



Madison County Veterans Receive Special Care During the Holidays

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EDWARDSVILLE — Madison County Veterans Assistance recognizes employee for her contribution for getting five veteran's families selected for the greater St. Louis 100 Neediest Cases campaign.

“Our office manager, Devon Neal, was instrumental in setting up the United Way/VAC relationship, selecting, completing and submitting applications,” VAC Superintendent Brad Lavite said.



United Way of Greater St. Louis and the St. Louis Post-Dispatch have collaborated for more than five decades to put on the campaign. The VAC recognized Neal during its annual staff and board appreciation dinner Thursday night for her hard work and dedication.

“The selection of the five families came as a direct result of her diligence and caring heart,” Lavite said. “She consistently goes above and beyond what is expected for our veterans. She continues to do an outstanding job helping veterans each and every day she comes to work.”

Lavite said Neal provides additional assistance beyond what the VAC provides to ensure that veterans in need receive just a bit more.

“What may seem like a little is a lot for the five selected and the countless others she helps each and everyday,” he said.

Lavite said the selected veterans' names would not be given to protect their privacy, however one of the veterans selected will be spotlighted in the Post Dispatch profiled cases.

"Three of the selected families will get assistance to help with utilities and additional gifts and one of the veteran's dad's funeral bill is being paid by his adopter," Lavite said.

Lavite said if not for Neal, none of this would have been possible.

More than 60 social service agencies, working through the United Way, identify thousands of families and individuals in need. Volunteers then select 100 cases out of 4,300 cases to be profiled in the St. Louis Post Dispatch.

The profiles help raise awareness and encourage donations for the thousands of others in need. We make an effort to assist every case in some way.

"When Devon approached me about participating in this campaign, I was like OK that greats and that is all the effort that I put forth," Lavite said.

He commended Neal on her hard work because he had no idea of what to expect when she submitted their applications.

Neal said it's an honor to be recognized, but the true honor should go to the families in need.

"Getting selected as one of the 100 Neediest Cases is very difficult to do," Neal said. "In all my years working at other agencies and in the social service arena, never once has a story been selected and spotlighted despite many years of trying."

For more information or to adopt an individual or family visit www.100neediestcase.org or visit www.stltoday.com/news/special-reports/100-neediest/ to read more.