

# Dept. of Veterans Affairs: Volunteers improve outdoor spaces for residents of the Union Grove housing program for veterans

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MADISON – In observance of Earth Day, military veterans from across the region joined together to “green up the grounds” at Fairchild Hall, home of the Veterans Housing and Recovery Program (VHRP) in Union Grove. The group constructed raised-bed gardens and installed other infrastructure to create a habitat for pollinators, manage stormwater runoff, and grow fresh vegetables.

The effort is a partnership between the Veterans Corps of the Great Lakes Community Conservation Corps and the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA). Participants in VHRP, a WDVA program that provides temporary housing, training, and supportive services to military veterans who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless, will have the opportunity to work with Veterans Corps members enrolled in the AmeriCorps national service program to maintain these green spaces.

“A hallmark of the Veterans Housing and Recovery program is the restored sense of pride and confidence our residents build by working together to maintain their common living areas,” said Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Mary Kolar. “I look forward to seeing the fruits of their labor. I’m sure that the veterans who tend these new gardens are looking forward to the good, healthy meals that the gardens will provide. Plus, there is the added positive climate impact of providing pollinators a welcome environment and reducing our carbon footprint.”

Contact the Veterans Corps to learn how you can help with projects such as these,

including sharing favorite family recipes that feature locally harvested produce.

### **About Great Lakes Community Conservation Corps**

The Great Lakes Community Conservation Corps (Great Lakes CCC) is a modern version of the Civilian Conservation Corps of the 1930s when unemployed individuals resided at work camps where they rebuilt America's public infrastructure. The camps were operated by the military and at the outbreak of WWII, CCC members at the camps enlisted and deployed overseas to serve in the United States military.

### **About the Veterans Corps of the Great Lakes CCC**

The Veterans Corps of the Great Lakes CCC is an inclusive program that serves all veterans transitioning into civilian life. It provides opportunities that build on a veteran's military experience, promote a sense of purpose, provide peer support, develop job skills training, and instill self-confidence. The Veterans Corps serves veterans who are retired, transitioning, homeless and in permanent housing, in rural and urban communities, and those from under-represented populations and under-served geographic areas.

### **About the Veterans Housing and Recovery Program**

The Veteran Housing and Recovery Program (VHRP) provides temporary housing, training, and supportive services to military veterans who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless in order to help them obtain permanent housing. The VHRP is designed to help homeless veterans receive the job training, education, counseling and rehabilitative services needed to obtain steady employment, affordable housing and skills to sustain a productive lifestyle. The Wisconsin Department of Veteran Affairs has operated the VHRP program since 1994 and has locations in Chippewa Falls, Green Bay, and Union Grove.