



# THE AMERICAN LEGION

*For God and Country*

## DEPARTMENT OF NEBRASKA

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### **The American Legion Department of Nebraska to receive the Michael Guty Homeless Veterans Outreach Award**

LINCOLN – (May 16, 2017) – On Saturday, August 19th at the 99th Annual American Legion National Convention in Reno, Nevada, the Department of Nebraska will be recognized for its outstanding efforts towards ending veteran homelessness in the Omaha metro area with the Michael Guty Homeless Veterans Outreach Award. Receiving the award on behalf of the Department will be Senior Vice Commander Jim Costello of Bellevue.

“Winning this prestigious award would not have been possible without the tireless work of Bellevue Post 339 Legionnaires Don Kiviniemi and Jim Costello,” said Department Adjutant Dave Salak. “Their devotion to helping veterans at the Victory Apartments in Omaha has truly been an inspiration.” Victory Apartments, located at 10th and Dorcas Street, provides safe, affordable housing for formerly homeless and low income veterans in the form of 65 one-bedroom units and 25 studio units.

Since 2013, Kiviniemi and Costello have supported residents of Victory Apartments by securing furniture and other household goods, bus passes and refurbished bicycles for vets to get to jobs and medical appointments, and computer tablets for continuing education. In addition to building outdoor recreation areas and taking residents to local sporting events, Kiviniemi and Costello, with help from DJs Dugout and other community members, host special events on Veterans Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. They also hold bingo events in which food is given as prizes and run a pantry stocked with food donated on a monthly basis by Hyvee, the Offutt Air Force Base Commissary, Outlook Nebraska, Inc., Rotella’s Bakery and the Tri-City Food Pantry.

The Michael Guty Homeless Veterans Outreach Award recognizes those American Legion Departments who show outstanding support for homeless veteran initiatives. Michael Guty, a World War II veteran, iron worker and Legionnaire from Canterbury, Connecticut, donated \$800,000 in 2012 to Legion Post 15 in Jewett City to help fund rent free apartments for homeless veterans through Connecticut’s American Legion Veterans Housing Program. Upon Guty’s death in 2014 at the age of 92, he bequeathed an additional \$1 million to Jewett City’s American Legion Housing Complex.

#### **About The American Legion**

With a current membership of 2.2 million wartime veterans, The American Legion was founded in 1919 on the four pillars of a strong national security, veterans affairs, Americanism, and youth programs. Legionnaires work for the betterment of their communities through more than 13,000 posts across the nation.