



VETERANS ASSISTANCE FOUNDATION

THE ALLIANCE

VAF, P.O. Box 610, Tomah, WI 54660 608-372-1280 www.vafvets.org Visit us on Twitter & Facebook  

Fall 2011

SERVING WISCONSIN'S AND THE NATION'S HOMELESS VETERANS FOR OVER 16 YEARS

VAF RESIDENTS ENTER FLOAT IN PARADE



Here are a few photos from the Cranberry Festival. Pictured at far left are two of the several talented VAF residents who helped create and build the float entry: Ralph C. and Reggie L.

On Sunday, September 25th Renee Pierce, Dawn Ollendick and Jeff Ard (all staff members of the Veterans Assistance Foundation), along with two residents (Reggie L. and Ralph C.), participated in the Warrens Cranberry Festival Parade. The VAF entry was a float designed and built by residents Reggie L., Ralph C., Argele B., Richard M. and Ernest N. The float represented all branches of the armed forces. Reggie and Ralph were amazed at the number of units that were in the parade. Our float was 111 out of 114 units entered in the parade. We were entered into the category of adult nonprofit.

Although we did not place in the award standings, we had fun and it was an opportunity for outreach and to get our name and

information out to people who wouldn't normally hear about us. We handed out our brochures and our Eagle pins to people along the parade route. Renee's daughter and son came, as well as Dawn's son, to help hand out candy. The kids, of course, were the official candy "taste testers" and tried the candy first to make sure it was not outdated. Once we had their unanimous approval, we were able to load the buckets in preparation for handing it out to the children along the parade route.

The residents outdid themselves with this float and Reggie says he is getting ready for the holiday parade and says he is "lighting it up". This year's Holiday Parade for the City of Tomah will be held on Friday, November 25th at 6 p.m.

FORMER EMPLOYEE HOLDS BOWLING TOURNAMENT AND FOOD DRIVE FOR VAF

Vern Tranberg, friend of the Veterans Assistance Foundation (VAF) and former employee, decided he wanted to do something to benefit the program and the veterans we serve. Since Vern is an avid bowler, he decided to hold a bowling tournament and food drive to raise money and collect non-perishable food items for the VAF.

The 8-pin bowling tournament was held at Features in West Salem, Wisconsin on Friday, September 23rd and Saturday, September 24th. There were 33 bowlers who participated in the tournament (and had a great time while bowling). Even though the turnout wasn't what was hoped for (as the weather was beautiful and both the Warrens Cranberry Festival and Oktoberfest in La Crosse were both held

on this weekend), they were able to raise over \$700 and collected a box of non-perishable foods for the VAF. At sign in, each bowler was given information about the VAF, a VAF window decal and pin.

We would like to thank all the participants and donors for their time and very generous donations. Last but not least, we would like to thank Vern for his time coordinating and participating in the tournament, and his idea for this fabulous fundraiser!

Please mark your calendars for the first part of 2012, as Vern has stated that he would like to do another bowling tournament and is looking to do it some time in January. Follow our Facebook and Twitter accounts to get the dates and information once we have it.

VETERANS DAY DONATION



The Saint James Ladies Aid group from Necedah, Wisconsin made a very generous donation to the Veterans in our program in observance of Veterans Day. Each Veteran in our program in Tomah received a large gift bag full of items, such as: shampoo, lotion, gloves, socks, scarves, hat, shower gel, candy, tea bags, shave cream, razors, puzzle books, toothpaste, toothbrush, paper, Christmas card, postage stamps, envelopes, combs, pens, Polident and dental floss.

A BIG thank you to all the ladies who took part in this awesome donation. Each veteran was very surprised and thankful for the bag of useful items they received. Being remembered and honored on Veterans Day for their service was heart-felt by all the veterans.

Have a
Merry
Christmas
and a Happy
New Year!

FROM THE PRESIDENT



The year 2011 is almost to a close. Thank you to everyone for the kind gifts and donations to the Veterans in our programs. We cannot express how much this is appreciated.

As always, there are several events to report on in the time since our last newsletter. Peggy and Andrew (Case Managers) have both hit their two-year anniversary with the Foundation, while Bill (Case Manager) and Karla (Administrative Assistant)

both have hit their one-year anniversary. Congratulations, and job well done!

VAF is now part of the 2011 Badgerland Combined Federal Campaign being held from mid-September to mid-December. Our number is 71109. This year marks the 50th anniversary of the CFC. "The CFC has raised nearly \$7 billion to help combat disease, protect our planet, feed the hungry and lift up individuals and communities at home and around the world." We are honored to be a part of the campaign. A special thanks goes out to all those who contribute through the CFC.

VAF added a new member to our Board of Directors in November. So, it is my

pleasure to welcome Ramona Kane-Blaney as the newest member of the VAF Board of Directors. Ramona is an honorably retired Army veteran with 30 years of military service. She also worked for the Veterans Administration as a Social Worker with PTSD and Grant & Per Diem programs. We are very pleased to add her expertise to our team.

As always, until next time, take care, be safe and enjoy the holiday.

Semper Fi,
Colin Moten
VAF President

SUPERMARKET OF VETERANS BENEFITS

On August 5th and 6th a Supermarket of Veterans Benefits was held in Madison, Wisconsin. At the Supermarkets, Veterans can learn about eligibility criteria for state veteran's benefits, programs and services; apply for state and federal benefits; receive information about loans, education benefits and employment opportunities; get assistance in obtaining military medals and records; obtain information about assisted living and nursing home care; pre-register for burial in state veteran's cemeteries; and they can learn about the wide range of benefits and services available including health care, loans, compensation and pension, education, job training, aging services, funeral honors and much more.

In addition to the tables set up by Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) to provide the above services, other service organizations can attend and set up a table to provide information to those interested in or in need of the services of that organization. Dawn Ollendick, Programs Director for the Veterans Assistance Foundation (VAF), attended the supermarket on behalf of the VAF. Dawn states that the attendance at the supermarket was lower than expected, but she was able to make contact with a few individuals who may be in need of our services and was able to give them information about our program and our contact information for future use.

WAYNE D. HORNER MEMORIAL STAND DOWN

October 8, 2011 was the date for the Wayne D. Horner Memorial Stand Down held in Madison, Wisconsin. This was a one-day event and focused on serving all Veterans who are Homeless or At-Risk of Becoming Homeless. This year marks the first Stand Down in Dane County in 12 years.

Some of the services provided included: Vet Center Counselors; Veterans Benefits Information; Women Counselors; Health Screenings & Women's Clinic; Drug & Alcohol Treatment Information; Clothing & Housing Assistance; and Employment Assistance. Breakfast and lunch were also provided for the Veterans attending the Stand Down and for the Veterans with children, they provided a youth program for children ages 3 and older.

Once again, Dawn Ollendick, VAF Programs Director attended and set up a table on behalf of the Veterans Assistance Foundation (VAF). Dawn did six on-site referrals to our program, and three were able to be placed right away in our program.

TOMAH AREA VETERANS MEMORIAL DEDICATION HELD



James Blaney, Wisconsin National Guard (retired). Fort McCoy and Volk Field provided Color Guards and rifle teams and the Tomah High School Band was also on hand to perform patriotic music and individual branch service songs for the dedication.

September 10, 2011 was the official date for the Tomah Area Veterans Memorial Dedication in the city of Tomah, Wisconsin. The Memorial stands in Memorial Park (formerly named Butts Park) on Superior Avenue and was erected to honor all veterans past, present and future.

To start the Dedication off, there was a two jet fly by performed by the Wisconsin Air National Guard. It was a spectacular scene as the jets flew parallel to Superior Avenue, all the way through town. The Dedication continued with several speakers from the area, including Pete Peterson, Co-Chair Tomah Area Veterans Memorial; Tom Flock, Municipal Judge; and Major General

The monument honors all branches of the military and weighs approximately 25,000 pounds. Three flag poles, seven benches, two pillars honoring those killed in action and more than 600 tiles and 250 bricks are also featured in the memorial. A saying on one of the pillars says, "THIS MEMORIAL HONORS ALL VETERANS WHO, ALTHOUGH SEPARATED BY GENERATIONS, SHARED A COMMON, UNDENIABLE GOAL – TO VALIANTLY PROTECT OUR COUNTRY'S FREEDOMS. THE MEMORIES OF THESE VETERANS WILL CONTINUE TO LIVE ON WHENEVER AND WHEREVER DEMOCRACY EXISTS. THE

AMERICAN VETERAN – FOREVER A SYMBOL OF HEROISM, SACRIFICE, LOYALTY AND FREEDOM."

The Memorial was erected without any funding from the federal, state or city government. It was completely funded by businesses, families and individuals in the community buying the bricks and tiles and donating time, money and talents to make sure it was just right. The Tomah community pulled together to honor our veterans and gave them a thank you that simply can't be forgotten.

Memorial Tiles and Bricks may still

— TOMAH AREA, continued on page 3

OUR BEST WISHES TO ANDREW AND LINDA



October 6, 2011 was the last day of employment for VAF Case Manager Andrew Stargard...as a single man. Andrew married the love of his life, Linda Shay, on Saturday, October 8, 2011.

With the help of VAF case manager, Peggy Engen-Koresh, several residents of the program helped send Andrew off in style. The halls of the VAF building were decorated and noisemakers employed to help Andrew celebrate his impending nuptials. Andrew then had to "walk the gauntlet" of residents and staff as he left his office for the day. Andrew's vehicle wasn't even safe for the day, as that was also decorated (with someone writing "HELP" on one of the windows). As Andrew was walking to his car, he walked through a shower of bubbles, was serenaded with a small portion of "Going to the Chapel" and was given many words of congratulations and several handshakes.

Andrew and Linda had a beautiful day for their wedding and we all wish them the best and many happy years to come.

MAKE A DIFFERENCE DAY FUNDRAISER

In October, Colin Moten had the pleasure of attending a spaghetti dinner on behalf of the veterans in our programs. The dinner was put together by the Altrusa Club of Marshfield, Wisconsin. The meal was prepared and held in the American Legion Post 54 and attended by many in the local community. Our hosts, Linda and Gail, as well as the members of Post 54, could not be matched – they were simply wonderful. This was part of the Club's "Make a Difference Day" fundraiser...and a difference they did make.

As a result of the event, they collected over \$400 in cash donations, plenty of clothing, hygiene items, books, puzzles and baked goods, as well as a \$100 match from one of the local banks. Most of the donations were used immediately the next week at the Veterans Stand Down.

Altrusa is a community-based organization that picks a need in the community and works to make a difference. They can be found on Facebook as "Altrusa Club of Marshfield". This is truly a wonderful group of people and we are very grateful for their support.

VAF PARTICIPATES IN LACROSSE STAND DOWN



VAF's Dawn Ollendick meeting with veterans at the Stand Down.

"Stand Down" is a military term, which refers to taking care of combat troops by removing them from the battlefield to an environment that is safe and secure. The soldiers are given medical attention, food, fresh clothing and the chance to get cleaned up, rest and recuperate.

Stand Downs that are held in communities throughout the state are meant to be an intensive service fair for veterans and their families to provide services that they normally would not be able to get or would have trouble accessing. Veterans are provided with a "one stop" location to get help with many different items, such as VA benefits, help with employment, haircuts, flu shots and much more.

The Veterans Assistance Foundation (VAF) attended the Stand Down in La

Crosse, Wisconsin on October 20th of this year and we were able to get our name and information out to many individuals and businesses in the community. Besides getting our information out to attendees, the VAF provided many items for the homeless veterans in the area who attended, such as clothing and hygiene items, as well as back packs, sleeping bags and boots.

Dawn Ollendick and Jeff Ard of the VAF were on hand to help the Veterans with their needs and to answer questions about our program; they spoke to a large number of individuals who were not in need of our services, as well as those that do require some sort of assistance. They also were able to do onsite referrals for our program, which resulted in Dawn bringing a Veteran back with her from the Stand Down.

Again this year, several members of the Friends of Veterans were on hand to help Dawn and Jeff with handing out the clothing and hygiene items. They also helped cook and serve the breakfast and lunch that was provided for those attending the Stand Down.

HIGHLIGHT A VETERAN

By Paul S.



Prior to arriving at the Veterans Assistance Foundation (VAF), I was incarcerated at Chippewa Valley Correctional Treatment Facility (CVCTF) where I successfully completed all the requirements of the Earned Release Program (ERP). By voluntary participation in the ERP, I regained control of my life and was released six months early on October 13th, 2010. I spent nine days at a Temporary Living Placement in Appleton, Wisconsin, where I went through extreme periods of anxiety, due to the drastic change in my living environment.

I learned of the VAF from Mr. Powers, the Veterans Representative at CVCTF and was referred. On October 21, 2010 I arrived at the

VAF, not knowing what to expect but grateful to have people to talk to again. I soon realized that I was in a safe, caring environment where I could continue my aftercare and reintegrate back into society. I was physically ill due to my treatment for Hepatitis C; mentally out of balance, but spiritually sound.

The VAF gave me the opportunity to freely open myself up to choices for personal growth, and accept responsibility for my continued recovery. Physically, mentally and spiritually, I have made an amazing recovery. I have come full circle and transformed into a balanced person.

In closing, I want to express my sincere thanks to all the staff at the VAF and the VA for all their help and support. Without the help of staff, my recovery would not have been possible.

TOMAH AREA, continued from page 2 —

be purchased and will be incorporated into Phase 2 of the project. All of the tiles and bricks available during Phase 1 of the project were sold and the committee moved up Phase 2 of the project in order to meet the demand for more memorial tiles and bricks from the public. Personalized Memorial 12" x 12" Granite Tiles are selling for \$250 and Personalized Memorial 4" x 8" Bricks are selling for \$100.

For more information regarding the Memorial, you can contact the Tomah Area Veterans Memorial Campaign via mail at P.O. Box 625, Tomah, WI 54660, by phone at 608-374-0718 or 608-372-3322, or you can visit their Web site at www.tomahveteransmemorial.com

WDVA HOLDS 5TH ANNUAL WOMEN'S VETERANS CONFERENCE

Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs held their 5th annual Women Veterans Conference at Fort McCoy, Wisconsin from September 23rd through the 25th, 2011. Carolyn Morgan, the Women Veteran Representative at Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) in Madison, was in charge of the event this year.

Registration started Friday night and there was also a reception at McCoy's on base. The Saturday morning opening ceremony included remarks from WDVA Secretary John A. Scocos. We also heard from Employer Partnership of the Armed Forces, who not only help the veteran but also their spouse in connection with employers who are looking to employ veterans. Patricia Anderson spoke to us about her experience at West Point as part of their 3rd graduating class of females.

This year Holly Hoppe was awarded the

2011 Woman Veteran of the Year award. Yvette Pino spoke of the Veteran Print Project and Cpt. Kristin Boustany spoke on Resilience. Saturday afternoon consisted of workshops that included Equine Therapy, Pain Self-Management, Employment Transition and Post-Traumatic Spiritual Disorder for combat or sexual trauma PTSD.

Sunday started off with a one mile fun run/walk and concluded with veterans being able to participate in workshops such as: My Horse and I, Ceramics, Belly Dancing, Yoga, Scuba Diving, Tell Your Story and Wii Games.

If you know of any women veterans, let them know about this fun and informational event. This is an annual event and they can sign up on the WDVA Web site at www.dva.state.wi.us. Pictures of the event are available on the Women Vets of WI Facebook site, which is accessed at www.dva.state.wi.us/womenvets.asp

WISH LIST

Personal Care Items:

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

Laundry Items:

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

Recreational Items:

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

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

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

Household Supplies:

Sugar and/or Sugar Substitute	Coffee mugs (plastic)	Pillows and Pillow Protectors
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While donations of any kind are always welcome, please call the Center at 608-372-1280 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.

In Remembrance

Phil Price 07/06/1952 – 08/06/2011 U.S. Army - 59 Years	Robin Engen 07/15/54 – 10/21/11 U.S. Navy - 57 years	Joseph Barnes, Sr. 10/12/54 – 09/18/11 U.S. Army - 56 Years
Robert L. Barkenhagen, III 10/01/49 – 09/11/11 U.S. Marines - 61 Years	Verlyn Sagmoen 06/28/24 – 09/19/11 U.S. Army - 87 Years	Thomas F. Schurtz 09/28/11 – 10/05/11 U.S. Navy - 63 Years

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.
P.O. Box 610
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.

REMEMBER ME IN YOUR HEART

To the living, I am gone,
To the sorrowful, I will never return,
To the angry, I was cheated,
But to the happy, I am at peace,
And to the faithful, I have never left.

I cannot speak, but I can listen;
I cannot be seen, but I can be heard.
So as you stand upon a shore gazing at
a beautiful sea...

As you look upon a flower and admire
its simplicity...
Remember me.

Remember me in your heart,
Your thoughts and your memories,
Of the times we loved,
The times we cried,
The times we fought,
The times we laughed.
For if you always think of me,
I will never have gone.

– Unknown