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Contact: Charlene Shirk, Assistant Vice President, Public Relations
shirkc@vystarcu.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

VyStar Foundation Awards Grants to 12 Military and Veterans Nonprofits

Jacksonville, FL - VyStar Foundation announced today that $201,551 will be distributed among 12 recipients in its third grant cycle focused on nonprofit organizations that support military and veterans service programs. Specific funding priority was given to programs that address health and basic needs, mental health services and workforce development.

"We are proud to announce that VyStar Foundation selected 12 nonprofit organizations in our second military grant cycle," said VyStar Foundation President Patricia McElroy. "Providing much-needed support to these organizations is a privilege. The spirit of philanthropy is deeply embedded in our identity, and we remain committed to supporting our brave service members and acknowledging the sacrifices made by them and their families."

The list of grantees and causes:

- **American Red Cross (Northeast FL**) – Funds will be used to expand the Armed Forces Family Emergency Communications & Resiliency Workshops program to recruit and train additional volunteers to keep service members and their families connected during emergencies and build resiliency in the military community.
- **Clay County Rescue Mission (Northeast FL) -** The purpose of this grant is to contribute to the end of homelessness through providing sustainable and short-term housing and support to military individuals and their families.
- **Golden Isles Veterans Village Inc. (Southeast GA)** - Funds will be used to purchase clothing, hygiene items and kitchenware for units in the Brunswick tiny home village serving homeless veterans, leading residents towards a path of self-sufficiency. The program will also include cooking classes for veterans who have been chronically homeless.
- **Hart Felt Ministries Inc. (Northeast FL)** - Funds will help veterans 70 and older stay in their homes by providing housing and grocery assistance to alleviate hunger and help prevent eviction and possible homelessness as well as premature entry into an already-taxed long-term care system.
- **Heart of Florida United Way (South Central FL)** - Funds will be used to enhance the current Mission United program by increasing marketing/promotion activities.
- **Here Tomorrow Inc. (Northeast FL) -** The grant will provide funding for Here Tomorrow's Military Peer Support program, which is a one-of-a-kind, mental health model that serves those who've served with no-cost, no-wait support.
- **Hope4Veterans Inc. (Northeast FL) -** The grant will be used to expand Hope4Veterans' P2P Therapeutic Art Program in Clay, Duval and St Johns counties. The program harnesses the healing power of creativity, offering an outlet for expression and recovery through art. The funds will also help provide childcare during the sessions.
- **Marion County Veterans Helping Veterans Inc. (South Central FL**) - The Operation Upward Momentum program assists veterans with hands-on service and mobile outreach for their basic living needs, while assisting them in job placement, community involvement and self-sufficiency in Alachua, Bradford, Citrus, Clay, Lake, Levy, Marion, Putnam and Sumter counties.

- **MOACC Good Deeds Foundation Inc. (South Central FL)** - Funds will be used to provide monetary support to active-duty military veterans and their families in order to meet their basic needs in Brevard County as part of the MOAACC Good Deeds Fund.
- **Navy League of the United States Mayport Council (Northeast FL)** - The grant will provide resources through the 'Food is Essential! Ask any Sailor before Payday' program to supplement food insecurities for military members and their families at Naval Station (NS) Mayport during the periods prior to the bi-monthly pay periods when the military member's paycheck funds are low.
- **Operation Lifeline Inc. (Northeast FL)** - The Heroes to Housing: Veteran Workforce Development program addresses workforce development and education, with a focused commitment to supporting transitioning military service members through comprehensive vocational training in the construction industry.
- **Thomas University (Southwest Georgia)** - The grant will enhance Thomas University's Counseling Center capacity for veteran and student support and strengthen its ability to provide high quality care to veterans, military members, and their families, thereby improving their overall well-being and success within their academic experience.

VyStar Foundation supports nonprofit organizations in Georgia, North and Central Florida. In 2023, the Foundation had a total impact of nearly $1 million. Grants totaling $387,282 were given to 20 local organizations addressing the critical needs of youth, active military members, veterans, and their families in addition to a $570,000 building donation to Three Grains of Rice Missions. The non-profit provides resources for individuals and families struggling with food and housing instability along with local and international disaster relief and humanitarian aid.

Grants through VyStar Foundation are available to 501(c)(3) organizations whose purpose and mission align with the Foundation's strategic giving pillars:

- **Military:** Ensuring active military members, veterans and their families receive the social services they need and the recognition they deserve
- **Youth:** Empowering youth by providing equitable access to creative learning environments
- **Community Building:** Cultivating financially strong, culturally vibrant, and interconnected communities

VyStar Foundation will launch its next grant cycle this September giving funding priority to nonprofit organizations that support youth. The youth application process opens on September 9, 2024, and closes on October 13, 2024. To learn more about VyStar Foundation and upcoming grant information sessions, visit vystarfoundation.org.

About VyStar Foundation

As VyStar Credit Union's philanthropic arm, VyStar Foundation was established in 2021 to strengthen the credit union's ability to do good. Operating as a 501(c)(3) charity, the Foundation is dedicated to doing good and leading by example through collaborative partnerships that support youth, military members and veterans and overall community vitality in the areas served by VyStar Credit Union. For more information, visit vystarfoundation.org.