

Veterans Welcome Home and Resource Center

Post 10804 launches new program to help veterans.

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More and more VFW Posts are starting up their own programs to aid veterans in many different ways and VFW Post 10804 in Little River, S.C., is raising the bar for these Posts' programs around the world.

In May of 2009 Post 10804 started a program called the "Veterans Welcome Home and Resource Center." They received their 501c3 status the following June and have been growing ever since. The resource center has big plans in the works to continue to help veterans the best they can.

Currently, the resource center pledges to help veterans of all eras. They have a staff capable of helping with VA disability claims, obtaining copies of military records and replacement medals, helping homeless and unemployed veterans find shelter and work, aiding family members, as well as locating assistance to those with mental health issues and much more.

"Post 10804 members put in at least 100 volunteer hours per week. To date we have helped over 200 veterans and are seeing more each week," explained Kris Tourtellotte, VFW service officer and founder of Veterans Welcome Home and Resource Center.

"Our Future Projects will include a transportation program and a reintegration house," said Tourtellotte.

The Transportation Program will provide veterans a ride to and from the VA hospital. The closest VA is three hours away from Little River, leaving many veterans unable to get to their scheduled appointments. The Post plans to fundraise in order to purchase a handicapped van to hold six or more passengers and wheelchairs.

"It's imperative that veterans make it to all VA appointments to prevent from being dropped by the system. On top of that, a missed appointment likely takes several months to reschedule," said Tourtellotte.

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The other major future plan is the Reintegration House, which will allow veterans to stay up to two years as long as the veteran is following a program to reintegrate back into society as a self-providing, contributing member of society. It will not be a homeless shelter; it will be for transitioning either from a rehab program, homelessness, or a discharge. The house will have a staff which will include psychologists, case workers, and administrators. Occupants will be required to cook, clean and do their own laundry, all helping the veteran to become a part of a team and improve communication skills.

“We will actively seek grant monies and charitable donations to find suitable property that can be refurbished to our needs,” said Tourtellotte.

“We would like to see other VFW’s across the nation start similar programs. We even started our V.O.G.U.E. program (Veteran Organizations Gathered in a United Effort) last November with 30 other organizations. Basically, any organization that has a program for, or that deals with veterans can join V.O.G.U.E to share information about their program so that where ever a veteran goes, that organization will know where to sent him or her for the help needed,” concluded Tourtellotte.

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