

Buddy Poppy/ National Home October

Buddy Poppy

How does the time fly, here it is September and only 3 months till Christmas!!!

Please, if you haven't purchased your Buddy Poppy's do so with your Post before September 31, 2024, deadline.

When you're having any event with poppies, remember to count or estimate the amount you have used, those who have purchased them, and have given away.

Be thinking of what your Auxiliary will be doing for the District Display Contest. Let's be well represented at Department in June.

Be actively looking into Buddy Poppy and National Home, National Program Awards.

#1. is to help educate the community about the VFW "Buddy Poppy Program.

#2. Is the most outstanding activity/or event to recognize and celebrate the VFW National Home 100th birthday.

Read the contest rules on Malta under Buddy Poppy/National Home.

National Home

From time to time this year I will be writing and telling you the auxilian, about people who have taken the advantage of what the Nation Home is all about and how they have come to lie life to the fullest through their program.

Meet James, before he was 16, he had moved 59 times and was out on his own at 15. Having to make his way in the world before he was even an adult, James decided to enlist in the Army National Guard.

Although he gained valuable experience in the service, he struggled after being discharged. When he returned to his hometown of Portland, Oregon, he was a single parent trying to find work to support his daughter.

"I got a job at the unemployment office, but I wasn't making enough to pay rent and childcare," he said. "The cost of living was very high, and I just couldn't make ends meet."

Then, his stepfather, a VFW member, told him about the VFW National Home. He and his daughter, moved to the VFW National Home in Eaton Rapids, MI, where they received a single-family home, rent free for up to four years, the support of a case manager to help with goal setting, and a small-town environment where his daughter could enjoy a normal childhood.

For the first time, James had a stable home for himself and his daughter and a reliable daycare that allowed him to find steady employment and enroll in a cybersecurity program at Lansing Community College.

While living at the National Home and pursuing his education, he began attending the First Baptist Church. There he made another unexpected turn.

He got to know Samantha, his daughter's Sunday school teacher. Like James she also had an unstable upbringing. It wasn't until she and her mother moved into the National Home that she experienced stability. After leaving the National Home, she decided to stay in Eaton Rapids.

"James eventually asked me out, and four months later, we got married," said Samantha.

"I came to the National Home with \$30 thousand in debt, and in just three years, we've paid off most of it, except for \$3,000 from my student loans," explains James.

While getting his education, James has also completed the National Home's Guitars 4 Vets and the Heroes to Hive programs. Samantha received her undergraduate degree and is currently on track to finish the requirements for her master's degree by the end of 2024.

The family, who recently welcomed a new son, have also purchased their own home in Eaton Rapids.

"If I hadn't come to the VFW National Home, I would be in a very different place. I am now middle class instead of being impoverished," he said with gratitude. "I want to build a foundation for my family that Sam and I never got.

Your kindness and generosity made this dream of a happy ending a reality. James, Samantha, and countless other families receive the stability and support they needed to pave the way to a brighter future.

Your donations through your Auxiliary or personal donations are critical for us to provide help, hope and healing that deserving military families need to make fresh starts.

- January 7, 2025, 100th Anniversary Birthday Celebration.
- February 8, 2025, is National Home's Celebration Gala
- March 9, 2025, will be the Pollet House Dedication / Ribbon Cutting event.
- June 28, 2025, will be the 100th Anniversary Community Celebration



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