

VFW National Home Talking Points
Winter 2026
District #7 Trustee Michele Rathke
Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin

Mission Statement: “The VFW National Home assists military, veterans, and their families with children, by creating a foundation of services and resources to achieve their personal and family goals in order to move forward in a positive, safe and healthy environment.”

Campus Victory: Anna’s Journey-Strength, Stability & Success

- Anna came to the National Home determined to build a better life for her two sons.
- Her boys thrived through after-school programs, holiday events, and music lessons—one has graduated and is working full-time, the other just started high school.
- With clear goals, Anna improved her credit, saved diligently, and became a proud homeowner.
- She balanced multiple jobs while raising her sons and now has full-time employment with benefits.
- Anna’s story shows how determination, paired with the National Home’s support, can transform lives.

Notables:

- **Advancing Education Opportunities Through VRAD (Veteran Regenerative Agriculture Demonstration Farm)** – Three VRAD participants are moving forward with enrollment at Cleary University. Two are preparing for Bachelor’s programs, and one is pursuing an MBA. This marks significant progress toward their long-term career goals.
- **Formal Partnership with Camp Southern Ground** – The National Home finalized an MOU (memorandum of understanding) with Camp Southern Ground, founded by the musician Zac Brown, creating new opportunities for shared resources and mission awareness. National Home residents now receive priority access to the “Warrior Week” program. This partnership significantly enhances the support we can offer Veterans.

Reminder of changes to the Life Membership program:

- Life memberships are now \$100. Members receive the regular pin and a plastic wallet card—a handy keepsake of their support.
- Purchase memberships here: <https://vfwnationalhome.org/you-can-help/membership/>

Centennial bricks are still available in the Centennial Garden:

Each \$500 8"x8" brick is a lasting way to honor someone or mark a special event — and once all 1,000 are sold, that's it. We'd love your help spreading the word so we can fill the garden. To find more information and to order:

<https://vfwnationalhome.org/centennial-brick/>

2025-26 VFW National Commander-in-Chief Whitmore & Auxiliary National President Callahan combined special project- Retail Store:

The new Retail Store will be inside the remodeled Welcome Center. This fundraiser will fund the coolers, freezers, and an honor-system point-of-sale program, so residents can shop with a swipe card and pay by credit card — even after hours.

Donations can be made at vfwnationalhome.org/donate; just type 'Retail Store' in the comments. Please call 866-482-9642 with any questions.

Share Thank You message:

On behalf of the VFW National Home, thank you for your generous support and belief in our mission. Because of friends like you, we can provide a safe, supportive community for veterans, service members, and their families as they rebuild and strengthen their futures. Your partnership truly makes a lasting difference, and we are deeply grateful for your continued commitment to the National Home.

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