

# The Update

June  
2007

The latest news and notes from the VFW National Home for Children

3573 S. Waverly Road~Eaton Rapids, MI 48827~800-424-8360~vfwnationalhome.org

## National Home Dedicates Alaska/Hawaii Duplex, Receives Incredible Donation

The VFW National Home for Children had a *very* good day on May 31. A new duplex was dedicated, allowing the Home to be able to serve two more families of veterans and active-duty military, and an outstanding donation of one million dollars was presented by the Buick-Pontiac-GMC Division of General Motors. The donation was part of BPG's "A Million Thanks" Memorial Day and National Military Appreciation Month campaign.

The Alaska/Hawaii Duplex was built with a portion of the \$3.5 million donation that resulted from last year's 2006 Memorial Day Dealership Campaign conducted by BPG. The VFW Departments of Hawaii and Alaska have generously assumed sponsorship of each side of the duplex.

Each side of the 2,400 plus-square-foot duplex includes three bedrooms and two bathrooms and are ADA compliant. The brick structure was selected to fit current program needs while fitting seamlessly within the campus neighborhood of more than 70 buildings



*BPG General Manger Jim Bunnell presents the donation of one million dollars during the Alaska/Hawaii Duplex Dedication Ceremony May 31.*

including 36 individual family homes and one duplex.

Participating in the ribbon-cutting ceremony was Gary Kurpius, Commander-in-Chief, VFW; Virginia Carman, Sr. Vice President, Ladies Auxiliary to the VFW; VFW National Home for Children Board of Trustees President Mel Garrett of New Rochelle, New York; Patrice Green, Executive Director, VFW National Home for Children; Richard Haake, Department of Hawaii National Home Chairman, VFW; and Jim Bunnell, General Manager, BPG.

In attendance at the dedication ceremony was Jim Mueller, Past Commander-in-Chief, VFW; Dixie Hild, Jr. Vice President, Ladies Auxiliary to the VFW; JoAnne Ott, Past National President, Ladies Auxiliary to the VFW; and the VFW National Home for Children Board of Trustees.

Through the month of May, BPG dealers across the county partnered with "A Million Thanks" to collect thank you notes to send directly to our men and women in uniform. "A Million Thanks" is a letter-writing, military-support campaign to help raise awareness of the unseen sacrifices of military men and women. The goal of the campaign was to collect one million notes at collection points located in dealerships nationwide.

A decision will be made at the next Board of Trustees meeting in October on how the generous donation will be put to use.



*Alaska/Hawaii Duplex*

## Washington, D.C. Vietnam Memorial Replica to Visit the National Home

Tears, hugs and closure will be experienced on the National Home campus, August 9-13. The traveling exhibit known as the Moving Wall allows those who are unable to travel to Washington D.C. to see it in their own community, find the names of their loved ones and take as much time as they need to reflect on the Wall's meaning.

There is no admission fee to visit the Moving Wall which will be open to the public 24 hours daily from 2 p.m. August 9 until 8 a.m. August 13. Highlighted events include the opening ceremony on August 9 at 4 p.m. with keynote speaker James Goldsmith, Past VFW Commander-in-Chief; special ceremonies for the families of those killed in action in the Vietnam War at 5 p.m. on August 10; special ceremonies presented by Veterans Groups from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. on August 11; and closing ceremonies on August 12 at 7 p.m. with guest speaker Jack Devine, National Vice President of Vietnam Veterans of America.



During the Moving Wall's stay there will be a 24-hour color guard on duty with 24-hour volunteer escorts. In addition, the National Home will feature a comfort tent with refreshments, a medical tent, rest room facilities and lunches and dinners in the Community Center.

For more information or if you are interested in volunteering, please call (800) 424-8360.

## National Home Graduates Ready for the Future

The VFW National Home for Children celebrated the accomplishments of its graduating seniors, single parent family residents and school children during a Community Graduation Celebration on June 7. The National Home hosted several dignitaries, including National Home Board President Mel Garrett, District 3 Trustee Ron Stensland, District 6 Trustee Dorothy Verrill, Dept. of Michigan Ladies Auxiliary President Sandy Onstwedder, Dept. of Michigan Past State Commander Ed Gucwa, VFW Post #6986 Commander John Ghere and several Post members.



From left, Board President Mel Garrett, Danielle, Trustee Ron Stensland, Cathy, Trustee Dorothy Verrill, Samuel, Alex and Executive Director Patrice Green.

National Home residents honored this year included high school graduates Alex and Samuel; Grand Valley State University graduate Cathy; Western Michigan University graduate Danielle and six Single Parent Family Program mothers who have completed advanced degrees or certifications. Students were also recognized for making the honor roll and having exceptional attendance for National Home tutoring sessions.

Three high school graduates received special recognition with presentations of scholarships. Samuel was the recipient of a \$1000 scholarship from VFW Post 663 and the \$500 Daniel and Nellie Beck Scholarship.



## Third Annual Alumni Day Brings Back Memories

Alumni of the VFW National Home for Children were welcomed back home for a special, third-annual alumni event on Saturday, June 2.

Approximately 100 alumni and their families members attended the event. All visitors were offered the opportunity to tour many of the homes on campus as well as other campus buildings. Many walked through the front doors of their former homes with tears in their eyes.

Lunch was served to the entire campus community, allowing current and former residents to share a meal and memories. Alumni spent much of the time sorting through the National Home's extensive photo collection and making copies of pictures they remembered.

For many, it was their first time back to the National Home. Mary Gabelberger of Portland, Ore. came back to her "home" after being gone for 52 years. A former resident from 1950-1955, Mary reminisced with other former residents who lived at the National Home during the same time period, browsed through historic photos and visited the three homes that she lived in.

"Coming back after more than 50 years brought back many memories," Mary said. "It was so nice to be back Home."

The National Home has made Alumni Day an annual event on the Saturday in June that corresponds with the Eaton Rapids High School all-class reunion. Next year's event is tentatively scheduled for June 7, 2008. Former residents seeking more information on Alumni Day are asked to call the Public Relations Department at (800) 424-8360.



*Jeanne (Collingwood) Kramer of Stevens, Penn. and former resident from 1943-47, takes a look at some historical photos in the Museum during Alumni Day.*

## Classic Rides Revs Up Support for "The Moving Wall"

The National Home is hosting the "Classic Rides Car & Motorcycle Show" Friday, July 27 from 5 – 8 p.m. All vehicles are welcome and are eligible for prizes. Registration is \$12 in advance or \$15 on the day of the show and includes a dash plaque and driver gift bag. Admission is free for spectators.

All proceeds are going to support the "Moving Wall" which will be at the National Home on August 9-13. For participation information and driving directions, please visit [www.classicrides.org](http://www.classicrides.org). The car show is sponsored by Consumers Professional Credit Union.

## Don't Forget! Keep Using to Benefit the National Home

GoodSearch.com is a search engine that donates half its revenue to the charities its users designate. You use it just as you would any search engine, and it's powered by Yahoo!, so you get great results. Just go to [www.goodsearch.com](http://www.goodsearch.com) and be sure to enter the National Home as the charity you want to support. Just 500 people searching four times a day will raise about \$7300 in a year without anyone spending a dime!



# Help Us Get Another Campbell's Labels for Education Minivan!

The National Home is very close to earning its fourth mini-van from the Campbell's Labels for Education Program. In the last five years, through the combined efforts of Ladies Auxiliaries and their members, Junior Girls Units, VFW Posts and their members, dedicated volunteers, residents and staff, the National Home has acquired three minivans.

In early June, the National Home has turned in just over a million UPC codes, and all that is needed to get another van is about 400,000 more! We are confident that all of our supporters can join together to help us reach this magnificent milestone. Please send us any UPC codes that you have by August 10.

This minivan will help the National Home in transporting children to school and church activities, sports practices, dance and music lessons and doctor appointments.

Please remember that Campbell's now has a new way to clip labels. You no longer need to clip the entire label, all that is needed is the UPC (bar code). This can be found on the back of the product near the bottom. While many products are worth one point, there are several products worth five points. For a list of eligible products, please visit [www.labelsforeducation.com](http://www.labelsforeducation.com). When sending your UPCs to the National Home, please do not staple or worry about sorting them. You can put the UPCs in a baggie and we will sort them here.



## Current Campus Population

As of June 19, 2007, the National Home population includes:

- 77 Children
- 27 Single Parents
- 2 Veteran Family Parents
- 2 Military Family Parents
- 10 Continuing Education/  
Aftercare Students

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**118 Total Served**



## VFW National Home for Children Upcoming Events

**July 27** – Classic Rides Car &  
Motorcycle Show

**July 29** – Michigan Day

**August 4** – Ohio Day

**August 9-13** – National Home to host  
"Moving Wall"

**Sept. 30** – Indiana Day

**October 6** – Illinois Day

