



Department of California

“Buddy” ® Poppy & VFW National Home for Children

La Verne Wilson, Chairman

February 2021



Greetings District Officers, Auxiliary Officers, Chairmen and Members, thank you for all your hard work and devotion to the Department of California “Buddy” ® Poppy Contest, Centerpieces. Working together we made it a successful and fun event on Zoom and will always be remembered.

Due to COVID-19, the judging took place on January 21 by way of Zoom and winners were announced at the Council of Administration, January 22, 2021, during the Chairman's portion of the meeting. All ten entries were beautiful and inspiring and have been invited to enter in the National “Buddy” ® Poppy Contest. **Thank you,** President Robyn Kuznik and Treasurer Marilyn Peck for all of your support to make this happen. The Judges were Past Department Presidents Marilyn Leisure, Mary Ryser and Department Chaplain Mary Anne Kreutz, **Thank You,** great job. To view all entries, visit my January Blog on the Department Website under Chairmen Reports.



First place was District 12 - Auxiliary 9243
“Bud E. Poppy loves Truckin’ for Veterans”.

Second place was District 13 – Aux. 8327
“Inspiration for the Veterans Hot Line”.

Third place District 1 – Auxiliary 5867
Theme: “Honoring Those Lost”.

Buddy Poppy Displays at National Convention

There are Three Categories:

- One: Public Promotion of Poppy Campaign
- Two: Memorial or Inspirational
- Three: Artistic or Decorative use of Poppies

Display must contain at least ONE Poppy in its original form and color with the label attached.

The Department Adjutant will have to notify the Programs Director in writing, by June 30, 2021 of the Posts that will represent the Department in each category.

Read the brief “Buddy”® Poppy Chairman’s Manual and learn tips for a successful poppy drive and the rules for the “Buddy”® Poppy Display Contest held at National Convention.

National Home for Children Life Membership: One of my goals this year, is promoting Post and Auxiliaries to become Life Members. The one-time cost of \$50.00 includes a membership certificate which helps to supports the National Home and a wallet card, a Life Member pin. You can vote for the trustees who represent their National Home District and approve any proposed changes to our bylaws and articles of incorporation. All VFW and VFW Auxiliary members are eligible to become a Life member of the National Home.

The Post or Auxiliary that promotes and sells the most Life Memberships will receive a special gift from me (La Verne Wilson) at the Zoom Convention or by mail.

La Verne Wilson, Department Chairman...

National Home for Children Updates: The Board of Trustees met on February 3rd via zoom. Renee Fulk, VFW National Home Trustee.

Finances - overall, income is down. Due to COVID-19 many Post and Auxiliary closures have limited fundraising abilities; however, individual donors continue their support. Expenses are down as well.

Program - during the period October 1 to December 31, 2020, there were 126 residents on campus (50 parents and 76 children). There were 29 assisted through the helpline. Please remember this is transitional housing and the board of trustees is provided with the current residential occupancy rates. It is important to make sure VFW and Auxiliary members are sharing the helpline number with veteran families in your communities as well as other Veteran Service Organizations, Service Officers, patients at VA hospitals, adopted military units, FROs and legislators so they can become a resource for the family and the National home. The number is 800-313-4200. If your Posts and Auxiliaries want to make donations other than sending a check, please go to Amazon Smiles wish list.

Marketing and Development - Please reach out to your community business and corporations about supporting the National Home and let me know if there is any interest in corporate sponsorships. The Family Support Services Fund has been established and is doing well. This fund helps the families inside the house and the house fund supports the brick and mortar of the building. The home's Facebook page grew by almost 1.000 new followers and we hope it will continue to grow; encourage your members to follow.

Please share with your members - Become a Home Front Hero through the convenience of our Monthly Giving program. Monthly giving is a simple, secure, and convenient way to support the VFW National Home for Children.

How it works: You determine the amount of your monthly donation. You choose to use your credit card, debit card or checking/savings account. Close to the first of each month, we deduct your gift from the card or account you specify. Each January, we send you an annual giving statement for tax purposes. You can call 866-483-9642 or email us to increase, decrease or suspend your gift at any time.

Renee Fulk, Trustee District 12

“Buddy”® Poppy & VFW National Home: Get Creative / 5 Ways to Donate

It is a new year, but challenges of the last year remain. Our veterans have been heavily impacted by this pandemic and we need to ensure their needs are met. As you get back into your routine, please continue to let those in your community know the challenges veterans face. Ways this can be done include hosting poppy drives and fundraisers to help restore and increase Relief Funds.

Another way is to get crafty and create poppy displays for specific patriotic holidays (e.g., Presidents Day, Flag Day, Constitution Day, etc.). One Department Chairman had Auxiliaries create poppy displays for POW/MIA Day. The Auxiliaries took photos of the displays and sent the photos to the Department Chairman. The Chairman had a panel of judges who reviewed the photos and awarded Auxiliaries for the best display that depicted POW/MIA.

Note: The VFW decides how poppy displays will be judged on the National level and suggest Department contests are set up to correspond with the categories and rules. Read the brief **“Buddy”® Poppy Chairman’s Manual** and learn tips for a successful poppy drive and the rules for the “Buddy”® Poppy Display Contest held at National Convention.

Earlier this month the **VFW National Home for Children** celebrated 96 years of helping our nation’s veteran and military families. I remember the first time I saw a video about the National Home and the impact they have on the veterans and their families who live there. The families expressed feelings of safety and security that being at the National Home gave them. Our donations help make those feelings possible.

Ways to donate include:

- **Become a Life Member** of the VFW National Home: \$50.00
- **Purchase a Tribute Brick** in honor or memory of someone: \$100.00.
- **Become a Home Front Hero** through monthly giving: You determine the amount of your monthly donation.
- Purchase items from the **National Home’s Amazon Wish List**.
- **Support the National Home while you shop on Amazon** with AmazonSmile.

Select the National Home as your AmazonSmile charity of choice and AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5 percent of the purchase price from your eligible purchases to the National Home.

My Auxiliary and Department, as well as yours, has placed a strong focus on membership this year. It has brought to light how many members are never contacted by their Auxiliaries until it is time for dues payment. I encourage you to contact at least one member a month by phone, email or text and check in with them. See if they are doing well, if they need help in any way and let them know what’s going on with the Auxiliary. The greatest things about the Auxiliary are the friends we make, and the lives of veterans, service members and their families who we impact.

I wish everyone a great year and thank you for keeping the “Buddy”® Poppy and VFW National Home for Children at the forefront of the minds of our members and our communities.

Dana Fogner

2020-2021 National “Buddy”® Poppy & VFW National Home Ambassador