

‘We Just Wanted to Give Back’

A VFW member in Washington State opens a mobile pet pantry for those with furry companions needing a boost

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Vietnam veteran Tony Blount remembers when he and his late wife, Amy, went through hard times when they were younger. The couple — both of whom were 100 percent disabled veterans — had to utilize food banks to make ends meet.

When the duo had the opportunity to give back, they formed West Plains Angels out of Cheney, Washington, to help other veterans, schools, food banks and other groups.

“We just wanted to give back,” said Blount, junior vice commander of VFW Post 11326 in Cheney. “We were finally in a position to give back, so we did.”

Earlier this year, Blount started a mobile pet pantry. He travels to the various food banks in surrounding communities on food distribution days to give out pet supplies to those with furry companions at home.

With the help of his fellow VFW members donating their time to distribute pet food among other items, Blount has donated 2,500 pounds of pet food and nearly \$2,000 in leashes and harnesses. He gives pets toys, too.

“This pet pantry has been deeply well-received,” Blount said. “So many of the people going out to these pantries cannot afford to buy pet food. But oftentimes, their pets are their only source of companionship. I find it curious that the more we gift and give, the more we receive.”

Blount said he is not much into computers or tweeting or texting. Instead, his focus is to “compound the good,” which just happens to be the motto of West Plains Angels.

“My wife of 50 years died two years ago,” Blount said. “I do this in memory of my most beloved wife, Amy. The day I met her at Travis Air Force Base, she wrote in her diary, ‘Today

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I met the boy I am going to marry.”

VFW Post 11326 Commander Rick Mattausch describes Blount as “dynamic.” Mattausch and his wife have both volunteered their time at the mobile pet pantry.

“Tony is kind of a saint, really,” Mattausch said. “He’s always working to help the people of the community.”

The Post gives Blount Buddy Poppies, which he distributes when giving away pet supplies. Mattausch said he’s pretty sure Blount has distributed more Poppies than anyone else in their VFW District. He also accepts donations on behalf of the VFW.

“The work he is doing is important,” Mattausch said. “He is helping people who are having a hard time making ends meet and preventing them from having to give away their pets. It is not often you meet someone like Tony.”

This article is featured in the January 2024 issue of [VFW magazine](#), and was written by [Janie Dyhouse](#), senior editor for VFW magazine.