Helping a Veteran in Need

In the hot summer month of July, a Veteran of the Vietnam War recently got a gift he could not even attempt to quantify in dollars. And this event was coordinated by one of our own Bexar AAA Care Specialist’ Ms. Susan Blevins.

The Veteran, in bad health and unable to do things that many of us consider normal chores when owning a home, had reached out to the Alamo Service Connection (ASC) to see if there were any services in the community that could assist. “Frank” had recently returned from the hospital after having a double bypass, and at 81 years old this was a life-threatening event. Too proud to ask, his spouse made the call because she felt there was no other choice and wanted him to feel that he had not let them family down by not attending to the home’s needs. After speaking with an ASC Care Specialist, she was encouraged to talk with our Veteran’s Program that had performed many community outreach efforts and regularly coordinates for such unmet needs in the Veteran community. Bobby Ehrig, MSGT, USA, (ret), our Lead Veteran Specialist, contacted the family, assessed their needs and current resources, and decided that this was something that could easily be accomplished. He set up a time to go to their home and discuss their concerns. After evaluating the Veteran’s problems, he found out that “Frank” had several medical problems after his major surgery and was not physically able to be outdoors for long periods of time or exert very much energy. In addition, they had a leak and because of his fragile state, he could not bend down to fix it. Bobby and his team made a plan to address the Veteran’s needs and reached out to the community for help. Ms. Susan Blevins, a Bexar Aging Care Specialist and proud Veteran supporter, felt that this was something she and her church volunteers could accomplish to honor his service.

On the next visit, after fixing a simple leak with their sink, Fredrick Vann, an Outreach Specialist with Bexar AAA and retired Army Veteran, asked “Frank” if he would allow us to have Susan contact him and see if they could also help. Within two weeks, a team of 10 volunteers marched onto the yard of “Frank” and paid it forward by helping this aging Veteran with something so simple, that it brought tears to his and his wife’s eyes. Thanks to Susan and the volunteers from Journey Church, located off of I-10 and Boerne Stage Road, the Veteran’s yard was groomed, trash was removed, grass cut, and a family renewed.
Many of us take for granted tasks so simple that we tend to forget how hard it is for aging seniors and Veterans to accomplish them. Without family support, many of the over 255,000 Veterans in the region are left alone and in a state of turmoil. Over 42% of Veterans in the region are age 60 and older and diagnosed with at least one disability. Hundreds of calls are received each week from Veterans, their family members, and other seniors just trying to survive and complete simple tasks like yard work, minor home repairs, and getting to medical appointments in Military City USA. It is because of the kind heart and caring ears of members of Bexar AAA, and community volunteers like Journey Church, that our great city has become the home for Veterans around the nation.