

Annual Report Southwest Michigan Blue Star Mothers MI179

VA visitations and volunteer work.

- Aug 10 Watermelon Fest
- OCT 11 "Tailgate Party" for 60 veterans supplying food items
- Dec 22 We Delivered Christmas gifts
- Feb 14th Valentine for Vets this past year featured Matt Guard
We along with MI 186 sponsored and worked the Day time site visit with Matt Guard and held a Veterans Party –the Theme was a Piano Bar.
Matt Guard played and sang for the veterans. The Food was great, and goodie bags we put together were distributed to the vets that attended.
- We participate in Bi-Monthly visits – were we play games, have snacks, talk and help them make Fleece blanket.
- We donate \$50 quarterly to the VA's Volunteer Service Project.
- We have one mom that gets very involved with the \$3 Letters for Santa fund raiser

We finally realized the error of our ways and made the Blue Star Mother's uniform our official uniform except for times of local events like Parades and our packing events. Those red vests are so easy to spot in a crowd.

One Sunday a month throughout the fall we assisted the local American Legion with their Breakfast fund raiser.

We sent items pertaining to the history of our Chapter to the Sloan Museum in Flint, who is now the MI repository of Blue Star Mothers memorabilia.

September 26th Cpl Christopher Willis Foundations held its 5th annual Charity Bicycle ride to provide scholarships to children of the fallen or permanently disabled veterans. We helped with registration.

Oct 23 we held a one day Shop for the Troops Day at 4 area stores, in preparation for our Holiday Open House in November.

- Family Fare of Paw Paw; Village Market Gobles, Decatur and Allegan 10 to 4

Open House November included:

- **Patriotic Program**, Songs (National Anthem and patriotic songs by veteran, Jim McCloughan of South Haven), Covert JR ROTC color guard, Guest speaker share about what it means to be on the receiving end of our packages. We also recognized the veterans in our audience.
- Card making table
- Assembly line packing of care packages with the public's help
- Posters of each of our service members lives are tented down a row of tables.
- Slide show of our Blue Star Mother MI 179's year.
- Encouraged High School students to earn community service hours helping with our mission.

We attended our MI Dept's Fund Day where we played games and visited with BSMA sisters from around the state. We also attended the MI Dept.'s School of Instruction on April 2. Where we had instructions on filing our annual reports and were given a terrific visual of what a Blue to Gold

presentation entails, when several moms put on a mock Blue to Gold presentation from the moment you receive the news until you complete the actual presentation.

We did a Flag presentation to local Gobles Elementary School. This flag was flown over Afghanistan and sent to the school to thank the students and staff for the cards and letters they wrote for our Holiday Open House care packages in 2009.

We donated \$200 to MI Department Big Dippers Josephine Colenda Memorial Funds for Educational Assistance.

Social events - Dinner out in December at Brewster's in Paw Paw, Fun Night at member Linda Scherer's home in August with a Salad potluck, time to relax, visit and play in the pool.

Area Events participated in:

We participated in the Eastern Van Buren CROP Walk May 1st to help battle hunger in our own county and worldwide. We participated in the American Cancer Society Relay for Life with a Blue Star Mother relay team on June 25 – 26 in Paw Paw.

We set up our Chapters display at this year's Senior and Veterans Expo May 2nd, at a Dowagiac Support the Troops Fund Raiser July 23rd and at Decatur VFW's Car Show on August 6th.

We donated \$329 to replace a flag pole when Ft. Custer National Cemetery began a campaign to replace its 202 flag poles -152 comprise The Avenue of Flags located along the main road, and an additional 50 flagpoles arranged in a semi-circle at the head of the thoroughfare.

We presented a Blue Star Wreath and a Gold Star Wreath at Ft. Custer National Cemetery at their annual Memorial Day Ceremony and attended the Flag Pole Dedication Service. We also present the Blue and the Gold star Wreaths at Paw Paw's **Memorial Day Ceremony** on Memorial Day.

Our president, Laura De Roo was one of two guest speakers at the Michigan Senate's Annual Memorial Day Service. There she shared about the loss of her son and her involvement in Blue Star Mothers of American, Inc. and American Gold Star Mothers. Laura and her husband and the other guest speaker and her family were also honored to meet Gov. Rick Snyder and witness the signing of the bill that made Gold Star License plates available in the State of Michigan beginning on July 1st.

Our Annual Rummage Sale June 11th helped to cover the expenses to get our delegates to National Convention.

June 1 packed care packages to send the troops with the aid of a local Girl Scout group.

We donated \$500 for the National Presidents Project Home for the Troops.

We had the privilege to assist at 2 FRG family fun events and attend one group send off.