

Affordable Housing Development for Veterans Opens

Nearly 100 Veterans, elected officials, and housing authority representatives met Sept. 13 in Chicago Heights to celebrate the opening of Otto Square Veterans Square, a four-story building containing 82 residential units designed for veterans and their families experiencing homelessness.

The property is comprised of 80 one-bedroom units, and nine two-bedroom units, with thirteen units located on the ground floor. The four-story building features units ranging from 525 to 550 square feet, with each floor equipped with a laundry room. The ground floor includes a large multi-purpose room with an adjacent warming kitchen, an exercise room with a health and fitness center, a computer/media room, a mailroom, and meeting spaces. Upper floors include a shared four-season room, and laundry facilities near the elevator core to encourage community interaction, as well as resident

storage lockers. Site improvements feature parking for eighty-two cars (including an electric vehicle charging station and accessible spaces), a patio, a secured yard for residents and pets, dog playing area with dog bathing facilities, a meditation garden, and raised beds for community gardening.

Ermon Davis, VFW District 16, Post 311, a veteran who served in 1966, “watched the ceremony with deep awe and gratitude. He marveled at the project, which he played a crucial role in bringing to life. Davis said housing veterans remains a challenge. He stated he has witnessed firsthand how some veterans, struggling to re-adjust after service, turn to drugs or other coping mechanisms.”

The VFW District leadership and auxiliary was led by 16th District Commander Bill Browne and Auxiliary President Dan Hansen. VFW Senior Vice Eugene Blackwell represented VFW Department.



Veterans and Auxiliary members from District 16 attend the opening ceremony for the Otto Square Veterans Square, a four-story building with 82 residential units in Chicago Heights designed for veterans and their families experiencing homelessness. The facility opened Sept. 13.

Collinsville Businesses Support VFW Life Membership Program for vets

On Patriots’ Day, Sept. 11, the Collinsville Kahokian Memorial Post 5691 of the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) proudly announced a generous donation of over \$1,200 from local businesses in support of their lifetime membership program for veterans.

The sponsorships were contributed by Edward Jones financial advisors from Maryville and Collinsville, demonstrating a strong commitment to honoring and supporting those who have served our nation.

The primary focus of the lifetime membership program is to honor and support veterans of World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War—individuals who have given so much in service to their country. These memberships aim to relieve veterans from the burden of annual dues while ensuring they have continued access to the vital services and camaraderie provided

by the VFW.

The financial advisors who contributed to the donation include:

- Nathan Spudich
- Chris Rydgig
- Jeff Stark
- Scott Combs
- Kyle Webster
- Kyle Stein

In a special moment, Illinois VFW State Commander Maurice Bridges was on hand to receive the donation, underscoring the significance of the event.

Commander Bridges expressed his appreciation for the community’s support, stating, “It’s through acts of generosity like this that we can continue to serve and support our veterans. The funds raised will go directly toward sponsoring lifetime memberships for VFW members, with a particular focus on World War II, Korea, and Vietnam veterans. This initiative reflects

the dedication of the Collinsville community to recognizing the sacrifices made by veterans and ensuring they receive the support they deserve.”

Post Commander Alonzo ‘Skip’ Skipper also shared his gratitude, saying, “On this Patriots’ Day, a day of remembrance and reflection, it is truly meaningful to see our community come together to support the men and women who have bravely served our country. The contributions from Edward Jones and other local businesses will help make a significant impact in the lives of our veterans.”

The Collinsville VFW will continue to seek sponsorships from local businesses to extend the program and provide additional memberships to veterans in the community. Those interested in contributing to the program are encouraged to contact Post 5691 for more information.

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS POST 5691



Members of the Kahokian Memorial Post 5691, Collinsville, pictured with State Commander Maurice Bridges, announced the receipt of a generous donation to support their Life Membership program.

Rochester VFW, Scout Troop Conduct Dignified Flag Retirement Ceremony

On Sept. 7, VFW District 10 and Post 11463, Rochester, orchestrated a powerful flag retirement ceremony in collaboration with Rochester Scout Troop 40 and PAC.

Post 11463 proudly serves as the Charter organization for Troop and PAC 40. This event marked the inaugural of several planned retirement ceremonies with the Scouts.

More than 250 flags were honorably retired during the one-hour ceremony, a result of meticulous preparation involving inspection and precise folding of the flags.

The community actively engaged in the ceremony, significantly contributing to the dignified retirement procedures.

