Over 96 years of helping our nation’s military and veteran families rebuild their lives.

2020-2021 Annual Report
The VFW National Home for Children’s mission is to provide children, and families of veterans, active-duty military, and members of the VFW and its Auxiliary opportunities for growth and development in a nurturing community, and by doing so, serve as a living memorial to all veterans.
Dear Friends,

The National Home has shined as a beacon of hope for our nation’s military and veteran families since 1925.

Our unique program offers participating families the opportunity to live in our quiet countryside community while working with a personal case manager to identify areas for growth and development.

Our comprehensive approach to assistance includes free housing, state-licensed daycare, and a customized family program to guide and assist each member of the family in attaining their individual and collective goals. These services include but are not limited to educational, relationship, health, and wellness.

In addition to our residential program, our programming team oversees our Military and Veteran Family Helpline 800-313-4200. This referral line has assisted thousands of veterans and their families throughout the country since its inception in 2008.

Yesterday, today and tomorrow we are here to help our veterans and their families.

None of this would be possible without your support and contributions. You have all given in a multitude of ways. Whether you sent in a donation, purchased a tribute brick, or volunteered your time and services, your generosity has touched the lives of so many veteran families in need, both on our campus and throughout the country.

Thank you,

Armithea “Sissy” Borel
VFW National Home for Children Board President
2020 and 2021 was filled with uncertainty and fear. Hear how National Home residents weathered their hardships with the help of the VFW National Home for Children.

“We are fortunate enough to be residents at the National Home. I can’t even imagine where we would be at this moment. I don’t even want to imagine. I can’t express enough my gratitude to our donors. They are life savers. My family has been able to heal and grow because of opportunities provided to us here. It’s more than no expenses to me it’s about learning how to be the best us we can be. If I could say one thing to our donors it would be, ‘Thank you from the bottom of my heart. Because of people like you, families like us have a second chance at living, functioning, and growing together.’”

“As a single mother, I am so relieved to be in such a safe and protected place to weather these uncertain times and to not have the worries of keeping a roof over our heads while being laid off, goes without saying. Many times over this past year I have thought of you, the donors who keep our lights on, and the worries you may be facing in the "real world" due to these times we're in, this thought makes me feel even more humbled & blessed to be here and I thank you.”

“Thank you for the continued support of this organization. Your donations have allowed families like mine to continue to feel safe and stable in an otherwise hectic world.”

“I believe the program saved my life, marriage and family and I am thankful for the generosity given to my family and me. I thank GOD every day for every one of the donors. Before we came here, we felt hopeless. At times I have to pinch myself just to make sure this is not a dream. I pray that God will continue to bless and keep you and your family safe.”
In 2020 National Home Alumni Emily graduated from Eaton Rapids High School. She is currently serving in Americorps working as a part of a forest team. She was certified for type 2 wildland firefighting and type 2 chainsaw.

Emily has plans to return to Michigan to pursue a degree in forestry from Michigan State University.

National Home Alumni Caleb reached out to us this year with an update.

"Joining the National Guard is my way of trying to do my part. In my service I hope to serve honorably and to be someday called a veteran."

"I remember talking to old veterans and hearing their stories. These people were heroes and they amazed me, and I have always wanted to be like them."

Caleb graduated in 2020 from Davenport University with his bachelor’s degree in business management and administration.
John is an alum of the National Home and a proud Marine.

"I lived at the Home from 1978 to 1992, I wouldn't be where I am at today without the caring staff that all had a hand in raising me during my time at the National Home.

I spent 20 years in the United States Marine Corps and loved every minute of it. I have traveled the world, lived in Okinawa Japan for a total of 7 years and deployed to Iraq 3 times and Afghanistan 1.

I am a life member of Post 10066 in Jensen Beach, FL."

National Home Alum McKenna is a prime example of how the National Home can help families build the tools and skills to give their children the foundation for a happy and successful future.

McKenna recently graduated from Eastern Michigan University with her bachelor’s in social work and will be attending the University of Michigan. In addition, she plans to enter the Advanced Standing Masters of Social Work program with a concentration in mental health.

Being a stellar student with good grades, McKenna was able to qualify for scholarships and tuition assistance, and with the loan repayment program through Michigan Health, where she works, she graduated from EMU debt-free!
Alumni Update

“When our family left the National Home, we moved across the country to Washington state, where Brad began his masters program.” says mother, Sherry.

Brad graduated in June 2021 with a dual masters in Mental Health Counseling and Substance Abuse Counseling from Eastern Washington University. He is in the process of starting his mental health and counseling practice. Sherry is working for the State of Washington with plans of attending Gonzaga University School of Law in the near future.

Maximus is eight now and enjoying second grade. Last year, like many others, he did his first grade year remotely and is happy to be back face to face (and masked) with his friends this year.

“He is continuing to grow like a weed and is living up to his name!” says Sherry.

“Daphne just turned five and is enrolled in a Spanish immersion preschool that we really love. She is like a sponge absorbing Spanish like crazy!”

“She is precocious and extremely smart. I look forward to seeing what mountains she moves in the future.”

Since moving to Washington the family has purchased a home and have added a dog, “Hawkeye” and a cat, “Lucky” to their family.

“I just want to thank everyone for their support. Neither of us had a degree when we came to the National Home, or the ability to buy our own home. All of our accomplishments are really because of the support that we received. Thank you!”

-Sherry
Luisa’s Story: Military Mom

After serving almost nine years in the United States Navy, the plans that National Home Resident Luisa had made for her transition to civilian life quickly changed, and she found herself unexpectedly parenting her four children on her own.

“I went from full-time military where I’m so used to structure uniform, you know, get things done right here right now to a full-time single parent of 4 children, and there’s no schedule, there's no structure it's chaos every day." She said with a laugh.

Luisa separated from the military in 2017 with plans to raise her children with her husband and pursue a degree in psychology. However, after the passing of her father and an unexpected divorce, Luisa moved to be with her mother in Eaton Rapids, Michigan.

Little did she know, Luisa had brought her family to the very town where military and veteran families can find the support and resources they need to rebuild their lives at the VFW National Home for Children.

"When I first arrived at the VFW Home mentally, I was a mess. I didn't even know really how I felt; I was just going through the emotions of my dad's passing, my divorce, and just trying to learn how to be a mom, raise my four kids.”

"Financially, I was broke. I did not have two pennies, two nickels to rub together.”

While living at the National Home, Luisa was assigned a one-on-one case manager who helped her set goals and make plans for her future.

"My case manager was my guardian angel. She was there to guide me. She provided so many resources just to get me back on track. I really needed to understand my children at that time, just understand their needs and wants and remember that I'm no longer in the military, I have to be a mom."

Luisa found that the temporary relief of monthly rent and utility bills allowed her to focus on her family. She was also able to utilize the National Home’s free, state-licensed Early Education Center for her youngest children.

After two and a half years, Luisa felt she had accomplished all she wanted to and was ready to exit the program.

"I am leaving the National Home with only two debts which are my cell phone bill and car insurance, so I’m blessed."

Luisa's next goals are to return to Jacksonville, Florida, and purchase a home.

"The National Home has set me up to where I can now leave and be happy financially. I have a solid foundation."

"The Home has done so much for my family. They did wonders for us, things that I couldn’t even dream of. I was struggling, and the National Home literally held their hand out, and I reached for it, and so I will be forever grateful for this home."
2020-2021 BOARD OF TRUSTEES
(as of 6/30/2021)
Armithea “Sissy” Borel, President, District 6
Steve Van Bergen, Vice President, District 9
Keith Jackson, District 1
Art Scheuneman, District 2
Ron Stensland, District 3
Sam Compton, District 4
Mark Winn, District 5
Annabelle Furgason, District 7
Jerry Blake, District 8
Sylvia Sanchez, District 10
Kim Sloan, District 11
Renee Fulk, District 12

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VFW Adjutant General, Kevin Jones
VFW Quartermaster General, Debra Anderson
VFW Auxiliary National President, Sandra Onstwedder
VFW Auxiliary National Secretary/Treasurer, Ann Panteleakos

2020-2021 Management Team
Frederick Puffenberger, Executive Director
Todd Marriott, Facilities & Grounds Director
Lynn Hagerman, Finance Director
Susan Alverson, Development Director
Brian Lorente, Interim Program Co-Director
Laura Lonsbery, Interim Program Co-Director
OUR PROGRAM

The VFW National Home for Children is grateful for the generous friends and supporters who have reached out to help military and veteran families. The Home was founded in 1925 as a place where the families left behind by war – mothers and children, brothers and sisters – could remain together, keeping the family circle intact even when their serviceman didn't come home. Today’s families face different challenges – reintegration, post-traumatic stress, high unemployment and rehabilitation from battlefield injuries, among others – and the National Home has evolved to meet those changing needs.

Families find a healing calm in our tranquil, rural, small-town community. Our neighborhood is essentially a small village with its own gymnasium, hiking trails, fishing pond, playgrounds, sports fields, and green spaces.

Families who need a fresh start can live at the National Home for up to four years and benefit from numerous community supportive services, including professional case management services, on-site licensed child care, life skills training, tutoring and other educational services, as well as recreational and community service opportunities.

Additionally, many families benefit from our services throughout the country. In the 2020-2021 year alone, hundreds of families were helped by our Military & Veteran Family Helpline 800-313-4200.

This free service offers information, creates connections and gives hope to struggling military and veteran families.

Families can also learn more about our program and contact us at:

vfwnationalhome.org/help.
## Summary of 2020-2021 Audited Financial Statements

### Summarized Statement of Activities

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<th>Description</th>
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<td>Revenue</td>
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<td>Indirect care</td>
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<td>Total expenses</td>
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<td>Net Change in Assets</td>
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### Summarized Statement of Financial Position

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<td>Ending Net Assets</td>
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### 2020-2021 Expenses Ratio

- Program Expenses 68%
- Administration 15%
- Fundraising Expenses 17%