

‘If You Develop a Good Plan, Good Things Will Happen’

One Wisconsin Post uses Day of Service to support the largest food pantry in northeast Wisconsin

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As members of VFW Post 2113 in De Pere, Wisconsin, began thinking about what to do for this year’s VFW National Day of Service, discussions led to a previous member.

“Our Post has a long and proud history of supporting the needs of the community,” Post Quartermaster/Adjutant Randy Hansen said. “One of our original members, Leo Frigo, founded Paul’s Pantry in 1984. Leo’s commitment was brought up, and we started thinking about how we can expand on his legacy.”

Hansen says that Paul’s Pantry is now the largest food pantry in northeast Wisconsin, serving more than five million pounds of food annually. Members wondered whether other areas in the state were receiving adequate assistance.

“We contacted smaller rural farming communities in southern Brown County and discovered that they have food shortage needs similar to our region but not the same donation levels as Paul’s Pantry.”

Members of VFW Post 2113 decided to assist food pantries in those communities for this year’s VFW Day of Service. But they won’t be doing it alone.

“As discussions continued, the idea evolved to include each of the 26 VFW Posts and 17 VFW Auxiliaries in the 8th VFW District of Wisconsin, making our event the first-ever district-wide Day of Service event in state history,” Hansen said.

As news of the event has spread, many non-VFW entities, including police and fire stations, an American legion post, a local gas station, and a funeral home began making plans to hold supporting food drives as well.

Hansen is pleased to see how the event has transformed. Recognizing the importance of

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collaboration and communication, he offers this advice to other VFW Posts thinking about hosting their own Day of Service event:

“Once you develop a concept, it’s important to meet face-to-face with your Post and Auxiliary members, especially in the final month of planning, to ensure all details are set. As you do this, it’s also critical that you keep community partners informed because you’re not working alone. You never know where a solution will come from.

“But if you develop a good plan targeting a specific community need, good things will happen.”