

'Service is in My Blood'

Air Force veteran Lisa Smith realizes how much service has enriched her life and urges other veterans to get involved

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“Service is in my blood. I never knew any other life,” said Lisa Smith. “It started with my mother taking me to inner-city schools where she taught. Then, it was passing out food to the homeless when I was a teen.”

Eventually, Smith’s drive to serve led her to the military. She enlisted in 2007 and spent four years as part of the Air Force Security Forces.

After active duty, Smith and her husband built a home in Arvada, Colorado, and she earned her master’s degree in social work to assist low-income, disabled individuals. Smith sought additional ways to help others outside of her work.

Since 2013, Smith has traveled across the globe as a volunteer to help communities impacted by natural disaster.

“I’ve helped run a clinic in a refugee camp, deployed medical personnel to Nepal after a deadly earthquake, and rebuilt homes after disaster occurred,” she said.

Recently, she found a new way to create positive change on a local level.

“While getting dirty in service has been rewarding, I’ve put my boots out to dry and stepped into the local political arena to serve my community through smart policy and servant leadership,” she said.

In November 2021, Smith became the first ever female veteran elected to the Arvada City Council. Just a month later, the Marshall wildfire decimated homes and properties throughout nearby Boulder County. Smith jumped into action.

“People wanted to help but didn’t know how,” explained Smith. “A fellow councilmember

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and I put together a regional gift card drive that grew to include more than 15 cities and five counties in Colorado. We collected more than \$65,000 in gift cards to give to victims of the fire.”

With much of her city council term still ahead, Smith looks forward to engaging her community to do more good in the future. She realizes how much service has enriched her life and urges other veterans to get involved.

“I would encourage people to look up their local town or county committees and step into the service arena!” she said. “It’s been a great place for me to plug in. I’ve found that having a veteran’s perspective and experience is invaluable.”

Looking back, Smith is grateful for the example set by her mother and father early on.

“My parents served their communities as a social worker and teacher. They taught me to give back and help others, and I’ve kept that mindset,” she said. “I’m not sure what a life without service would be, but I know it would not be fulfilling. It would be void of purpose. Service is just who I am.”