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Berrien County Gives Back

Korean War Veterans Continue to Give

The men from the **Korean War Veterans of Southwest Michigan** served their country when called upon more than 50 years ago. Now, they continue to serve and honor other veterans through the **Veterans Endowment for All Who Served at the Berrien Community Foundation**.

The group of local Korean War veterans worked diligently to build the fund and recently awarded the first grants to organizations that support and honor the needs of veterans. A grant to the Berrien Towne and Country Quilters' Bridgman Patriotic Quilters will offset supply costs the group incurs from creating and sending out red, white and blue blankets to American veterans across the globe.

"About four years ago, seven of our men got quilts and this group made them," recalled Ed Gramburg, who helped start the fund along with fellow Korean War veterans. He served in the Army Reserve. "Murray has one that you couldn't take if you tried. One of our members had his put in his casket."

"I cherish it," Murray Miller said of his quilt. The 4-foot by 5-foot quilt hangs on a wall of his Berrien Springs home. He served in the Marines in the Korean War and received a Purple Heart for his bravery after being



Members of the Korean War Veterans of Southwest Michigan award a grant to Bridgman Patriotic Quilters.

wounded in an attack.

Because of the grant, the quilters are finding financial relief in fronting some of the cost associated with buying supplies and shipping. To date, they've made 200 quilts. Each quilt takes a minimum of 20 hours to make and can cost more than \$100.

"I had an uncle who never came home from World War II," Kay Wilcox, of Sawyer, said. "This is my way of honoring him in the sacrifice he made. I never knew him but he was my dad's best friend."

"Making these quilts is something I can do because I can't go fight. I can't defend our country," explained Kim Otte, of Sister Lakes.

Continued on back

New Carolyn's Kids Grant at BCF

Carolyn Hanson has a heart for children and wants to make sure their needs are met in our community. **Carolyn's Kids** is a partnership between Carolyn Hanson and the Berrien Community Foundation that will award two \$50,000 grants to programs that support the needs of children.

"The children truly are the future," said Carolyn Hanson. "I care so much about what happens to our kids. I'm so honored, proud and humbled that I can be part of doing something

to help kids."

"We were talking about the needs in the community, and I could see Carolyn's passion to help children," said BCF President Lisa Cripps-Downey. "So, we decided to put something together that could use both of our resources and would result in a way to make the lives of children better. I'm really excited to see what this can do for children." Learn more about the grant at berriencommunity.org/grants.



Carolyn Hanson

www.berriencommunity.org
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Spring 2022



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Veterans cont.

“My grandfather was an ambulance driver in World War II. I have lots of family members who have been soldiers and service members. That’s why I do it.”

The Veterans Support Endowment for All Who Served also provided a grant to Michigan Wood Carvers who whittle canes for veterans; each decorative cane lists their name and branch of service.

Over the years, the number of men in the Korean War Veterans of Southwest Michigan group has decreased from around 45 members to just eight. All the men, in or near their 90s, continue to meet monthly. But, when the day comes that none are left, they wanted to find a way to support veterans forever and never forget the sacrifices men and women made for our country while serving in the armed forces.

Their answer was to start the **Veterans Support Endowment for All Who Served**. Each year, money will be awarded to nonprofit organizations that serve veterans. Each grant will serve that dual purpose — supporting veterans and remembering the Korean War and the other wars that our nation has fought.

“We’re at the point now where the Korean War is so far back people don’t remember it or don’t know

what it was or how many people were lost,” Korean War veteran Bill Burke, of Stevensville, said. “It’s called the ‘Forgotten War’ and it was more than a war. This grant is to help make the Korean War visible and not forgotten.”

Burke served in the Navy aboard the USS Missouri, which was turned into a museum after being decommissioned.

Their next mission is to see the endowment grow. “It has been such an honor to work with these men,” Berrien Community Foundation President Lisa Cripps-Downey said. “They gave so much and what they want to do is to continue to give. This is such an important endowment and I hope the community continues to support it and help it to grow so that they can do even more.”

To give to the Veterans Endowment for All Who Served fund at Berrien Community Foundation, visit www.berriencommunity.org/veteranssupport.



Bill Burke and Ed Gramberg hear more about making the Quilts of Valor

Love Your Shelter Challenge Raises over \$100,000

A \$40,000 check is ready to be cashed by **Emergency Shelter Services** after a challenge grant moved community members to give above and beyond, raising a total of \$104,000.

Berrien Community Foundation, Hanson Family Foundation, Frederick S. Upton Foundation and Felland Fund pooled their resources to offer a 4-to-1 challenge grant to the community to help fund much needed repairs at the family homeless shelter in Benton Harbor. Because of the challenge, every \$1 donated by the community would be matched by \$4, up to \$40,000.

“When I threw the Love Your Shelter fundraiser out there, I knew we would reach our goal, but I am overwhelmed by the response we got,” said Emergency Shelter Services Executive Director Reshella Hawkins. “This is big for our community. It’s big for our staff and big for the people who utilize this building. This is showing them that somebody does care.”



BCF Program Manager Susan Matheny celebrates with case managers (L to R) Lakesha McKinney, Taquella Harrison, Matheny and Executive Director Reshella Hawkins.

Grant Application Due Dates

April 29 - Alamar Nonprofit Sustainability Grant

May 16 - William J. Deputy Grant

May 31 - Carolyn’s Kids

June 1 - Stephen E. Upton Love Your Community Grant

June 15 - Frederick S. Upton Foundation Grant

June 15 - Golden Acorn Classroom Mini Grant