



## AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY SUPPORT TOOLS

A collection of resources from National Headquarters to assist and guide members and volunteers in serving veterans, servicemembers and their families.

## VOLUNTEER: ENGAGE

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Last Updated 5/22/12

# HOW TO MAKE A BUDDY BASKET:

Between 2010 and 2011, homelessness among veterans declined, according to The Department of Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development. This means more veterans are finding larger numbers of transitional or permanent housing available to them. What's better than assisting their new move by providing a much needed home-warming gift? A Buddy Basket is a nice way to welcome a veteran into their new home.

## History of the Buddy Basket:

"The Buddy Basket project was created and implemented by the Dept. of Virginia's Legion Family to provide assistance to the VAMCE Homeless Coordinators, and to the United States Veterans Initiative (USVETS) who are responsible for the continued success of the HUD-VASH programs in Washington, D.C., and the Commonwealth of Virginia." –Dianne Williams Cabot, ALA Dept. of Virginia

## Things to Do:

- Locate a veteran or military family in need.
  - By visiting the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans site, you can easily locate organizations to help find someone in need: <http://nchv.org/network.cfm>
  - Contact your local VA Medical Center's Homeless Coordinator.
- Ask for donations (items or money),
  - Involve The American Legion, SAL or other Legion Family members.
  - If you are looking for a large amount of items, contact outside sources for donations and help.
    - Local schools, businesses or relatives and friends of members.
- Set a deadline and location for donations. Provide a number and contact for any questions from donors.
- Use monetary donations to purchase items at a discount store or a "dollar store."
- Plan an assembly date after the donation deadline for members to come together and make Buddy Baskets.
  - Place all like items in a pile. It might be best to start with larger items first, and then move to the smaller items.
  - Make sure to have signs by each pile explaining how many of each item needs to be in the basket.
  - Designate a group of people to start by grabbing a basket and placing items in the basket.
  - Designate a group of people to package the finished baskets.
  - Designate a group of people to write letters thanking veterans for their service and welcoming them into their new home.
- Prepare a time with the veteran or military family for Buddy Basket drop off.
  - Prepare to secure the Buddy Basket with plastic wrap in case of inclement weather.
  - Make arrangements to drop off Buddy Baskets at the home or organization.
  - If you received anonymous information about homeless veterans in need from an organization, they may be willing to pick up the Buddy Baskets and distribute them to the veterans in need.

## Suggested Items for Buddy Baskets:

- Laundry Basket/Waste Basket
- Paper Towels
- Bathroom Tissue
- Window Cleaner



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- Scrubbing Cleaner
- Rubber Gloves
- Dust Pan with Hand Broom
- Light Bulbs
- Shower Curtain
- Bath Towels
- Laundry Detergent
- Eating Utensils
- Dishes

### **Packaging Ideas:**

If possible, try to make the Buddy Basket look as though it is a gift. Use plastic wrap to bundle around the basket and tie a ribbon at the top or add tissue paper and bows/ribbons to the side of the baskets. Once you have made your final touches to the Buddy Basket, don't forget your welcome home note.