



DARYL SULLIVAN | THE DAILY TIMES

VETERANS LINE UP TO receive Vietnam War commemoration pins Saturday during the 49th Veterans Day Program.

PROGRAM: Veterans honored with pins, certificates, music

FROM 1A

Owens, who has received several honors, including the Bronze Star Medal with Valor Device and the Purple Heart Medal with Oak Leaf, pointed out that soldiers that made it back home from Vietnam did not just pickup with their lives as though nothing happened.

"You don't forget," he said. "You remember the faces. You remember the places. You don't forget about that time in your life you were somewhere and you wished you weren't there."

Blount County Mayor Ed Mitchell and Blount County Habitat for Humanity Executive Director Kathy Jackson both received the George P. Thomas award, bestowed to individuals/organizations for efforts made to bring spiritual healing to veterans.

"I was very overwhelmed," Mitchell said. "Blount County has been committed over the years to helping our veterans. We have made changes at

'You remembered the places. You don't forget about that time in your life you were somewhere and you wished you weren't there.'

Freddie Owens
U.S. Army Vietnam War veteran

are doing our best to serve them."

Music was performed by the Maryville College Lads, and the Heritage High Junior ROTC provided the presentation of colors. The event concluded with attendees gathering outside RIO for the firing squad salute and the playing of taps.

The 50th United Veterans of Blount County Veterans Day Program will be held next year. Mitchell would like to see a large crowd.

HUNGER: Welcome Table served 24,000 plates last year

FROM 1A

spikes in the number of clients served and when, depending on the economy, a sentiment echoed by Welcome Table chef Amelia Geis-Scott. She spoke about the timing of income tax refunds impacting the number who are in need of serving, with refund arrivals decreasing attendance slightly, and the arrival of summer tends to change things.

The cycle of falling into food insecurity is easily the toughest aspect to break through. It's easy to supply food, but it's only a bandage for a greater issue.

People find themselves in a loop of having to survive through any means necessary, sometimes including an illegal or immoral activity, because they can find no other choice. If this results in surviving another day, it's considered a success. It's a "self-perpetuating cycle," Haralson said. "And we'd like to break that cycle."

DEALING WITH FOOD INSECURITY

While the Community Food Connection continues to provide groceries, Haralson knows there is still work to do in actually breaking the cycle food insecurity. One option he noted is establishing "cooperatives."

This program would feature 20-30 families that would meet every two weeks. Clients would pay a \$4 fee, the revenue from which would fund classes on life skills, such as balancing a checkbook, how to get additional education, or budgeting.

Meanwhile, at the Welcome Table, volunteers begin work early in the day: table setup begins at 11 a.m., with different volunteer groups helping with other tasks throughout the day and the cook team arriving around 1:30 p.m.

Still, before of any that work begins, Geis-Scott has to form a menu for around 300 people. Asked about how difficult it is to



DARYL SULLIVAN | THE DAILY TIMES

BOB LARSEN CHECKS THE temperature on a pan of mashed potatoes as preparations are made for the Welcome Table on a recent Tuesday at New Providence Presbyterian Church.

WELCOME TABLE

Serving every Tuesday and Thursday
Tuesday – New Providence Presbyterian Church, 703 West Broadway Ave., Maryville, 5-6 p.m.

Thursday – First United Methodist Church, 804 Montvale Station Road, Maryville, 5-6 p.m.

BECOMING CLIENT OF COMMUNITY FOOD CONNECTION

Blount County Community Food Connection, 311 Whitecrest Drive, Maryville

- **Get** in contact with BCCFC through phone (865-977-4400) or in person to be registered
- **Provide** proof of address within Blount County
- **Receive** assistance

just as easy for me to cook for 300 as it is 50."

LIVING THROUGH IT

"I had a pool and I drove a Mercedes," Teresa Lee said as she took a few moments away from getting groceries at the Com-

ing job and had a seizure, which spiraled into more and more health-related issues — including cancer and seven operations. "Your health isn't anything to bank on, no sir," she warned.

In the face of these issues, she has continued to march forward — and the Community Food Connection is a large part of that. "This right here, if it weren't for this food bank ... I don't know how I would make it. There would be no way."

Lee gives an honest assessment of her situation, sharing publicly that she receives help. She hopes that honesty leads others who are battling similar issues to likewise find help. "I'm on Facebook daily saying I get food stamps. I'm humble. ... It's not that I don't have any pride left, it's that I'm just aware of what's going on," Lee said.

"I would like to tell everyone to be thankful every day."

LOOKING FORWARD

From here, it's all about getting people out of poverty. When asked about his goals for the next five years, Haralson said, "A third of (our clients) are children. ... That's a couple

led to death."

He also hopes to form a delivery service, helping those around Blount County who can't get to the Community Food Connection, and he would love to give out some sort of scholarship.

Geis-Scott wants to expand Welcome Table and see new volunteers roll in. She wants people to know, "This is not a Methodist thing, this is not a Presbyterian thing, this is a community thing." She notes that the 10th anniversary of Welcome Table is approaching, and that some of the people who have been volunteering from the beginning are starting to get tired.

Geis also hopes to have another church allow the Welcome Table to serve with them, opening up their services to other parts of the community. According to the data she has collected from volunteers, Welcome Table served over 24,000 plates last fiscal year. She wants to see that increased.

No one can speak on living through food insecurities like the people who wake up every day with it on their mind. Teresa Lee had one piece of advice for anyone hesitant to reach out for help, and for the

"Blount County has been committed over the years to helping our veterans. We have made changes at the courthouse to make it more accessible to veterans. I want every veteran in Blount County to know that every day we

of Blount County Veterans Day Program will be held next year. Mitchell would like to see a large crowd. "I hope every citizen of Blount County that is able will attend next year's program in order to honor our veterans."

work begins, Geis-Scott has to form a menu for around 300 people. Asked about how difficult it is to form a meal for so many, she joked that she has trouble cooking for just four at home. "My brain does quantities of 50. It's

a Mercedes," Teresa Lee said as she took a few moments away from getting groceries at the Community Food Connection. On a day that seemed like every other, Lee, a college-educated woman, got up to leave for her well-pay-

his goals for the next five years, Haralson said, "A third of (our clients) are children... That's a couple of thousand children. If I could get one out of poverty, that'd be a success; if I could get five in the next five years, I'd be tick-

on their mind. Teresa Lee had one piece of advice for anyone hesitant to reach out for help, and for the community in general. "Don't be embarrassed. Don't be ashamed. Every time you get a meal, be thankful."



LET US HELP YOU WITH A COMMUNITY HOME IMPROVEMENT LOAN

Visit a convenient Renasant location to learn about home improvement options including our new Community Home Improvement Loan.

Our experienced team of lending professionals will work with you to understand your individual needs and help determine which option is right for you.



Understanding You.

800.680.1601 | renasantbank.com



All loans subject to credit approval. Other restrictions may apply.



MAKE YOUR *Holiday Party Reservations* NOW AND THE APPETIZERS ARE ON US!



Call today and book your holiday party of ten or more guests before December 15th, and receive your choice of **ONE** appetizer per five guests absolutely FREE! We have flexible seating to accommodate up to 50! **CALL TODAY FOR RESERVATIONS - 981-9399.**



GIVE A TRULY TASTEFUL GIFT!
\$5 FREE for every \$25 Purchased



SPRINGBROOK CENTER-ALCOA • 981-9399 • www.puleosgrille.com

