

'I've Seen the Good the VFW Does'

Veteran MarieAnn Raguso turned to the VFW's Unmet Needs program when she needed help

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On the evening of July 27, 2013, MarieAnn Raguso, 33, was traveling in a truck near Bagram Airfield in Afghanistan when a 200-pound improvised explosive device tore the vehicle apart.

"I can't remember much of it," she said of the explosion.

Among other injuries, Raguso suffered a concussion and traumatic brain injury. She was medically evacuated and admitted to Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland, where she remained for nearly four months.

Today, Raguso continues to experience complications related to the incident, including nerve damage, Post Traumatic Stress, survivor's guilt, chronic migraines, digestive issues and insomnia.

Along with managing those conditions, Raguso is working toward her Ph.D. and runs the nonprofit she founded, Crazy Cat Lady Therapy for Veterans.

"My goal is to become a doctor of behavioral science to develop alternative therapies for veterans," she said.

Struggling to find a part-time job that fit her needs and schedule, Raguso was encouraged by a friend to contact the VFW for financial assistance.

"My best friend, Brian, told me about the VFW's Unmet Needs program, and I went for it," she said.

Raguso is thankful for the grant, which she used to cover some of her mortgage.

"The support alleviated some of the financial burden while I look for a job," she said. "Not all organizations place donated funds in the hands of the people they claim to help, but the

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

VFW does.”

Inspired by the support she received, Raguso decided to join VFW Post 973 in Newburgh, New York, to repay the kindness she was shown by serving others in her community.

“I’m someone who loves to help veterans and be involved, and I’ve seen the good the VFW does for the community,” she said. “I’m proof of it.”

Learn more about the [VFW’s Unmet Needs program](#).