

# San Diego Miramar Lions Club Volunteers at the 35<sup>th</sup> Annual San Diego Veterans Village STAND DOWN 2022

On July 30, 2022, the San Diego Miramar Lions Club gathered to volunteer at the San Diego Veterans Village STAND DOWN 2022 held this year at the Roosevelt Middle School. Taking place annually, STAND DOWN is now in its 35<sup>th</sup> year. What is STAND DOWN? The 3-day event, sponsored by the San Diego Veterans Village, is for homeless veterans, transitioning veterans in need, and at-risk veterans teetering on homelessness or are currently unemployed. Services provided to veterans at the Stand Down site include food, clothing, shoes, homeless resources, programs, and services, employment info, toiletry/hygiene kits, legal services, medical resources, pet care, and even free haircuts.

The mission of the Veterans Village of San Diego (VVSD) is dedicated to “Leave No One Behind,” and they have continued this mission for and with veterans for over forty years. This organization helps thousands of vulnerable military veterans through programs that offer transitional and permanent housing, mental health counseling, substance treatment, and employment. There is even an established program for their pets to keep them safe and protected during this event. Animals and possessions are stored under 24/7 protection while men, women, and families are assigned to a bed/bunker. Since the inception of COVID-19 and the follow-on variants wreaking havoc throughout the county, the STAND DOWN event has been scaled down. During the 2022 STAND DOWN which finished on July 31, 2022, it is estimated that approximately 500 veterans participated and attended - many staying in tents there during the three days.

In preparation for the three-day weekend STAND DOWN event, a call for clothing, toiletries, shoes, and coats/jackets was announced during May and June. Part 1 of Stand Down took place in June 2022 in the back parking lot of the San Diego Veterans Village. During the month of June, in preparation for Part 2 of STAND Down, the Lions of the SDMLC organized and donated 19 bags of clothing, jeans, shoes, jackets, and hoodies along with 39 hygiene/toiletry kits filled with toothbrushes, razors, soap, shampoo, Q-tips, and body lotion. Boxes and bags were organized, separated, and like items arranged together for ease during the distribution of clothing and shoes contributing to Part 1 in June.

During July, the San Diego Miramar Lions had 17 volunteers who worked on-site during Part 2 of the STAND DOWN. Each Lion was assigned a volunteer slot in a myriad of areas needing help –Lions were assigned the mission of finding shoes and clothing that fit, shoppers with/for veterans, providing ground and gate security, veteran baggage checks, water and food distribution, event litter patrol, and more. Each lion from the PRIDE completed their volunteer service with full dedication and a big heart under the rising temperatures and heat of the day. Not a single complaint, just big smiles knowing they were helping our Nation’s citizens who had worn the uniform of our armed services. Thank you, San Diego Miramar Lions Club PRIDE, for your continued commitment to our military veteran community. You have touched many lives and lifted the hearts of veterans in need.



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