



BUDDY POPPY/NATIONAL HOME PROGRAM

We are having a great year with the Buddy Poppy/National Home Program! The Department of Arizona Auxiliaries have had some seriously impressive and creative promotions of the Program in your communities. As we wrap up the year, be sure to check the MALTA website, malta.vfwauxiliary.org, for the National Citation Award forms and the rules for your Buddy Poppy Displays. Each Auxiliary President has an email with the National Citation forms for Buddy Poppy and the National Home. They will also be receiving an email with the display contest rules and entry form this month. So far, I have received Citation Award entries from Auxiliaries 720 and 6306. Way to go!

Our National Ambassador, Sandra Jeffries, states in her recent Blog, “I just want to remind each Department of my goal for the Buddy Poppy. This year we are sailing around the nation looking for creative ways to educate our members on how to partner with the VFW for joint Poppy drives and/or fundraisers, and how to split the proceeds. I have been receiving many pictures of events, now I need each state to send me more detailed information on combined events. Remember, when you distribute Poppies, you are honoring the dead by helping the living.”

We also want to continue supporting the VFW National Home with each Auxiliary purchasing a membership and a Tribute brick. Our National President, Lois Callahan, and VFW Commander-In-Chief, Carol Whitmore, are encouraging each state (VFW and Auxiliary both) to send donations to “Stock the Store.” This is an extension of the Special Project from 2023-2024 to remodel the Welcome Center retail space. Sandra’s goal for the National Home “is to create ideas from all around the nation to help introduce veterans and their families to (the National Home) services.”

To remind us of the impact the VFW National Home has on participants, I am sharing Heather’s story. Her journey began after she was honorably discharged from the Army and moved to the National Home with her 9-month-old daughter. While working the program, she earned her medical assistant certification and attained financial stability while raising her child. She worked as a medical assistant for 12 years before returning to school to become a social worker with the goal of helping veterans as she was helped. She has come full circle, from being a participant to now working at the National Home as a Case Manager/Social Worker. She truly understands the value of the counseling and support she received personally and wants to give back to our veterans and help get them set up for lifelong success.

While “Building Strong Families,” the National Home also boasts some innovative initiatives. Last year they received a \$10,000 grant to promote STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) education. The resource will provide students with hands-on opportunities to apply their learning. The Home is also involved in the VRAD (Veteran Regenerative Agriculture Demonstration) Program to

empower veterans and veteran family members to care for the land and grow food while rediscovering their own strengths, confidence, and sense of purpose. And they get to play in the dirt!

Continue to wear and display your Poppies everywhere you go! You are representing our veterans and the sacrifices they have made in this simple way!

Sincerely,

Peggy Welch