

A ‘More Sustainable’ Way to Combat Hunger

VFW’s Uniting to Combat Hunger program ‘victory gardens’

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In anticipation of the 2024 VFW National Convention in July in Louisville, Kentucky, the VFW and Humana are continuing the Uniting to Combat Hunger program that has provided more than 4.5 million meals for food-insecure families since 2018.

During the 124th VFW National Convention in Phoenix last year, dozens of VFW and Auxiliary members, as well as Humana employees, participated in a Uniting to Combat Hunger seed-packing event that provided about 30 tons of vegetables for families suffering from food insecurity.

VFW Foundation Grants Manager Jason Couch said that VFW is once again working alongside the Society of Saint Andrews. The nonprofit organization is offering VFW Posts free seeds to create victory gardens.

“Creating a victory garden is a great way to grow food in food deserts and other areas where fresh produce is scarce,” Couch said. “It’s also more sustainable – growing your own plants is better for the environment.”

Victory gardens have a rich history dating back to the first and second world wars. The U.S. encouraged citizens to plant various fruits and vegetables in private gardens to supplement rations.

The Uniting to Combat Hunger program aims to alleviate food insecurity among veterans and their families, as well as in the broader community. The program recognizes that many veterans face challenges, including financial difficulties and limited access to resources, which can contribute to food insecurity.

“The Uniting to Combat Hunger initiative exemplifies the spirit of collaboration and sustainability within communities across the country,” he said. “By fostering the growth of

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victory gardens, we are strengthening the bonds among VFW Post and Auxiliary members."

The Department of Agriculture in 2021 said more than 34 million people, including 9 million children, experience food insecurity in the U.S. during the year — that is about 1-in-10 households in the country.

Feeding America says that about 125,000 active-duty military troops experience food insecurity — about 7 percent of troops in the active military. However, according to the Department of Agriculture, only about 2 percent of active-duty troops qualify for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. Feeding America also says 1-in-4 Afghanistan and Iraq War veterans are affected by food insecurity. For more information, visit <https://endhunger.org/seed-project>.