

Omaha Federal Credit Union gives thanks for Vets Basket event

Many smiles and salutes were given to veterans and their spouses and family members during the third annual Vets Baskets campaign, which covered nursing and assisted living homes in Washington and surrounding counties in support of Veterans Day this November.

The third annual Vets Baskets donation, a grassroots community service campaign created by Julie Gasper of Omaha Federal Credit Union, and Ed Lautrup, Veterans Service Officer of Washington County, was created in order to give back to veterans in Washington County, as well as Douglas, Burt and Sarpy counties in Nebraska, and Harrison County in Iowa.

"Our mission is to honor our Veterans and let them know we have not forgotten them and we never will," Gasper said in an email with the Enterprise. "The reason we are a free nation is because of those service men and women who stood up for us. When our country needed them most, they sacrificed some of — or all of — their hopes and dreams and pushed back many of their life plans to instead go, secure and fight for America's interests."

In May 2021, the campaign started with five Blair nursing homes and one in Fort Calhoun, were 100 goodie bags filled with treats and necessities for veterans and their family members. The next year, a Douglas County nursing home was added, as well as the Eastern Nebraska Veterans Home, located in Bellevue.

This year, two Har-



COURTESY JULIE GASPER



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risson County nursing homes were added, as well as one in Tekamah and the American Legion Jackson-Peck Post 274 in Herman.

"With our Credit Union recently chartered to serve Harrison County, we knew that we wanted to serve the vets there as well as the nursing homes that we've done in the past two years," Gasper explained. "We had a donation goal to accomplish that, but we well exceeded that because of the graciousness of our supporters."

In total, 204 baskets were delivered to veterans across the ever-expanding service area.

"We want to personally connect with our Veterans, our members and others in the communities where we live and work, because these communities have given so much back to us and have supported us for many decades. I feel that these close connections and touch points are the real success indicators behind what we do, and we cannot do it without the ongoing support of donors and volunteers and their deep belief in this service to our nation's Veterans as well as our communities. "Getting out into the

community and meeting the various homes' staff and administration helps with our personal connection to them and to the Veterans they take care of on a daily basis," Gasper said. "These folks know their Vets inside and out. They care for them deeply and protect them like they are family. We also get to hear the great stories and battles that these Vets have experienced."

Gasper said those interested can become involved by providing monetary donations or giving ideas as the team prepares for Veterans Day in 2024.

"If someone has a talent they'd like to contribute or items they'd like to donate, or monetary donations they'd like to give, or ideas they'd like to share, we are open to the possibilities that each person can bring to help us ultimately be successful each year," Gasper said. "Folks should not hesitate to call me direct at 402-951-8728, or Ed Lautrup at 402-426-6838. The other thing folks can do in the months prior is to

look for sales or deep discounts on little things for the Veterans that might be fun or useful, patriotic, or help them pass the time. It's the little things that go a long way. We welcome donations and input all year long."

Gasper said there is an ongoing list of supporters who help grow the Vets Day baskets each year.

"We couldn't do this without the ongoing support of the communities, homes and vets that we serve, our Credit Union members and future members, our employees, our Board of Directors, our volunteers, area Vets clubs, Veterans' Service Officers, Boy Scouts, Cub Scouts, Douglas County and WA County Service Offices, vendors, businesses, the WA County Chamber, Greater Omaha

Chamber, Sarpy County Chamber, area American Legion Posts and AM Vets, just to name a few," she said. "Ed and I have a great back-and-forth working relationship and we enjoy doing community service work together, such as project management activities

and time spent fundraising and ultimately planning the next event and what it may look like or evolve into in the months and days leading up to the big event."

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Tree of Life Campaign


In 1956, the Memorial Community Hospital Auxiliary began a holiday money tree drive to purchase needed equipment for the hospital. The tradition continues today with the Tree of Life Campaign. The tree is a symbol of friends and loved ones who hold a special space in our hearts and minds.

We are excited to share this opportunity to make a difference in the lives of our patients. By sponsoring the "Holiday Tree" with a donation in honor of a friend or relative, you can celebrate their memory while spreading joy and warmth throughout the season. It's a symbol of hope and support for our patients and families.

Funds raised during this year's campaign will be used to purchase items that enhance patient comfort, ensuring their experience at MCH is as pleasant as possible. Your generosity will make a tangible impact on those who rely on our care.

We now have the ability to accept donations through Venmo, providing a secure and convenient way to support the Tree of Life Campaign!

@mchfoundation



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200+ Baskets Delivered 11-07-23 and 11-09-23 to 9 nursing and retirement homes in 8 cities across 4 counties

A special THANK YOU to all of the donors and volunteers that supported our 3rd Annual Community Service Event for VETS! We greatly appreciate YOU!

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- American Legion Jackson-Peck Post 274, Herman, NE
- AMVETS Post #8, Blair, NE
- Arbor Care Center, Tekamah, NE
- Autumn Pointe, Fort Calhoun, NE
- Azria Health Longview, Missouri Valley, IA
- Azria Health Rose Vista, Woodbine, IA
- Birdeye
- Boy Scouts Troop 114, Fort Calhoun, NE
- Carter House, Blair, NE
- Crowell Memorial Home, Blair, NE
- Crown Pointe, Omaha, NE
- Cub Scouts Pack 114, Fort Calhoun, NE
- Custom Lawns, Omaha, NE
- Eastern Nebraska Veterans' Home, Bellevue, NE
- Enterprise Media Group, Blair, NE
- Good Shepherd, Blair, NE
- Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce, Omaha, NE
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- KMTV 3 News, Omaha, NE
- Nebraska Credit Union League, Omaha, NE
- NRG Media, Omaha, NE
- Omaha Federal Credit Union Members, Employees & Board of Directors
- Petersen Printing, Omaha, NE
- Sarpy County Chamber of Commerce, Omaha, NE
- Veterans' Service Office, Douglas County, NE
- Veterans' Service Office, Washington County, NE
- VFW Post 1251, Blair, NE
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