

DEPARTMENT OF KANSAS
BUDDY POPPY/NATIONAL HOME PROGRAM

JANUARY 13, 2023

QUESTION: are you a VFW National Home Life Member?

That's the question Madam National President Carla has for our members. The VFW National Home only has about 100,000 Life Members, while between the VFW and Auxiliary, we have almost 1.5 million members. Why are you not signing up to be a Life Member of the VFW National Home? This is one of the most reasonable Life Membership fees you will ever pay.

One of the reasons I believe members aren't signing up to become Life Members is that they don't understand the programs within the home. I think we all can do a better job of communicating the goings on in this program. How many of you go to the Sunflower Express and really read what the Program Chairs put in their blogs, if you will?

Example: At December's meeting I read the Buddy Poppys/National Home to my Auxiliary, they were flabbergasted at all the programs within the National Home, they had no idea!! Come on Auxiliaries, let's learn together and do better!

Here are a few of the newest programs that are happening. The National Home recently graduated their first class of journeyman beekeepers. This is the Heroes to Hives program. The program began this year with two hives purchased and assembled by National Home staff. The first class is hoping to be producing honey next year. They have plans on selling the honey and calling it "Cootie Nectar." The hope is to receive more hives next year from Michigan State University.

Another program that just finished was "Guitars 4 Vets." This program brings a group of veterans together that learn how to play the guitar. In 10 short weeks, veterans learn the components of a guitar, tuning, notes, string recognition and chord memorization. They then have a small private recital where each member learns a song of their choice to play. At the end of the program the veterans receive their very own guitar.

Once a month on a Saturday, the Veteran Resource Center opens for veterans from the National Home and local veterans can meet for a "Cup of Joe." The Cup of Joe event allows veterans to sit back and have a cup of coffee and get together to talk about their choice of topic.

Not all programs are designed for the veteran. Many events are happening for the children living at the VFW National Home. For children from 6 weeks to 5 years of age, there is an Early Education Center. This center is available for families living at the VFW National Home and is available free of charge for these children. There are also after-school activities for older children from piano lessons with Miss Rhonda to painting and Gaga Ball. Gaga Ball is dodgeball, but the ball can only hit no higher than your knee and is played in an enclosed pit. They also arrange paint nights and other events for the spouses of the veterans to attend.

We also cannot forget about 4-H Group. Children raise pigs and rabbits from a young age and will show them at the Eaton County Fair. Recently, a student named her pigs Porky and Hammy. The rabbits that are raised are for their distinguished species like the rabbits with large floppy ears or their cashmere fur. The animals are then sold at the fair and once the cost for feed and purchase are paid for, the child gets to keep the remainder of the money.

The National Home also has a greenhouse. Each year seeds are donated to the home. The seeds are started in the greenhouse. Several homes share a garden bed to grow their vegetable gardens.

They sure are busy at the National Home, so let's get busy and see if we can not raise that membership number for them!

Cindy Biggs, Chairman

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