



BUDDY POPPY/NATIONAL HOME

We Are now coming into the Fall months with plenty of opportunities to promote “Buddy” Poppy and the National Home. Some upcoming “days” and holidays that could be a theme for distribution and education are:

- October 19: National Chocolate Cupcake Day
- October 26: Day of the Deployed
- October 26: National Pumpkin Day
- October 28: Statue of Liberty Birthday
- October 28: National First Responder Day
- October 31: Halloween and National Carmel Apple Day
- November 5: National Donut Day
- November 10: United States Marine Corps Birthday
- November 11: Veterans Day
- November 27: Thanksgiving

Using a theme for your event can help draw participation from the community and make it fun for your volunteers. Another thing to consider is location, location, location! An area that people feel comfortable stopping to chat and learn about “Buddy” Poppy and the National Home. Auxiliary 1433 held a Buddy Poppy/Membership Drive outside a local restaurant in the evening. Auxiliary members were joined by their Jr. Vice Commander, John DuTemple. It was a very successful event, and the time of the event fit the location.

Another important point is presentation. An identifying sign or tablecloth lets people know what we represent. Wearing your VFW I.D. badge, shirt, etc. looks professional. Having poppies, brochures, fun poppy items, National Home literature, and prominent QR codes for those interested. Remember to smile and communicate with the public.

Some ideas from our National Ambassador, Sandra Jeffries:

- Share the video “The Veterans Behind the Poppy”
- Create “Buddy” Poppy centerpieces for food nights at your Post
- Always have a “Buddy” Poppy handy to give away along with an information card/brochure

Other talking points:

- Remind people that all money donated is for the welfare of veterans and their families
- Wearing your “Buddy” Poppy can spark conversation

- “Buddy” Poppies are distributed, not sold

The National 2025-2026 Auxiliary goal for the National Home is to create new ideas in each individual state of ways to show information to help us get in-need veterans and their families to the National Home for assistance. On the Comrade side, their National 2025-2026 goal is to Stock the Store. Our Department goal of having each Auxiliary buy a Life or Centennial Membership and a Tribute Brick can help with this. Fundraisers can also help with proceeds earmarked to Stock the Store.

The National Home is now 43 homes strong and the Department of AZ sponsors the Arizona House. What an honor to be able to help our eligible military and veterans with a home and a safe, supportive environment to help them succeed.

At Fall Conference in Parker, AZ, I was joined by the VFW Department National Home Chairman, Phil Erickson, in a skit which followed our family as we went through applying to the National Home, being accepted, starting the program, day to day life at the Home, and completing the program. It was a fun way to educate the attendees about the National Home.

Be sure to continue promoting the eligibility criteria using the Helpline number, 800-313-4200, and the QR code. Remember, many military and veterans are not aware of the National Home and how the program can help. Getting the word out there can change lives.