

VFW National Home for Children

Press Release

3573 S. Waverly Road ~ Eaton Rapids, MI 48827 ~ vfnationalhome.org

Contact: Sara Lyon
Public Relations Specialist
(517) 663-7012
slyon@vfnationalhome.org

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VFW National Home for Children Breaks Ground for New Addition to Campus

Eaton Rapids, Mich. – Despite the chilly winds of a December afternoon, the warmth of generosity was felt on the campus of the VFW National Home for Children on Friday, December 8, as ground was broken for a new duplex to be built to help care for families of our nation's veterans and active duty military.

The new construction on the 629-acre campus was authorized by the National Home's Board of Trustees at their October meeting. The Board's decision to expand the Home's capacity will allow the 82-year-old unique child care facility to serve even more families as they strive to meet the changing needs of today's veterans.

The duplex is being funded by a portion of the \$3.5 million charitable donation that resulted from the 2006 Memorial Day Dealership Campaign conducted by the Buick-Pontiac-GMC Division of General Motors Corp. The donation, presented by Division General Manager John Larson in July, was made to the National Home without designation or restriction.

The National Home was honored to host Mr. Larson as a participant in the groundbreaking ceremony. Also participating were National Home Board President Melvin Garrett of New York, Vice President Roger Taylor of Ohio, Trustee John Hamilton of Florida, and Trustee Roy Ator of Texas. Executive Director Patrice Green and Buddy Poppy Girl Samantha Spitzley represented the National Home. Local GM dealers were represented by Kristen Buege of Buege Chevrolet of Eaton Rapids and Glen Buege of Buege Buick-GMC of Lansing. Representing the Military Order of the Cootie, an Auxiliary to the VFW and stalwart supporters of the National Home, were National Commander Ray Fern of Pennsylvania and National President Rebecca Strauss of Missouri.

In his remarks, John Larson reflected on the 2006 Memorial Day Campaign. "We wanted Memorial Day to be about more than just having 'cook outs.' We wanted to remind America what that day is all about... honoring America's veterans and today's active-duty military. And today, we break ground with this new duplex in honor of America's veterans, past and present."

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A Community of Promises Kept.

Scheduled for completion in spring 2007, the two-family home will house residents of the National Home's various family programs that serve single parent families, families of deployed service members and the families of disabled veterans participating in VA Vocational Rehabilitation. The National Home also offers long-term residential services for children in a family-like home environment.

Each side of the 2,400 plus-square-foot duplex will include three bedrooms and two bathrooms. The brick structure was selected to fit current program needs while fitting seamlessly within the campus neighborhood of over 70 buildings, including 36 individual family homes and one other duplex.

This will be the second new housing construction at the National Home since 1966 and closely follows the completion last summer of a duplex built and sponsored by the National Veterans Affairs Department of the United Auto Workers.

"This groundbreaking ceremony is a signal to all that the National Home is steadfast in our commitment to be of service to the families of those who have worn the uniform of our country," said President Garrett. "We will care for the children of those who cannot. We will assist the families of those who have, and who continue to serve. And we will welcome home the soldier who needs us as he returns to civilian life."

Lansing-based Alternative Design is the project architect and M & S Development is the general contractor.

Since 1925 the VFW National Home for Children has been providing for the children and families of our nation's veterans, while at the same time serving as a living memorial to our nation's heroes. For more information on the National Home, please call (517) 663-1521, toll-free at (800) 424-8360 or visit www.vfwnationalhome.org.

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