

Marine Rebuilds His Life with the VFW

'I joined the VFW and immediately felt at home'

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Ron Ramos is **#StillServing** as a Gold Legacy Life member of VFW Post 10818 in New Richmond, Wisconsin. He's currently the VFW Department of Wisconsin Junior Vice Commander, Post 10818 Service Officer, and was an All-American Commander 2018-2019.

Originally from the Bronx, Ramos always wanted to join the U.S. Marine Corps. His desire to enlist was solidified after witnessing the events of 9/11. He left New York in 2005 for training and served as a Marine for eight years, including deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan. Transitioning out of the military then proved more difficult than he anticipated.

"After leaving the service, I immediately faced issues adjusting to civilian life. I no longer had a purpose," recalled Ramos.

"I struggled to stay engaged in classes and work and could no longer find the motivation to continue taking care of myself or my daughter. I became homeless and unemployed, and moved to Wisconsin to live with my daughter's grandparents."

A social worker suggested that Ramos get involved with a veterans' organization to meet people and perhaps find friends and renewed purpose. He credits the VFW with giving him a community and the fresh start he needed.

"I joined the VFW and immediately felt at home," Ramos said.

"Since I was still unemployed, they gave me tasks to do right away such as taking over the Post's newsletter and creating a website for the Post. I was able to refocus my lack of direction into a mission again, just like we had in the service."

The VFW also helped Ramos discover a new career path. He received assistance with resume writing and got a job at a veterinary clinic. He then moved on to a larger clinic, and throughout the past five years has found he enjoys helping with emergencies and surgeries as a veterinary assistant.

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“Because of the VFW’s drive to assist veterans like me, I just graduated with an associate degree in veterinary technology and will earn certification as a Certified Veterinary Technician in Wisconsin,” said Ramos.

Ramos is grateful for the opportunities to serve through his profession and the VFW. He was on the board for a student chapter of the National Association for Veterinary Technicians of America while in school and volunteers in his community to provide heartworm tests, nail trims and microchipping for animals in the local area. He also spends time with service members and veterans to ensure they are cared for and have the resources they need. He’s especially proud of helping fellow veterans who, like him, are looking for assistance as they try to finish their education and move forward in life.

“I recently assisted a veteran in my school who was struggling with the cost of education after using up most of their GI Bill,” Ramos said.

“I was able to get them in contact with the VA Vocational Rehabilitation Program. Since it was determined they had a disability rating above a certain percent and enrolled in school to improve employment opportunities, they were approved to have the VA pay for their entire program while receiving a stipend.”

Ramos is thankful for the chance to give back. He’s dedicated to helping wherever he can and ensuring more veterans know they have a home in the VFW.

“The VFW is commitment and service to our communities. This is why I’m proud to say ‘I am the VFW,’” stated Ramos.

“I am the VFW because I continue my service of helping those in need and honoring those who came before me.”

To find out more about the VFW's #StillServing campaign or to share your story, visit vfw.org/StillServing.