



HONORING OUR SHEROES

WOMEN IN THE MILITARY INITIATIVE

Overview

Women Veterans were the best-kept secret for many years. Onset of the 1980's activities were initiated to increase public awareness about services for women in the military and women Veterans. In 2011, First Lady Michelle Obama and Dr. Jill Biden launched Joining Forces, a nationwide initiative calling all Americans to rally around service members, veterans and their families and support them through wellness, education and employment.

“...Everybody can do something. Every American. Every business. Every profession. Every school. Every community. Every state. All of us, as one American team. That's how we will truly honor our veterans. That's how we will truly say thank you. That's how we will uphold the sacred trust with all who've served in our name.”

President Obama, August 26, 2014

Therefore, the Central Area of the Links, Incorporated has decided to launch an Area initiative creating a laser focus on our women in the military. This initiative will focus on Sheroes, women in the military making a difference in our states, nation and world.

Goals:

1. Increase awareness to the unique experiences and strengths of women who serve or have served in the military.

2. Collaborate with communities, businesses, nonprofits, and others to ensure that opportunities, resources and support are available and accessible for our women who serve or have served in the military.
3. Showcase military women through their skills, experiences and dedication to serving our nation communities.

Integration into Chapter Programming/Activities/Events

- **Collaborate** with the YWCA or other organizations to hold a forum on domestic violence in military families.
 - Domestic violence happens so much in the military that the Department of Defense has made it an item of specific concern.
 - Violence against women is a pervasive problem within the military, just as it is among civilians. However, women in the military are particularly vulnerable to abuse due to geographical isolation from families and friends, and the potential social isolation with the military culture.
 - Abused women in military communities are often fearful of reporting incidents due to the lack of confidentiality and privacy as well as limited victim services. Source: FuturesWithoutViolence.org
- **Host** an Awards Ceremony honoring Women Veterans for their contributions in the Service/Military.
- **Develop** a Chapter Project/Innovative Program in the community around issues facing military women.
- **Sponsor** a women veterans' career fair that is focused on transitioning women veterans to the workforce. The project should be conducted in partnership with local businesses, veteran centers, Dress for Success offices, and local agencies. This can be in conjunction with Women's History month to demonstrate Links' commitment to supporting and empowering women veterans and their families.
- **Provide** scholarships for military veteran women to further their education.

Conclusion

During the 2017 Central Area Conference, a resolution will be presented on this initiative. Chapters will be recognized for programs focused on "Honoring Our

Sheroes". Chapters are encouraged to incorporate this initiative with existing programs to expand or enhance aligning with all or any of the five facets.

A toolkit will be available for Chapter use by the end of January 2016.

When our women are serving in the military, they are doing their part create a safe and secure world for us. Now it's time for us to do our part in serving our women in the military and veterans.

Resources

- United States Department of Labor
- Center for Women Veterans
- Women Veterans Rock
- YWCA – Military Veteran Program
- Joining Forces, The White House Initiative
- National Association of Black Military Women