

Department of Missouri VFW Auxiliary
Buddy® Poppy/ National Home
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First and foremost, I want to extend a heartfelt thank you to everyone who participated in the Buddy® Poppy Contest at the Fall Council of Administration. The creativity and craftsmanship on display were truly inspiring! Each hat was a unique tribute to our mission, and they brought smiles, pride, and a touch of patriotic flair to the event. You made it memorable, and I'm so grateful for your enthusiasm and creativity.



Creative Ways to Work the Buddy® Poppy Program

Here are four meaningful and engaging ways Auxiliaries can keep the Buddy® Poppy Program blooming throughout the year:

-  **Poppy Pen Pal Project** Partner with a local school or youth group and have students write letters to veterans. Include a Buddy® Poppy with each letter to spark conversation about its meaning and history.
-  **Poppy Tree of Honor** Create a seasonal display—such as a tree, wreath, or banner—where each poppy represents a veteran. Invite community members to “sponsor” a poppy in honor of someone they love.
-  **Poppy Pop-In Days** Designate one day a month to “pop in” at local businesses, libraries, or senior centers to distribute poppies and share their story. It’s a great way to build awareness and community connections.
-  **Veterans Day Poppy Distribution** Hand out Buddy® Poppies at your Veterans Day programs to honor those who served and educate attendees about the significance of the poppy. It’s a simple gesture with lasting impact.

Journey to Oz – The VFW National Home

A huge thank you to everyone who traveled to Oz—our beloved VFW National Home—with us this year. What an unforgettable experience! Great friends were made, laughter echoed through every moment, and the spirit of camaraderie was alive and well.

We began with the **Annual National Home Meeting**, where members gathered to discuss the future of the Home, share updates, and reaffirm our commitment to its mission. It was inspiring to see so many passionate voices come together in support of Veteran families.

The **guided tour** of the campus was equally moving. From the museum and chapel to the family homes and learning center, each stop offered a deeper understanding of the healing and hope the VFW National Home provides. It reminded us why our continued support is so vital.



And then—what a celebration! The **Route 66–themed Halloween Party** was a hit. Some members grilled, some decorated, some served food and drinks, and others helped with games and activities. The creativity and teamwork brought the spirit of the open road to life, making it a festive and fun-filled evening for all.

I hope that each of you returned home inspired and energized—and that you’ve been able to **share with your Auxiliaries all the great things happening at the VFW National Home**. From the programs that support Veteran families to the beautiful campus that offers healing and hope, there is so much to be proud of. When we spread the word, we strengthen the mission. Let’s keep that momentum going and make sure every member knows the impact we’re making together.

Some Ways to Work the National Home Program

Here are a few impactful ways Auxiliaries can support and promote the VFW National Home for Children:

-  **Share the Story** Educate your members and community about the mission of the National Home. Use newsletters, social media, and presentations to spread awareness.
-  **Fundraise for Tribute Bricks or Life Memberships** Organize events or campaigns to raise funds for Tribute Bricks or Life Memberships. These lasting gifts help sustain the Home and honor loved ones.
-  **Host a National Home Awareness Day** Plan a special day at your Post or Auxiliary to highlight the National Home. Include videos, brochures, and guest speakers if possible.
-  **Encourage Visits or Virtual Tours** If travel isn’t possible, encourage members to explore the National Home through its website or virtual tours. Seeing the campus—even online—makes the mission come alive.

Please keep those reports coming — I truly enjoy reading about every meaningful activity your Auxiliary is doing to support our Veterans through the Buddy Poppy and National Home Program.

**“Be the Reason a Veteran Smiles Today” as we stand together “From Sea to Shining Sea
Honoring Veterans – Who Keep Us Free.”**