

VFW's Day of Service Sees Increase in Participating Posts

More than 700 VFW Posts around the world participated in VFW's second annual Day of Service in May

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VFW members around the world delved into VFW's second annual Day of Service this year, an initiative to engage veterans, service members and local advocates in a widespread attempt to make a meaningful impact in their communities.

This year's Day of Service built on the success of its inaugural event last year, growing its total number of grassroots events by more than 20 percent. VFW Posts in all 50 states, as well as those in Europe, Guam, the Philippines, Mexico and Puerto Rico, participated.

The results of this year's Day of Service stemmed from a decision by VFW to expand and begin outreach months earlier. VFW National Headquarters alerted members with information in VFW magazine and through a robust social media campaign.

With the Day of Service hashtag used more than 3.3 million times across social and traditional media, the gospel of what VFW does in and around their communities spread universally, as more than 700 Posts around the world participated.

The following are a few examples of VFW Posts whose work was praised on local TV, in newspapers and on social media platforms for their extensive work in and around their communities on VFW's 2023 Day of Service.

'WE HAD A LOT OF SUPPORT'

Members of All-American VFW Post 9167 in Princeton, Texas, led several service projects that targeted their community throughout VFW's Day of Service on May 6.

Post 9167 garnered more than 72 volunteers and 31 additional supporters in a widespread effort to serve and enhance their community.

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“We had a lot of support to make this happen,” then-VFW Post 9167 Commander Preston Callaway said. “We received help from churches, city, chamber, schools and other groups in town. The mayor and city council and chamber of commerce all were glad to be a part of it.”

VFW members carried out several beautification projects that included repairing and polishing headstones at Princeton Cemetery and cleaning the town’s Veterans Memorial Park.

They also joined the Princeton Fire Department in brush clearing to protect neighborhoods from grass fires, as well as joining local nonprofit chapters to build homes with Habitat for Humanity and deliver meals through Meals on Wheels America.

“We all split up into groups and worked together with each project by having a VFW Post 9167 member in each group to be the point of contact,” Callaway said. “Everyone bought in and helped where they could.”

In conducting their Day of Service, Post 9167 members enlisted help from the local JROTC and Scout troops to pass down mentorship and ideals in what it means to serve one’s country and community.

The Post also partnered with the local First Baptist Church to use its facility for free health screenings and a blood drive that garnered 21 pints of blood. The Post also provided career resources through the Texas Workforce Commission and free haircuts through VFW’s partnership with Sports Clips.

“I was deeply grateful for all the community members who came out to help,” Callaway said. “I already look forward to next year.”

BEDS FOR NEEDY CHILDREN

VFW Post 1264 in Roanoke, Virginia, conducted its Day of Service, alongside its Auxiliary, by building 30 beds for children in need. Post members received help from the Roanoke Battalion Sea Cadets and other community members on May 6.

The Post sponsored the event by providing \$6,000 toward Sleep in Heavenly Peace, a global nonprofit with chapters across the U.S. that focuses on building beds for children in need of the proper physical, emotional and mental support a bed offers.

“Everybody had a great time, and there was not a single face without a smile on it,” said Lloyd Nolan Jackson, a Post trustee. “By supporting this bed build, we were able to get 30 children off the floor or sofa into a bed of their own. For many of them, it was their first bed.”

Joining the Sleep in Heavenly Peace chapter in Roanoke, about 170 miles west of Richmond,

Virginia, members of Post 1264 joined their 77 enlisted volunteers in building and furnishing the 30 bunk beds throughout the day.

“Unfortunately, there will always be children in need of a safe and comfortable place to sleep,” Jackson said. “That’s why we must continue.”

‘PERSPECTIVE AND TEAMWORK’

For their VFW Day of Service this May, VFW Post 1533 members in San Antonio split their time into two volunteer sessions at the San Antonio Food Bank.

A cohort of 18 Post members spent more than three hours apiece on May 16 and May 19 working out of the San Antonio Food Bank’s warehouse, sorting and packing food for those suffering from food insecurity.

“Our Day of Service was spent in a warehouse working with fellow volunteers from across our community who were equally committed to fighting hunger,” VFW Post 1533 Judge Advocate General Suzzie Thomas said. “By luck and good fortune, we were joined by high school students, volunteers from USAA and a large group of Navy chiefs.”

VFW Post 1533 also donated \$500 toward the Food Bank, helping provide more than 3,500 meals for the community, an additional token of their mission.

“VFW’s Day of Service is about perspective and teamwork,” Thomas said. “We can all get caught up in our daily grind and life’s challenges, so it is important to make the time and have a reason to come together as a team to make a positive impact.”

Adding to their efforts during this year’s Day of Service, Post 1533 members went beyond the month of May and remained involved with the food bank throughout the summer. In July, they also hosted a food and pet drive at their Post, managing to donate an additional 1,072 food items to the San Antonio Food Bank.

This article is featured in the November/December 2023 issue of [VFW magazine](#), and was written by [Ismael Rodriguez Jr.](#), senior writer for VFW magazine.