

‘It’s Amazing to See How Grateful They Are’

San Antonio Post provides 43,000 pounds of food to families

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A VFW Post in San Antonio is doing their part when it comes to fighting food insecurity in its community.

Since July, VFW Post 8397 in San Antonio has distributed about 43,000 pounds of groceries to food-insecure families in the San Antonio area. In partnership with Humana, the Post holds a food distribution drive for needy families on the second Saturday of each month.

Cris Vieyra, a past VFW Post 8397 commander, said the VFW Post has held these events for about three years with the help of the San Antonio Food Bank. Additionally, Vieyra said the Post has received help from local JROTC youth to help with the distribution.

“We hand out a variety of food, including frozen dinners, canned foods, fresh fruits and meats such as chicken, fish and beef,” Vieyra said. “We try our best to help as many families as we can. All of us enjoy what we do.”

At distribution events, Humana-organized volunteers, as well as Post and Auxiliary members, provide help to the “long lines” of families who need help, Vieyra said. Humana’s efforts are led by Andrea Ortiz, a veterans community engagement executive with Humana and a member of VFW Post 7108 (also located in San Antonio).

Since 2018, VFW has worked with Humana for the Uniting to Combat Hunger campaign. The program was established to fight hunger and food insecurity across the country.

According to statistics from Feeding America, about 1-in-4 Afghanistan and Iraq war veterans are affected by food insecurity. In the general population, about 1-in-10 households experience food insecurity.

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Vieyra said the community's reaction to the food donations has been "incredible" to see.

"The people who we help often volunteer to help us distribute food to others," Vieyra said. "It's amazing to see how grateful they are."

VFW Post 8397 recently utilized a \$1,500 VFW Foundation grant for its work with the food bank. Since 2021, the VFW Foundation has offered grants to VFW Posts and Auxiliaries supporting the Uniting to Combat Hunger campaign. For every dollar raised by local VFW Posts and Auxiliaries, the VFW Foundation will match the full amount up to \$1,500. Uniting to Combat Hunger grant applications are available at vfw.org/UTCH.