



VETERANS ASSISTANCE FOUNDATION

THE ALLIANCE

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

Winter 2014

SERVING WISCONSIN'S AND THE NATION'S HOMELESS VETERANS FOR OVER 19 YEARS

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK



Hello everyone! Once again we are in the middle of winter and just completed another successful year. 2013 proved to be a very busy year for VAF. It started with VAF and the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs partner-

ing in the operation of the State's Veteran Assistance Programs located in Chippewa Falls, King and Union Grove. This partnership propelled VAF from providing 79 beds for homeless veterans to 165 beds.

In 2013, VAF was also awarded a second year of the Supportive Services for Veterans' Families grant. This proved to be a very significant expansion for the Foundation. It expanded VAF's service area from one office location that covered 14 counties to an area that covers 38 counties and now has four office locations. This expansion has allowed VAF to assist many more families with housing assistance throughout a broader area of the state.

The Foundation was also awarded three capital grants for van purchases through the Department of Veterans Affairs. One van will replace the van that is used for the Step-up programs and the other two vans will go to the 60-bed grant and per diem program. With these grants the VA covers 65% of the total cost of the vehicle while the grantee (VAF in this case) provides the remaining 35%. These vans are used to provide transportation for program activities and to provide services to veterans within the program. Services such as transportation to and from work, medical/dental appointments and supply runs to keep the programs going.

I also want to use this time to thank all the donors, service providers, family and friends that have supported VAF through the past year and beyond. With your help VAF has been successful in providing much needed assistance to homeless and at risk veterans throughout Wisconsin. With your help, we will continue to make difference. Thank you and I wish everyone a safe and successful 2014.

Semper Fi,
Colin Moten
President

VAF RECEIVES SSVF GRANT RENEWAL

The Veterans Assistance Foundation (VAF) is happy to announce the renewal of the Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) program grant. As of October 1, 2013, VAF's SSVF program will expand services from last year's fourteen counties to thirty-eight of the seventy-two Wisconsin counties. Four

new case managers have joined the two established program case managers under the supervision of SSVF Program Director Don Roach.

Erin Becker and Celia Fauris will continue to operate from the Tomah Administrative Office. Erin will assist Green Lake, Marquette,

— *SSVF, continued on page 4*



Don Roach,
SSVF Program Director



Sally Swanson,
King Site



Scott Radack,
Union Grove Site



Celia Fauris & Erin Becker,
Tomah Site



Karla Peterson & Michael Xoing,
Chippewa Falls Site



IHG ARMY HOTELS DONATION

On Friday, December 13, 2013, a check in the amount of \$12,500.00 was presented to VAF on behalf of the Fort McCoy IHG Army Hotels and Lend Lease to support homeless and at-risk veterans.

Money for the donation was secured through the sale of TVs and furniture during hotel renovations.

IHG (InterContinental Hotels Group) is the exclusive hotel manager and operator of on-post lodging under the Department of the Army's Privatization of Army Lodging (PAL) program. Lend Lease is the exclusive asset man-



ager, developer and design builder for the Army's entire lodging portfolio. There are 776 hotels and more than 11,000 guest rooms on 39 U.S. Military installations in the IHG Army Hotels portfolio.

Well-recognized hotel brands, including Holiday Inn Express, Staybridge Suites and Candlewood Suites, deliver the consistent, high-quality stay experiences on post, which guests around the world have come to trust and expect from the IHG family of hotel brands.

Visit www.ihg.com for hotel information and reservations.

KENOSHA/RACINE STAND DOWN



Some of the supplies available for the veterans.



Melissa Taggart, Felicia Smith and Don Roach are shown speaking with and helping out a veteran at our booth.



Scott Radak and Don Roach manning the Stand Down booth.

Saturday, October 26, 2013 was the annual Stand Down for Kenosha/Racine County. This year it was held in Kenosha. The 2013 Stand Down/Expo focused on providing information and services to those veterans that are homeless or at risk of being homeless. There were many representatives providing services, such as: health screening, free haircuts, vision tests, education benefits, healthcare benefits, housing options, pension claims, legal aid and clothing. There was a breakfast and lunch served at the event.

This year the Veterans Assistance Foundation had the privilege to be on the committee organizing this event. Melissa Taggart, Site Director and her Case Managers, Celeste Balcer and Felicia Smith were there representing the VAP (Veterans Assistance Program). Don Roach and Scott Radack were there providing services from our SSVF Program (Supportive Services for Veterans and their Families).

The event was able to reach out to 125 veterans; of those, 16 were either homeless or at risk of being homeless. We were able to provide information to them about our programs. We were also able to make new connections with many of the other vendors at the event.



VOLUNTEERISM PAYS



Turon H.

While in a general meeting with his employer (Walmart Distribution Center), Turon H. heard about the “Volunteerism Always Pays” program. With this program Walmart will contribute monies to a

nonprofit organization within the community in turn for the employee’s volunteer efforts; where the employee volunteers their time is where the contribution goes.

In this particular case, Turon chose to volunteer his time with the Veterans Assis-

tance Foundation (VAF). He has put in 250 hours since April for VAF and logged this on the Walmart website for employees for consideration by the “Volunteerism Always Pays” program.

Turon volunteered for many different VAF functions such as Adopt-A-Highway, Tomah citywide Clean-Up and picking up several donations from local businesses, just to name a few. Because of the time he generously contributed, Walmart donated \$1,250 to VAF.

Colin Moten, VAF President, has indicated that this donation will go towards the purchase of new vans for the Tomah site. We would like to thank Turon for his hard work and dedication to our program; it is truly appreciated.

PAWS 4 INDEPENDENCE

We are a nonprofit, specialized organization providing a service dog and training to assist individuals and veterans with diabetes, mental illness, PTSD, seizures and other disabilities challenging individuals on a daily basis. We work with many veterans with severe injuries who suffer from PTSD, traumatic brain injury and hearing loss caused while serving our country. We work with you to find the right animal for you, your spouse or your child. Our training is done as a team; you and your dog come to class and learn skills. We train dogs to help their owners manage everyday challenges to improve their quality of life.

With the many different types of reasons for needing a service animal, we keep ourselves educated in these areas so we know how to place the right service animal with the right individual. The classes not only teach the dogs, but also help the owners manage their service dog. We make visits to the Tomah Veterans facility to reach out to new veterans who need our services but don’t know how to access it, and to continue training with the ones who are receiving our help.

If you have any questions or would like more information, please call 608-797-2410. Website: www.paws4independence.com Email: paws4independence@gmail.com

Cheryl A. Clayton, President
Melodee Krogman, Secretary

LA CROSSE STAND DOWN

A Stand Down was held on Thursday, September 26th at The American Legion in La Crosse, Wisconsin. The doors opened at 9:00 a.m. and a total of 262 veterans streamed through them until 2:00 p.m. in the afternoon.

The veterans who attended were able to receive a chili lunch, a flu shot and access to several community services and resources.

Numerous community agencies were present at the Stand Down. The La Crosse County CVSO, the Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC), Paws for Independence, the Tomah VA and the Veterans Assistance Foundation were a few of the many organizations that were accessible for veterans at the Stand Down.

A resource room filled with clothing, backpacks, sleeping bags and hygiene items was also available to veterans who were income eligible.

ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY FALL CLEAN UP



On a beautiful fall morning, five veterans worked together with two VAF staff to pick up the trash deposited along a two-mile stretch of Highway 21. The Veterans Assistance Foundation sponsors this section of Highway 21 thru the Adopt-A-Highway program and we clean it three times a year as part of our volunteer efforts.

The participants included Paul

B., Mike C. and Mike V. from the Step-Up Program and Allan R. and Jim W. from Building 407. The group filled about fifteen garbage bags with trash during the trek up and over the Tunnel City Hill. Satisfied on a job well done, the volunteers worked to clean up the roadway. Despite a few stiff muscles, the veterans' enthusiasm for the project was high and contagious.

Their help with this effort is greatly appreciated. *Great job, guys!*

HIGHLIGHT A VETERAN

Phil's success story:

My day started out like...“this is the day I'm going to win a few thousand dollars at the Ho-Chunk Gambling Parlor just on the outskirts of Tomah, Wisconsin.” On March 1, 2012, I had been at the place mentioned above and had won over \$1,500 on a couple of their one-armed bandits, a form of gambling machine which has an arm on it and you drop quarters into the coin slots and pull the arm and the reels inside the machine are spinning and, of course, I am sure I'm going to “win and win big!” just like all the other gambling joints that I had been in while I crisscrossed the good old US of A in an 18 wheeler semi rig owned by Knight Transportation.

Sure, I had won thousands of dollars – lots of thousands of dollars – over the 15 years I had played, like I said, “in a lot of places”! On March 2, 2012, after winning the day before, the reels were turning but were not landing on the big payment I was sure I was going to hit. At approximately 9:30 a.m. on March 2, 2012, I was down to my last \$17.00! Yes, of all the money I won on the 1st, plus the \$1,400 I started with on the 1st, \$17.00 was all that was left. I called a cab from the casino and decided that I was in deep trouble. No place to stay, not much money left to even eat on after the cab dropped me off at the Veterans Admin Bldg. 400. I walked up to the admissions desk and asked if the Veterans Assistance Foundation (VAF) was still operating in Bldg. 407. The receptionist said, “Yes”. The reason I asked was because I was a participant back in 2003 after I had tried to cut my wrists in November of 2003. I did not do a very good job, as I'm here to tell you my success story.

It turns out that I, Phillip N. Wayne, Sr., on March 2, 2012, hit the jackpot I had hoped I would have won while gambling – The Veterans Assistance Foundation, located at Bldg. 407, on the grounds of the Veterans Administration Outpatient Clinics and Hospital.

VAF is located on the 2nd and 3rd floors of Bldg. 407. I left the Admissions Office and walked over to the 2nd floor of Bldg. 407 and pleaded with a lady that I did

not know, but has become to be a very important person to me...at the time I didn't even know her name. I was accepted into the program as what they call “a resident”.

I was told I would have to do a UA – urinalysis test for drugs or alcohol. I passed that test; the only drug I had was the addiction of being a compulsive gambler. It was Friday, March 3rd and it was close to the time for the VAF staff to go home for the weekend.

I had my picture taken and was given my resident ID card that was to be worn and visible at all times. I kind of knew what the rules were from being in the program in 2003. In 2003 I was sort of a rebel rouser; I did the chores that were assigned to me, I did the job well and would become agitated at other people that were residents and assigned chores and didn't do them in the way I thought was the right way. If I didn't think it was, I'd ask them or actually tell them, “don't do it at all if you aren't going to see that it's done right”. I met a resident, his name was Paul C., and he would tell me, “don't worry about what the other resident did or didn't do as it was on the working profile, that staff would write them up and Faye would handle them.” I guess the problem was me because I was a retired Army SSG, and I liked things to be done the correct way.

Moving on and going forward with my success story: For the next 13 months, I went through phases which included getting my health back in order, because when I was gambling, I did not have the money to go to the doctor and, believe me, I should have been. During these 13 months, I went through exams, talking to my mental health doctors and clinicians that you could talk to about anything and everything. I realized and learned things about myself, such as being a compulsive gambler, and that I, when growing up by adopted parents, had a burning desire to hate my biological parents for tossing me out like garbage. My adoptive parents, one being the father figure, would tell me I'd never grow up to be anything worth my own weight in salt. No matter what I was told to do by him, it wasn't done good enough to satisfy him. My mother figure was a total 100% reversal from

the father. I could do no wrong. She was a 3rd Grade teacher at a local school and 20 to 30 years down the road, I had people that were students to her say she was the best teacher they ever had. I admired her until her untimely death of Lou Gehrig's disease and, to this day, speak of her with esteem and admiration. I loved her dearly. My clinician at VAF, Kathy, talked a lot about her and also of my father. She made me see them in two different entities, one as the loving compassionate, and the father as the strict enforcer. Kathy told me she was pretty sure he loved me, too – just had a hard time of showing it. How true. He told me one time he loved me and it was on his deathbed. At least he told me.

As I was going through the examinations, I have since become deemed a 60% Service-Connected disabled veteran. I was issued new hearing aids, new dentures, a brace for my right knee problem, a cane to assist me in walking and prescriptions for depression, anxiety, sleep deprivation and an ongoing intestinal problem. I've had CTs, MRIs and will have another MRI soon – a whole body MRI to see if I have a tumor.

During this time, if it wasn't for VAF staff sending me in the right direction and keeping track of my progress, I wouldn't have been able to save enough as I have to buy a used car so I can reconnect with my family, do errands, and...just 5 months ago...apply to go to Step Up, which means to actually live in a duplex home with another resident – to actually live the way I should have been.

Now, I'm actually going to “graduate” from the VAF Program and I have signed a lease to rent my own apartment with the monies I saved while in the program and still have money in the bank. I feel extremely fortunate to have been given a new lease on life and will forever be grateful to the VAF and VA staffs: Faye, Karla, Andrew, Peggy, Michelle, Bill, Greg, Rachel, Dawn, Amanda, Kathy and to the lady I talked to on March, 2, 2012, Cindi – and for being accepted back into VAF. If I missed anybody, sorry about that and I will love you all forever for saving the misguided “resident”.

Columbia, Jackson, Portage, Wood and La Crosse Counties, while Celia will attend to Crawford, Richland, Juneau, Vernon, Sauk and Adams Counties. Both Erin and Celia will cover Monroe County.

Newly hired case managers Karla Peterson will offer services to Barron, Buffalo, Dunn, Pepin, Pierce, Polk and St. Croix Counties, while Michael Xiong will assist Eau Claire, Taylor, Rusk, Trempealeau, Clark and Marathon Counties from the Chippewa Falls Office. Both Karla and Michael will assist Chippewa County.

Sally Swanson will attend to Shawano, Waupaca, Waushara, Winnebago, Outagamie and Brown Counties from the King Office and Scott Radack will assist Dodge, Walworth, Racine and Kenosha Counties from the Union Grove Office.

The SSVF Program will continue to offer rental assistance, rapid re-housing

services, educational assistance and more. According to the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), the SSVF Program assisted nearly 33,000 Veterans nationwide in 2012 with homelessness prevention and rapid re-housing. The purpose of the program is to provide temporary emergency support to prevent Veteran Family homelessness and assist in rapidly re-housing homeless Veteran Families. The average length of program participation is three months, according to the Effectiveness or Permanent Housing Program FY 2012 Report.

Having assisted over 60 Veteran Families through the program's initial year, VAF is very excited and proud to not only continue serving Veterans with the program, but to also expand to provide services to a major portion of the state of Wisconsin.

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.

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.

WHEN I MUST LEAVE YOU

By Helen Steiner Rice

When I must leave you for a little while,
Please do not grieve and shed wild tears
And hug your sorrow to you
through the years,
But start out bravely with a gallant smile;

And for my sake and in my name
Live on and do all things the same,
Feed not your loneliness on empty days,
But fill each waking hour in useful ways,

Reach out your hand in comfort and cheer
And I in turn will comfort you
and hold you near;
And never, never be afraid to die,
For I am waiting for you in the sky!

In Memory of:

Jerry K. -
US Army,
07/17/56 - 08/28/13

Jody T. -
US Army,
04/16/56 - 09/02/13

