The VFW National Home is a special place, especially for those who work so hard to make it home for our veterans that receive full-service support and assistance in their transition from the military to civilian life. The Board of Trustees continually look for ways to make this magical place the best it can be. In February 2022, we gathered with the senior staff to conduct a comprehensive strategic planning session to provide direction and vision for our future at the National Home. The trustees fully support this strategy, and we look forward to the continued growth and learning along the path to success.

As the Board President for 2021-2022, I am proud to have served on this board for the last 5 years and have great confidence for our future. I believe I can speak for the entire Board of Trustees, when I say, “our future looks bright” and we continue to “honor the dead by supporting the living”, a mantra the VFW adopted in the very beginning that still holds true today.

Steve Van Bergen
President
Board of Trustees
2021-2022
Strategic Planning 2022 Focus

The VFW National Home held a strategic planning retreat at the Community Center on Campus on February 9 and 10, 2022. The session was attended by the Board of Trustees as well as Directors and key personnel from the VFWNH staff. The strategic direction was to be veteran focused and support families, and children.
**STRENGTHS**

- We are a unique organization, with little to no organizational competition in respect to mission/vision, and story. Our purpose to support veterans and their families is unmatched foundationally.
- The level of dedication and commitment of the VFW, Auxiliary, and Military Order of the Cootie, as well as longevity and commitment of the full-time staff is indicative of an organization poised to grow, and innovate.

**WEAKNESSES**

- Outdated technology and equipment for the betterment and growth of the organization creates gaps in services and the ability to provide them.
- Outside a municipality that could provide support. Remotely located produces many issues to growth and vitality.
- Brand awareness, and marketing capability.
- Lack of veteran/family services available on campus for support of our residents.
- Lack of corporate partnerships, and/or governmental support through grants and fundraising.

**OPPORTUNITIES**

- Financially sound and capable of supporting growth in technology, and other upgrades services.
- Increase awareness through legislators, and congressional authority as well as local leadership.
- Utilize podcasting, and social media campaigns that can be syndicated through national agencies, and supported through corporate donors.
- Increase networking support through other service agencies like the American Legion, AMVETS, Marine Corps League, and DAV.

**THREATS**

- Longevity of some of our funding sources as it pertains to funding and support.
- National awareness, could be good to grow support, but may overwhelm the organization.
- Many VSO’s competing for the same funds, and support.
- Some Veteran Service Organizations are struggling with membership from the younger veterans.
Create long- and short-range goals and objectives created from priorities established in February session. Directors will create objectives based on the priorities and goals, and update frequently through weekly leadership meetings. Follow up monthly in director reports to Board of Trustees, and track through monthly evaluation process.

Professional development will ensue prior to the June Board of Trustees meeting. October’s meetings will wrap up strategies for the board year, and prepare new board for later strategizing in the following February meeting.

The staff and Board of Trustees will revisit the strategic plan prior to the February 2023 board meeting. (2/7/2023) This meeting will realign the organizational goals, revisit the SWOT analysis, and look ahead to 2026 and beyond. Much focus will be on the 2025 anniversary, but most should be coordinated through a committee at this point.

Staff members and trustees will revisit the strategic plan, and make necessary updates. Much focus will be on the 2025 Anniversary at this point, and most energies will be expended completing this work. It will be important to make sure we are at least looking ahead for 2026, and 2027 as the 100th anniversary should be well planned by this time.
Mission

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.
Our VFW National Home Culture

**Community:** A group of like-minded people striving for a common goal, our residents, alumni and staff are “one community”

**Integrity:** Doing the right thing without fear of reprisal or repercussions, being honest and faithful to our cause

**Veteran Driven:** A strong and deliberate focus on Veteran Support

**Family:** A core unit working and learning together

**Accountability:** Conducting ourselves ethically, and with honor for those who have served before us

Vision

The VFW National Home strives to be the VFW and Auxiliary’s primary source for supporting Veterans, Military, and their Families with children through residential support and resources that increase the potential of success in transition to the community.

The National Home is the central location for local, regional, and national supportive services for veterans, and their families. These resources are provided on-campus to increase the agility and flexibility for residents as they take advantage of these growth opportunities.

Children of Veteran’s families will be provided excellent opportunities to grow in a diverse and nurturing environment where all are treated with fairness and equity, while being allowed to be kids. Parents of the National Home’s children will be supported in the academic, and life skills growth of their children, through continuous community involvement and programming.
VETERANS AND FAMILIES
Our primary reason for existence is to support veterans and families. Everything we do must be rooted in the support of this priority. This includes currently serving members of our armed forces both active duty, guard and reserve. We will always support the families of our VFW and Auxiliary, as they have earned it through the legacy of the parents, and grandparents.

By increasing support on campus for our veterans and families we expect an increase in veteran interest in the support we provide. As our goal will be to focus on those in transition, the predominance of our residency will become more veteran and family centric. Our legacy families will be absorbed into our veteran centric family. We will embrace the VFW’s slogan, “Nobody Does More for Veterans” and make it part of our overall plan of support. We want the VFW National Home to emulate that very statement as we support those who have sacrificed to support us.

COMMUNICATION
Effective communication strategies will increase overall awareness of this mission, as well as increase our networks of support and resources through the state, and nation. Communication is key to all of our work. Increasing the effectiveness will require deep understanding of our mission, vision, and organizational culture in order to market our successes, challenges, and demands for growth and viability. The success of many of our goals of this strategic plan will hinge on communication effectiveness. As a short-range goal we will create a consistent message for our donors, life members, and residents using printed material, and electronic media, while removing past material in order to reduce confusion. Our long-range goals will include updating our brand, marketing strategy, and prepare for the 2025 Anniversary, as well as strategize for the “Second Century of Service”.

FUNDING
In order to continue, we must prosper. In order to prosper, we must grow. In order to grow, we must be financially strong. Through the creation of funding streams, and partnerships with corporate donors, we will be able to support the veterans and families who are in our care with greater purpose and longevity.

We will continue focused donor relations with our current partners, as well as the VFW, Auxiliary, and MOC. By partnering with corporate donors, and creating veteran driven funding opportunities, we will be able to increase our viability and long-term sustainment.

We will begin efforts to research grant opportunities that increase our capability without encumbering us to tedious documentation of outcomes and government red tape. We will focus on private foundation grant opportunities and seek grant writing professionals for support.
Evaluation of Goals

The following outlines our goals for both long and short range tracking. We will share our progress, and be able to quickly and easily display results for our Board of Trustees, and funders alike.

These will be living documents that will be diligently monitored and updated. Department leaders will be responsible for the upkeep of their goals and objectives and will be evaluated regularly for improvement and progress. The Chief of Staff will be responsible to update the master Strategic Plan.

Goals will be chronologically ordered from short range to long range, and will be assigned to a department or department teams.

Each month directors will determine the status of goals and indicate in their monthly report any changes or updates in their portion of the strategic plan. If there is no progress in the strategic plan, that too will be indicated monthly.

Priority: Veterans and Families

**GOAL 1 >** 90 percent of houses are occupied by Veterans/Families including Active/Guard/Reserved/Mobilized

**GOAL 2 >** Establish Veteran Resource Center on Campus to increase service support availability to Veterans/Military and families in need both on campus and in the surrounding communities

**GOAL 3 >** Reduce application completion timeframe to 30 days

**GOAL 4 >** Develop policy for residents supporting on campus events (event passport)

**GOAL 5 >** Adapt a growth and learning mindset for all focusing on the veteran and family dynamic
Evaluation of Goals continued

Priority: Communications

GOAL 1 > Develop national marketing plan to increase awareness, population by 50%

GOAL 2 > Establish 2025 100 Year Celebration Committee to be made up of Trustees, staff, and community members to begin the development of the plan for 2025

GOAL 3 > Increase awareness by developing activities/programs that can be duplicated throughout the states

GOAL 4 > Connect and create relationships with transitioning agencies to attract service members (ETS: ending tour of service)

GOAL 5 > Increase awareness through a virtual platform “state specific” through trustees

GOAL 6 > Obtain gold level MVAA Veteran friendly employer status to increase knowledge and skills of staff

GOAL 7 > Create new employee onboarding process

GOAL 8 > Develop Performance Management Plan

GOAL 9 > Create Employee “Community Service” Hours Plan

GOAL 10 > Define budgeted amounts for training programs / Education

GOAL 11 > Create relationships with military and veteran organizations in Michigan and surrounding States

GOAL 12 > Update broadband capability and technology to administrative and residential buildings

GOAL 13 > Develop a historian position description that supports the preservation of historical documents and artifacts

Priority: Funding/Finance

GOAL 1 > Expand Homefront Heroes monthly giving program by increasing donors by an additional 15%

GOAL 2 > Increase revenue through grant writing 100k dollars

GOAL 3 > Increase major gifts of $5000+ by 10%

GOAL 4 > Increase revenue through virtual fund-raising platforms

GOAL 5 > Establish the RFP (request for proposal) process to identify potential bidders and scopes of work to insure we are getting the most for our money

GOAL 6 > Establish cash flow projections policy in order to increase effectiveness of budget and capital projects forecasting

GOAL 7 > Create policy/procedure to address long term investment growth

GOAL 8 > Reduce Turnaround for House vacancy / readiness to 30 days from the date of move out
I am thankful. First and foremost, I am thankful for the VFW National Home and all that it does to support America’s veterans, military, and their families with children. In my 27 years of serving, and 13 years since retirement, I have never seen a place that does so much to support the stressful transition from military to veteran.

I am also thankful to have been selected to lead the staff at the National Home as the Executive Director. I truly feel at home in this role, and am proud to continue supporting my fellow veterans, and military members.

Our core culture is surrounded by Community, and Family. Our staff and residents at the National Home make up our community and, in some sense, our family. We work together, learn together, weep and grieve together, and grow together. We also continue to “give back” together. Our strength is in our desire to succeed, and help those around us succeed, and we celebrate together!

Our strategy for the future is strong, built on our vision and culture. Our mission is simple but intensely important. We are a growing and learning community, we are family.

Michael Wilson
Executive Director

“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.”