

VFW Posts Join Forces to Donate to VFW Troop & Family Support Program

\$4,400 was donated to VFW's MAP.

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Earlier this year, VFW Post 7327 Commander Gary Kelch attended the 2010 USO Aloha Christmas Party for Wounded Warriors at the Walter Reed Army Hospital in Washington, D.C., where he met country music recording artist, Ricky Lee.

After talking for only a few minutes, Kelch and Lee had a great idea: a benefit concert. Kelch thought it would be a fun way to raise money for the **VFW Military Assistance Program (MAP)**, which offers VFW Posts and Departments financial help to put on various military morale events such as welcome homes and farewell events for troops and their families.

Dale City, Va., Post 1503 Facility Manager John Meehan heard of the idea and offered the Post's event hall to host the benefit. Many Post members stepped up to plan the fundraising event.

Post members created and distributed flyers, notified the local newspapers and radio stations, announced it on their social media websites and e-mailed a flyer.

The benefit was held only two months after Kelch and Lee's initial conversation, and over 120 tickets were sold. Through ticket sales and individual donations during the concert, \$4,400 was raised, all to be donated to VFW's MAP.

"Ricky Lee and his band, The Mustangs, had the Post rockin'! They put on a memorable show, for a worthy cause," said Kelch.

Not only did Lee and his band members put on a great concert for veterans and their families, but the night before, Kelch drove Lee and two of his guitarists, C'Jay Castello and Matt Pletcher, around the northern Virginia District 10 area to play a few songs at various Posts.

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“Ricky Lee and The Mustangs truly enjoy entertaining our veterans, and judging by the applause and cheers, the veterans enjoyed them right back,” concluded Kelch.

The fundraiser was a great success, and the Posts involved did a remarkable job using the resources available to them to get the word out. It’s a great example of how social and local media can spread the word, especially for an event to raise money for America’s heroes!