

BUDDY POPPY VFW NATIONAL HOME

2023-2024

I am very excited to be appointed as the Department of Illinois Chairman for the “Buddy”® Poppy and VFW National Home program again this year. We accomplished many great things for both of these programs last year and I can’t wait to see what we accomplish this year. Let’s **“Be A Warrior”** for our Veterans in both of these programs. I would love to see an increase in “Buddy”® Poppy drives this year so make sure you are sending me pictures of your poppy drives! Please educate your communities about this mighty flower and how it helps Veterans from fabrication to distribution. I would also like to see an increase in attendees for Illinois Day at the VFW National Home this year. Last year was my first time attending and I was blown away by the experience. I challenge each Auxiliary member to visit the National Home at least once. I guarantee you will walk away energized and eager to serve our Veterans and their families. Please make sure to read through all of the materials attached regarding the “Buddy”® Poppy and VFW National Home programs. Please share pictures of your hard work on your Auxiliary social media pages as well as our Department Facebook page. Also, make sure to report your hard work and reach out to me with any questions you may have.

“Buddy”® Poppy Program



The “Buddy”® Poppy is one of the most recognized symbols of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. It is our job to educate them as well as ourselves as to what this mighty little flower does.

The VFW conducted its first Poppy distribution over 100 years ago in 1922. The VFW was the first Veterans’



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PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- ✓ **Buddy Poppy Education and Community Outreach**
- ✓ **National Buddy Poppy Display Contest**
- ✓ **VFW National Home Education and Community Outreach**



organization to organize a national distribution. In February 1924, the VFW registered the name "Buddy"® Poppy with the United States Patent Office. A certificate was issued on May 20, 1924, granting the VFW all trademark rights in the name of Buddy under the classification of artificial flowers. These small but mighty memorial flowers are an integral part of the VFW Community. As the VFW's official memorial flower, the Poppy represents the blood shed by American service members. It reiterates that we will not forget their sacrifices.

"Buddy"® Poppies are assembled by disabled, hospitalized, aging, and needy Veterans. The VFW provides compensation to those Veterans who assemble the Poppies. This money is often used to pay for little luxuries they would not otherwise be able to afford. The assembling of the Poppies is also used as a form of therapy for many Veterans.

For each "Buddy"® Poppy that is purchased for distribution, a portion goes to the Department's Veterans Service Fund, The VFW National Headquarters Veterans Service Fund, and the VFW National Home for Veterans. All proceeds then collected from the distribution of Poppies are used for the Veterans' welfare or the well-being of their dependents. These proceeds provide financial, social, and emotional support to Veterans and their families as well as supporting the VFW National Home.

When your Auxiliary hosts or co-hosts a "Buddy"® Poppy drive all money collected goes into the Auxiliary relief fund. Money from the relief fund can then be used only for the following purposes:

- Aid Auxiliary members needing financial assistance
- To meet all obligations or to send monetary gifts to the VFW National Home
- Hospital work for all Veterans, members of the Armed Forces, Auxiliary members, and their family members
- Veterans & Family Support works for all Veterans, members of the Armed Forces, Auxiliary members, and their families
- National Auxiliary Cancer Aid & Research Fund
- Special purposes authorized by National Headquarters
- To perpetuate the memory of deceased Veterans and members of the Armed Forces and to comfort their survivors
- To foster true patriotism through historical and educational programs

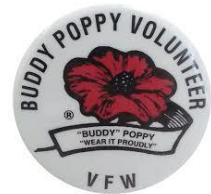
"Buddy"® Poppy drives are traditionally held around Veterans Day, Memorial Day, or other patriotic holidays but can take place any day. The "Buddy"® poppy should be promoted all year round. This will bring comfort to our Veterans as a reminder that the VFW and VFW Auxiliary are always here for them and they are

not forgotten. It is also a way to spread our mission and potentially recruit new members to join us in our mission. Remind volunteers they are NOT SELLING poppies, but DISTRIBUTING them for donations. Never refuse someone a poppy because they are unable to donate.

"Buddy"® Poppies should be incorporated into every Auxiliary activity or event such as parades, membership drives, BINGO or trivia nights, community events, or patriotic events. The "Buddy"® Poppy can be displayed on windows, posters, wreaths, remembrance walls, hats, event centerpieces, and so many more places.

Ordering "Buddy"® Poppies

- Contact the VFW Department of Illinois Headquarters by phone at (217) 529-6688
- Download and send in the Poppy Order form found on the Department VFW website
 - www.vfwil.org >Resources>Reports & Forms
- Brochures, distribution supplies, and promotional materials can be ordered from the VFW Store
 - www.vfwstore.org
 - Call (800) 821-2606
- Poppies can be purchased by Auxiliaries not just Posts.
- Order your Poppies at least 8-12 weeks before your "Buddy"® Poppy Drive



VFW National Home



Illinois Day at VFW National Home is September 23, 2023

The concept of the VFW National Home comes from the VFW's pledge to "honor the dead by helping the living". The National Home was founded in 1925 as a place where families left behind from war could remain together even when their servicemen didn't make it home. Over the years, the National Home has adapted to meet the ever-changing needs of our Veterans, active-duty military, and their

families. Many military families are affected by Post Traumatic Stress, high unemployment, struggles with reintegrating into civilian life, physical injuries, emotional wounds, financial strain, and many other challenges as a result of one or both parents serving our country. The National Home provides a safe environment for these families to heal.

Located in Eaton Rapids, MI, the National Home is committed to honoring our nation's Veterans and active-duty military by providing help and hope for their children and families during difficult times. The campus is comprised of 42 single-family homes. It also includes facilities such as a gym, library, computer and science labs, daycare center, playgrounds, fishing pond, hiking trails, and more. The National Home is open to families of active-duty military, Veterans, and descendants of members of the VFW and VFW Auxiliary. The family can include one or both parents with one or more children. Families must be committed to making changes to better their lives and are expected to demonstrate consistent progress toward family goals. The family lives in a single-family home rent-free for up to four years. They have access to professional case management services, on-site licensed childcare, life skills training, tutoring, and other educational services, as well as recreational and community service opportunities.

The VFW National Home has strategic goals. One of these goals is to be the first name that comes to mind for all our Veteran service organizations. We need to get the word out about the VFW National Home. If the American Legion or any other Veteran service organization has a family in need, we want them to be directed to the VFW National Home. Share their brochure with your local Veteran service officer.

Military families not living on campus can receive much-needed assistance from the National Home Helpline. The Helpline is staffed by caring professionals that help callers with urgent needs such as issues with housing, domestic violence, legal issues, and the need for treatment and therapy. The staff can connect the callers with organizations in their area to help them. The service is completely free. If you know of a service member, Veteran, or family member that needs assistance please encourage them to:

- Call the Helpline at **(800) 313-4200**
- Email help@vfwnationalhome.org
- Visit vfwnationalhome.org/help



Military & Veteran Family Helpline

Be Heard. Be Helped.

800-313-4200

Call for any reason.

The VFW National Home is a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation that receives no government funding. It is predominantly funded by individuals, businesses, corporations, organizations, the VFW, and the VFW Auxiliary. It is imperative that we promote the National Home to our members and communities so that we can continue to raise needed funds. Our military families are counting on us to help them!

Ways to support the VFW National Home:

- Health and Happiness Donations
 - Make sure your Auxiliary donates **at least** 10 cents per member to Health and Happiness.
 - The Health and Happiness Fund supports the National Home with Christmas gifts, graduation gifts, maintenance of Auxiliary sponsored buildings, and emergency repairs and renovations.
- Individual or Auxiliary Donations
 - These can be a one-time donation or monthly (known as a Home Front Hero).

To donate online in MALTA:

- Visit vfwauxiliary.org and select “MALTA Member Login”
- Log in to MALTA
- Select “Make Gift” from the Main Menu
- Select the “Make a Gift” button
- Enter the amount you choose to donate
- Enter payment information
- Select the “Pay Now” button
- You will receive confirmation your gift has been made



To donate by mail:

- Send a check earmarked Health and Happiness to:
VFW Auxiliary National Headquarters
Attn: Health & Happiness Donations
406 W. 34th Street, 10th Floor
Kansas City, MO 64111
- Host a Fundraiser for the VFW National Home. Some examples are a .1K Run, Penny Wars, Nickels for the Nursery, or a Meat Raffle. Visit <https://vfwnationalhome.org/you-can-help/fundraising-ideas/> for more information.
- Encourage all VFW and VFW Auxiliary members at your Post to become National Home Life Members. Life memberships cost \$50.00, and the member will receive a membership certificate, wallet card, and Life Member pin. A life membership creates a lasting bond between yourself and the mission of the National Home.
 - Spread the word that individuals and organizations that are not members of the VFW or VFW Auxiliary can become Associate Life Members. Associate Life Members do not have voting privileges
 - Visit <https://vfwnationalhome.org/you-can-help/membership/> to join online, print off applications, and learn more about being a Life Member.
- Purchase a Tribute Brick to honor a friend or loved one by leaving a lasting mark on the campus of the National Home. Each brick is \$100 and

includes a commemorative certificate with a representation of your brick. Bricks are 4"x8" and can be customized with a three-line message. Each brick line is limited to 18 characters and spaces per line. More information can be found at <https://vfnationalhome.org/you-can-help/tribute-bricks/>

- Purchase items from the National Home's Amazon Wish List.
- Become a Home Front Hero. Home Front Heroes can be individuals, Auxiliaries, Posts, or Districts.
 - As a Home Front Hero, you are committing to becoming a monthly donor. Donations can be as little as \$10 a month! Visit vfnationalhome.org/hero to sign up today!



Resources to aid in the promotion of both programs:

- "Buddy"® Poppy Chairman's Guide <https://vfwauxiliaryil.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Buddy-PoppyChairmans-Manual.pdf>
- "Buddy"® Poppy Story Cards https://vfwauxiliaryil.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Buddy-PoppyCards_10.pdf
- The Veterans Behind the "Buddy"® Poppy Video & Article <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5mbKEo1h1Lg> & <https://vfwauxiliaryil.org/wp-content/uploads/Poppy-story.pdf>
- The VFW website <https://www.vfw.org/community/community-initiatives/buddy-poppy>
- The VFW National Home website <https://vfnationalhome.org/>
- The VFW National Home Virtual Campus Tour <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0-0iR0bc1GY>
- National Home Helpline Posters
- National Home Eligibility Cards
- National Home Life Membership Applications
- National Home Program Cards
 - All National Home Promotional Materials available at <https://vfnationalhome.org/promotional/>

BUDDY POPPY - VFW NATIONAL HOME

Program Awards

DEPARTMENT AWARDS

Auxiliary Awards

1. A Citation to all Auxiliaries that participate in both programs: "Buddy"® Poppy and VFW National Home and are reported by December 31, 2023.
2. A Citation to all Auxiliaries that promote the purchase of a Life Membership to the VFW National Home and report it by December 31, 2023.
3. A Citation to all Auxiliaries who make 25 cents or more donation to Health and Happiness based on their June 30, 2023 membership total by December 31, 2023. Donations must be reported to the Department Chairman.
4. An Award to the Auxiliary Chairman with the best promotion of each part of the "Buddy"® Poppy/ VFW National Home program in their meetings. All parts of the program must be included, and reports are due to the Department Chairman within 30 days of your meeting. A report must be submitted by April 15, 2024.
5. An Award to the Auxiliary Chairman with the most outstanding use of the "Buddy"® Poppy in another VFW Auxiliary National Program. Entry form required and available in MALTA Member Resources. Auxiliary Chairman must send the entry form to the Department Chairman by March 31, 2024.
6. An Award to the Auxiliary Chairman that hosts an activity and/or event that educates their community or another Veteran Service Organization about the VFW National Home. Entry form required and available in MALTA Member Resources. Auxiliary Chairman must send the entry form to the Department Chairman by March 31, 2024.
7. A Gift and Citation to one Auxiliary in the downstate, upstate, and mid-state who have the most participation at Illinois Day at the VFW National Home. Report must be submitted by December 31, 2023.

8. A Citation to all Auxiliaries that donate to the Health and Education Playground Project at the VFW National Home by September 15, 2023.

District Awards

1. A Citation to the District Chairman that participates in both programs: “Buddy”® Poppy and VFW National Home program in District meetings and are reported by December 31, 2023.
2. An Award to the District Chairman with the best promotion of each part of the “Buddy”® Poppy/ VFW National Home program in their meetings. All parts of the program must be included, and reports are due to the Department Chairman within 30 days of your meeting. Report must be submitted by April 15, 2024.
3. A Citation to all Districts that donate to the Health and Education Playground Project at the VFW National Home by September 15, 2023.

NATIONAL AWARDS

Awards for Auxiliaries

1. Most outstanding use of the “Buddy”® Poppy in another VFW Auxiliary National Program.
 - Citation to every Auxiliary that uses “Buddy”® Poppy in another VFW Auxiliary National Program. Entry form required and available in MALTA Member Resources. Auxiliaries must send the entry form to their Department “Buddy”® Poppy & VFW National Home Chairman by March 31, 2024, for judging

Citations will be mailed directly to participating Auxiliaries from National Headquarters

- Citation and \$25 to one Auxiliary in each of the four Conferences with the most outstanding use of the “Buddy”® Poppy in another VFW Auxiliary National Program.

Citations will be mailed directly to winning Auxiliaries from National Headquarters and money will be deposited into the Auxiliary account after National Convention.

2. Most outstanding activity and/or event that educates their community and/or other Veteran Service Organizations about the VFW National Home.

- Citation to every Auxiliary that hosts an activity and/or event that educates their community or another Veteran Service Organization about the VFW National Home. Entry form required and available in MALTA Member Resources. Auxiliaries must send the entry form to their Department "Buddy"® Poppy & VFW National Home Chairman by March 31, 2024, for judging.

Citations will be mailed directly to participating Auxiliaries from National Headquarters.

- Citation and \$25 to one Auxiliary in each of the four Conferences with the most outstanding activity and/or event that educates their community and/or another Veteran Service Organization about the VFW National Home.

Citations will be mailed directly to the winning Auxiliaries from National headquarters and money will be deposited into the Auxiliary account after National Convention.

“Buddy”® Poppy Display Contest

"Buddy"® Poppy displays can bring awareness to and educate the public about our organization and the "Buddy"® Poppy Program. The "Buddy"® Poppy display contest provides a great opportunity to team up with your Post, get creative, and have fun! Members of your community and local youth organizations can and should be invited to participate in the contest.

Poppy Display Contest General Rules

1. The rules governing the poppy displays for the 2023-2024 year will be in accordance with the national poppy display contest. All entrants will comply with these rules. Your entry will be judged by them. All Districts are requested to follow these rules as closely as possible when holding your display judging.

Rules

Category 1- Public promotion of poppy sales: (Window, booth, parade, or poster displays, sales promotion, etc.)

- A. Displays must be designed for public exposure and must bear a message urging the buying and wearing of the VFW “Buddy”® Poppy.
- B. At least one (1) of the poppies used in the display must be in their original form and color, with labels attached.

Category 2- Memorial or inspirational displays: (wreaths, memorial tablets or plaques, patriotic or devotional themes.)

- A. Displays must be designed to honor the dead, to inspire devotion to God and country, or to dramatize the activities supported by the “Buddy”® Poppy Program.
- B. At least one (1) of the poppies used in the display must be in their original form and color, with labels attached.

Category 3- Artistic or decorative use of poppies: (Post home displays, table centerpieces, corsages, pictures, plaques, models, scenes, hats, novelty pieces, etc.)

- A. Display not meeting the qualifications for Category 1 or 2 shall automatically be entered into Category 3.
- B. Complete freedom shall be permitted in the use of poppies, poppy parts, or poppy labels, and in the use of dyes or paints in achieving the desired artistic effect.
- C. At least one (1) of the poppies used in the display must be in their original form and color, with labels attached.

2. The scoring of the displays will be in accordance with the National rules. Originality- 25 points; Composition-25 points; Neatness- 25 points; Poppy Story- 25 points; for a total of 100 points maximum. The Originality, Composition, and Neatness are self-explanatory, with the Poppy Story as outlined in the "Buddy"® Poppy Story.
3. **Awards-** There will be a First and Second Place Plaque awarded in each Division. Category 1 must have been on display at least three days.
4. A report of District judging must be sent to the Department "Buddy"® Poppy Display Director prior to the Department Convention. Any display not accepted at the District level, or not entered in District judging, will be ineligible for State judging.
5. All Displays entered and accepted at District level will be accepted for Department judging during the Department Convention.
6. Forms for judging and reporting results will be passed out to the District Commanders at the February Council of Administration Meeting, to be forwarded to each District Chairman.
7. Poppies to be used in display contests are to be ordered from VFW Department of Illinois Headquarters.

All District contests should be completed by Memorial Day! The Districts will award prizes to their winners at their discretion. Each District entry will be allowed to enter the Department Contest, in each of the three categories. However, they must remain in the category and division as entered in the District judging. All previous District or Department entries are ineligible for this contest. All ties will be broken by the largest "Buddy"® Poppy count.