

Veterans & Family Support

As the program year comes to a close, take time to reflect on all the great work that you accomplished this year *Banding Together for Our Veterans*. Next, take some time to think about what you might want to tackle in the coming year. Do you have any new ideas? A special fundraiser planned? A continuation of an annual project? I challenge you to come up with some kind of new avenue to take to continue helping our veterans and their families. Including the page at the end of this article, I have included some Kansas/Kansas City organizations that are worthy of your attention. Each time I've shared this page I have changed some of the organizations. Please know that these are not the only local organizations that help veterans, but they are some that I have found that not everyone knows about.

As my final installment of informational training on all things Veterans and Family Support, we will talk about one of the core goals- **Veterans and Family Support Programs**, they include...

- Unmet Needs
- Military Assistance Program Grants (covered in my August Sunflower Express article)
- Adopt-A-Unit
- Sport Clips© Help a Hero Scholarship Program

Unmet Needs is a grant for up to \$1,500 to help military and their families help pay for unexpected financial hardship for basic needs. Sometimes life throws you a curveball and you are not ready for it. Things like paying rent or buying groceries can suddenly be a hard choice or task if something unexpected comes up. This is only available to eligible applicants whose hardship is a direct result of deployment or injury related to service. To check eligibility or find a grant application, see MALTA under "Member Resources" or vfw.org/assistance and click Financial Grants.

With Adopt-a-Unit (AAU), a MAP grant can also be acquired to help cover shipping costs for care packages. If your Auxiliary and/or Post is interested in AAU, you can speak to Auxiliary or Post members or your community to see if anyone has or knows someone who is serving. If not, is there a local National Guard Armory you can help? The Department of Defense releases a weekly list of activated National Guard and Reserves units that you can look into. Lastly you can go to mybaseguide.com for a list of active bases and installations. Make sure you get permission from the unit's Commanding Officer before sending anything. Build those relationships!

The VFW partnered with Sport Clips© in 2013 to create the Sport Clips© Help a Hero Scholarship. The program is about 80% funded by donations and the rest by corporate sponsors. Over 2,000 scholarships totaling \$11.4 million have been awarded to service members and veterans to help pay for education tuition and fees. Applicants can be eligible for up to \$5,000 and can apply each semester. Additional info and applications can be found on MALTA under "Member Resources" or vfw.org/assistance and click Student Veteran Support. Some ways to help out are donations or becoming a patron of Sport Clips©

May 10th is Military Spouse Appreciation Day

May 13th is Children of Fallen Patriots Day

May 18th is Armed Forces Day

May 27th is Memorial Day

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If you're looking for alternative ways to help veterans, here are some local organizations to support.



Located on base at Ft. Leavenworth, this is more than just a food pantry. Each month they have a theme for a special event, i.e., baby shower, Thanksgiving meal kits, Angel Tree. They serve only active military families.

Strongholdfoodpantry.org
PO Box 291, Leavenworth, KS 66048



Formally known as 'Caregivers on the Homefront' this Kansas City organization focuses on the military caregivers and supports them through comradery, classes, retreats, and more. They also help children of caregivers as well.

operationfrontlinefamilies.org
7001 Locust A212, Gladstone, MO 64118



Started in KC and is now branching out to several other states. (The tiny houses)

Veteranscommunityproject.org



Located in Rose Hill, KS they specialize in helping train service dogs to be paired with veterans in need of support.

midwestbattlebuddies.org
PO Box 43, Rose Hill, KS 67133



Located in Manhattan, KS, they specialize in free outdoor adventures for veterans like hunting, camping, fishing and more. The events are therapeutic for the mental health for those that attend.

woundedwarriorsunited.org
3303 Valleywood Dr, Manhattan, KS 66502