

Hello, 2021-2022 Department Presidents and Department “Buddy”® Poppy & National Home Chairmen:

My name is Donna Ralston, and I am honored to be the 2021-2022 National Ambassador of the “Buddy”® Poppy & National Home Program.

I joined the Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars in 2008 under the eligibility of my late father, Donovan Orth, a Vietnam veteran of the U.S. Navy. I am a Life Member of VFW Auxiliary #808 in Claremont, New Hampshire and served as Department President in 2017-2018.

My Husband Scott and I have been married for 26 years. We have one daughter, Michele, and two sons, Michael and Jesse. Jesse served in the Marines and was the reason that I joined the VFW Auxiliary. Both my daughter and daughter-in-law are members of the Auxiliary. We have eight grandchildren.

I have held numerous positions from the beginning of my journey with the Auxiliary and continue to do so now that my year as Department President has come and gone. Positions include:

- Auxiliary Treasurer (2017-2021)
- Auxiliary Junior Vice-President (2008-2009)
- Auxiliary Senior Vice-President (2009-2010)
- Auxiliary President (2010-2012)
- District Conductress (2008-2009)
- District Senior Vice-President (2009-2010)
- District President (2010-2011)
- Department Guard (2014-2015)
- Department Conductress (2015)
- Department Junior Vice-President (2015-2016)
- Department Senior Vice-President (2016- 2017)
- Department President (2017-2018)

I have chaired every Program, except for Hospital, at the Auxiliary level.

I look forward to working with all of you to increase awareness about how the “Buddy”® Poppy & National Home Program impacts our veterans, service members and their families. Please contact me with any questions, concerns or SWAPs.

Sincerely,

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## **“Buddy”® Poppy & VFW National Home for Children**

Promotion #1 | July 2021

Donna Ralston, National Ambassador

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### **“Buddy”® Poppy**

**When “Buddy”® Poppy distributions are down it directly impacts veterans who assemble the Poppies.**

#### **“Buddy”® Poppy Facts:**

- “Buddy”® Poppies are assembled by disabled and needy veterans. “Buddy”® Poppy assembly is sometimes used for therapy.
- “Buddy”® Poppies are assembled in bunches of 10 and packed in boxes of 500, 1000 and 2000 for shipment to Posts and Auxiliaries.
- The VFW Buddy Poppy program provides compensation to the veterans who assemble the poppies, provides financial assistance in maintaining state and national veterans’ rehabilitation and service programs and partially supports the VFW National Home For Children. Show your support today. Host a “Buddy”® Poppy drive in your town, or have your local government issue a **special proclamation**.

#### **How to have a Successful “Buddy”® Poppy Drive or Promotion:**

- Set your date(s) early in the year. Do not wait until the last minute to schedule your drive.
- Decide your location(s) to stage your drive.
- Request from your Department Headquarters an order form to purchase your Poppies at least 8 to 12 weeks in advance of your distribution dates.
- Get the word out using your local newspaper, word of mouth, Facebook, bulletin boards and hang flyers in local business windows.
- Be sure to get permission from your local businesses to use their store front to hold your drive.
- Don’t forget to involve the youth groups in your community to help during your event.
- Have other Chairmen assist and have promotional material and a membership application on hand.
- Have your “Buddy”® Poppy kit with you. You can reference the folder for any information to educate the members helping at your drive and your community.
- **REMEMBER** never refuse a “Buddy”® Poppy to anyone even if they cannot make a donation.

### **VFW National Home for Children**

#### **VFW National Home for Children Facts:**

- The National Home community is open to families of active-duty military, veterans and relatives of VFW and VFW Auxiliary members with a commitment to making positive changes in their lives.
- There are 42 single-family homes.
  - See photos of the homes here: <https://www.vfwnationalhome.org/homes1>

- **Does your Department support a house?**  
Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia and Wisconsin.
- Military families not living on the National Home campus can receive invaluable assistance through the National Home Helpline. If you know someone who needs assistance, encourage them to:
  - **Call the Helpline at 1-800-313-4200**
  - **Email [help@vfnationalhome.org](mailto:help@vfnationalhome.org)**
  - **Visit <https://www.vfnationalhome.org/help>**
- **For more information, visit <https://www.vfnationalhome.org/>.**

### **Ways to Support the National Home:**

- **AmazonSmile**  
Amazon has a great program that helps raise money for non-profits while people shop – AmazonSmile. Here’s how it works:
  1. AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5 percent of the purchase price from your eligible purchases to the National Home.
  2. Go to AmazonSmile with the National Home already selected by using **[this link](#)**.
  3. Then log into your Amazon account and start shopping!
- **Amazon Wish List**  
The National Home’s **[Amazon Wish List](#)** is a great way to buy items that are needed for the day to day running of the National Home. You could buy something small like snow shovels or hand sanitizer or organize a fundraiser to purchase bigger ticket items like play sets for the nursery. View giving instructions and their **[Amazon Wish List](#)**.
- **[Donate online](#)**  
Make a one-time or recurring gift in the amount you choose.
- **Become a Life Member**  
Become a Life Member or an Associate Life Member and create a lasting bond between yourself and the mission of the National Home.
  - VFW and VFW Auxiliary members and organizations are eligible to become Life Members. Life Members may vote for the trustees who represent their National Home District and approve any proposed changes to our bylaws and articles of incorporation.
  - Any individual or organization wishing to support the National Home’s mission can become an Associate Life Member. Associate Life Members do not have voting privileges.
- **Tribute Bricks**  
Honor or memorialize someone or put your name or organization's name on a brick to be placed in a sidewalk at the National Home.
- **Tribute Park**  
Create a lasting tribute for a person or organization in a beautiful setting while helping build the National Home’s permanently restricted endowment fund.
- **Other Tribute Giving**  
Give a gift in honor or memory of someone. A card will be sent to a family member or friend to notify them that a gift was made in their honor or memory.