

A Post in Minnesota Strives to Assist Its Community

'We have a very active Post that works hard to make our community better'

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In finding a way to help the less fortunate in and around their community of Monticello, Minnesota, VFW Post 8731 members donated \$1,000 to the local food bank in December.

The Monticello Food Shelf, a community pantry for residents with limited financial resources, received the \$1,000 donation following a unanimous decision by Post members in November.

“One of our members, Dan Kellas, is a volunteer there, and he made the motion to donate the funds at our November membership meeting,” VFW Post 8731 Quartermaster Ronald Widell said. “The motion was seconded and passed on a [unanimous] voice vote.”

VFW Post 8731 members raised the money through their charitable gambling operation in the Post’s clubroom, which includes a bar and restaurant for the community.

“This has provided us with a reasonably steady flow of funds, which we use to support veterans, active military, their families and the communities in which they live and serve,” Widell said. “Geographically, that's primarily Wright and Sherburne counties, as well as northwestern Hennepin County.”

The Post’s fundraising efforts have over the years paved the way for donations made annually to serve its community and surrounding areas, as well as military service members and their families.

VFW Post 8731 offers four \$1,000 scholarships per month to students seeking post-secondary education, as well as providing assistance to local youth sports leagues, the local school district and the 257th MP Company, a local unit of the Minnesota National Guard.

Through the Minnesota National Guard Enlisted Association, VFW Post 8731 donated

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\$14,000 for the 257th MP Company's holiday banquet in December, which provided service members and their spouses with food, drinks and hotel stay.

"We have a very active Post that works hard to make our community better," Widell added. "We have [also] allocated \$20,000 for our Department 'Commanders Project' and Auxiliary president. This year, it's the 'Folds of Honor,' so we will be donating \$10,000 at the Department mid-winter conference and an additional \$10,000 at the Department convention in June."

Widell also praised the Post's Honor Guard, which remains a fixture in the community by serving at most funerals, parades and national holiday celebrations.

"That's just a representative sample of the various activities our Post supports and in which we participate," Widell said. "If it sounds like I'm proud to be a member of the USS Dorchester VFW Post 8731, that's because I am."