-colored ornaments (green, brown, black) and our homemade branch ornaments and care packages showing what we ship! We met the Governor Evers and Mrs. Evers!

# BLUE STAR MOTHERS SE WI 2



## DECEMBER 2023 NEWSLETTER

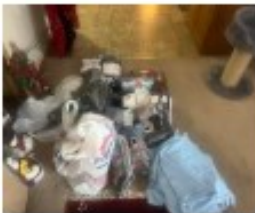
### Upcoming Events

**Wreaths Across  
America**  
December 16<sup>th</sup>

**Christmas Party**  
December 19<sup>th</sup>

**Christmas Floral  
Arrangement  
Fundraiser**  
December 21<sup>st</sup>

Undergarment donations for  
veterans from the Annual Up  
Down Tournament!



With the holiday season upon us we celebrated sisterhood with several fun events continuing our commitment to support each other, as well as our Military! One of the first events on the December calendar was the long awaited 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual VOW Winter Banquet fundraiser. Due to unforeseen circumstances the event was cancelled at the last minute, in our true **Blue Star Mom** nature of adapting and overcoming, we improvised and made alternative plans to gather and share laughs and an excellent meal!



For the 3<sup>rd</sup> year in a row our group had the honor of decorating a room at the historic Pabst Mansion in Milwaukee, WI for their time-honored Christmas display. The theme for our room this year was "a young woman waiting for her loved one to return home from World War 1".



In early December we volunteered with Operation Home Baked packaging cookies into care packages for our Military. We helped box 4,100 dozen cookies (which consisted of 492,984 COOKIES)! This was 3,000 more cookies than last year. Cookies are packed into boxes filled with candy and letters from schoolchildren.



*Happy Holidays to you all!*

*For those who have an  
empty chair at your table,  
for any reason, we are  
thinking of you.*

*Hope the year ahead brings  
Peace on Earth.*

*"Today I pray for peace  
In the hope that  
tomorrow  
I won't have to"*



*Happy  
New Year*

