

# Group helps keep the heat on

## Keep Wisconsin Warm/Cool Fund

### Connection

WINTER 2018

Now More Than Ever the Keep Wisconsin Warm/Cool Fund (KWW/CF) Provides Struggling Wisconsinites with a Proven Survival Safety Net

**Keep Wisconsin Warm/Cool Fund is responding to the growing energy crisis faced by Wisconsin Households**

Every year, thousands of Wisconsin's most vulnerable residents are faced with disconnection because of the high cost of energy. For decades, Keep Wisconsin Warm/Cool Fund has been able to provide that bridge for the gap between rising energy costs and what struggling households are legitimately able to pay towards their heat and power. KWW/CF has always been the go-to agency for people when they have no place else to turn to. "People hit hardest are the working poor with children, the elderly and disabled," says Energy Services, Inc. Executive Director and Keep Wisconsin Warm/Cool Fund and Heat and Housing for Heroes Founder Tim Bruer. "It's not uncommon for us to be working with veterans with service-related

disabilities who have high energy costs."

While housing and food costs have increased over the years, energy costs have increased at an even higher rate.

"The accumulated costs are such that incomes simply haven't kept pace, especially amongst some of the highest risk populations like the veterans where we have seen 200-300 percent increase in recent years," Bruer says. "While government-related assistance, which was originally intended to provide a buffer against those increased costs, continues to have a positive impact, the fact is that the gap is growing between the actual energy costs of Wisconsin's most vulnerable

NEED cont. pg. 4



ABOVE: Golfers at the 17th Annual KWW/CF Charity Golf Classic and Silent Auction shown here getting ready for a great day of golf in Lake Geneva, WI.

## 17th Annual Keep Wisconsin Warm/Cool Fund (KWW/CF) Charity Golf Classic Once Again an Overwhelming Success

**Golfers, contributors, volunteers, community stakeholders and more join together to make a difference**

The 17th Annual Keep WI Warm/Cool Fund Charity Golf Classic was held Tuesday, August 7th, 2018 at Geneva National Golf Club in Lake Geneva. The event was once again an overwhelming success, raising \$279,000 that will go towards helping thousands of Wisconsin households in need including Veterans, elderly, disabled and working families with young children in crisis. Because of the generosity of the many golfers, corporate sponsors, donors and stakeholders that took part in the outing, Wisconsinites in need will be able to keep the heat and power on. The outing also helped raise awareness to the cause of Keep Wisconsin Warm/Cool Fund and Heat and Housing for Heroes initiatives.

A special thank you to our angel donors, Wisconsin Pipe Trades,

SARA Investments, MIG Commercial Real Estate, and Mortenson Investment Group, who made it possible for a number of veteran foursomes to participate in the event.

Carved out of the rolling country side, the Geneva National Golf Club features 54 holes of Legendary Golf designed by the masters, Arnold Palmer, Gary Player and Lee Trevino. Golfers at the 17th Annual Keep Wisconsin Warm/Cool Fund Charity Golf Classic got the chance to experience three of the best golf courses in Wisconsin at one club.

Dozens of foursomes of golfers hit the links to play a scramble-style golf tournament. There were team prizes and individual prizes for separate contests like longest drive and longest putt along with fun activities

GOLF cont. pg. 3

## Consider Donating Today

Last year, because of the generosity of Wisconsinites, over \$1 million contributed assisted 5,300 households facing an energy-related crisis or homelessness. Those most vulnerable included:

1,900 senior citizens

1,140 working families with young children

2,952 people with disabilities

922 Veterans

Visit [www.kwwf.org](http://www.kwwf.org) or use the enclosed envelope to make a difference for those most in need!



# Utilities and Their Customer's Generosity Continues to Bridge the Gap Between Rising Costs and Limited Incomes

## ***Overwhelming generosity helps keep the heat and power on for households most vulnerable throughout Wisconsin during the bitter cold winter months***

The customer donations through utilities and the generosity of donors is so important for what Keep Wisconsin Warm/Cool Fund (KWW/CF) is able to do for people in need. The real unsung heroes have been the tens of thousands of contributors statewide from customers and donors every month. On top of this, thankfully, there has been a growing number of individuals from the Marinette area in northern Wisconsin to Madison in the south, both small and large, who have included Keep Wisconsin Warm/Cool Fund in their estate planning by donating as much as \$10,000 each.

"These dollars have been earmarked towards those who are at the highest risk – especially those veterans who are facing homelessness," says Energy Services, Inc. Executive Director Tim Bruer. "The impact of their dollars is amazing. As we move forward, we're going to work towards expanding on our efforts to capture more of that generosity because this is a cause that people can touch and feel right in their own communities. In addition to having an incredible 90 percent success rate of those previously facing homelessness our angel donors have made it

possible for us to also target veterans with incomes well below the federal poverty level. Over a thousand veterans that own their modest homes have physical disabilities and are considered high energy users, often due to life support systems, have received the financial assistance necessary to reduce their energy cost burden by over a third.

"Those workers and volunteers focusing on our targeting efforts are so emotionally impacted by the tremendous sacrifices and unmet needs they uncover while working to prioritize the KWWCF/Heat and Housing for Heroes targeted assistance towards those most victimized by poverty. In most cases, not only had the veterans been current with their high energy costs, but most had less than \$200 to survive on each month. **We only wish that our angel donors who have requested to remain anonymous could experience first hand the gratitude of those that they made such a difference in their lives.**"

Customers have been able to make many donations through their major utilities. WE Energies has also been one of the original charter mem-

ber that have really given Keep Wisconsin Warm/Cool Fund and Heat and Housing for Heroes a boost over the years.

"We go all the way back with Keep Wisconsin Warm/Cool Fund ... since the start," says Mike Mueller, Manager of Low Income & Medical Condition Programs for We Energies. "I can remember back when they were a pilot and they have been able to sustain and grow over the years and help more and more people."

We Energies helps low-income individuals pay their heating bills through a Keep Wisconsin Warm/Cool Fund donation that directly helps families, seniors and others with limited resources pay their energy bills. Making a contribution is easy for We Energies customers and you can make a one-time or monthly contribution, which appears monthly on your energy bill until you end participation.

"We have a way for our customers to make donations through their billing and make direct donations. We, of course, make year-end donations from our company, which have been pretty historic. It's probably close to \$10 million," Mueller says. "Over the

years, we've also been a supporter of the annual Golf Outing and other fundraisers of KWW/CF along the way."

Mueller says that We Energies really appreciates the efforts of KWW/CF and Heat and Housing for Heroes.

"It's another great safety net that compliments energy assistance. It's available at times when energy assistance may have run out for different communities," he says. "I think that with the whole Heat for Heroes initiative, it's a way to focus on particular in-need-type groups like our veterans."

"With our veterans, specifically, it's a way to target groups that may have not known about some of the programs that are out there," Mueller continues. "With the outreach that Tim and his team have done reaching out to these veterans groups, they are getting the people the help that needs it. Some of these are people that weren't part of the energy assistance network. They didn't even know about it. So, not only are they helped with Heat for Heroes dollars, but it also connects them in with the whole network of energy assistance and low-income weatherization."

UTILITIES **cont. pg. 6**

## Local Musicians Come Together for 5th Annual Flannel Fest, Raising Funds and Awareness for Those Most in Need

***Flannel Fest held at two locations this year featured bands that played to raise money and awareness for KWW***

The 5th annual Flannel Fest, a celebration of the local and national Americana music scene, was held at two locations this year on Friday, November 2nd and Saturday, November 3rd and raised significant money for Keep Wisconsin Warm/Cool Fund and Heat and Housing for Heroes.

"This was our 5th year and it's really starting to come into its own," says Flannel Fest organizer and co-founder Beth Kille. "I really feel like this was the best year so far in so many ways."

Flannel Fest North was held at the Gibson Music Hall in Appleton, Wisconsin on Friday, November 2nd and Flannel Fest South was held at the High Noon Saloon in Madison on Saturday, November 3rd.

"This was our 5th year in Madison and our 2nd year up in Appleton," says Flannel Fest organizer and co-founder Eric Kjeiland. "They both were incredible events this year. I believe we raised over \$6,000 this year which will be combined with a matching

funds."

"The bands really give us a discounted rate to play at Flannel Fest and we really appreciate that," Kille adds. "That's huge, and at the end of the night that's what helps us make such a generous contribution."

Those bands, who played both venues, were Miles Nielsen and the Rusted Hearts, The Mascot Theory, Beth Kille Band, Well Known Strangers, Driveway Thriftdwellers, Kurt Gunn and Amanda James.

"We had a bigger crowd in Appleton and in Madison than we had last year. It was nice to see the event grow," Kille says. "It's really cool to be able to raise money for an organization like Keep Wisconsin Warm/Cool Fund and also celebrate the regional Americana music scene. We have such great bands and everybody wears flannel and we have so much fun. Great music for a great cause."

Kille is a veteran on the Madison music scene, having released three records with her former band, Clear Blue Betty,



ABOVE: Beth Kille, co-founder of Flannel Fest, singing with her band during the concert at High Noon Saloon in Madison, WI.

three solo records, and three collaborative projects in 2014 with other Madison musicians. She first learned about the KWW/CF when she saw it on her Madison Gas & Electric energy bill and hatched the idea.

"This year, we are going to be making the biggest Flannel Fest donation that we have ever made to Keep Wisconsin Warm/Cool Fund," she said. "We're still waiting for the ticket money

to come in from the Appleton show. This will be the biggest by far. I'm just thrilled at how far we've come in terms of the money we've been able to raise and donate.

Sponsors like Spatz Bar in Appleton and Festival Foods really came through to help with the event, Kille added.

"It's been fun to watch people  
FLANNEL FEST **cont. pg. 5**



# GOLF continued from cover

throughout the course and opportunities for people to win prizes while they were golfing.

**The 2018 Charity Golf Classic was also an opportunity to present Keep Wisconsin Warm/Cool Fund Extra Mile awards to our Individual, Corporate and Labor Extra Mile recipients, nominees considered were those who had demonstrated both personal and organizational support well beyond the norm. Their efforts without a doubt has had a major impact on our mission or has been key to the success of a number of our special events like our 17th Annual Keep Wisconsin Warm/Cool Fund Charity Golf Classic. We are pleased to announce for 2018 our two Individual Extra Mile recipients are Wayne Harris and Steve Breitlow.**

“Wayne Harris has had a long history of getting involved in the grassroots in a number of worthwhile causes including Gilda’s House, The Ronald McDonald House and several others. Through thick and thin, Wayne has always been one of our more unabashed supporters of our mission, our purpose and our campaign fundraising activities including our golf outing,” Energy Services, Inc. Executive Director and KWW/CF and Heat and Housing for Heroes founder Tim Bruer says. “Especially during the melt down of the economy, Wayne was not shy about putting a tremendous amount of his own time and effort to mobilize support

and additional resources for Keep Wisconsin Warm/Cool Fund Golf Outing.”

“As co-chair of the annual golf outing, he has a big part of holding it all together,” Bruer adds. “He is more than worthy of being the recipient of the Extra Mile Award.”

Steve Breitlow, business manager for the Plumbers Local 75, was also selected as for the 2018 Individual Extra Mile Award. He has been a huge supporter of Keep Wisconsin Warm/Cool Fund and Heat and Housing for Heroes. “Nobody has spent more time at a moment’s notice to continually support our golf outings over the years,” Bruer says. “He has spent countless hours organizing for us and was the principal catalyst behind our very successful KWWCF/Heat and Housing for Heroes ad campaign which literally tripled the number of vets coming through. To date for 2018 a record 19,400+ veterans were provided much needed crisis assistance grants as part of our KWWCF/Heat and Housing for Heroes campaign.”

**Historically we have recognized both Corporate and labor organizations or individuals for going the extra mile. For our Extra Mile Award for 2018 we are also pleased to announce Steamfitters Local 601, Joel Zielke for their historical and incredible support today at the Keep Wisconsin Warm/Cool Fund and Heat and Housing for Heroes Charity Golf Classic.**



ABOVE: One of the many, many dedicated volunteers shown here assisting with the First Weber Group Foundation Putting Contest. Volunteer help is vital to running the KWW/CF Charity Golf Classic smoothly.

BELOW: The beautiful golf course at Geneva National in Lake Geneva, WI has been home to the KWW/CF golf outing for two years now.



Joel Zielke, Business Manager of Steamfitters Local 601, also accepted the award. Steamfitters Local 601 started the Heats On Program over 30 years ago with the idea that once a year the guys would volunteer their time on a Saturday in autumn during the start of the heating season to check out furnaces in the community.

“In recent years they have really focused on our veterans and have gone out to their homes at no charge to do whatever is necessary to keep them in their homes,” Bruer says. “Recently they had four furnaces where carbon monoxide was detected but they were able to work with contractors to replace the furnaces at no cost to the vet.”

“Joel’s leadership, along with

## Morgan Murphy Media, Channel 3000, WISC-TV and Madison Magazine Broadens Their Involvement and Continues to Build On the Success of the Mission of KWW/CF

### *Popular calendar raises awareness and funds for families, Veterans and others in need in Wisconsin*

“They were one of the first, beyond the traditional public service announcements, to really mobilize corporate support to raise public awareness and directly involve themselves in the ongoing fundraising activities of Keep Wisconsin Warm/Cool Fund, and more recently, Heat and Housing for Heroes,” says Energy Services, Inc. Executive Director Tim Bruer.

One of their most popular corporate projects has been their annual weather calendar – a photographic collection of beautiful Madison scenery that is very popular locally. The Wisconsin Weather Calendar is filled with daily weather facts and beautiful photos from around Wisconsin. A portion of the proceeds go to the Keep Wisconsin Warm/Cool Fund helping keep the heat on for Wisconsin families in need.

The Wisconsin Weather Calendar is produced by WISC-TV and

Steve Breitlow and others, have been at the forefront of putting positive action to providing a survival safety net to ensure that no vet goes without heat,” Bruer adds.

“Importantly, the Pipe Trades have also demonstrated their tremendous commitment towards the training and employment of veterans throughout Wisconsin. We have seen firsthand the success of their ability to effectively reach out and achieve gainful employment into the trades. It has been rewarding to have experienced a number of returning veterans that we initially assisted, then becoming proudly employed within the trades.” said Bruer.

Channel3000.com in partnership with Energy Services, Inc., and is a collaborative effort to bring heat to those in need in our community, particularly veterans.

“Since the beginning, Morgan Murphy Media – WISC-TV, Channel3000.com, and Madison Magazine -- has strongly supported the efforts of KWW/CF in its ongoing endeavor to keep the heat on for the state of Wisconsin’s most vulnerable,” says Tom Keeler, Vice President & General Manager of WISC-TV-TVW-Channel3000.com. “Tim Brewer and ESI share some of the same values that are very important to Morgan Murphy Media including serving our respective communities through on-going public service.”

Over the years, Channel 3000 has also contributed tens of thousands of in-kind production time to help make Keep Wisconsin Warm/Cool Fund’s ad campaign successful.

MORGAN MURPHY cont. pg. 7



ABOVE: Weatherman Gary Cannalite shown here with a past weather calendar from 2014 when the partnership between KWW/CF and Channel 3000 started.



# Dedicated Caring Crafters Use their Talents to Raise Funds and Awareness for Veterans in Need, Keeping Them Safe in Their Homes

***Group uses their talents to create crafts that benefit Veterans in need***

Literally thousands of our Wisconsin veterans are forced to choose between eating or heating each and every day. A group of women in Watertown, Wisconsin, are using their ability to knit and sew and are putting their talents to use to make a big difference in those veterans' lives.

The Caring Crafters are a group of over 60 individuals who meet every Tuesday from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. at the Watertown Community Center and make handmade items for various charities including scarves, hats, mittens, lap robes, prayer shawls, and much more. Watertown is located in southeastern Wisconsin, approximately midway between Madison and Milwaukee.

"We are a group of ladies who were looking to help out our community and to help out locally. Everyone is different: we have knitters, we have crocheters, we have people who sew. The group started almost 8 years ago now. We've been around for a little while now," says Leslie Krueger.

While Caring Crafters started with just a few people, they are now up to 60 members. They now make things for 7 different charities. Keep Wisconsin Warm/Cool Fund (KWW/CF) and Heat and Housing for Heroes is the only group that they sell things for. "We do chemo hats, prayer shawls, hats, gloves and mittens for all ages," Krueger says. "We do so many different things. Most of our yarn is donated to us. We make whatever we can with whatever we have."

The Caring Crafters group is

open to everyone and is always a great opportunity for fellowship and pattern sharing.

"Every year, we look at what we have going on and who we are supporting and if their needs change we try to grow with them," Krueger says. "We pick up charities here and there. If everybody works on something different, sometimes you get a ton of hats and not much else. But it all depends on what people decide to make." In fall of 2016, one of the Caring Crafters members discovered Keep Wisconsin Warm/Cool Fund and Heat and Housing Heroes in an ad on TV. "We had been working with the Wounded Warrior Project prior to that but we weren't happy because the money wasn't staying in state and we couldn't see any results from what we are doing. It was going somewhere else," Krueger remembers.

"When she found out that Keep Wisconsin Warm/Cool Fund was local, the previous leader of the group decided it would be a good fit," Krueger adds. "We're very happy with the money staying here in state and we have a lot of people in the group who have a veteran connection including a few people in the group who are veterans. Everyone is more than happy to help out with Heat for Heroes."

Caring Crafters have not only contributed a significant amount of dollars to Keep Wisconsin Warm/Cool Fund but they have also raised so much public awareness for Heat and Housing for Heroes.

"I think it's hilarious how much we raise



ABOVE: One of the "Caring Crafters" sorting through donated yarn for creating crafts that make a difference for people in need in the community.

for Heat for Heroes off dishcloths and nylon netting scrubbies. It blows my mind," Krueger laughs. "I swear everybody here in Watertown has at least five of our washcloths." Anyone who knows how to knit, crochet, or loom are welcome to join Caring Crafters who make dishcloths and scrubbies and sell them and then send KWWCF/Heat and Housing for Heroes the money. They've put together 70-90 quilts for KWWCF/Heat and Housing for Heroes.

"They've donated those to us and the vast majority will go to veterans and high-risk people with respiratory issues," says Energy Services Executive Director and KWW/CF and

Heat and Housing for Heroes Founder Tim Bruer. "We're in the process right now of identifying those most at risk with respiratory problems." As Caring Crafters continue to knit and crochet away for various charities, they are really committed to the Keep Wisconsin Warm/Cool Fund and particularly the Heat and Housing for Heroes initiative.

"We love our partnership with Keep Wisconsin Warm/Cool Fund. We love when they come in and spend time with us. And we were more than happy when they brought the [Schoep's] ice cream," Krueger says. One thing they can always use is more yarn. If anybody happens to have

CRAFTERS cont. pg. 6

## NEED continued from cover

and their incomes.

"The time of need has never been greater. Government dollars have been frozen in time," he adds.

The Keep Wisconsin Warm/Cool Fund was established to keep the heat and power on for those thousands of families in crisis with no place to turn. Through public, private, and community partnerships, KWW/CF provides preventative services and the financial assistance necessary to alleviate potential life-threatening energy-related emergencies during Wisconsin's harsh winters.

"Now, more than ever, the generosity and active support of the Keep Wisconsin Warm/Cool Fund and Heat and Housing for Heroes is necessary

because it literally makes the difference whether thousands of households each year have people staying safely in their homes and keeping their heat and power on," Bruer says.

The generosity of people of all sectors who stepped up to the plate and provided help for people in need has been amazing. Last year, because of the generosity of Wisconsinites, over \$1.5 million contributed assisted 5,900 households facing an energy-related crises or homelessness. Those most vulnerable included; 1,598 Senior Citizens, 820 working families with young children, 1,837 people with disabilities and 1,160 veterans.

"For many of these cases, the only alternative they have because they have no place else to turn is

prematurely being thrown into institutional care, being homeless, or literally choosing between eating and heating," Bruer says.

Keep Wisconsin Warm/Cool Fund provides, as a last resort, a critical safety net that helps keep people safe in their homes. Because of the generosity of the energy utilities, stockholders and Wisconsinites they've been able to make a difference in these households.

"In contrast to many charities, the appeal of Keep Wisconsin Warm/Cool Fund is that it is literally in every zip code in Wisconsin for assistance and services and has a proven track record of over 70 percent that are assisted and helped," Bruer says. "We're able to break the cycle of reoccurring disconnections and crisis situations.

For those veterans who are homeless, we have an over 90 percent success rate over three years of keeping our heroes off the street.

"None of this would have been possible but for the generosity of our donors," he adds.

***Your contribution to KWW/CF can make a tremendous difference in someone's life. Donation to KWW/CF can be made by sending a check to:***

***PO Box 68, Madison, WI 53701 or by calling 1-800-891-WARM.***

***For more information, please visit our website at [www.kwwf.org](http://www.kwwf.org).***





# THE SALUTE

★★★★ *A Heat for Heroes Publication*

WINTER 2018

## Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs and its Veterans Outreach and Recovery Program Working Hand-in-Hand with KWW/CF/Heat and Housing for Heroes

**State agency, nonprofit broaden their collaborative partnership in making a difference to those veterans most vulnerable**

Since its inception, KWWCF/Heat and Housing for Heroes has continuously grown its relationship with countless businesses, organizations and the surrounding community to aid in the mission of helping veterans who need assistance.

For the past two years, its relationship with the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs and its Veterans Outreach and Recovery Program has been the catalyst in reaching thousands of in-need veterans each year.

**"The VORP was one of the first programs or organizations that we built a solid bridge on. That relationship has been significantly enhanced with Secretary Daniel J. Zimmerman's leadership. He along with his staff team places a special emphasis on providing the support and assistance necessary to veterans who are the most vulnerable,"** KWWCF/Heat and Housing for Heroes founder Tim Bruer said. "I think we've built a survival safety net that's timely and predictable and that focuses on providing a hand up and empowering that individual or that veteran in crisis."

The WDVA's VORP works to connect veterans to community services and provide case management and support with a special focus on treatment and recovery. The program started in 2014, covering 49 counties in the state. Because of its success in identifying veterans in need and providing them with resources to get back to a sustainable lifestyle, the program was expanded earlier this year to cover all 72 counties in Wisconsin.

"This has been a huge asset for our veterans," VORP Program Manager Lori Kirchgatter said of the program's relationship with Heat for

Heroes. "(Heat for Heroes) has a slightly higher income threshold for assistance, so vets who get denied utility assistance by their county may still qualify for utility assistance through Heat for Heroes."

The WDVA's VORP team consists of 11 outreach and recovery coordinators, each covering specific counties and working to provide essential resources to in-need veterans and their families.

Whenever a coordinator identifies a veteran who needs help that KWWCF/Heat and Housing for Heroes can offer, the organization is at the top of the list for referrals, WDVA Division of Veterans Services Administrator Ken Grant said.

"Throughout Wisconsin, we have so many veterans who are dealing with utility and rent concerns," Grant said. "Heat for Heroes will respond immediately and has, with its donor dollars, the resources often to prevent a veteran from being homeless. In many cases, they are able to stop utilities from being disconnected or provide the funding necessary to keep a struggling veteran safely in their homes."

Bruer said the mission of KWWCF/Heat and Housing for Heroes has always been to form and expand relationships with initiatives that already exist to better assist veterans and their families. The work of the VORP often works hand-in-hand with KWWCF/Heat and Housing for Heroes to accomplish that goal.

"We've always wanted to complement, not duplicate or compete with other efforts on the grassroots level," Bruer said. "We look to organizations

VORP cont. pg.3A



Heat for Heroes and KWW/CF Staff members Noel Ayala and Terry McGraw standing near the Heat for Heroes banner at one of the many events attended to raise awareness for the plight of Veterans in need across Wisconsin.

## Bankers, Developers, Contractors, and Construction Companies Broaden their Support for KWW/CF/Heat and Housing for Heroes

**Commitment of business community continues to inspire**

The need for a grassroots effort to help those in need became clear during a bitterly-cold winter in the 1980s.

The awareness of the growing number of people enduring life-threatening situations was amplified by the tragic death of hypothermia of an elderly woman during that winter. Months later, do to her utilities being disconnected at no fault of her own, an elderly and disabled victim also died of heat stroke during the stifling hot summer with no place to turn.

Something needed to be done, and the community acted to assure those most vulnerable during Wisconsin's harsh seasons wouldn't face a crisis, like being unable to afford power or heat,

alone.

Energy Services Inc. was founded as a survival safety net for those in need of assistance for power or heating, and the initiative has grown to help low-income households across the state during times of need. But programs such as that wouldn't be possible without the generosity and support of others. Several industries in particular were anxious to lead the charge.

"Instead of looking strictly to government we chose to take a page out of the old Americana playbook and reach out to private and community sectors for support into the next decade. Along with broadening our

BANKERS cont. pg.4A 1A



# Wisconsin County Veteran Service Officers are a Critical Asset to KWW/CF/Heat and Housing for Heroes Organization's relationship continues to grow

The impact KWWCF/Heat and Housing for Heroes has on veterans and their families wouldn't be possible without its relationship with those who serve veterans throughout the state. It's those boots on the ground who hear firsthand from the veterans and families who are struggling that allows KWWCF/Heat and Housing for Heroes to lend a hand.

Among those sources, the most consistent since the organization's founding has been Wisconsin County Veteran Service Officers stationed in each of Wisconsin's 72 counties and 11 tribes. The CVSOs act as a resource and advocate for veterans and the families living in their respective county. They offer advice and refer veterans to various places to access benefits, resources and opportunities.

"CVSOs are greatly involved in working with organizations like ours to make sure veterans and their families have heat, power, or avert homelessness," KWWCF/Heat and Housing for Heroes Executive Director Tim Bruer said. "They also get veterans off the streets and work to identify those veterans hit hardest by their escalating cost of energy. Sadly, many of these veterans that we've worked together with are without heat or power, a basic necessity that's become an unaffordable luxury. But county VSOs are one of the major response teams and are frontline problem solvers for veterans who are struggling throughout the state." With dozens of veteran-related causes across the state, the list is long for Ali Nelson, the CVSO in Kenosha County. But at the top is KWWCF/Heat and Housing for Heroes, he said, adding that he can always count on the non-profit to deliver in times of need.

**"It's a terrific organization that goes out of its way to help veterans in crisis,"** Nelson said of KWWCF/Heat and Housing for Heroes. **"I can count on Heat for Heroes as one of the five-star organizations that help veterans who may be struggling financially. It could be utility problems or vets facing homelessness with no place else to turn. With all the work I've done with those guys (Heat for Heroes), there's been a positive outcome whenever I refer someone."**

Nelson proudly served in the U.S. Navy for 28 1/2 years. Upon his transition back into civilian life, he worked an office job but struggled to find his calling. When the opportunity to give back to veterans and serve as a 2A wealth of information for them

became available, he jumped at the chance. He's been involved with the CVSO Association of Wisconsin since 2011 and has worked in collaboration with KWWCF/Heat and Housing for Heroes ever since, he said.

"The gratification is beyond just getting a paycheck every two weeks," Nelson said. "I'd do it for free because of the joy I get from helping these veterans who need assistance. It's hard to explain how it feels to wake up every day and serve veterans."

**Nelson said he refers many in-need veterans to KWWCF/Heat and Housing for Heroes every month because he knows they will constantly come through. He's become so sure of it, that he asks representatives from the organization to come to the annual CVSO conference to ensure all others are aware of KWWCF/Heat and Housing for Heroes and its offerings.**

**"I could not do my job without them,"** Nelson said. **"They really help me, and I need their assistance to help other veterans."**

Much of the same applies to Adam Flood, the CVSO of La Crosse County. He said that on average, he refers an in-need veteran and his or her family to KWWCF/Heat and Housing for Heroes every other month.

**"In La Crosse County, we have a commission that's able to assist veterans to prevent energy cut off or eviction,"** Flood said. **"In some cases, the veterans' bill due is too substantial for the commission to take on by itself. But, through partnership with Heat for Heroes, we have been able to work together to ensure veterans are taken care of."**

Recently, a veteran came forward to Flood with an eviction and utility disconnect notice with a combined cost of about \$3,000, a number that La Crosse County was unable to help with alone. Flood contacted KWWCF/Heat and Housing for Heroes, and the organization worked to keep the veteran in their home with their heat on within just several days.

**"The ability to ensure that a veteran finds stability during times of problems is instrumental in preventing so many additional problems for veterans,"** Flood said. **"It's only through collaboration that these moments are possible. Most of the time, one agency cannot bear the problem on its own."**

Bruer said KWWCF/Heat and Housing for Heroes has a "12-24 hour rule" where service comes as soon as



ABOVE: The Heat for Heroes van, generously donated and maintained by Schmidt Auto Inc., travels around the state of WI to raise awareness and funds for Veterans facing energy-related emergencies.

BELOW: Many Veterans attend community events, such as the group shown below at an event in Marathon County, to learn more about the Heat for Heroes program which provides need based energy assistance grants to help keep the HEAT and POWER on for those most vulnerable.



humanly possible. "With their involvement and participation, we're able to expedite emergency assistance," he said. "Those county VSOs have really stepped up to the plate and have been critical to our success.

**"Over time, emergency situations have been avoided for**

**thousands of veterans because of that relationship ... we've taken what was originally a fragmented network and we've been able to seamlessly provide a comprehensive safety net that can respond in less than 24 hours."**



# Schmidt's Auto Inc. Support Grows with Their Popular 1937 Classic Divco KWW/CF-Schoep's Ice Cream Truck and the Heat and Housing for Heroes "Vet Mobile"

## **Multi-generational family-owned business continues to help community**

Longtime supporters of the community, as soon as Mike and John Schmidt heard what KWWCF/Heat and Housing for Heroes was doing, they wanted to extend a helping hand to families in need, especially struggling veterans.

The Schmidts, co-owners of Schmidt's Auto Inc., were immediately sold on the idea, offering to help the organization in any way. The family-owned business gifted and restored a converted ice cream truck for use in fundraising and outreach activities. Recognizing the importance of the impact the Divco ice cream truck has had, later unexpectedly, the family also contributed a converted van. The "vet mobile" has proven not only to be invaluable for special veteran events but with its patriotic graphics it too has become an incredible crowd pleaser.

"It's been amazing how many veterans, often in crowds, approach us with their appreciation for our mission after they see the 'vet mobile'." – Noel Ayala, Veterans Services Advocate for Heat and Housing for Heroes

**"Who wouldn't want to help out?"** Schmidt's Auto Inc. co-owner Mike Schmidt said. **"Whether it's helping veterans or providing heat for someone who can't afford it themselves (Keep Wisconsin Warm/Cool Fund), it's nice to be able to help out."**

The truck has an old-school body set atop of a late model Chevrolet van, which the Schmidt family renovated, and Vern's Body Shop in

Middleton worked some of their body shop magic to bring to perfection. Their support didn't just end there, Schmidt's Auto Inc. continues to maintain both vehicles to this day.

KWWCF/Heat and Housing for Heroes Founder Tim Bruer compared the ice cream truck to the Oscar Meyer Weinermobile, adding that it's become a widely recognized and appreciated fixture at events and parades.

"Hundreds of veterans and Wisconsinites during parades or special activities approach us or give us a thumbs up and thank our donors for making such a difference for a veteran in crisis," Bruer also said. "(The Schmidts) don't like any fanfare or attention to themselves, but they've probably been the most silent angel donors we've had since our inception."

Schmidt's Auto Inc. has been a staple in Madison for more than 80 years. The family and Bruer have been lifelong friends. When Bruer made contact regarding KWWCF/Heat and Housing for Heroes in its infancy, Schmidt's Auto Inc. was eager to contribute and help it grow.

**"We're a southside family-owned business, and whenever the neighborhood association calls us and asks for help, that's what we do,"** Mike Schmidt said. **"We're a company that kind of stands in the background ... we don't really like the publicity. We do it because we want to do it."**

**"If Tim wanted something, and he thought there was a way we**



ABOVE: Mike and John Schmidt, from Schmidt Auto Inc., as caricatures featured on the back of the vintage ice cream truck that the brothers donated and refurbished for KWW/CF to use at ice cream socials around the state.

**could help, we would gladly help."**

The family's support doesn't end with helping our nation's heroes by supporting the organization. It also supports various causes in the community, like the Boys and Girls Club, the Make-a-

Wish Foundation and the Southside Raiders youth football team.

"They are the epitome of old Americana where neighbors and small businesses come together to make a difference," Bruer said of the company.

## **VORP continued from 1A**

and programs like the VORP to guide us and take ownership over our mission and purpose."

"We like exhausting every possible opportunity to work collaboratively and together, and the VORP's ability to get into thousands of doors and areas that other organizations can't is very important.

The bond doesn't end there, as KWWCF/Heat and Housing for Heroes has expanded its program to help with housing for veterans in crisis. Grant said that KWWCF/Heat and Housing for Heroes has been instrumental in ensuring veterans and their families have a roof over their heads.

"Of all the categories of needs that veterans have, housing has continued to be the most important issue," he said. "Heat for Heroes helps to fill that void by providing the first month

of rent and the security deposit when appropriate.

"The importance of this organization is huge in the state of Wisconsin, and that's reflected by the continued number of veterans they assist each year."

Kirchgatter said the support and response she's received from KWWCF/Heat and Housing for Heroes time and time again has gone a long way in serving veterans and their families, saving many lives and hardships in the process.

**"They understand that we are not just talking about heat and housing, but peoples' lives,"** she said. **"They care about those they serve, and they go above and beyond on tough cases to find unique ways to help them out."**



ABOVE: The now famous KWW/CF ice cream truck decked out with ice cream hats and golf clubs at this year's 17th Annual KWW/CF Charity Golf Classic held at Geneva National in Lake Geneva, WI.



# BANKERS continued from 1A

support with trade labor organizations we enhanced our campaign by enlisting the support of the construction industry, the real estate development community and the financial sector,” said Energy Services, Inc. Tim Bruer.

“We were one of the first locally based non-profit organizations to look to the non government sector in a big way,” Bruer said.

Following the successes of the Keep Wisconsin Warm/Cool Fund, Bruer with many others focused on broadening the KWW/CF and focused on the growing unmet survival needs of veterans in crisis. After unprecedented success within these sectors’s support our charitable mission was expanded into responding to the growing energy and homelessness areas faced by veterans in crisis.

Without a lot of prompting because of the nonprofit’s mission, Bruer received the help and commitment he needed to get KWWCF/Heat and Housing for Heroes off the ground.

**Businesses such as Ideal Builders, Findorff, Tri-North Builders, CG Schmidt, MIG Commercial Real Estate, SARA Investments, North Central Group and Hovde Properties have all demonstrated their support along with Park Bank, Oregon Community Bank, Capital Bank, Bank of Wisconsin Dells, and Morgan Stanley-The Phelps Group giving back to those who served and saw an opportunity to do so with the organization.**

Ideal Builders, one of the fastest growing construction companies,

with its President & CEO, Dave Martin, was one of the first to step forward and generate a significant amount of support for the fund and the KWWCF/Heat and Housing for Heroes initiative. In spite of the tremendous amount of demand on his personal time, Dave Martin has always been available on a moment’s notice to lend a hand. Not only have they been incredibly generous with their financial support but Dave is always the first to offer to actively participate in a number of fund-raising activities.

“We’ve been supporters of the Keep Wisconsin Warm/Cool Fund for a long time, we feel that’s an important initiative,” Hovde Properties Mike Slavish said of the efforts. “Tim’s done a fantastic job leveraging those funds and finding a way to give them to vets in need of that assistance.”

For Slavish, the military is especially near and dear to him. Both his father and grandfather served in the military, and he wanted to help in any way possible. He mobilizes Hovde Properties to support KWWCF/Heat and Housing for Heroes’ annual golf outing and also offers other resources wherever needed.

“It’s always been an important initiative for me,” Slavish said. “I think we as citizens have an obligation to take care of those who help defend our freedom.”

The same rang true for SARA Investment Real Estate President and CEO Eric Schwartz. While he doesn’t have any direct military affiliation, the mission inspired him to support the

cause.

**“If you help protect this country and you’re left in a situation where you have no heat in your home, I can’t imagine a more desperate and more bizarre situation for our veterans,”** Schwartz said. **“You put your life on the line to protect our families and you end up not having heat in the winter.”**

With various veterans’ initiatives already existing, it was the results that mattered to Schwartz. He became fully committed upon seeing the organization’s successes of helping those veterans in need.

**“This one is especially important because it helps serve the veterans of our state,”** he said. **“I’ve heard from many commanders that Wisconsin’s veterans are a cut above the rest, and we need to protect those folks at the end of the day, because they protected us.”**

Tri-North is in its first year of involvement with the Keep Wisconsin Warm/Cool Fund and the Heat and Housing for Heroes campaign. Vice President Anna Stern said **the company gained inspiration through its client, North Central Group, and it was immediately obvious that their vision aligned with KWWCF/Heat and Housing for Heroes’.**

**“We are truly inspired by the far-reaching impact of this fund and initiative across our state,”** Stern said. **“We are moved to continue growing our support for the initiative and our relationship with the Keep Wisconsin Warm/Cool Fund.”**

While new supporters of the cause, Tri-North saw the incredible backing from the business community and were “honored” to help out in any way. The company was a Grand Slam sponsor at this past summer’s golf outing.

**“We are eager to continue finding ways to support these great initiatives,”** Stern said. **“What was most impressive to our team about (the golf outing) was the overwhelming show of support for veterans and other vulnerable populations facing energy-related crises or homelessness across Wisconsin.**

**“Frankly, we were blown away by what we all achieved together with this year’s fundraiser and we are honored to continue our support in future programming.”**

While aiding KWWCF/Heat and Housing for Heroes’ cause financially is one thing, the genuine enthusiasm shown through attendance at outreach events like the annual golf outing drive home the relationship, Bruer said.

“We’ve been greatly impacted by their generosity and involvement,” he said. “Hopefully with their growth and expanded involvement, especially from their employees, interest and participation, in years to come they will undoubtedly be leading efforts, hopefully, to provide the gift of warmth to tens of thousands of victims of poverty right in our backyard.”

## Hosking Inspired to Help, Volunteers for KWW/CF/Heat and Housing for Heroes

### ***Madison Vet Center outreach specialist devotes time to calming veterans’ stresses***

After serving for nearly 30 years, Dave Hosking has become very familiar with the difficulties that burden service members upon their return home from deployments and separation from the military.

Hosking, an Army and National Guard veteran who served in both Vietnam and Iraq, has been on the frontlines and realizes the vital needs of veterans. He tries to help solve them every day, too, as an outreach specialist for the Madison Vet Center, a U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs-affiliated facility that works to perform readjustment counseling for combat veterans and their families.

With multiple locations across Wisconsin, the Madison Vet Center is staffed by combat veterans, including licensed professional counselors with master’s degrees.

Hosking said whenever he or co-workers run into veterans experiencing financial difficulties, or those

lacking the ability to pay their energy bill during the winter, he doesn’t hesitate to make a quick call and knows they will be taken care of.

**“We do a lot of referrals (to Heat for Heroes) whenever we’re unable to help the veterans we serve,”** Hosking said. **“Heat for Heroes is a great resource ... I would put the organization up against any other that helps veterans. You see the number of cents on the dollar that directly returns to veterans; I’d like to see any other organization that even comes close.”**

KWWCF/Heat & Housing for Heroes Founder Tim Bruer said Hosking’s personal dedication he’s provided to the cause since it started has been incredible.

“Dave has been one of the earliest supporters of the Keep Wisconsin Warm and Cool Fund and Heat and Housing for Heroes initiative,” Bruer said. “From the very beginning, he

worked to not only give us a better understanding of the fragility of the mental health issues associated with veterans, but we also came to realize how much economic survival was in question for thousands of Wisconsin veterans.”

Hosking said that a key point of KWWCF/Heat and Housing for Heroes is its ability to remove stresses from struggling veterans’ lives, allowing them to focus on their mental health and other more important worries.

**“When you see veterans hurting, and you have a resource that can help, you’re able to relieve that stress,”** Hosking said. **“It’s difficult to describe what a difference it can make in their lives ... when Tim and his people help them like that, it takes the stress off and it gives them more time to come and talk to us about some of the other things they’re dealing with.”**

**“A house is just a house**  
HOSKING cont. pg. 7A



David J. Hosking, Outreach Specialist with the Wisconsin Vet Centers shown here with a co-worker in front of the Vet Center Mobile van at the KWW/CF Golf Classic



# Another Unsung Hero, Wayne Harris and 6AM Marketing, Lends Helping Hand to KWW/CF/Heat and Housing for Heroes

## ***Marketing agency's support helps nonprofit thrive***

All it took was for Wayne Harris to experience firsthand the thousands of veterans living across Wisconsin without heat every winter.

Harris, an Army Reservist Vietnam War-era veteran and the president of Madison-based 6AM Marketing, has long been a supporter and partner with the Keep Wisconsin Warm/Cool Fund and Heat and Housing for Heroes. He caught wind of the many who are forced to decide between heat and affording meals through a former employee whose daughter returned from a deployment in Iraq and found herself in that very situation.

"I couldn't believe the issue that when veterans come home from serving, they find themselves in that situation," Harris said.

So, he took matters into his own hands and "jumped in with both feet," he said. He offered to help KWWCF/Heat and Housing for Heroes, the brainchild of ESI Executive Director Tim Bruer, as much as he could and offered his full support.

"Wayne has always generously supported our mission and purpose," Bruer said. "He's one of the rare individuals that is probably the first to roll up his sleeves, check his ego at the door, and unselfishly give of himself."

Harris' involvement with KWWCF/Heat and Housing for Heroes includes volunteering his marketing agency to the nonprofit, building and maintaining its website (Heat4Heroes.com) and assisting with marketing

needs. "If they need something, we take care of it," Harris said. "It's an honor to be able to help our veterans."

Harris got involved with KWWCF/Heat and Housing for Heroes after meeting with Bruer about five years ago. He was immediately interested in the cause.

"The more people that we can help, the better," Harris said. "Kids and families should not have to go without heat or air conditioning."

While KWWCF/Heat and Housing for Heroes has continued to grow, Bruer said that success wouldn't be possible without the support of Harris and 6AM Marketing.

"Wayne just has this tremendous ability to bring people together," he said. "Without question, he's been a major key to our growth and success." It's not just Harris who has gotten behind the organization, though. The employees at 6AM Marketing have been eager to show their support for KWWCF/Heat and Housing for Heroes and in-need veterans and their families.

"My employees really enjoy helping out," he said. "They don't do this because their boss tells them to, they do it gladly because they understand how important this is."

"I'm very proud of the folks I've worked with because they understand the importance of this, and they jump in and help out."

Harris also co-chairs the Keep Wisconsin Warm/Cool Fund's Golf



ABOVE: Wayne Harris of 6AM Marketing, shown here accepting the award for Volunteer of the Year from KWW/CF Chief Spokesperson and Founder, Tim Bruer at the 17th Annual KWW/CF Charity Golf Classic and Silent Auction.

Classic & Silent Auction. He said being a big part of the event is an "honor," and he looks forward to it every year.

"It's probably one of the most successful golf outings throughout Wis-

consin," Harris said. "Our supporters all understand the need. Many of them grew up in situations without heat or air conditioning and understand how that effects one's ability to function well."

***WI Pipe Trades Supports KWW/CF/Heat and Housing for Heroes in Many Ways Along with being in the forefront of progressive action that has resulted in the training and employment of veterans, the Pipe Trades has also been a major factor in raising public awareness in media markets around the state of Wisconsin and meeting veterans unmet needs. Their rank and file support of the highly successful Heat and Housing for Heroes ad campaign has resulted in an unprecedented number of veterans averting life threatening emergency situations.***

The bond that's been formed between KWWCF/Heat and Housing for Heroes and organizations across the state has led to thousands of veterans and their families receiving assistance and not worrying about basic necessities such as heat and housing.

Among the hundreds, if not thousands, of collaborations that KWWCF/Heat and Housing for Heroes has established since its founding, some of the longest lasting have been with Steamfitters Local 601, Plumbers 75, and the Wisconsin Pipe Trades Association.

The first time business manager and Steamfitters Local 601 Officer Joel Zielke caught wind of Tim Bruer, it was regarding Heat's On program and

its work to inspect and service heating systems in the homes of Dane County veterans. It's an initiative that started 31 years ago, where steamfitters volunteer a day of labor to inspect and service heating systems in veterans' homes in Dane County.

"Every year we end up finding at least one to three furnaces that are truly bad and need to be shut down and replaced, some sort of tragedy could happen if that wasn't done," Zielke said. "The members (of the organization) go out and talk to these veterans in their houses, the elderly ones seldom get a lot of visits, so it's nice to go there and talk to them and hear them out for a Saturday morning ... it really makes our guys feel good

about what they're doing, too."

The Heat's On program and the things Bruer aspired to do with KWWCF/Heat and Housing for Heroes were synonymous, and the rest was history.

"They, with their contractors and supply houses, provide the labor for thousands of the highest risk households trying to survive below the poverty level," Bruer said. "They've even worked with others to replace the carbon monoxide poisoning that's been found."

Bruer credited the Heat's On program and steamfitters for aiding in identifying those who need assistance. For Zielke, continuing to support veterans, especially those in crisis, has

always been a no-brainer.

"Everyone knows what veterans have done throughout this nation's history for citizens, we wouldn't be here if it wasn't for them," he said. "It's the least we can do; it's something we can do to give back to those veterans who have given us so much."

Organizations like Steamfitters Local 601, Plumbers 75 and the Wisconsin Pipe Trades Association have each been integral to the success of KWWCF/Heat and Housing for Heroes as it continues helping veterans and their families. At a golf outing this past summer, Steamfitters Local 601 raised \$8,000 that was donated directly to KWWCF/Heat and Housing for Heroes.

STEAMFITTERS cont. pg. 6A 5A



# Schoep's Ice Cream Playing Big Role in KWW/CF/Heat and Housing for Heroes' Success and Keeping a Piece of Old Americana Alive for Many Generations

## *Al Thomsen's support keeps nonprofit moving forward*

For nearly 90 years, the thing that's helped make Madison-based Schoep's Ice Cream a leader in the industry has been its reliance on family and community.

Keeping much of the same formula over the years, Schoep's has tried to give back wherever there was an opportunity. So, when Tim Bruer, Keep Wisconsin Warm/Cool Fund and Heat and Housing for Heroes Founder, approached Schoep's CEO/President Al Thomsen with a chance to do just that, he didn't hesitate. Instead, he jumped into action.

Schoep's has long been a supporter of the Keep Wisconsin Warm/Cool Fund and Heat and Housing for Heroes. Whether it's been donating time, money or products, Thomsen and his company have fully embraced the mission.

"It's important to us," he said. "It's probably the No. 1 thing that we spend time on and contribute to as a company."

Bruer said that the support from Schoep's has been unparalleled, adding that the bond that's formed over the years has been predicated off the great reach of the company's charitable

efforts.

"They really have a special place in their heart and an appreciation for what our mission and purpose is," he said. "It was a relationship that was destined to succeed because where our organization prides itself is in reaching even the most isolated and rural areas and people who don't come forth because of their pride. Schoep's has been involved in so many worthwhile charitable events in the area on a grassroots level."

Giving back specifically to the military community has been on Thomsen's mind since working with Schoep's former CEO, who was in the military and served as a mentor to him. Thomsen said that hearing his experiences, in addition to those of a few friends, made him want to do more.

**"They are the ones who give us and protect those rights for us," Thomsen said. "I'm a firm believer in the National Anthem and what it stands for."**

Every year, Schoep's holds ice cream social fundraisers at Olbrich Botanical Gardens in Madison benefitting KWWCF/Heat and Housing for Heroes. The cost is \$5 for all-you-can-eat ice

cream with 100 percent of the money going directly back to the organization. The company is also involved in Wo-Zha-Wa Days in Wisconsin Dells, doing much of the same, with leadership scooping thousands of ice cream scoops during outreach events.

"I feel a tremendous sense of reward," Thomsen said. "It's one of the biggest things of (Heat for Heroes), they put their money where their mouth is; the money is going to the folks who need it."

Bruer said that each time he encounters Thomsen and Schoep's, it's not

difficult to notice their dedication to the cause.

"You can just feel their appreciation and support," Bruer said. "The sensitivity they have toward people struggling to survive Wisconsin's bitter cold and blistering hot summers is evident."

Thomsen credited the success of KWWCF/Heat and Housing for Heroes to Bruer's big heart and devotion to those who are in need.

"A lot of the growth is due to Tim caring," he said. "He has folks who

SCHOEP'S/ cont. pg. 7A

## STEAMFITTERS continued from 5A

"They have been in the forefront of aggressive action to help us fund those outreach and network activities that have been so successful," Bruer said.

Upon hearing the genesis of Bruer's idea to start KWWCF/Heat and Housing for Heroes, Wisconsin Pipe Trades Association President Terry Hayden was quick to jump on board. He lent his support to the organization, and the Wisconsin Pipe Trades Association board approved additional support by sponsoring an ad campaign to be run over several major military holidays. The ads have been a huge success, running on major television networks and at various Milwaukee Brewers games.

"We looked at it as a board and said, 'This really fits, it's good work and it fits with some of the other stuff that we're doing,'" Hayden said.

Terry added that the picture painted the first time he saw the ad runs caused him to become emotional. "It choked me up," he said. "I couldn't be prouder of what we're doing."

6A Bruer pointed to the ad

campaign as being integral to raising awareness to such an important issue, and letting people know that if they know a veteran in need, KWWCF/Heat and Housing for Heroes is there for them.

"We have literally seen participation every year increasing at an unprecedented level from 3,680 veterans in 2016 to over 9,400 during 2018 and much of that increased activity is driven by these highly publicized effective ads," Bruer said. "There's no question we'd never be where we're at today, if not for the veterans ad campaign which has gone a long way in raising awareness and breaking through some artificial barriers we've faced."

"The pipe trades have historically been and continue to be the backbone of not only our workforce in middle class America, but they have been a key to our success in alleviating those life-threatening situations. We all owe a debt of gratitude to trade labor organizations like them for all they do, they are clearly one of our major unsung heroes."



ABOVE: Patrons at Wo-Zha-Wa Days ice cream social in the Wisconsin Dells enjoy all-you-can-eat ice cream donated by Schoep's for \$5 a serving benefiting KWW/CF.

BELOW: Volunteers set up the ice cream social promoting the generosity and goodwill of the Schoep's Ice Cream Company.





YES! I would like to make a contribution to keep a Veteran in crisis from becoming homeless and safely in their home!

Please accept my tax-deductible gift of HEAT and POWER for a hero in need!

☐ \$25 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$100 ☐ OTHER\_\_\_\_\_

Checks may be made payable to Heat for Heroes and can be mailed to: P.O. Box 68 Madison, WI 53701. To donate by credit card, please visit our website at: [www.heat4heroes.org](http://www.heat4heroes.org) or call us at: 1(800)891-WARM(9276)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

In contrast to many other National Veteran related charities' high costs, the KWW/CF's Heat for Heroes Campaign's administrative costs are limited to 10% or less to insure that those most in need receive the maximum benefit of your generosity.



Heat for Heroes is an initiative of Keep Wisconsin Warm/Cool Fund and Energy Services, Inc. and is supported in part by the State of Wisconsin, Division of Energy, Housing, and Community Resources. KWW/CF is a not-for-profit organization recognized as tax-exempt under Internal Revenue Code section 501(c)(3). Keep Wisconsin Warm Fund/Energy Services Inc. Tax Exempt #ES24839 Federal ID #39-1443614.



ABOVE: KWW/CF Staff member Terry McGraw scoops donated Schoep's ice cream for volunteers at an event earlier in the year as a thank you for the volunteers' support of KWW/CF and Heat and Housing for Heroes.

SCHOEP'S continued from 6A

understand that this is a really important thing, and they're huge believers in it."

Scheop's willingness to give back to the military community isn't close to finished, though. Thomsen said that the company is currently exploring the possibility of making an

ice cream flavor dedicated to the military and veterans with proceeds going back to them.

"It's mint ice cream and chocolate ice cream swirled together, so it would give you the vision of camouflage," he said.

HOSKING continued from 4A

unless it's a warm place to live, then it becomes a home. To have to worry about having a warm place for your family to live, that's a heck of a stress."

Bruer credited the work of Hosking with raising awareness to KWWCF/Heat and Housing for Heroes and helping identify those in desperate need of assistance.

"Together, we work to target our resources to some of those at the highest risk, especially those with mental health related issues," Bruer said. "We use our resources to develop much more affordable payment plans and, in the process, those veterans to become both financially and emotionally stable."

The inspiration Hosking has received from KWWCF/Heat and Housing for Heroes' mission encouraged him to volunteer his time outside his work with the Vet Center. He said that he volunteers his outreach expertise to KWWCF/Heat and Housing for Heroes and attends various events, adding that giving back to veterans in any way is a big motivator for him.

"When you look forward to coming to work in the morning because you can make a difference in someone's life, that's pretty awesome," he said. "Whenever you can see the direct results of what you do, whether it's Heat for Heroes or others who help veterans...you may not know or see the person you're helping but you know you're making a difference. That itself is pretty powerful."

It's that kind of work that keeps KWWCF/Heat and Housing for Heroes thriving, Bruer said.

"Dave has dedicated countless uncompensated hours toward those veterans who have a number of both physical and mental health challenges," he said. "Together, we have seen over a 90 percent success rate for veterans who are homeless or heading into homelessness. Together, we've been able to have a major impact on breaking that cycle."

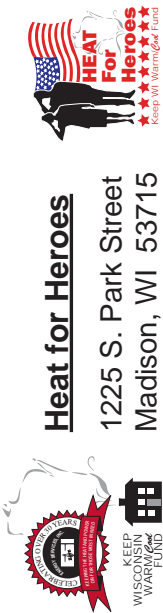




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# Partnership Between State of WI and KWW/CF Helps Keep the Heat and Power on for Those Most Vulnerable In WI

The Keep Wisconsin Warm/Cool Fund has a unique relationship with the State of Wisconsin that together they join forces to raise funds and awareness for some of the most vulnerable Wisconsinites who have no place else to turn to. Together they are making an incredible impact.

“It’s almost unprecedented. The historically close relationship with state officials going back to the inception of the fund. Their support which has been critical to the success of Keep Wisconsin Warm/Cool Fund beginning with [former Wisconsin] governor Tommy Thompson and continuing with every succeeding governor with their leadership the KWW/CF along with the Heat and Housing for Heroes campaign also enjoys the amazing bi-partisan support in Wisconsin’s legislature,” says Energy Services, Inc. Executive Director Tim Bruer. “We’ve not only enjoyed their support but most governors have

been actively involved as the honorary chairperson of the Keep Wisconsin Warm/Cool Fund campaign.”

The very unique matching fund that the organizations have set up between them is one of the reasons for the success.

“Along with the tremendous commitment from utility companies, which leverages matching funds from other sources, we’re able to match the generosity of Wisconsinites and utility customers. When private individuals give their support, we’ve been able to leverage two dollars for every dollar that is contributed through the governor’s unique matching challenge,” Bruer says. “In addition, there is a unique relationship in every county and tribe in the state that voluntarily identifies and qualifies the most in-need people in the community for crisis-related assistance. These funds, with the uncertainty of government assistance

which have been frozen in time since 1982, are so important. The demand for assistance has far surpassed the resources that have been made available.”

KWW/CF and state of Wisconsin partnership has remained strong through each and every administration – Republican or Democrat - the last three decades.

“It has not only expanded over the years, but it has brought together a fragmented network,” Bruer says. “The Keep Wisconsin Warm/Cool Fund has proven to be the bridge between the growing unmet needs and the declining resources that are available. Through this relationship, we’ve not only provided a survival safety net for those with the greatest health risks but we have seamlessly strengthened the effectiveness of the government-utilities’ low income energy assistance initiatives.

“In order to reach out to

the most isolated and rural sectors throughout WI we have been able to establish incredible collaborative relationships with a cross section of county agencies, other human service providers, VFWs, hospitals, clinics, American Legions and so many others who have joined forces,” he adds. “In the past decade we’ve more than doubled the amount of resources available annually, from our generous donors, and this has had significant impact on lessening the mounting energy burden of those with low or fixed incomes. Together we not only avert life threatening situations from occurring but we achieve the long term emotional and economic stability of those assisted by our donors.”

Not only has the Keep Wisconsin Warm/Cool Fund been a success and recognized statewide, but it is well-known on the national level as a very effective public-private community-funded charity.

## Spotlight on Corporate Partnerships: Focus on Energy Working with KWW/CF and the State of WI to Offset Rising Energy Costs by Conserving Energy

Focus on Energy has a state contract to do energy conversation. Its efforts help WI residents and businesses manage rising energy costs, promote in-state economic development, protect our environment and control WI’s growing demand for electricity and natural gas. In partnership with 108 WI utilities, Focus on Energy helps single-family homeowners, renters, and property owners make energy related improvements to their homes.

“We are the statewide energy efficiency program so we partner with almost all of the utilities in the state to offer incentives to homeowners and businesses to make energy efficient choices and to make upgrades to their homes and businesses,” says Scott Bloedorn, Project Manager at Focus on Energy.

Bloedorn and Focus on Energy, who empower the people and businesses of WI to make smart energy decisions with enduring economic benefits, have been a collaborator with KWW/CF for years.

“We are happy to partner with KWW/CF when we can,” Bloedorn says. “Currently, we’re working on a couple of different areas trying to help KWW/CF enhance cost savings through a number of conservation opportunities we can offer.

“They are planning to install free highly efficient LED bulbs for veterans and it’s a great opportunity for us because they are already in people’s

houses. We’ve got the bulbs and they have the need. Everything works together,” he adds.

“They are targeting their resources – especially in terms of LED bulbs and other conservation tools that they can provide – to low-income, elderly and disabled populations ... especially veterans,” says Energy Services, Inc. Executive Director Tim Bruer. “It’s about 20,000 bulbs that are going out, and they can seamlessly interface with our KWW/CF recipients. Along with his active involvement with the KWW/CF Golf Classic, he has also been active working with us on collaborative efforts to bring down folks’ energy costs and consumption.”

“Focus on Energy has been a supporter of KWW/CF and an active participant in our annual golf outing,” Bruer says. “We really appreciate that.”

Over the years, the KWW/CF Golf Classic has raised over \$1.7 million for people in need.

“I love that event. It’s a lot of utility folks and people that work in the energy space so it’s a lot of people and organizations we partner with. It’s just a great mission-driven event that raises a lot of money,” Bloedorn says. “And we get to golf, too! But, yes, it’s nice to be able to get out and raise money for something good that benefits the whole state.”

## FLANNEL FEST continued from pg. 2

come back to Flannel Fest every year that we don’t even know Kjeiland says. “As artists, we have bands that play throughout the year and we have certain fans that we know very well, but this event has kind of taken on a nice little thing of its own where people come just for the event. It’s fantastic. They just pack the house in all of their flannel clothing. It’s fun to see.” Beyond raising all of the money, which is really needed, Kjeiland enjoys the fact that Flannel Fest is raising awareness.

“Just talking with all of the Keep Wisconsin Warm Fund people and getting some information and some statistics, you really see the need out there. And they help out so many musicians, as well,” he says. “We’ve had

## KWW/CF with its Growing Donor Base Leads the Nation with Their Charitable Support That Keep Thousands at Risk Safely in Their Homes

With so many longstanding worthwhile charities out there, Keep Wisconsin Warm/Cool Fund and Heat and Housing for Heroes are emerging because of the growing grassroots support from Wisconsinites.

“Wisconsinites have really decided to make Keep Wisconsin Warm/Cool Fund and Heat and Housing for Heroes their charity of choice. What’s been absolutely amazing with our donors, both big and small, is their level of loyalty and commitment. Clearly, they lead the nation not only with their generosity but also their personal involvement at our special events or helping to identify those in their community with unmet needs,”

some musicians at the event who even came up to the Keep Wisconsin Warm Fund people and tell them, ‘Hey, we’ve had to use you guys once or twice and we really appreciate you.’

**“Awareness is huge,” he adds. “If you can spread that safety net out to people and let them know that this help is available, that’s huge .... let people know that if they or their neighbors need that help, that they can get it. It’s pretty incredible.”**

For more information about Flannel Fest, please visit <http://flannelfest.com>.

says Energy Services, Inc. Executive Director Tim Bruer. “There are those that have faithfully contributed to the fund on a monthly basis. We’re seeing our larger donors not only continuing to support the funds but we’re also seeing the amount of those donated dollars continues to increase.”

These donors are critically preserving the survival safety net, especially amongst struggling veterans below the poverty level and those with disabilities who have tremendous health risks.

“To respond to that increased demand, fortunately, our grassroots donors and utility support have also

DONOR BASE cont. pg. 7 5



# First Weber Foundation Impacting the Lives of Wisconsin Veterans in Need Through Partnership with KWW/CF and Heat and Housing for Heroes

## ***First Weber working to keep Veterans and other vulnerable households from facing energy-related crisis situations or homelessness***

United States' military Veterans this? are among the least likely to come forward to ask for help in times of trouble, even when they find themselves facing life threatening situations. Pride is often the principle barrier for Veterans in receiving this much needed assistance. Recognizing this, Services, Inc. and the Keep Wisconsin Warm/Cool Fund launched its statewide Heat and Housing for Heroes Campaign a few years ago.

The First Weber Foundation has been a big supporter of the KWWCF/Heat and Housing for Heroes initiative since the very beginning. Jim Imhoff, chairman of the First Weber Foundation, is a Veteran himself and was very instrumental at the start of this campaign that is uniquely designed to avert life threatening energy related emergencies by helping struggling veterans keep their heat and power on while also providing adequate resource connections with other state, county and veteran services for optimal, long-term household stability.

"I know that it can sometimes be hard to find these Veterans that need help because they are so proud that they won't ask. But that's also why Heat for Heroes is so important and has had our support," Imhoff says. "When this idea first came up, and we found out what it was all about, we were on board right away. How could we not be involved in a program like

"They have helped so many hundreds of Veterans. It's amazing," he adds. "You think about how many people this will help. And it's not just the veterans but it is their families and kids."

KWWCF/Heat and Housing for Heroes helps Veterans, who through no fault of their own, are facing an energy-related emergency, where other available resources are delayed, inadequate, or unavailable.

KWWCF/Heat and Housing for Heroes is just one of the many organizations that the First Weber Foundation supports. First Weber agents, managers, and staff are uniquely committed to bettering the lives of people and the communities throughout Wisconsin through First Weber Foundation, Inc. Since 2006, the First Weber Foundation has contributed over \$2.5 million benefiting over 800 eligible non-profits.

"This is a self-funded foundation. Our agents and our managers and our staff contribute to it on a regular basis. Over 90 percent of our agents, for example, contribute something off every closing. We have managers contributing out of their salary. And the rest of the staff contributes out of their salary," explains Imhoff. "First Weber also contributes a significant portion. What they have done is take the money that they used to budget in the community and they put that in the foundation now.

The First Weber Foundation, through their processes, ends up giving needed money to various charities. In the by-laws of the foundation, it says that the First Weber Foundation can give money directly to any charity that is housing-related.

"So we've participated in contributing to the building of many Habitat for Humanity houses and we've also contributed to many shelters - women's shelters, children's shelters, things like that," Imhoff says. "We encourage every office that we have to get involved in at least one or two charities around the state. So, this isn't just Madison. We have 77 offices around the state and they get involved."

The different offices raise money and the First Weber Foundation matches those funds – up to \$2,500. How did First Weber Foundation get involved with Keep Wisconsin Warm/Cool Fund and Heat and Housing for Heroes?

"We got involved with Keep Wisconsin Warm/Cool Fund because it is a housing issue," Imhoff says. "The minute Tim [Bruer] came to see me, I took it to the foundation and they approved the annual contribution of \$5,000.

"It's a basic need issue that all relates to shelter ... that what it really is," he adds. "When KWW/CF was presented to the board of directors, it took maybe 15 seconds for them to approve it. And since then, it gets re-approved every year in about 5 seconds."

On top of the money that First Weber Foundation commits to KWW/CF and Heat and Housing for Heroes, they also commit money and staff to the organizations' special events, especially the annual golf outing.

"We love what they do and we love the organization," Imhoff says. "We're looking forward to working with them in the future."

"With all the special needs in the community and worthwhile charities we feel privileged that we are considered a priority in their annual giving. When the Keep Wisconsin Warm/Cool Fund and Heat and Housing for Heroes crisis campaigns were both envisioned, Jim, along with a handful of other community leaders, were the first to step in and give of themselves. Clearly, today, we would not have ever experienced the level of success or been able to provide the lifeline for literally thousands of households struggling annually to stay in their homes without Jim and the First Weber agents who have made all of this possible," said Tim Bruer, Energy Services, Inc. Executive Director and Keep Wisconsin Warm/Cool Fund and Heat and Housing for Heroes Founder.



ABOVE: The First Weber Foundation banner hanging proudly at the 17th Annual KWW/CF Charity Golf Classic at Geneva National in Lake Geneva, WI this past August.

## **DONATIONS** continued from pg. 2

Mueller says that he loves how the customer donations to the Keep Wisconsin Warm/Cool Fund brings all of the major class A utilities together like We Energies, Madison Gas & Electric, Alliant Energy, Exel Energy and Wisconsin Public Service.

"We are all in this together to help so it's not just an individual utility like ours," Mueller says. "It's brought the other utilities closer because we not only work on the issues at the state level but with Keep Wisconsin Warm/Cool Fund, too ... all of the major utilities working together."

Through public, private and community partnerships, KWW/CF provides preventative services and the financial assistance necessary to alleviate potential life-threatening energy-related emergencies during Wisconsin's harsh winters and blistering-hot summers. Much of this is possible

through the generosity of so many great donors throughout the state.

"We have gotten tremendous support from their leaders, their stockholders and their customers, they are also unsung heroes – along with Wisconsinites – because they are really raising millions of dollars annually to provide a safety net for those who are truly victims of poverty," said Bruer.

"In reality, in decades to come, we felt that it was not going to be government that would provide the support and generosity for that critical survival safety net but it would be utilities, staff, stockholders, and ratepayers-customers that would help," he adds. "Today, they are responsible for providing the gift of warmth to tens of thousands of our neighbors in need and they literally raise millions of dollars annually."

## **CRAFTERS** continued from pg. 4

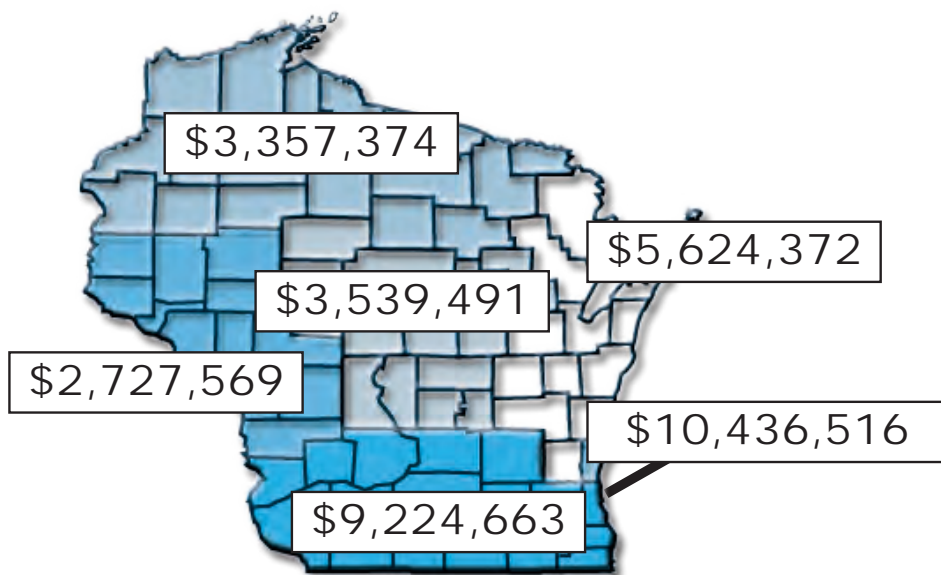
some yarn that is gathering dust and would like to find a purpose for, I am sure that Caring Crafters will find a great home and need for it! While the survival of literally thousands of Wisconsinites depends on the generosity of others, we cannot express our appreciation enough to Caring Crafters for their tireless hard work. In every one of their items you can see and feel how much of themselves they

put into their craft. They are probably the largest group of caring unsung heroes that have done so much for so many without asking for any recognition in return. Truthfully, our team for Keep Wisconsin Warm/Cool Fund and Heat and Housing for Heroes initiative absolutely enjoy connecting with them personally throughout the year. The 60+ active members are just simply beyond awesome.



## KWW/CF SERVING THOSE MOST IN NEED THROUGHOUT WI

**Generous contributions from corporations, community groups and individuals statewide to date have resulted in 115,634 households most in need being assisted by over \$34 million! Money stays where it was contributed because KWW/CF turns back the clock to a time when neighbors, not government, helped those most in need right there in their own community.**



KWW/CF is sponsored in part by the State of Wisconsin, Division of Energy, Housing and Community Resources.

## MORGAN MURPHY **continued from pg. 3**

Channel 3000 is also in the process of exploring co-sponsorship with Keep Wisconsin Warm/Cool Fund and Heat and Housing for Heroes a Heat Aid/Vet Aid concert that will raise further public awareness and bring in some of the top national talent in the country and western world.

"The likelihood of that event occurring within the next year has been enhanced by Tom's leadership and their growing corporate involvement to turn that concert into a reality," Bruer says. "Having this incredible support

from Morgan Murphy Media has been critical to our success and having Tom's active participation will give us a tremendous boost going forward."

Keeler says he is looking forward to a long and lasting partnership.

**"We will continue to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with Tim and his team by supporting this cause for years to come and are anxious to explore other ways to tackle this vitally important need in our state."** he says.

## DONOR BASE **continued from pg. 5**

worked to expand to develop early alerts on many of the high risk customers, especially our veterans," Bruer says. "We've developed targeted payment plans and outreach initiatives so that nobody in Wisconsin faces the bitter cold alone."

The support and contributions that KWW/CF gets from its Connections bi-annual newsletter is a key contributor.

"We're starting to see more recently contributions coming from individuals who are planning their estates and as direct result of a handful of those larger contributions we were able to literally recently reach out to a number of the special needs population, such as; frail elderly, disabled veterans, and young children with respiratory issues," Bruer says.

KWW/CF is particularly proud that administration costs are kept at 10

percent or less, so that 90 cents of every dollar goes directly towards helping a vulnerable household in need.

"Without question, now more than ever as we approach another season of bitter cold temperatures, those contributions are going to be essential in keeping folks safely in their homes," Bruer says. "I think the average contributor who has been so generous with a number of different causes, we cannot express our appreciation enough and reinforce the level of impact they are having in our community for victims of poverty but for their generosity would be forced into institutional care."

"So many of these veterans had no place else to turn and none of this would have been possible if not for the growing generosity and support of our donors who are making such an incredible difference for those who are less fortunate," Bruer says.

## Just a few notes from many of the people who were helped by KWW/CF!

How beautiful a day can be  
when kindness touches it.  
Thank You  
I CAN'T BEGIN TO SHARE  
THE GRATITUDE I FEEL  
READING THE LETTER AND  
GIFT YOU PROVIDED ME  
THROUGH HEAT FOR HEROES.  
AS ALL VETERANS AND MOST  
PEOPLE, I AM PROUD AND HAVE  
DIFFICULTY ASKING FOR HELP.  
I THANK YOU FROM MY HEART!

We want to thank you  
or whoever made it  
possible for us to receive  
the money for fuel and  
electricity. We are very  
grateful and it allows  
us to stay current with  
our bills.  
This is a wonderful program  
for people with limited income,  
emergency situations and  
dire need.  
Our gratitude to all people  
involved in making help a  
reality.

Keep us warm People!  
Thank you for your  
Compassion And Kindness.  
THE Grant Money Paid  
for our Elect bill helps us  
so very much. Also  
Thankyou for your  
dedication of service  
Toward all of us that  
are in need. Godbless  
you, IT'S Refreshing  
To see kindness yet  
being shown in a  
time in our country  
that often is littered  
with cold - MEAN -  
Selfish behavior by THE  
very people who used  
To put America First.  
People First - ect  
Thank you!





**Thank You for Making a Difference!**



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