

Veteran Cares for Her Family with Help from the VFW

'Most of us hate asking for assistance, but it's wonderful to have people that make it possible for someone like me to not struggle in a time of need'

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Andrea Lopez, 37, of Fresno, Calif., is a fighter. A single mom of six children, Andrea has faced many obstacles as she's tried to remain tough and care for herself and her kids. Her will to fight for what's needed and desire to find her own way in life led her to the Army.

"I chose to join because I was a young mother who had just come out of an abusive relationship and had nothing. I consider myself very intelligent, but at that time I couldn't afford school and raise my children on my own. My kids are the reason I joined – to make a better life for them and myself," Andrea said.

Andrea served in the Army for 10 years. Her time was spent primarily as a mechanic stationed in California and Texas. Now a veteran, she has discovered that no matter how strong and smart someone may be, sometimes they need to lean on others.

Andrea struggles with mental health issues including PTS from military sexual trauma and deals with lasting damage to her pelvis, hip, back and wrist due to physical injuries sustained during basic training and a deployment. This has made aspects of civilian life difficult, but Andrea is grateful to find there are people willing to help.

Andrea got connected to an organization called Our Heroes Dream and their Women Warriors program which offers mental health support. When she experienced financial hardship, a woman in the group told her about the VFW's Unmet Needs grant. Andrea applied for the grant and received a gift card that enabled her to purchase groceries for the month.

"It meant the world to me and my family," said Andrea. "Thank you from the bottom of my heart. Most of us hate asking for assistance, but it's wonderful to have people that make it

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

406 W. 34th Street
Kansas City, MO 64111

Office 816.756.3390
Fax 816.968.1157

WASHINGTON OFFICE

200 Maryland Ave., N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20002

Office 202.543.2239
Fax 202.543.6719

info@vfw.org
www.vfw.org

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Seeing firsthand the immediate response and the effect the Unmet Needs grant had for her and her children, Andrea encourages more people to support the VFW and programs such as Unmet Needs so more veterans can get help when they need it.

“Please donate,” Andrea said. “The impact of doing so should bring you peace at heart knowing you’re making a difference.”