

Pay It Forward

Post in Texas honors memory of Army vet through scholarship fund

Jan 28, 2021

In honoring the memory of a local Army veteran, a VFW Post in San Antonio established a scholarship fund that surpassed more than \$75,000 in 2020.

In the 10 years since creating a scholarship fund in memory of Jeremiah J. Geffre, VFW Post 1533 and its members have awarded 69 college scholarships ranging between \$1,000 and \$1,500 to local JROTC high school students.

“We have always valued education at Post 1533, so preserving the memory of a young man like Geffre through a scholarship named in his honor was very fitting,” said Ruben Villafranca, a VFW Post 1533 trustee and scholarship chairperson.

The decision to honor Geffre was voted upon by Post members in 2011, five years after Geffre lost his battle to brain cancer diagnosed while deployed to Kuwait between 2004 and 2005 with the Army’s 328th Human Resources Company.

Post 1533 began with two scholarships worth \$1,000 each in 2011, but has since allocated funds to donate between six and seven scholarships a year. In 2019 and 2020 alone, the Post awarded 13 yearly scholarships worth \$1,500 each.

Each year, Post 1533 members raise the funds through barbecue and Bingo nights at the Post, as well as receiving private donations from local businesses and residents such as the Geffres.

The program’s success has led to testimonials from former awardees, whose presence at yearly scholarship ceremonies alongside Post 1533 members encourage future participants to propel their own goals forward.

“For Geffre’s parents and the Post, the scholarship keeps a veteran’s memory alive. But it also helps our future leaders get their education,” Villafranca said. “It’s a blessing hearing past awardees come and talk to the youth and speak on how the scholarship has helped

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

406 W. 34th Street
Kansas City, MO 64111
Office 816.756.3390
Fax 816.968.1157

WASHINGTON OFFICE

200 Maryland Ave., N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20002
Office 202.543.2239
Fax 202.543.6719

info@vfw.org
www.vfw.org

them achieve their career goals.”

Despite not having the means to raise money for the 2021 campaign as a consequence of COVID-19, Villafranca and other Post 1533 trustees expect the program to continue in 2022.

“COVID difficulties had us decide to forgo this year’s scholarships, but it’s not the end,” Villafranca added. “We are very proud of the program and hope to continue it for many years to come.”