



VETERANS ASSISTANCE FOUNDATION

THE ALLIANCE

VAF, 312 Superior Ave. Tomah, WI 54660 866-823-8387 www.vafvets.org Visit us on Twitter & Facebook



Spring 2014

SERVING WISCONSIN'S AND THE NATION'S HOMELESS VETERANS FOR OVER 20 YEARS

5TH ANNUAL ROCK FOR VETS UNION GROVE SITE



This event was held on April 19, 2014 in Racine at Memorial Hall. The event was held by the Veterans of America Motorcycle Club (VOA). The concert was located on two different stages located on the main floor and downstairs. There were a total of eight bands that performed: *Mean Jake, Fall Hazzard, Black Frog, The Blacktop Kings, Imperial Fall, Mind Merchant, Carbellion* and *Amber My Ember*.

The event ran from 6pm until 11pm. They had raffles, a silent auction and were selling T-shirts and sweatshirts for supporting veterans. They were also selling raffle tickets for a Brewer Suite for the Father's Day game against the Cincinnati Reds. This suite includes 14 tickets and 6 parking passes. The VOA had a tribute to the troops and there were a few current military personal that were participating. *Fox 6 News* was there to cover the event.

Melissa Taggart, Site Director and Celeste Balcer, Case Manager attended the event. They were invited by the VOA to place a table at the event to answer questions about the program and to show where some of the proceeds were going to benefit. It was an excellent way to show our support for the VOA and all they do for us at the VAP (Veterans Assistance Program) in Union Grove (Cottage 16).

100% of the proceeds from this event go back into helping veterans in the community. This includes VAP. The VOA throws a Christmas Party, a 4th of July cookout and comes out a few times a year to just cook out and hang out with the residents. Recently they donated a residential refrigerator to the facility to replace one that no longer worked in one of the pod areas.

We would like to thank the Veterans of America Motorcycle Club for all they do for our Veterans!

NEWEST MEMBER OF SSVF TEAM AT KING SITE

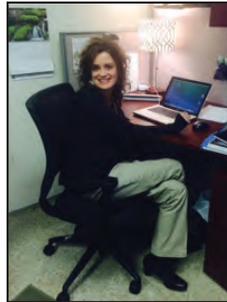
Hi! I am Jamie Kolpien, the newest member to the Veterans Assistance Foundation Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) team. I am located in the King site office and cover Winnebago, Outagamie and Waushara Counties.

I have a passion for helping the homeless and feel so blessed to be a part of the SSVF Team! I haven't yet had the opportunity to meet everyone; however, I feel very thankful and welcomed

by the people I've been working with so far. In addition, I absolutely love working with our clients!

Eight years ago, I had my first vision of helping the homeless. I saw a building in which we brought homeless into for short-term housing. The vision went on with us assisting them in finding a job, helping them get cleaned up, taking them shopping for new clothes and helping them get back on track in general with their lifestyle. In June of 2014, I am also taking a missions trip to Haiti to help those in need.

So, it is with honor that I am working with SSVF to help our homeless veterans in their difficult times and to be a part of the process.



MEET VAF'S NEW ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT



My name is Rachelle Baumer and I have joined VAF as the Administrative Assistant at the Administrative office in Tomah. I am a Wisconsin native; however, I am

a military spouse and have also lived in South Carolina and Germany.

I moved back from Germany in February of this year with my three children. My husband and two dogs will be joining us soon. Everyone has been very welcoming, and I look forward to meeting all the staff in person (not just over the phone or via email)!

WE ARE THE CHAMPIONS!

Families First of Monroe County 4th Annual Trivia Night

In the Tomah community there is a program called Families First that we have been working with for what seems like forever. In hard times and budget cuts they had to find a way to help raise more money for their program, so as to have the means to help needy families in the Monroe County area. They decided on having a Trivia Night/Chili Feed.

Anyone can enter a team as long as all members are at least 21 years

of age. Teams can have up to 10 people with a flat entry fee of \$200 per team. This year they had 32 teams enter; up from 27 last year. There is a half time chili feed that consists of various types of homemade chili, breads, cakes and cookies.

Since it started four years ago, the Veterans Assistance Foundation (VAF) has entered a team to show our support for Families First. Residents of VAF programs also organized a

WE ARE THE CHAMPIONS, continued on page 2

team and gave us some competition. They all have said that they had a great time.

We would like to say that what was extra great about this year is the staff VAF team went away the CHAMPIONS. We were able to bring the trophy back to Tomah from the Sparta Kiwanis team and get to hold it for the year. You can stop in and see it at our Administrative Office in Tomah located at 312 Superior Avenue.

Needy families of the community came away the BIG winners with Families First pulling in over \$13,500 to support those in need within Monroe County.

Please check out their website at www.familiesfirstonline.org or their Facebook page at Families First of Monroe County to see the pictures of the competition. Start watching their Facebook page or website for information regarding the 5th annual

Families First Trivia Night competition which will be on March 14, 2015 and see if you can win the trophy from us.

As they say, "It's not what you know, but who you don't know it with."

Faye Rainey
Tomah GDP Program Director
TEAM VAF



VETERANS IN CHIPPEWA FALLS VOLUNTEER THEIR TIME TO HELP OTHERS



Pictured are Volunteers Ben F., Bill P., Tom E. and Kevin R.

Veterans in the Chippewa Falls VAP volunteer at many events and for many different organizations within the area.

One such location is at the Sojourner House, which is a homeless shelter in Eau Claire. Chippewa Falls VAP volunteers once a month at Sojourner House (see photo at left). We clean, organize and make sure the shelter is ready for people to come off the street and have a hot meal before they lay down to sleep for the night.

Other volunteer activities include volunteering at Feed My People Food Bank packing backpack lunches for the school age children in our area and helping to prepare orders for food pantries and meal sites.

TOMAH & STEP UP AWARD "RESIDENT OF THE MONTH" HONORS

The staff of VAF in Tomah and Step Up Program realized that we have several residents in our programs who tend to go "above and beyond" their own goals and issues and extend a helping hand for other Veterans, VAF programs or other organizations.

With that in mind, we decided to start a nomination process for Resident of the Month. The criteria consists of not only would the Veteran have to be fully active in their personal goals, but would have to be showing consideration for and provide assistance for someone else.

Staff members nominate the Veterans and then the nominations are read by staff and they conduct a blind vote to see who will be that month's Resident of the Month. The individual is then presented with a certificate, VAF pin and gift card for a local business.

The winners for January are Randy D. for Tomah and John D. for Step Up. February's winners are Turon H. for Tomah and Frank M. for Step Up. The winners for March are Fred B. for Tomah and Paul B. for Step Up.

Congratulations to all of you and keep up the good work!

CULTIVATING A LASTING PARTNERSHIP

With one main goal in mind, "Assisting Veterans in need", several organizations from Minnesota and Wisconsin got together on February 14, 2014 to speak about their programs and discuss collaborations. The attendees consisted of several different levels of professions including Case Managers, Social Workers and Directors. The meeting was a great representation of the different services in Wisconsin and Minnesota that aim to assist Veterans.

Kathleen Vitalis, President/CEO of The Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans (MACV) discussed her program and the different ways they are able to assist Veterans in the state of Minnesota. MACV provides comprehensive programs and supportive services to homeless veterans in three primary focus areas: housing, employment and civil legal concerns.

Our very own Support Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) Director Don Roach also discussed the SSVF program and how we provide services to our Veterans. Don emphasized the need to build rapport and lasting partnerships with other organizations in order to serve our Veterans in the most effective ways possible.

Mary Schmocker, SSVF Coordinator for the Indianhead Community Action Agency, Inc. (ICAA) also discussed her program and the ways they are able to assist Veterans in rural Northern Wisconsin. Mary also discussed the ICAA's Connections Store which allows them to assist families and individuals with food, clothing, job training, medical needs and funding for emergency housing.

Greater collaboration between agencies and the need to improve interagency working is a key priority in providing effective services. The meeting was a great way for the different organizations to network and put a face to a name. We can only hope that our partnerships will build lasting results in assisting Veterans in need.

A DAY AT THE HORSE FARM

By CB, Veteran resident of the VAF Foundation

On April 30, 2014, veterans of VAF Tomah had the opportunity to visit the Veterans Equine Trail Services (V.E.T.S.), a nonprofit organization in LaValle, Wisconsin. V.E.T.S. was founded and is run by Barbara Knopf, a disabled veteran herself (USMC). This is a horse outreach program for veterans and disabled

— HORSE FARM, continued on page 3



COMMUNITY OUTREACH – UNION GROVE SITE

By Scott Radack, Union Grove Site

Since the start of the second quarter, the Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) Office in Union Grove has been engaged in several community outreach events. These opportunities have enlightened me in regards to the number of organiza-



tions available to assist those lower income individuals and families in need. I found out that many of the individuals/groups that I spoke to that work with Veterans were

not aware of the different programs available for Veterans, such as SSVF and the Grant Per Diem programs available through the Veterans Assistance Foundation, Inc. (VAF).

Two such outreach opportunities were at the Kenosha Human Development Center and Gateway Technical College-Racine Campus which provided me with numerous contacts and resources in Kenosha and Racine Counties, and also provided me with the opportunity to promote VAF and SSVF Programs.

A huge thank you to Ms. Ginger Helgeson, (Outreach Program VOCA Advocate) for requesting my presence at their monthly meeting at the Kenosha Human Development Center in Kenosha, Wisconsin to discuss

VAF and SSVF with their staff.

Many thanks also to Ms. Jane Davis (Veterans Advocate) from Gateway Technical College-Racine Campus who hosted the “Community Awareness Day”. The “Community Awareness Day” Outreach event at Gateway College on April 8, 2014 provided me with additional resource agencies with whom I discussed VAF programs and what services their agencies provide. This was also an excellent chance to explain the programs to several Veterans.

These outreach opportunities were amazing and it was truly great to coordinate with other Continuum of Care organizations and meet those Veterans who may be in need of assistance.

GAS GRILL DONATION AT UNION GROVE SITE

In February of 2014, William Hustad, the Grand Commander of the Military Order of the Cootie, contacted me (Melissa Taggart, Site Director Union Grove VAP) and asked me what we could use at our facility. Grand Commander Hustad was collecting money for a special project for his year as Grand Commander 2013-2014 and wanted to use it towards something for the Veterans.

After thinking long and hard of what the facility needs or could use, my reply was a gas grill. Our kitchen manager cooks on the grill sometimes, but when she does she has to use three or four charcoal grills to have enough space. I told him it would be nice to have a grill that had a large cooking surface.

In April of 2014, we received a large gas grill for our facility along with a lock, pro-

pane tank and cover. Carol Reynolds, our kitchen manager, is excited to use it.

Thank you to the Military Order of the Cootie and Grand Commander Hustad!



HORSE FARM, continued from page 2

children, offered free of charge.

The day was damp and gloomy, but that did not stop the veterans from having a good time. There were three new foals and one colt and the veterans got to pet them and feed them treats. One of the foals was born the day before the visit.

Farms are not all fun and play. There are chores to be done: from mucking the stalls, filling up grain containers, throwing hay down the barn loft and grooming the horses, there are many chores included in farm life. It was interesting to see manure transform magically into fertilizer once it

got outside the barn.

The program is by appointment only and can be made by calling 608-985-8886. The farm is located at: S 1472 McKinney Road, La Valle, WI 53941.

It was fun for all the residents who attended and they also had plenty of cookies.

PROUD OF OUR ARTISTIC VETERANS

By Andrew Stargard, Tomah GDP Case Manager

On March 31, 2014 I had the privilege to attend the 2014 Creative Arts Awards Ceremony held at the chapel of the Tomah VA Medical Center. VA Medical Director Mario DeSanctis and 2013 Miss Wisconsin, Paula Mae Kuiper handed out awards to the recipients and posed for pictures.

The Veterans Assistance Foundation (VAF) was well represented by John D. and Scott L., as well as many former residents of the program proving that the amount of talent that comes into VAF is limitless. John D. won an award in plastic model kits category, taking 2nd Place for his

“M1-Tank”. John’s love of model making started in the 1980s after he was done with military service. He has done many models and it has become his main hobby. Most of John’s models are centered on the World War II era, but he has also done models with aircraft and cars. He has even created some of his own variants on his models by mixing paint or taking parts of one model to add to another for realism of the piece. John told me that spending time completing models gives him something to do besides watch too much TV. His other interests include watching sports and

searching for golf balls that were hit off of the VA golf course. This was the first year that John entered the competition and he looks forward to entering next year.

Scott L. won awards for the following: in the acrylic category he won 2nd Place for “Ocean Breeze”; in the oil painting category he won 3rd Place for “Waiting on Lonely Follower” and in the watercolor category he won 2nd Place for “Resting Pheasant”. Scott told me that his talent in art was developed in school taking art classes. He was urged on because his parents said he was talented and he was

ARTISTIC VETERANS, continued on page 4

very good at acrylic and ceramic paintings. In his time of military service he painted murals of aircraft, logos in the hangar and designed T-shirts for jets. He now focuses more of his work on watercolor, oil and acrylic paints, and he generally completes wildlife and nature scenes because of his love of nature. Scott always looks for new challenges in his artwork in which he bases his final product off pictures he's seen and will make adjustments if something doesn't look right as he goes.

Scott told me that he can paint a piece very quickly or go slow and be more detailed. His artwork helps him deal with his problems and helps him feel good when he is depressed. Above all, Scott gets the most enjoyment out of seeing

other people receive enjoyment from his finished products. Some individuals have even asked to keep them which is a great source of pride for Scott. The 2014 Awards was the first time that Scott submitted artistic pieces into the competition and he looks forward to submitting more work in the future.

Scott wanted to thank VAF for having him in the program; without our help, he would not have been able to submit his art for the competition.

It was a privilege to attend the ceremony. Congratulations to all our veterans who submitted material into the competition and we look forward to seeing more of it at the 2015 Creative Arts Awards Ceremony.

WISH LIST

****Shower Shoes are currently in great demand and we could use many pairs.**

Personal Care Items:

Toothbrushes/holders, Toothpaste, Dental Floss, Toilet Paper, Foot powder, Shampoo, Conditioner, Brushes, Combs, Disposable Shavers, Shaving Cream, Lotion, Bar Soap, Liquid Hand Soap, Baby Oil, Kleenex, Denture-Bath/Cleaner/Adhesive, Deodorant, Vaseline, Bath Towels/Washcloths, Fingernail/Toenail Clippers, Bar Soap Holder/Container, **Body Wash

Laundry Items:

Fabric Softener Sheets, Laundry Bags (mesh type), Sewing Kits, Laundry Detergent (Powder), Plastic Clothes Hangers

Recreational Items:

Model Kits, Craft Kits, Phone Cards, Board Games, Movies, Crossword Puzzles, Pens, Pencils, Envelopes, Stamps, Pool Sticks and Red Chalk, Nine Ball Rack, Pool Stick Repair Kit, Stationery, Books, Greeting Cards, Exercise Mats, Bicycles (26"), Bicycle Tire Repair Kits, 26" Tire Tubes for Bikes, Bicycle Racks

Clothing: Used clothing, in good condition, is fine.

House Slippers (Sizes 8-13), T-shirts (S, M, L, XL, 2XL), Tennis Shoes, Underwear (S, M, L, XL, 2XL), Socks – Athletic (Sizes 8-13), Winter Hats – Gloves – Boots – Coats, Men's jeans (Waist sizes 32 to 42, *****Shower shoes/flip flops (M, L, XL)*****

Household Supplies:

Sugar and/or Sugar Substitute, Coffee mugs (plastic), Pillows, Pillow Protectors

While donations of any kind are always welcome, please call us at 608-372-VETS (8387) before making any donations. Cash donations are always needed and welcomed. As always, the residents and staff thank you for your kind thoughts and generous support.

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP?

Providing services takes money; foundations and corporations fight hard for a share of big federal and state grants. The Veterans Assistance Foundation relies on the generosity of people like you to help end the national disgrace of homeless veterans who are (MIA) Missing in America.

Please send your tax-deductible donations to:
Veterans Assistance Foundation, Inc.
312 Superior Ave.
Tomah, WI 54660

Please help us to continue our efforts to help those veterans who need a "Handup and not a hand-out."

VAF MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to help homeless veterans or at risk of becoming Homeless veterans regain, maintain and improve their status in society by providing an alcohol and drug-free, secure environment through which a wide array of human services can be accessed in an atmosphere of dignity and mutual concern.

MOURN NOT WITH BROKEN HEARTS

Anonymous

*Mourn not with broken hearts,
when friends and dear ones go,
For you the night of loneliness,
for them the morning glow;*

*For you the daily burden of
the years that are to be
For them? A new adventure
in a world you cannot see.*

*For sorrow has its season.
Nothing lasts, not even grief.
Every winter has its ending,
and then the green leaf.*

*One day, you will awake and find
that time has eased the pain.
That is how God's Mercy works.
Spring will come again.*

The following were present
or past residents of VAF.

In Memory of:
Gary G., US Navy
05/02/53 – 01/10/14

Walt K., US Army
09/05/46 – 02/13/14

Philip L., USMC
10/17/51 – 04/13/14