



# VETERANS ASSISTANCE FOUNDATION

# THE ALLIANCE

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



Winter 2015

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

## LHI HOST HOLIDAY DINNER



*Pictured from left: Enjoying the evening are, Anthony W., Timothy C. and Lynn K.*

On December 18th 2014, Logistics Health Inc. (LHI) of La Crosse, Wisconsin held their annual Holiday Dinner and again invited the Veterans in our program to the event which was held at the Waterfront Restaurant in downtown La Crosse. As the Veterans disembarked from the bus in La Crosse, they were greeted by LHI employees who have all served in the armed

forces. We had over 60 Veterans from our programs attend the event along with three staff members who went along to assist the Veterans with any needs they had during the evening.

Once again, the dinner served was fabulous. It included prime rib, shredded chicken, potatoes, gravy and green beans. Pumpkin pie was also served and enjoyed by all. During the dinner a local choir sang Christmas songs while another member played piano. When the dinner was over, all Veterans were given a gift bag with fruit, snacks and a drink along with hat, gloves and sweatshirt. After everyone was back on the bus, we drove through the rotary lights by the river. Everyone really enjoyed the trip and the sights and all look forward to being invited again next year.

Thank you LHI for the wonderful evening and your continuing generosity to the Veterans of our program.

## WOMEN VETERAN STAND DOWN – EAU CLAIRE, WI



## TOMAH GRANT & PER DIEM PROGRAM STAFF CHANGES



With the opening of a Case Manager position, Karla Pierce moved from the Administrative Assistant position to Case Manager. Karla has been with the Veterans Assistance Foundation since November 2010. This move opened up the Administrative Assistant position which has been filled with retired Army Veteran Joanne Segovia. Please continue to read for Joanne's story.

### Joanne's Story:

I was raised on a farm outside of Elroy, Wisconsin. Growing up, I couldn't wait to get out and see the world. At 18 I

## ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS HELP ASSEMBLE VETERANS DAY GIFT BAGS



The Second grade class at Lincoln Elementary, New London, WI, as part of the schools Veterans Day celebration, along with Thrivent Financial and Action Card donated bags with personal hygiene items, Thrivent t-shirts and Veterans Day Cards to the Veterans participating in the Veterans Housing and Recovery Program in King, WI. The students were very excited and had many questions about our Veterans. Great job students!

On Monday, December 8, 2014 the American Legion Auxiliary in Eau Claire held its annual Veteran Stand Down event for women. The Stand Down provided an abundance of resources such as Veteran benefits and community resources. The female Veterans could also pick out household supplies and food that had been donated.

The Auxiliary was also able to help a fellow Veteran and her family with a hotel stay while waiting for their housing. Mary Gadwill, Auxiliary member and event coordinator stated, "It's such a great feeling to be able to help our Veterans who are in need. This right here is why we will continue this event each year."

Although the Stand Down had a small turn out in respect to Veterans who walked through the doors; the event gave community agencies a chance to network and share resources.

## LA CROSSE STAND DOWN

Stand Down events for homeless veterans are modeled after the stand-down concept used during the Vietnam War to provide a safe retreat for units returning from combat operations. At these secure base camp areas, troops were able to take care of personal hygiene, get clean uniforms, enjoy warm meals, receive medical and dental care, mail and receive letters, and enjoy the camaraderie of friends in a safe environment. Standing down afforded battle-weary soldiers the opportunity to renew their spirit, health and overall sense of well-being.

The purpose of a Stand Down for homeless veterans and achieving those same objectives requires a wide range of support services and time. The program is success-

ful because it brings these services to one location, making them more accessible to homeless veterans.

Each year the Federal Government offers grant opportunities for organizations who would like to host or be involved in a Veterans Stand Down event. The Veterans Assistance Foundation (VAF) wrote for and received a grant to be used for the event which was held in La Crosse, WI on October 23, 2014. With the grant, VAF was able to purchase items such as clothing, winter gear including coats, hats & gloves, hygiene products, shoes, work boots and food items for sack lunches.

This year Mr. & Mrs. Don Weber, along with Logistics Health, Inc. (LHI), offered

*LA CROSSE, cont. on page 4*

## DAY TRIPP'N TO "HOUSE ON THE ROCK"



*VVA Chapter #5 members along with program Veterans...Josh W., Dan C., Bob F., David Z., Winston B., Ray N., Stu B. and Matt L.*

On Saturday, November 8, Chippewa Falls Veterans Housing and Recovery Program (VHRP) staff member Robyn and eight resident Veterans in the program were invited to accompany members of the Mike Voth Memorial Chapter #5 Vietnam Veterans of America on a day long trip to The House on the Rock located in Spring Green, Wisconsin. It was through the generosity of this group, who paid everyone's admission, that our vets were able to explore such an amazing architectural structure.

The self-guided tour took about 3-hours as veterans took in all the sights and sounds. What started out as a 14-room house, grew into several buildings filled with Jordan's collections of doll houses, collectible firearms, airplanes, extravagant carousels, self-

made music exhibits and so much more!

The House on the Rock was designed by Alex Jordan back in the 1940's as a weekend retreat. However, soon after it's unveiling, tourists came from all around to see it, so Jordan started charging 50-cent donations. Even after selling The House on the Rock to his longtime associate Art Donaldson back in 1988, the eclectic collections have continued to grow. The House on the Rock is definitely a sight for all to see and enjoy.

Our veterans are very thankful to the members of the Mike Voth Memorial Chapter #5 Vietnam Veterans of America for their invitation and look forward to similar events/outings in the near future! [http://www.thehouseontherock.com/HOTR>Contact\\_ContactUs.htm](http://www.thehouseontherock.com/HOTR>Contact_ContactUs.htm)

## TOMAH RESIDENT CHRISTMAS PARTY



The Tomah Resident Christmas Party was held at the Veterans Assistance Foundation (VAF) on December 16, 2014. Dinner was catered in by BP's Smokehouse and the Veterans stated that they really enjoyed the meal.

After everyone was served dinner, the party moved to the classroom where presents were handed out to each Veteran. Every Veteran received a gift from VAF and several other gifts that were donated from individuals and groups in the area.

Numerous rounds of Bingo followed and the Veterans won clothing and cash prizes courtesy of Am Vets of Necedah. Cake and ice cream was also served courtesy of Am Vets.

Many of the Veterans reported that this was the best Christmas they have had in many years and were very appreciative of everything that was provided. A BIG thank you to everyone involved!

## WDVA HOSTS HOLIDAY PARTY FOR MADISON STEP UP VETERANS



On Wednesday December 17th, 2014 the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs ( W D V A )

invited our Madison Step-Up residents to attend a holiday event they were hosting. The Veterans Assistance Foundation was recognized by keynote speaker Mrs. Leslie Busby-Amegashie for providing superior services to our veterans.

In addition to the generous words spoken about our program, each of the residents were given gift bags comprising of hygiene products, slippers, pillows, a wallet, baked goods and other items that were greatly appreciated. WDVA provided very thoughtful and useful presents for the current veterans, but was also thinking of future residents by supplying the house with a crock-pot, several novels to read, DVD's to watch and sleep-aid CD's.

## VHRP – UNION GROVE HOLIDAY DONATIONS

The staff and Veterans from the Union Grove Veterans Housing and Recovery Program (VHRP) would like to thank all of the individuals and/or groups who donated during the year 2014, especially those that made the holidays special



**Pictured: Program residents: Eric S., Herman K. and Michael D.**

for the Veterans. Following is a listing of a few such individuals/groups:

On December 12, The Boy Scouts from Union Grove came in to sing Christmas carols to the Veterans.

On December 13, The Gold Star Mothers and Lakeshore Technical College came in and gave each Veteran a gift.

On December 14, the Veterans of America Motorcycle Club held their annual Veterans Christmas Party. They deep fried turkeys and provided a huge dinner. After dinner each Veteran received gifts from the group. They also held a pool tournament for the Veterans; Victor L. took first place with a plaque and was given a pool cue. Harold K took second place and Marcus G

took third place. All the Veterans enjoyed the day.

On December 19, members of St. Robert's and St. Mary's parish came in and hosted a Christmas Party for the Veterans. They provided a wonderful dinner and gifts for the Veterans.

On December 21, the Union Grove VHRP had their Annual Holiday Party for the Veterans. Along with the Veterans currently in the program, the graduates from the past year were also invited to attend. They enjoyed great company, food and many gifts. The American Legion, The Patriot Riders, Santa in a Shoe box, St Joe's Church in Big Bend, and the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs were among groups that donated gifts to the Veterans.

Thank you to all who have donated to the program, you have helped us help the Veterans throughout the year and you helped to brighten the holidays for the Veterans by showing that there are people who truly do care.

## VHRP-CHIPPEWA FALLS CHRISTMAS



Throughout the month of December, VHRP-Chippewa Falls received donations of Christmas gifts from various groups, organizations, businesses and individuals. On Friday, December 19th, staff and residents gathered in the activity room for the much anticipated Christmas Party. A special Thank You goes out to all those that donated during the holiday season. These groups and individuals include, but are not limited to:

- Chippewa Valley Correctional and Treatment Center
- Republican Women of Eau Claire County
- Garber's Electric
- Bohan/Johnson Corporation
- American Vets Auxiliary, Post 32
- Al Goettl
- Amy Lueck and family
- Connie and Dennis Stahlbusch
- Deanne Brott
- Mike and LaVonne Brott
- Mark and Cathy Kaeding
- Sacred Heart Cancer Center
- American Legion Auxiliary Unit 53
- Patriot Guard Riders of Wisconsin

Staff and residents at VHRP-Chippewa Falls are grateful for the support of everyone throughout the 2014 year and look forward to what 2015 will bring!

## KING - VHRP HOLIDAY DONATIONS

This holiday season we had many great organizations help our Veterans enjoy it to the fullest. They have given our Veterans many generous gifts, but more so they have shown them that they are not alone.

Some of the organizations include: Desert Vets, Unit 258 Women's Auxiliary, Women's Life Insurance Society, Man of Honor, American Legion and Auxiliary Oshkosh, Little Chute Unit 258, American Legion Auxiliary 239, AMVETS Singer Barnes Post & Auxiliary 3, Patriot Guards, Lutheran Women's Missionary League and many, many more.



**Unit 258 Women's Auxiliary & the Women's Life Insurance Society members shown with program Veterans: Larry L, Bill S., Tom P., Mark R., Jerry D., John M., Tom S., Francis M, David J., Mark E., John M, Chris S. and Nick S.**



**Desert Veterans of Wisconsin members: Ray and Vicki Rogstad, Nikki Szczepanski and Mark Luedtke along with Program Veterans: Jerry D., Tom S., Patrick D., John M. and Mark R.**



## TURN AGAIN TO LIFE

A. Price Hughes & Mary Lee Hall

If I should die and leave you here awhile,  
 be not like others, sore undone, who keep  
 long vigils by the silent dust, and weep.  
 For my sake, turn again to life and smile,  
 nerving thy heart and trembling hand to do  
 something to comfort weaker hearts than thine.  
 Complete those dear unfinished tasks of mine,  
 and I perchance may therein comfort you.

The following Veterans were either present or past residents in our program.

### In Memory of:

**JAMES F.**  
**US NAVY**  
**03/28/60 – 01/02/15**

**MARK C.**  
**US ARMY**  
**03/12/62 – 01/06/15**

### TOMAH GRANT, cont. from page 1

joined the Army and was able to travel to many different places including Germany, Alaska, Panama, South Korea and Fort Hood, Texas. I also served in Saudi Arabia and Iraq during Desert Storm. My primary job was working with satellite and microwave radio systems, putting in phones so that the various units could communicate. My secondary MOS was as a clerk typist. I worked in Battalion Plans and Operations and also served as a company clerk.

After serving in the military for 20 years, I retired and had two children (I had already had two children while on active duty). I moved back to Elroy and worked for several years as a legal secretary. After leaving that job, I worked at various jobs.

I was thrilled when asked to interview for the position in 407 (Tomah Grant and Per Diem); and even more thrilled when I was offered the position. I really enjoy the work that I do and I like the Veterans I am doing it for.



the use of the Cargill Room to hold the event and the Waterfront Restaurant catered the meal. Volunteers and vendors for the day included (this is not an all-inclusive list) the Veterans Assistance Foundation, Inc., Friends of Veterans, Logistics Health Inc., the Tomah VA Medical Center, American Legion Post #52, Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs, VA Regional Office Staff, La Crosse County Veterans Service Officer, Department of Work Force Development, local employment agencies and many, many more.

Some of the services that Veterans could obtain at the Stand Down included limited medical and optical services, flu shots, haircuts, nails, claim services and employment counseling. They could also learn of the many different programs and services that are available for Veterans from the different organizations that were present.

The Stand Down was able to serve 232 Veterans during this one-day event held from 9am to 3pm. We are optimistic that the event will continue to grow and next year they can reach many more in need of assistance. Overall, participants said the day went very well and they look forward to growing and assisting more Veterans in need next year.

### 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.*