

## REGION 8 REPORT

October 8, 2024

The 2024 National Leadership and Education Conference held in Reno, Nevada in August was a tremendous success. We had a significant number of attendees who gathered a great deal of information to share with their states and chapters. The topic of Agent Orange and the Molly Loomis Act which focuses on medical research on behalf of our children and their families related birth defects and miscarriages was one of the highlighted seminars that was pivotal. We need answers from professionals that have no other agenda than to discover the scientific facts of the impact that Agent Orange exposure presented. Another seminar that had an impact on the attendees was the Spousal and Survivor Benefit Seminar that was presented by Co-Chairs Beverly Pounds and myself. The importance of holding these seminars is crucial as our veterans and their spouses need to be prepared for the unfortunate ending of our days. If we are experiencing the long goodbye or losing our spouse suddenly, preparation is the key. The AVVA's S&SB program is beneficial in that it provides the tools to assist our Veterans and their families with the preparation needed.

There were other seminars that were very well presented such as Suicide Prevention, narrated by Dr. Tom Hall, who explained the importance of "Dare to Disrupt Suicide" and responding to the red flags whether there is basis or not. Caring for an individual that is isolating themselves by reaching out to them reassuring them that you care. Look for ways to help your family and friends feel genuinely needed in your family, your church and your community. These are just a few examples of how beneficial these seminars were and how practical the information was for those attending.

In conclusion, Our Project Friendship program was also a tremendous success as we were able to raise over \$20,200 for Horsemanship for Heroes, a nonprofit Equine Therapy program that is yet another tool in assisting veterans with PTSD and Suicide Prevention. Well done AVVA!

Jennifer Ellis, Region 8 Director