

**VA**U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

# News Release

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## VA recognizes elementary school students for role in ending Veteran homelessness

In conjunction with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) community partnership efforts to combat Veteran homelessness, VA recently recognized Henry Zarrow International School in Tulsa, Oklahoma, for winning the [2018 End Veteran Homelessness Challenge](#).

Mark E. Morgan, director of the Eastern Oklahoma VA Health Care System, presented a certificate of appreciation to the school on April 26 for winning the friendly elementary school competition, which collected household and personal care items for Veterans transitioning from being homeless.

VA began the challenge in October 2018 in partnership with the [National Association of Elementary School Principals](#) and the [American Student Council Association](#), with plans to make it a yearly event.

"It's thrilling to see our nation's youth volunteer their time for this great cause," said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. "The generous donations collected by the students will help provide Veterans with basic household necessities as they settle into their new housing."

The goals of the challenge are to encourage civic engagement among school-age children and help fill critical needs of Veterans transitioning from being homeless. Six elementary schools in six states participated in the 2018 challenge. In total, participating schools collected nearly \$7,000 worth of personal care items and household goods to help Veterans transition to stable housing.

Other schools that participated in the 2018 challenge include: Eastman Avenue Elementary School in Los Angeles; Carrollwood Day School in Tampa, Florida; The Main Street Academy in College Park, Georgia; P.S. 54 in New York City; and Little Cypress Intermediate School in Orange, Texas. The collection drive ended in December.

In winning the event, Henry Zarrow International School collected more than \$2,000 worth of items. Together, the six schools collected 881 toothbrushes, 746 pairs of socks, 557 containers of soap and body wash, and 428 tubes of toothpaste.

To date, more than 65 communities and three states — Connecticut, Delaware and Virginia — have [effectively ended Veteran homelessness](#). Nationally, homelessness among Veterans has decreased nearly 50% since 2010. Since 2010, more than 700,000 Veterans and their family members have been permanently housed or prevented from becoming homeless nationwide because of interventions by VA and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Veterans who are homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless can contact their local VA medical center, where VA staff are ready to assist, or they can call 877-4AID-VET (877-424-3838).

Visit [www.va.gov/homeless](http://www.va.gov/homeless) to find out how to help prevent and end homelessness among Veterans and subscribe to the online newsletter to be notified when the 2019 challenge begins.

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