

Lake Villa VFW Auxiliary Hosts “Veterans Baby Shower” 35 Veteran and Military Moms

Lake Villa, IL (September 15, 2019) Lake Villa VFW Post 4308 Auxiliary held a “Veterans Baby Shower” for 35 expectant “Mom’s to Be” that are either a veteran, active duty military, or spouse. Auxiliary President Anne Simons said members of Lake Villa Auxiliary had considered holding a “Veterans Baby Shower” after attending West Dundee VFW Post 2298’s Auxiliary’s event every January for several years. Members considered hosting their own Veterans Baby Shower at Lake Villa until the August 2018 meeting when a motion was made; seconded and passed on a voice vote. That’s when fourteen months of planning started to bring it to fruition.

Initial steps in preparation for the event proceeded slowly until January 2019 when 250 invitations were printed and given to the Obstetrics Care Nurse at James A. Lovell Federal Health Care Center (FHCC) with instructions to provide an invitation to confirmed expectant females in the eligible group. May 2019 the USO manager at Lovell was also requested to distribute invitations.

A dedicated email account was created to allow invitees to acknowledge receipt of the invitation and the 4308 Auxiliary could send an email asking if the “Mom to Be” was a veteran, active duty, or spouse of one in which branch of the military did you, your spouse or both serve. Also, other questions included were do you know or want to know the gender of your baby; When is the baby due? Invited Mom’s to Be, came from James A Lovell FHCC and also from Hines VA Hospital in Chicago and a few were received through word of mouth from other VFW Auxiliary members.

Donations from local businesses were obtained as well as from VFW Posts and other Auxiliary’s provided some of the myriad of needed items for New Mom’s and babies, everything from cases of diapers; formula starter packs, baby bath tub, a laundry basket containing crocheted blankets, sweaters, hats and booties from Grayslake Senior Center, and Antioch Presbyterian. Screen printed tee shirts were purchased for everyone that that reads: “Home of the Free Because My Mommy is Brave”. Each Mom received a “Celebration Diaper Cake”, compete with a Bottle of Champagne, and a donated Porta Crib. Miss Jr. Lake Villa,

Miss Lake Villa and Little Miss Lake Villa did the judging to determine winners of the games for the Mom’s and Dad’s to be. The number and breath of the gifts from various donors and businesses were overwhelming to the Mom’s to Be! Each Mom to Be also received a case of 100 diapers, a large item such as a Baby Car Seat, Stroller or Baby Gym, each Mom received a raffle ticket for an additional donated item such as a Gift Basket from Mission Barbeque, Restaurant Gift Cards, a basket filled with Baby girl or Baby boy items, more diapers, a high chair, baby laundry soap, wrapped in a crocheted blanket.

Twenty responses were received early in early August confirming that that would attend and by early September they had received a total of 35 replies. Replies received beyond that number were told due to limited space and time to secure additional items they would not be able to accommodate them; however, they were urged to contact the West Dundee Post 2298 Auxiliary to be included in their January Baby Shower. Lake Villa capped their attendees at 35 to allow everyone to be seated comfortably and intermingle with other Mom’s to Be; VFW members, and invited guests that included VFW Illinois Auxiliary President Billie Guthals, President’s Chief of Staff and Pin Chair, Jerriann Boyd, 5th District VFW Illinois Commander Christine Pawley, 2018 2nd Place Miss Veteran America and National Anthem Singer.

This is an email received from one of the attendees the day after:

“Thank you again so much for yesterday! It was a blessing and was not expected at all. I was so touched from the moment I pulled in seeing all the flags, being greeted at the door and all the wonderful hugs and smiles inside from everyone and all the love! I have been having a rough time hospitalized multiple times with this pregnancy and your amazing team brought a full day of smiles and love to me and my unborn daughter which was soooooo needed. Words will never be enough to thank you for everything, but I had to put an email together and send, and I don’t mind if you share with everyone about even the littlest things said or done meant the world to me! My two boys were so shocked when I returned, they said, “Wow Mom, they must love you” I said Yes Boys, they showed love to all 35 of us! So thankyou again so much and I hope you all have an amazing week.”

All the best

(Name Withheld)

“The feelings expressed in this message is why we do what we do” Anne Simons, VFW Auxiliary President,
Lake Villa VFW Post 4308