

## LOUDOUN VETERANS AND FAMILY SUPPORT

### 2020 Assistance Report

To paraphrase the words of President Franklin D. Roosevelt: “2020 – a year that will live in infamy!”

This year of the COVID-19 pandemic will certainly go down in the history books as one of the most catastrophic and disastrous years since the Great Depression of the 1930’s! We all have been affected by the pandemic, in one way or another, and none more so than the veterans of Loudoun County!

The LVFS-CLC is extremely fortunate to have the support of the Military Officer Association of America (MOAA) Chapter at Falcon’s Landing in Sterling. Their support has enabled CLC to partner with other Veterans Service Organizations (VSO’s) in Loudoun County, to assist needy veterans in this county. Many of the veterans are elderly and live on fixed incomes, others are disabled and rely solely on the disability income provided. Last year (2019) LVFS assisted 31 Loudoun County veterans for an amount of \$17,265.85. This year, in the midst of the COVID-19 Pandemic, LVFS, as of 30 November 2020, has assisted 20 veterans in the amount of \$16,113.83. If this trend continues, by the end of the year 2020, LVFS will either meet or far exceed last year’s total.

At the November Loudoun County Board of Supervisors General Meeting, LVFS was honored to represent all of the Veteran Services Organizations in Loudoun County as the monthly “Voice For A Cause” representative for the annual “Veterans Day Proclamation” by Chairwoman Phyllis J. Randall on behalf of the entire Board of Supervisors. Very proudly, one of our own CLC members, Michael R. Turner is the Broad Run District Supervisor, who also participated in the ceremony!



L-R (Front) Don Poorman, LVFS-CLC, Tom Grant, Loudoun County, Jim Mullen, MOAA-FL;  
(Rear) Michael R. Turner, Ashburn District; Phyllis J. Randall, Chairwoman; Kristen C. Umstaadt, Leesburg District; Tony R. Buffington, Jr., Blue Ridge District

So, you may ask “how does the ‘system’ work?” Fair question!

Donations are received primarily from the MOAA-FL Chapter on a quarterly basis. Other donations come in from private sources, i.e. CLC members, and other concerned organizations on either a regular or irregular basis. Since there is a degree of irregularity to the funds available, LVFS and MOAA each have a representative that evaluates each request for assistance and determines the degree we offer our participation with the other Loudoun County VSO’s to fulfill the veteran’s request.

The ‘veteran’s request’ is sent by blast email to approximately 25 VSO’s by the Loudoun County Veteran Services Coordinator, Mr. Tom Grant. Tom does what is known as a BLUF (Bottom Line Up Front) memo, giving the pertinent details of the veteran’s eligibility, circumstances and amount of assistance requested. It is estimated there are approximately 40K veterans in Loudoun County, roughly 10% of the population. In the past year, 2019, LVFS contributed \$17.2K to a total of 31 needy veterans, which is approximately 0.1% of that population. Yes, Loudoun County has been judged as one of the richest counties in the country – but there are still those living at the poverty or near poverty level!

This year, with the COVID-19 Pandemic, the need for LVFS support has been equally as necessary. Before the pandemic restrictions began, Tom Grant had the “normal” requests for rent payments, utility payments, phone bills and a request for heating oil!

About two weeks into the pandemic, Tom received a call from a 78 year-old veteran who required assistance picking up restaurant food orders for him and his wife, who is afflicted with Advanced Stage Parkinson’s Disease! Obviously, he could not risk going out and perhaps bring the virus back to his wife!

LVFS partnered with the VFW and American Legion to set up a “duty roster” of volunteers to assist him on Monday, Wednesday and Friday of each week. The veteran would call an order in to a specific restaurant, and the “duty” volunteer would pick the order up and deliver it to the veteran and his wife. On a personal note, I would like to thank and commend Pastor Annabelle and Jeff Markey, Heather Williams, Tom and Sherry Fitzsimmons, and Diane Martin for stepping up and answering the call to assist me with these deliveries! Ultimately, after a couple months, the veteran made arrangements with a neighbor to make the meals for them.

Many of the stories LVFS hears from the Loudoun County Veterans Assistance Coordinator are repeat request from veterans who, through no fault of their own, get themselves in situations where they are reluctant to seek VSO help and when they finally do ask for help their circumstances tax our abilities! Such is the case of one veteran who was trying to juggle his financial problems by actually making them worse by entering into two “pay-day loan” transactions to the tune of over \$6,000 with interest rates in excess of 30%+ compounded weekly! Unfortunately, many veterans fall into traps such as these, and other forms of unscrupulous money lenders!

Perhaps our most emotional request came from a young (52 year-old) veteran, 100% non-service connected disability with early onset dementia leading to Alzheimer’s Disease and Parkinson Disease. The veteran is married, with two teenaged children. This is an ongoing request, as we learn, almost daily, of new needs for the family and their circumstances. LVFS is assisting American Legion Post 2001 in finding financial and psychological help for the family!

Finally, in the coming year, MOAA contributions to LVFS funding is being reduced substantially, which means LVFS will be operating with minimal funds to distribute to Loudoun County veterans in need. If we are to continue assisting veterans in need to the extent in past years, we will need a dual source of sustainable funding throughout the year! CLC veterans should understand the need for these funds better than anyone! We ask each member of CLC, particularly the military veteran members, to prayerfully consider a weekly contribution of \$1, \$3, or \$5; or a monthly sustaining contribution of \$10, \$15, or \$20! We would also like to extend an invitation to all the CLC military veterans to join LVFS, either as an interested party or as a volunteer helping other Loudoun County veterans. LVFS is a participating member of the Loudoun County Community Engagement Board (LCCVEB), which, among other things, will resume planning a Veterans Experience Action Center (VEAC) as soon as the COVID-19 Pandemic allows. One was planned for June 2020, however was cancelled due to the pandemic. VEAC is a free event where veterans can meet one-on-one with representatives of the Office of Veterans Affairs to open claims, check on active claims, or simply receive information of veteran's benefits! Your prayerful consideration for all of these things is greatly appreciated!

Thank you everyone for your prayers and support to LVFS and the veterans of Loudoun County!

#### **Loudoun Veterans and Family Support Administration**



L to R: Don Poorman, LVFS-CLC; Howard Schue, MOAA-FL; Robert Manning, MOAA-FL President