

March 2025 Sunflower Express

Buddy Poppy/National Home

### **Buddy Poppy**

Boy where has the time gone!! Hopefully all of you are working on your Buddy Poppy displays to take to your April meeting. Remember to classify your display in the right category. Rules can be found on the Buddy Poppy /National Home programs in MALTA.

Reporting has been FANTASTIC!! Keep up the good work!

### **National Home**

On June 28, 2025, at the National Home to celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday, they are having a “Community Celebration”. The city of Eaton Rapids along with the National Home are coming together to bring lots of fun and awareness to this great facility. There will be carnival rides, car show, food trucks, family activities, beer garden, and music and magic shows, and tour of the facility!! If you and your family are looking for a summer trip, I couldn't recommend any place better!!

Don't forget the Buddy Poppy/National Awards!!!

Buddy Poppy /National Home Program Award #1 and Buddy Poppy/National Program Award #2. Both Entries are due by March 31, 2025. Again, visit Malta and the entry forms will be found under programs. I've received one already, so come on ladies and gentlemen, send me some more, please!

As I've done in the past, I've written about lives being changed at the National Home because of the great vision of the forefathers of this facility. Here's James and Samatha's Story.

James had moved 59 times before turning 16 and knew little about stability. By the age of 15, he was on his own. In contrast, Samatha had a challenging upbringing until she moved with her mother to the VFW National Home, which she described as the most stable place she has ever been.

At 17, facing a lack of support, James enlisted into the Army National Guard. After his service, he returned to Portland as a single dad struggling to make ends meet. His stepfather informed him about the VFW National Home, and in January of 2021, James moved to Eaton Rapids, where he found secure housing and dependable childcare. This allowed him to enroll in a cyber security program at Lansing Community College.

While attending the First Baptist Church, he met Samatha, his daughter's Sunday school teacher. Their relationship blossomed, leading to marriage, and Samatha moved in with James at the VFW National Home. Together, they worked hard to pay off debts and pursue their education.

Having recently welcomed a new son, they purchased their own home and expressed gratitude for the support they received. "The VFW National Home changed our lives," Samatha said. "It provides the stability we needed to thrive."

Hoping to see all of you in Manhattan in June.

Cindy Biggs

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