

Clay County VSO and Volunteering

Last week, I met a friend, Bernie at the Moorhead Public Library, a wonderful community resource and we talked about my article from last week. Bernie took a different approach than mine when he applied four years ago. He went to the Clay County Veterans Service Office (VSO) and one of the staff helped him complete his application and processed it with the VA. This may be the best approach for Veterans to take because the Clay County VSO staff is very dedicated, knows the bureaucracy of the VA and can become the advocate for the Veteran.

The Clay County Veterans Service Office is located at 715 11 St N, Suite 103 in Moorhead, just south of the court house. Curt, Jennifer and Bonnie are all wonderful people and very helpful. I stopped to talk with Jennifer and learned more about the office. While we were talking she answered a call from a Veteran who wanted to know how to get medals and ribbons he received while in the military. Jennifer told the Veteran and me that a one-time request can be made to get copies of them and she said that she would help fill out the application. The Veteran needed proof of service, a DD 214. Other ways the VSO helps Veterans is with obtaining military documents such as DD 214, military treatment records and military personnel files. The VSO will help process paperwork for VA compensation claims, home loans, financial assistance, MN Department of Veterans Affairs benefits, pension claims, vocational rehabilitation claims and has an extensive list of other referral resources. The VSO is a partner with the Beyond the Yellow Ribbon Moorhead, the Family Assistance Center, VA Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling and American Heroes Outdoors (guided hunting and fishing trips).

In addition to Curt, Jennifer and Bonnie, the VSO has a couple dozen volunteers who are passionate about helping Veterans. Over the past few years, I've met many people who share this passion about helping our Veterans, here a few examples. Karen routinely visits veterans at the VA hospital, Tim is completing training to become a volunteer at the hospital, my VVA brothers and sisters volunteer at the hospital and the Gladys Ray Shelter in Fargo. Holidays are especially difficult times for Veterans in hospitals, assisted living facilities and nursing homes. Volunteers and visitors always appreciated. My friend Gail is passionate about helping veterans and is wonderful at fund raising. Earlier this year someone told Gail that her passion was not the same as his. Many of us don't understand when others aren't as concerned as we are. But that's OK, we need volunteers in all areas of our community. For instance my Sweetie, Bev is passionate about saving all the cats in our area, my friend Jeanne has the same passion about the Rourke Art Museum, Dea loves to support Dragon basketball, Babs is dedicated to helping the homeless, Jane is a tremendous volunteer with the Honor Flight program and the list goes on. If you care about a project, organization or group, please consider volunteering to help. If you can't afford the time, a contribution is always welcome.