

#StillServing VFW Post in Arizona gets ‘All Hands on Deck’

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May 21, 2020

A VFW Post and its Auxiliary in south central Arizona opened a food bank amidst the COVID-19 crisis to help feed those most susceptible to hardship.

Post 1677 in Casa Grande, Arizona, about 47 miles south of Phoenix, opened a food bank in late March to safely provide food and water twice a week for the elderly, homeless and 19 patients at a local VA cancer treatment center.

By May, Post and Auxiliary members had raised \$29,000 and delivered more than 6,000 care packages, while hosting a free drive-thru breakfast special on Wednesdays and Saturdays for anyone in need of a meal.

“Our Post has been very engaged with the community in helping them through this crisis,” said Hugues Byrne, VFW Post 1677 commander. “We’ve got a very energized Post and Auxiliary, and all hands are on deck to help where we can.”

Prior to launching the food bank initiative, Post 1677 invited two local healthcare professionals to train its members on handling the food and how to protect themselves and the community from coronavirus exposure.

The knowledge and preparation allows Post 1677 volunteers to safely deliver supplies and food for the elderly at their respective homes. It also prepares them to deliver lunch to the 19 patients at Alliance Cancer Care Arizona at Casa Grande, a ward of the VA Community Based Outpatient Clinic.

“This kind of preparation has allowed for tremendous success with the program,” Byrne said. “And the community has responded with an outpouring of support.”

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Byrne added that with incoming financial support from the Casa Grande community, the Post plans to continue running the program for the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic.