Proud to be of Service

A Minnesota community gets help from Post 1647

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VFW Post 1647 in Brainerd, Minnesota, is doing what it can to help veterans and local residents during the pandemic.

The Post maintains a robust website and it's been a hub for useful information. Their goal is to be a beneficial, hopeful and uplifting presence in the community.

"We are proud of our website which is updated almost daily to keep members and the public informed," said Post Chaplain and Webmaster Mark Persons.

"The BrainerdVFW.org website put up VA instructions for veterans who might be feeling ill. There also is a link so veterans can apply for COVID-19 financial grants. The home page has a chaplain's prayer as well as our encouraging radio ads which tell people, 'We will get through this and come out with our flags flying high.' "

The Post is known for charitable giving and activities throughout the year, and they're continuing to serve beyond providing online resources.

"The Post opened its doors to the Red Cross. In three days, 160 units of blood were donated. One donor was a woman dressed as the Statue of Liberty," Persons said.

Additionally, on the first day of the stay-at-home order, Auxiliary member Kathy Brastrup began sewing face masks. She's made more than 500 so far, including red, white and blue masks worn by the Honor Guard during a Memorial Day video ceremony.

"Memorial Day was a bit different this year. Instead of a crowd of hundreds, a video recording was made at the All Veterans Memorial in Brainerd," said Persons. "Post Commander Chip Borle played Taps to be part of the Taps Across America nationwide effort to honor our fallen."

All of these efforts by Post 1647 caught the attention of the local newspaper and their Memorial Day event was broadcast by two radio stations.

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"As a Vietnam veteran, I am glad and proud to be a member of the Brainerd VFW," Persons said.