

JROTC Helps Out Operation Stand Down

Cadets help raise funds, awareness for RI vets

Coventry Career & Tech Center students receive praise from event organizers and state politicians

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COVENTRY— The Coventry Junior Reserve Officer Training Corp (JROTC) troop volunteered for a fundraising event with Operation Stand Down Rhode Island over the weekend to raise awareness and funds for homeless veterans in the state. In fact, the cadets were invited back to help with the next fundraiser in June.

The steak fry event is an annual fundraiser and Director of Development and Communications for Operation Stand Down, Dee DeQuattro, said it was the biggest one yet, raising over \$9,000. This year's event was held Feb. 28 at the Smithfield

Elks Lodge.

Operation Stand Down is a non-profit organization aimed to assist struggling and homeless at-risk veterans by offering services and adequate housing. The Johnston-based organization was founded in 1993.

"The JROTC cadets were outstanding and did most of the heavy lifting with serving the veterans and setting up and breaking down the event," DeQuattro said. "I don't know how we would have pulled it off without them."

The JROTC was the only group of volunteers that offered to help at the event, other than the



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Coventry Career & Tech Center Air Force Junior ROTC cadets were the only group that volunteered to help out at a recent Operation Stand Down RI event, earning praise for their efforts in the process.

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Cadets earn praise for help

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organization's private volunteers. Governor Gina Raimondo and Congressman David Cicilline were among the many that were in attendance and expressed their gratitude to the cadets for all they have contributed.

Raimondo has been a huge supporter of Operation Stand Down since 2010, DeQuattro said, and attends many of the fundraising events.

All of the food was donated, some of which by the Coventry JROTC, who went grocery shopping for 75 canned goods at the Coventry Stop and Shop before the event.

"Watching our cadets interact and engage in conversation with many of these veterans was heartwarming," Dorothy Jackvony, a cadet mom and ROTC volunteer said. "The cadets cannot understand why they are veterans and homeless and want to do everything they can to help Operation Stand Down solve that problem."

The veterans were pleased to see the dedication of the



Submitted photos • Courtesy Dottie Jackvony

ABOVE: Cadets (L-R) Chase Raposa, Ben Jackvony and Commander Kim Simas with Gov. Gina Raimondo at the Operation Stand Down RI event. **RIGHT:** Cadets shop for canned goods, of which they donated 75, before the event.

JROTC cadets and interact with them because they enjoy seeing young adults who are interested in pursuing a military career, DeQuattro explained.

"No veteran should be without a home," Jackvony said.

