

PULSE



Hinsdale's Dave and Chris Pequet, taking this year off from hosting their Red White and Blues fundraiser, are instead encouraging residents to donate to the Special Forces Scholarship Fund. American Legion Post 250 hopes residents will donate to its Gifts for Yanks collection Dec. 2 and that local vets will consider joining the post. (photo provided/file photo)



No shortage of ways to say thank you

Supporting American Legion post, scholarship fund, vets and pets program all options

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A heartfelt "thank you," a warm handshake or a friendly smile are all appropriate ways to show appreciation to a U.S. veteran.

This Veterans Day, so is throwing out your unwanted documents.

Hinsdale American Legion Post 250 will host a free public shredding event from 8:30 to 11:30 a.m. Veteran's Day, Saturday, Nov. 11. The public is invited to bring their documents to the Memorial Building circle drive on Maple Street. Free-will donations will be welcomed, said Joe Craig, a 20-year member of the local post and post adjutant. Donations will support the post's ongoing efforts to help veterans and the community.

"The Legion uses it to fund their youth programs and other programs," Craig said.

While members of the public can support the post, so can veterans, Craig said, by becoming a post member. The Hinsdale Post celebrated its 100th anniversary earlier this year, but with a membership far smaller than that of previous years. Craig said younger veterans are looking for a post that includes a restaurant, bar and family activities. Hinsdale's post, which meets in the American Legion room of the Memorial Building, has none of these things, but there is plenty the post can offer, Craig said.

Along with camaraderie, a sense of history and an opportunity to participate in activities benefiting veterans, young people and the community, membership in Post 250 can be a valuable resource for veterans.

Craig, who served three years of active duty and 25 years as a reservist, said the local post is an initial contact for veterans in need of ser-

vices or those who want help navigating the vast resources available. Craig said in fiscal year 2022, Illinois veterans collected or benefited from over \$6 billion in Veteran's Administration benefits.

"We can navigate," Craig said.

Meetings take place at 7:30 p.m. on the first Tuesday of each month. Veterans interested in joining can call Craig at (630) 606-2423 or send an email to hinsdalepost250@gmail.com.

"Our local veterans could really help us by becoming involved with the legion post," Craig said.

In addition to the Nov. 11 shredding event, Hinsdale American Legion Post 250 seeks public support throughout the year with events like Poppy Day in May and the Gifts for Yanks collection, which will take place this year on Dec. 2 near Kramer Foods and Starbucks. Both simply require the public to give cash donations to veterans collecting throughout the village.

Special help for Special Forces

A veteran himself, Hinsdale resident David Pequet works throughout the year to support fellow veterans, as well as current members of the Armed Forces and the country's Special Forces.

Some years, Pequet and his wife, Chris, host the Red, White and Blues gala to raise money for Operation Support Our Troops America. He also raises money by organizing one-of-a-kind trips for veterans to visit military-related destinations throughout the country.

This year, Pequet said he's keeping things simple by asking people he knows, past supporters and anyone who would like to contrib-

ute to make a donation to the Special Forces Scholarship Fund at www.sfscholarshipfund.org.

The Special Forces Scholarship Fund helps children of active and veteran Green Berets to meet the costs of college.

It was through his work with Operation Support Our Troops America that Pequet said he learned of the unique needs of Special Forces troops and their families and began raising money for the scholarship fund.

"It's very, very difficult on the family," Pequet said. Members of the Special Forces are typically away from home six months at a time. They're often stationed in dangerous parts of the world. Families often know very little about where their loved one is. The scholarship fund can make things just a little easier, and remind children of our country's Special Forces that they, and their entire family, are supported.

Help from some four-legged friends

Created in memory of longtime Hinsdale resident and Humane Society volunteer BJ Chimenti, the BJ Chimenti Angel Fund for Veterans and Pets helps veterans find, care for and benefit from the companionship of a four-legged friend.

A program of the Hinsdale Humane Society, the Angel Fund works to engage veterans as volunteers, and offers veterans and their families the opportunity to participate in pet therapy sessions with the Humane Society's Therapaws Pet Therapy teams.

Donations to the Angel Fund can be made by visiting www.hinsdalehumanesociety.org/programs/bj-chimenti-angel-fund.