

'Great Way to Connect the Community'

Post in Wisconsin hosts blood drive

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For their Day of Service this year, VFW Post 10519 members spearheaded a community blood drive that helped provide for 81 patients across the Milwaukee area.

The Post, 11 miles southwest of Milwaukee in Greendale, Wisconsin, had been deciding on its second-annual VFW Day of Service project when members were contacted by representatives from Versiti, a Wisconsin-based nonprofit blood center.

"They approached us and told us of the shortage of blood in the Milwaukee area," VFW Post 10519 Senior Vice Commander Kristin Dodds said. "Versiti donations go to multiple hospitals including the VA medical center in Milwaukee, so it was a great way to connect the community to the VFW and veterans by filling an urgent need."

Post 10519 members accepted the challenge and began an advertising campaign to recruit donors prior to VFW's Day of Service on May 6. The Post and its Auxiliary also worked with several community organizations and businesses to spread the word and accrue donations.

In orchestrating the event, Post 10519 received a \$500 donation from Humana, a longtime VFW partner, as well as blood donors from Greendale staples that included the Broad Street Coffee Company, American Legion Post 416, Lions Club and St. Alphonsus Church.

When the event began on May 6, the Post hosted the blood drive at the building they share with Legion Post 416, handling all the logistics and allowing Versiti to collect the blood from 26 donors that included 11 Post and Auxiliary members.

"We conducted donor check-ins and also collected food items for Milwaukee Homeless Veterans Initiative's emergency food program," Dodds said. "The event was successful enough that Versiti asked us to host another blood drive in the fall."

Working with the same businesses and organizations in Greendale, VFW Post 10519 members hosted their second blood drive in September. They welcomed 20 donors and helped Versiti raise blood to help 57 Milwaukee patients.

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Dodds credited VFW's Day of Service for the flourishing partnership with Versiti, who has expressed a desire to continue to work alongside Post 10519 to help field blood donations for those in need around Milwaukee.

"It is important for VFW Posts to participate in the Day of Service campaign because the events create opportunities to connect with other local organizations for the betterment of their communities," Dodds said. "Additionally, the Day of Service is a platform for VFW Posts to talk within their communities about the great work we do year-round and not just in May."