



Auxiliaries make

Veteran Housing Essential Kits – Chicago, Ill.



Department of Illinois Auxiliaries are helping Chicago-area veterans move out of homelessness by giving the kind of gift that makes a house a home.

With contributions from Auxiliaries, Illinois has been able to purchase four Veteran Housing Essential Kits from Federated Wholesale, Inc. and donate them to Jesse Brown VA Medical Center.

The housing kits, each contained within a large reusable tub, contain everything newly-settled veterans could need, including bedroom, bathroom, kitchen and laundry items like sheets, an alarm clock, shower curtains, cookware and utensils, and hangers and detergent.

“What happens once you get into a home? You need sheets and plates and towels,” said Tammie Kiker, owner of 25-year-old Federated Wholesale, Inc. a Georgia-based company that specializes in supplying health, hygiene and comfort care products ranging from apparel to toiletries.

Knowing that these costs can quickly tally up for veterans just getting a fresh start, she said, “It feels really good that we can help people who need the help.”

Federated Wholesale, Inc.’s motto is “Caring Matters: It’s Who We Are...It’s What We Do.” Their client base comprises active-duty military servicemen and servicewomen, veterans, veterans’ service organizations and other non-profits. Over the last year and a half, they’ve shipped 1,000 of these kits, available at about half the cost it would take to purchase all of these household items at retail.

Mercie Woolfolk, Department of Illinois Hospital Chairman and a Life Member of Addison Auxiliary 7446, said she hopes more Auxiliaries will be inspired to help veterans the same way her Department has.

“It caught my heart,” she said, “to give to a veteran who doesn’t have anything they need to get set up for the first time and for them to have that sweet smell of everything new and see their relief and a wonderful smile. Imagine how many we could help if at least 100 Auxiliaries purchased at least one (of the kits)?”

Patrick Gleason, Chief of Voluntary Services at Jesse Brown, said the housing kits have been wonderful addition to the VA’s housing program.

“They let the veterans know that people really do care and support them,” he said. “One veteran stated, ‘I am so thrilled to be housed, but I never expected such a great housewarming gift!’”

home *sweeter* for veterans

Dream Project – Fort McCoy, Fla.

In Florida, the VFW Veterans Village independent living facility recently completed a “dream project” thanks to De Bary Auxiliary 8093 in Deltona, Florida.

The Auxiliary donated 35 new 32-inch flat-screen televisions and brackets for wall mounts – enough to finish outfitting each of the Village’s 70 rooms and make each space free of TV stands that some of their residents had tripped over.

“I’m on cloud nine,” said Auxiliary 8093 President Shirley Bonds. “It feels wonderful that if our veterans need something, we can take a vote and say ‘OK.’”

Veterans Village Director and retired U.S. Army Lt. Col. Alcides Lugo began updating TVs for residents six years ago. An Auxiliary donation from a now-deceased member made it possible for Auxiliary 8093 to help turn the Village’s dream project into reality.

“The dedication to this one-of-a-kind facility that is not supported by any federal, state or local funds is truly amazing,” Lugo said. “The Auxiliary has always had a special place in their hearts for the VFW Veterans Village. Thank you, Shirley and your outstanding Auxiliary, for this wonderful gift!”

The VFW Veterans Village in Fort McCoy, Florida, was established in 1991 by the Department of Florida Veterans of Foreign Wars. Village operations are funded by the VFW and VFW Auxiliary, residents and donor friends of the Village.

Its mission is to provide a homelike atmosphere to veterans who have proven their loyalty and patriotism by serving the United States of America. Its guiding principle is to provide affordable, independent living accommodations to VFW members, their spouses, qualifying members of the Auxiliary and their spouses and widows of veterans. Over the past nearly 25 years, the VFW Veterans Village has helped thousands of veterans and their families. ★ AC

For more information about the VFW Veterans Village, visit vfwveteransvillage.org.



Past VFW Commander-in-Chief Bill Thien (right) helps VFW Veterans Village maintenance team member Joel Travis install a brand-new flat-screen television for a resident.