

VFW Posts Rally Around Homeless Population

VFW Post 3282 Commander Jose Rosa took it upon himself to help the homeless in Port Orange, Fla., when temperatures plummeted to 20 degrees in early 2018

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Ponce Inlet Realty, also in Port Orange, donated hats, about 40 mats and five boxes of premium potato chips to the Post, along with \$5,000, which the Post is putting toward a new generator.

Rosa said his two sons-in-law and two grandchildren helped him distribute those items to the homeless who were waiting for a shuttle to a local church.

“I happened to go to that area where there were about 70 homeless waiting in the cold to be picked up,” Rosa said. “So they ran up to us, to the two cars that I brought over there, and they were so happy to get these blankets and to get the chips and the hats.”

Rosa also gave money out of his own pocket.

“I didn’t bother the Post for it because there wasn’t time,” Rosa said.

“These people were hungry and they were cold.”

It is “extremely important,” according to Rosa, to help those in need.

“I want the community to see that somebody’s trying to help these homeless and not to forget that these people are out there,” Rosa said.

Meanwhile, in Savannah, Ga., VFW Post 660 has been hosting its “Vets Helping Vets” event for four years.

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Auxiliary President Leigh Ann Koons- VanHorn said the program, which began with past-Auxiliary President Dawn Kaping, includes an awareness camp out that was held Jan. 12-14 with more than 30 participants.

Post 660 partners with Post 8760, of Beaufort, S.C., and two veterans motorcycle clubs.

“They get awareness out to other people in the community,” Koons- VanHorn said, “and we invite people to come out and camp with us for a weekend to make them aware of what it’s like to be a homeless veteran.”

Post members conduct a donation drive during the camp out to collect money and goods for the homeless. Some campers, according to Koons- VanHorn, purchase tents for the camping portion and donate them at the end of the weekend.

Collections also are accepted all year, and the Post seeks “basic” items such as water, clothes, sleeping bags and non-perishable canned goods.

Koons-VanHorn said the Post distributes items to homeless camps in various locations on a weekly basis. They also find out what the veterans need, such as rides to doctor appointments, obtaining a driver’s license or a copy of a DD-214, among other requests.

Koons-VanHorn said the significance of “Vets Helping Vets” is that they are “looking after our veterans who wrote a blank check for us.”

“I think that just completely stands on the premise of what our organization is,” Koons-VanHorn said.

This article is featured in the March/April 2018 issue of [Checkpoint](#), and was written by [Kari Williams](#), associate editor, VFW magazine. Photo courtesy of Jose Rosa.