

Help a Vet this holiday season, become a “battle buddy”

It’s well known that military service can severely impact the lives of our veterans and their families, especially as they return home from combat deployment. With more than 40,000 veterans in Solano County, many of our veterans return home with serious issues like alcohol and substance abuse, mental illness, homelessness, unemployment and strained family relationships. With so many obstacles to overcome, nobody should have to do it alone – and this year, I’m asking for your help.

My office is looking for a few (more) good men and women to volunteer their time to become a “battle buddy” to a local veteran in need. The time commitment is minimal and may include a weekly phone call or the occasional lunch date. With five battle buddies already on board, we are starting to make a huge difference in veteran’s lives in Solano County, but there is always more to do.

Earlier this year, my office, in collaboration with the Veteran’s Administration (VA), the Solano Court System, District Attorney and Public Defender’s Office initiated a Veteran’s Treatment Court in Solano County, the seventeenth one in the state. The Veteran’s Treatment Court helps veterans struggling with issues after returning home by getting their lives back into a balance through an eighteen-month road to recovery program. Paired with their battle buddies, the new court system is changing the lives of our service members for the better, all while saving the justice system money by helping break the relentless cycle of poverty and recidivism.

This holiday season I encourage any honorably discharged veteran interested in volunteering their time as a battle buddy to call my office at (707) 784-6590 and ask for me or my colleague Michael Mendoza, our mentor coordinator to learn more about the battle buddy mentorship program. You can also stop by my office during regular business hours to discuss how you can get involved in changing a veteran’s life for good, forever.

Happy holiday’s to your and your family.

Ted Puntillo is Director of Veteran’s Services for Solano County. Reach him at (707) 784-6590 or tepuntillo@SolanoCounty.com. The Solano County Veteran’s Services Office, 675 Texas St. in Fairfield, is open from 9 a.m. to noon and 1 to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday.

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