




VETERANS ASSISTANCE FOUNDATION

THE ALLIANCE

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

Summer 2012

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

FROM THE PRESIDENT



Hello All,

I hope that everyone is enjoying this summer. VAF has been very busy since our last correspondence this spring. In June, the National Coalition of Homeless Veterans (NCHV) held their annual conference in Washington, D.C. The NCHV reported that this year was the largest conference that the coalition has held to date. More than 529 community-based organizations participated in the event. The conference lasted three days and had 38 workshops that addressed issues ranging from housing and employment to strategies being used to prevent homelessness in communities across the nation. The NCHV is a nonprofit organization that is the resource and technical assistance center for a national network of community-based service providers that address homelessness among veterans. You can read more about NCHV at www.nchv.org

I am proud to announce that our fundraising campaign to replace program vans is

just over \$15,000. We hope to replace one, if not two, of the program vans by year's end. These vans are used in everything from picking up supplies for the programs to transporting veterans to and from work and appointments. The vans we hope to replace are two of the three vans that are used for the large 60-bed program located in Tomah. We appreciate and look forward to your help in reaching this goal. You can track our progress through the red thermometer located on our website at www.vafvets.org. We can now accept donations by credit card on site at 312 Superior Avenue in Tomah and at several of the events that we attend. Just ask a staff member.

In February of this year we submitted an application for the Supportive Services for Veterans Families (SSVF) grant through the VA. I am glad to announce that in July, VAF was awarded this grant in the amount of \$300,000. This is an exciting and much needed opportunity for veterans and their families in Western and Central Wisconsin. This grant will support the counties of Monroe, Eau Claire, Clark, Wood, Trempealeau, Jackson, La Crosse, Juneau,

———— *PRESIDENT, cont. on page 2*

VETERANS ASSISTANCE FOUNDATION RECEIVES \$300,000 FEDERAL GRANT

The Veterans Assistance Foundation (VAF) has been awarded the Supportive Services for Veterans' Families (SSVF) grant from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs in the amount of \$300,000. The purpose of the grant is to promote active outreach, both in community and with the local VA; case management services; assist participants in obtaining VA benefits; obtain mainstream entitlements and services; and provide temporary financial assistance for rent, security and utility deposits, utility fees, moving costs, emergency supplies and transportation. It is also a new option that allows assistance to the families of veterans.

VAF Founder and Chief Executive Officer Bob Piaro said this was a first for the area and he was thrilled to be able to now help the families of veterans. "This

grant is a phenomenal benefit to veterans and their families in western Wisconsin," Piaro said. "To this point we were only able to assist the veteran. This grant will allow VAF to extend benefits and services to the veterans and their family as well, which will fill a gap in preventing homelessness among veterans," he added.

VAF will be able to start helping qualifying Veterans and their families as of October 1, 2012. The grant will support services in Monroe and twelve surrounding counties: Adams, Clark, Crawford, Eau Claire, Jackson, Juneau, La Crosse, Richland, Sauk, Trempealeau, Vernon and Wood, as well as the Ho-Chunk tribal communities contained within these counties. The program aims to

———— *VETERANS, cont. on page 2*

FRIENDS OF VETERANS HOLD ANNUAL POKER RUN AND BIKE BLESSING



In May, the Friends of Veterans (FOV) held their 10th annual Bike Blessing and Poker Run to raise funds to assist with the needs of the veterans in our programs. As a result of this event, the FOV were able to present VAF President, Colin Moten, with a check in the amount of \$5,700.

It was a beautiful day for the event and over seventy bikes and riders signed in for the ride. The VA Chaplain was present to bless the bikes and riders for the 2012 riding season before the start of the ride. They put together a wonderful event and offered great door prizes and a raffle with a chance to win a variety of prizes that included a Toro Z-Rider mower, a Model 770 Remington w/scope or \$200 cash, two passes for a river cruise, a canoe rental and stays at hotels, to name a few.

This has become an annual event held each May. If you enjoy a good ride on your motorcycle (other transportation is



Shown here is Eric Peterson of FOV (Friends of Veterans) presenting a check to Colin Moten, VAF President for \$200.00 from his employer, FTS International.

———— *POKER RUN, cont. on page 3*

600 FREEZE POPS HANDED OUT AT 4TH OF JULY PARADE

“Amazing Heroes” was this year’s theme for the annual Tomah 4th of July parade. There were 105 units signed up to participate ranging from Veterans groups, local fire departments and first responders, community organizations and the high school band. The Tomah Young Professionals held grocery cart races before the parade and then they walked with the carts in the parade collecting several hundred pounds of food for the Tomah Neighbor for Neighbor food pantry.

The extremely hot temperatures didn’t stop the good people of Tomah from coming out to watch and participate in the parade. The Veterans Assistance Foundation again this year had an entry in the parade. We were

stocked with over 600 freeze pops to hand out, and the kids along the route were grateful to receive these.

We have great pride in being able to represent the Veterans Assistance Foundation in this event and the people along the route showed their appreciation by not only being there through the heat and humidity, but by their words of thanks as we went down the street. The Tomah Chamber of Commerce has given the Foundation a certificate to display, which shows their appreciation for our participation.

Thank you to all who helped in the parade and for the continued support of the community.

VAF HAS BOOTH AT TOMAH TRUCK AND TRACTOR PULL



VAF staff seated here are Michelle Hove and Peggy Engen-Koresh.



The Tractor Pull was held at Tomah’s Recreation Park.

The city of Tomah, Wisconsin hosted the 37th Annual Budweiser Dairyland Super National Truck and Tractor Pull Thursday, June 21st through Sunday, June 24th and the Veterans Assistance Foundation (VAF) was in attendance. Tucked inside the Gold Exhibition Hall, VAF staff constructed a small booth to offer information, collect donations and enjoy the roar of mechanical feats of strength outside.

The Tractor Pull venue offered a rare opportunity for the VAF to introduce itself to both local and visiting parties. Such exposure

One of the entries at the event.



in the community allows the organization to actively engage with the public, while also inviting others to offer their services and experiences. By building and maintaining these relationships, VAF can better assist those who require it. We made valuable contacts with individuals and groups looking to donate time and/or items for the Veterans in our programs. There were many who stopped by to ask questions about the program and thank us for providing the services we do for the Veterans who are in need. All the VAF staff were involved over the four-day event.

In 1976, the Monroe County Agricultural Society established the first Tomah area tractor pull and it has continued to grow yearly, adding pullers and vendors alike. Every year, the City of Tomah and its residents have welcomed the Budweiser Dairyland Super National Tractor Pull, its competitors and patrons to the area. The event brings in estimated 60,000 in attendance and \$15 million in revenue for the city. The event itself is always an exciting occasion for the city of Tomah, bringing in numerous vendors, pullers and fans from across the world to the area. The Pull is a fun-filled, action-packed, four-day gala.

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Adams, Vernon, Crawford, Richland and Sauk. It will also include the Ho-Chunk Nation lands in those counties. This grant is aimed at keeping the veteran families in their permanent housing and from becoming homeless. It will provide supportive services to very low income Veteran families by providing supportive services designed to promote housing stability.

Types of services that will be provided are outreach, case management and assistance in obtaining VA and other benefits, which may include health care, daily living services, personal financial training, fiduciary and payee services, legal services, child care services and housing counseling services, to name a few. The main office of operation will be located at 312 Superior Avenue and services will start October 1st. For more information, call 608-372-8387.

As always, you can also follow us on Facebook and Twitter where we post updates of current events happening within the Foundation. Take care, be safe and enjoy the rest of the summer...and above all, thank you for your support.

Semper Fidelis,
Colin Moten

VETERANS, cont. from page 1

improve housing stability for very low-income Veteran families through daily living services, financial planning, legal counsel, childcare services and time-limited payments to third parties, such as landlords and moving companies.

“With the assistance of the Federal VA, state and local partners, we are very pleased to be able to provide this much needed service to veterans and their families,” VAF President Colin Moten said. “Our goal is to provide assistance to prevent the veteran family from becoming homeless and allow them to remain intact in a stable environment.”

The Veterans Assistance Foundation is a 501(c)(3) private nonprofit organization based in Tomah, Wisconsin that was established in 1994 to operate homeless veterans programs throughout Wisconsin. VAF currently operates transitional housing for veterans who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless with a program located on the grounds of the Tomah VAMC, as well as four houses within the city of Tomah and one in Madison.

Veterans who are interested in learning more about the grant and opportunities it presents are encouraged to call the VAF at 608-372-8387.

VAMC 2K WALK



On May 23, 2012 the Tomah Veterans Affairs Medical Center held a 2K walk to end homelessness. The walk was held on the Tomah VA grounds.

All participants met on the lawn by the flagpole in front of building 400 and the national anthem was played on the trumpet. Each participant received a visor to wear during the event, which was held on a nice, sunny day. A speech was then given about the VA's mission to end homelessness. At the end of the speech, the participants commenced their walk.

Veterans Assistance Foundation (VAF) case managers Peggy Engen-Koresh and Andrew Stargard (pictured above) participated in the event that went from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. It was a beautiful day to walk around the VA and collaborate with the VA staff, which included the VA clinicians who work with the VAF and the Hud Vash staff.

POKER RUN, *cont. from page 1*

also welcomed) and would like to participate in next year's run, keep an eye open for the date next year.

Thank you to the FOV and all who participated in this event. Your support is greatly appreciated. HAVE A SAFE RIDING SEASON.



SUBSTANCE ABUSE PROGRAM CERTIFICATE

By Rachel Shea



I have completed the Substance Abuse Certificate Program through University of Wisconsin-Madison Continuing Studies. I recently received my certificate of completion. I attended all six classes and completed a final written assignment.

The assignment included researching a topic from the National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA) website, composing a summary of that topic and discussing how I plan to apply the information I learned in the certificate program in my work setting.

I really enjoyed the program and acquired a lot of valuable information from the instructors and other professionals in the program. I was able to listen to several guest speakers who shared plenty of information about their experiences within several different programs and organizations. It was great to meet other participants in the class, as well. Class participants were employed in a wide variety of different fields and I was able to learn quite a bit from other professionals' experiences working with clients with substance abuse issues. Overall, I was very pleased with this program and I am grateful that I had the opportunity to participate in it.

TWENTY-NINE VAF RESIDENTS COMPLETE ADDICTION CLASS



Twenty-nine residents successfully completed all of the requirements for the Addiction Class. The class consisted of 12 sessions, which included information on several topics related to addiction. The first six classes included discussions on the definition of addiction, the effects of addiction on the brain, addictive behaviors and the diagnosis and treatment of addiction. The participants watched an educational movie, "Pleasure Unwoven." This movie addressed the question, "Is addiction really a disease?" and explored the arguments for and against this debate. This was discussed in the context of related neuroscientific research about addiction.

The last six classes focused on topics including maintaining a substance-free lifestyle, motivation, recovery, identifying triggers and high risk situations and formulating a relapse prevention plan. These classes discussed the differences between healthy and unhealthy relationships, selecting and participating in healthy activities, alternatives to pain medications that may be addictive and ways to motivate oneself in recovery.

The final assignment everyone was

required to complete was the relapse prevention plan worksheet. The worksheet asked participants to identify their triggers, high risk situations and warning signs. Participants then identified strategies to cope with these triggers, and also discussed how to address negative feelings and take positive action.

Throughout the sessions, the class was also shown the Mark Lundholm Series. Mark Lundholm is a comedian and recovering addict who speaks at treatment facilities throughout the country. He relates to his audience by using humor to convey messages about addiction. Many of the participants in class said they enjoyed watching his videos.

Certificates of completion were presented on May 24, 2012 in the classroom. The following were among those who received certificates: Maurice A., David B., Ronald B., Martin C., Michael C., Dustin D., Craig F., Gerald F., Herbert G., Michael G., William H., Ronald L., Bernard L., Robert L., Steven M., Mark S., Cecil S., Michael S., Donald T., Lance T., Terry V., Barry W., John W. and Kenneth W.

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.

TIME WILL EASE THE HURT

The sadness of the present days
is locked and set in time
and moving to the future
is a slow and painful climb.

Nothing can erase the painful
imprints on your mind,
but there are softer memories
that time will let you find.

But all the feelings that are now
so vivid and so real
can’t hold their fresh intensity
as time begins to heal.

Though your heart won’t let the sadness
simply slide away
the echoes will diminish
even though the memories stay.

No wound so deep will ever go
entirely away
yet every hurt becomes
a little less from day to day.

—Author Unknown

The following were past or present veterans of VAF

Thomas R., U.S. Navy 07/19/55 – 05/12/12	Leo W., U.S. Army 11/16/50 – 05/18/12	James S., U.S. Army 10/25/57 – 05/21/12
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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.

2012 – 4TH OF JULY FIREWORKS SHOW

This year the 4th of July Tomah area fireworks were again held at the Tomah Recreation Park where there is always plenty of room for whoever ventures out in the heat to be a part of the festivities.

A few of our Veterans signed up to take the short van trip to the fireworks show. Leaving VAF at 9:30 p.m., our Veterans found a good seat in the grandstands where they enjoyed the view of the 10 p.m. show. It was a full house and a sticky night, but the fireworks were, as usual, a terrific close to the Independence Day celebration.

All of our Veterans who attended had a wonderful time and everyone is looking forward to next year’s light show in the skies.

