

Wreaths Across America's Mobile Education Exhibit Visits Alton At Riverfront Park

by Chris Rhodes, Reporter
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ALTON - The National Wreaths Across America's Mobile Education Exhibit paid Alton a visit from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Wednesday, August 12, at Riverfront Park.

Margaret Hopkins, organizer of the local Wreaths Across America event, said Wednesday's mobile visit was "a very special public opportunity to honor America's veterans."

Local volunteers who bring Wreaths Across America to Alton National Cemetery hosted the Wreaths Across America Mobile Education Exhibit as a kick-off to this year's fundraising effort to lay wreaths throughout Alton National Cemetery on Wreaths Across America Day, which is this December 19.

Hopkins, who founded and leads Wreaths Across America in Alton every year at the National Cemetery, was ecstatic to be selected to have America's Mobile Exhibit stop in her hometown.

"They made three stops in Illinois and we were one of them," she said. "It gives people an opportunity to view a film, talk to people, and learn about the program. They did proper COVID-19 procedures with cleaning after each group went into the trailer. The Muny Band also performed from 10 to 11 a.m. on Wednesday. We are looking for any volunteers who want to help us with the Wreaths Across America event at 11 a.m. on Dec. 19."

The goal of the WAA Education Exhibit is to bring local communities and our military together with education, stories, and interactive connections.

"The goal of The Wreaths Across America Mobile Education Exhibit is to build community awareness and understanding of the organization's yearlong mission to Remember, Honor, Teach," said Karen Worcester, executive director, Wreaths Across America. "However, in light of the current health crisis, we feel this exhibit has taken on even more meaning by providing the opportunity for people to safely participate in something with safety measures in place that is both educational and fun, while supporting and giving back to the community during this uncertain time."

Amber Caron, a WAA spokesperson said, "I'm proud to have the opportunity to mimic the courage and valor of our country's veterans by forging ahead with this event and offering folks the hope we can still be united for a great cause. I'm also hopeful that families use this as an opportunity to teach community spirit, as well as having significant meaning for so many."

Hopkins said she was uncertain what this year's Wreaths Across America event in December would look like exactly with COVID-19, but she said the mission will be carried out.

“We are waiting on guidelines for how to do everything,” she said of this year. “Each year we raise about \$5,600 to provide wreaths for every one of the gravesites at the National Cemetery.”

Hopkins said fundraising for the 2020 Alton Wreaths Across America event will begin in the fall.

[Dan Brannan also contributed to this story.](#)