



AVAG News

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At the 2025 Pacific Palms Christmas event, AVAG Chaplain Doreen Matsumoto and Mellissa Arriola Breunig of the Richard Breunig Foundation, stand amid the multitude of gifts generously donated for the children of the community.

From Thanksgiving to the New Year: AVAG Celebrates Together

From late fall into the heart of winter, AVAG communities have been alive with activity and filled with the spirit of connection and gratitude.

This Winter 2026 issue highlights the many ways our community members came together to celebrate the season—and the partners who helped make it possible.

Thanksgiving gatherings brought residents around shared tables for potlucks, fellowship, and gratitude. For many, these events offered more than a holiday meal—they provided companionship and a welcoming place to belong.

The holiday season was especially bright thanks to the support of outstanding partners. Children Giving Gifts helped young res-

idents experience the joy of choosing presents for themselves and their parents. American Legion Post 295 hosted an incredibly successful toy drive and fundraiser, ensuring that Christmas morning was memorable for families across our communities. Stater Bros. Markets treated several groups of veterans to holiday grocery shopping sprees, easing seasonal expenses and spreading good cheer. And the Richard Breunig Foundation generously supported multiple community celebrations and events.

Holiday events, game nights, and Christmas gatherings filled clubhouses with laughter and friendship—reminding everyone that the greatest gift of the season is time spent together. 🦋

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AVAG Communities Celebrate Thanksgiving—Spotlight on Casitas La Verne

Thanksgiving was celebrated across all AVAG communities this year, as veterans and their family members gathered to share a meal, reflect on their blessings, and enjoy time together. One such celebration took place at Casitas La Verne Mobile Home Estates, where attendees savored a delicious catered luncheon featuring turkey and all the traditional trimmings.

Sheri and Michael are to be commended for thoughtfully arranging the tables, creating a warm and welcoming setting. A wide assortment of desserts added a sweet finishing touch to the meal. Guests received watches, sunglasses, and tote bags, while our veterans were presented with challenge coins and special pins in recognition of their service.

Excitement filled the room as everyone participated in raffles for gifts and gift cards to Smart & Final. Most importantly, the gathering provided a valuable opportunity for fellowship for the members of this remarkable community. ✨



AVAG News



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Veterans and family members from Santiago Creek Estates in Orange gathered for a group photo at the Stater Bros. in the city of Orange.



Veterans and widows from the AVAG Sequoia Plaza MHP community enjoyed shopping at the Rialto Stater Bros.



AVAG members from our Diamond Bar and Casitas La Verne communities at the Rowland Heights Stater Bros. in December.

AVAG Organizes Thanksgiving Stater Bros. Grocery Event for Community Veterans and Widows

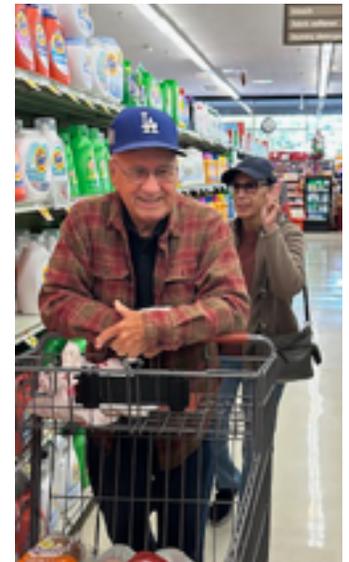
As part of its Thanksgiving outreach, AVAG coordinated grocery shopping events at three Stater Bros. locations to support veterans and their families during the holiday season.

Just ahead of Thanksgiving, veterans and their spouses from Santiago Creek Orange gathered at the Collins Avenue Stater Bros. in the city of Orange for a special shopping outing. The management opened an additional register to streamline checkout. Special thanks to Jeremiah and Julio for their outstanding assistance.

In Rialto, Sequoia Plaza MHP veterans and their widows each received \$100 to purchase groceries of their choice. Manager Angel opened a dedicated register, and Samuel and Cheyenne assisted with loading groceries.

A third shopping event was also held in Rowland Heights for veterans from our Diamond Bar and Casitas La Verne communities, extending holiday support to additional veterans and families.

These events reflect AVAG's continued commitment to providing practical assistance to those who have served. 🦋



AVAG Partners: Working Together to Serve Our Veterans

American Legion Post Fulfills Veterans Christmas Wishes.

AVAG extends our sincere appreciation to the dedicated Auxiliary ladies of American Legion Post 295 for their generous partnership this Christmas season.

Working alongside AVAG, the Auxiliary sponsored veterans and senior residents across our communities, helping ensure that holiday wish lists were fulfilled and gifts were delivered before Christmas Day. Their kindness brought genuine joy to those who received them.

Veterans from Diamond Bar Park, Casitas La Verne, Sequoia, Creekside of Orange, and Rancho La Paz were among those blessed by this thoughtful outreach. 🦋



American Legion Post 295 Hosts AVAG's Annual Christmas Toy Drive

AVAG'S toy drive/fundraiser was held at the American Legion Post 295 just prior to the Christmas holiday season. We are happy to report that it exceeded expectations, with a strong turnout, despite the rain. The community's enthusiasm for the event was evident, and we successfully filled a box and a half of toys and raised nearly \$1000 to support upcoming toy giveaways.

The winner of the Dollar Game graciously donated his winnings to Mellissa Breunig to enhance the fund. The motorcycle competition, though limited to two participants, was a closely contested affair. The Marine Corps Riders' newest member ultimately claiming the trophy. The event was a thoroughly enjoyable experience for all who attended.

AVAG wished to express its sincere appreciation for the American Legion's support. 🦋



Christmas Toy Collection Box
American Veterans Assistance Group (AVAG) is collecting toys for Veterans' Children And Low-Income Families. Please provide one green stamp (up to 2 gifts).
Time is running out! Box will be picked up by December 7.
For more information, please contact: Christmas Collection Box, The AVAG Office



AVAG Partners Hope Chapel and Children Giving Gifts: Bringing the Joy of Giving to Local Families

Children Giving Gifts at Hope Chapel

In December, AVAG proudly joined valued partners Hope Chapel Huntington Beach, Children Giving Gifts, and the Richard Breunig Foundation to host two impactful Children Giving Gifts events serving local families.

The first Children Giving Gifts event took place on December 7 at Hope Chapel Huntington Beach, where families gathered for a joyful holiday outreach centered on teaching children the blessing of giving. Young participants thoughtfully selected gifts for their parents or guardians, assisted by dedicated volunteers who helped guide them through the experience. The atmosphere was festive and welcoming, with cookies and treats for the children and Army Veteran Charlie Aroz delighting families in the role of Santa Claus. The day reflected the warmth of community and shared purpose. 🦋



At the Boys & Girls Club of Huntington Valley

A second event was held on December 16 at the Boys & Girls Club of Huntington Valley, located in Fountain Valley, in partnership with the Hope Chapel Chaplaincy Team. Families began lining up before the event opened, eager to participate. Approximately 150 children took part, each paired with a host or hostess to help them shop for quality donated items — including watches, purses, tote bags, blankets, jewelry, wallets, coffee mugs, and more — to give to their loved ones.

At both events, children experienced first-hand the truth that it is better to give than to receive. Their gratitude and thoughtful participation demonstrated the meaningful impact of this partnership in action.

AVAG is grateful for the continued collaboration with Hope Chapel Huntington Beach, Children Giving Gifts, and the Richard Breunig Foundation. Together, these partners are strengthening families and cultivating a spirit of generosity throughout the community. 🦋



AVAG Members Celebrate Christmas AVAG with Disabled American Veterans (DAV) Chapter 23

AVAG veterans and their families were warmly welcomed by Disabled American Veterans (DAV) Chapter 23 for a festive Christmas celebration.

The gathering, held at Anaheim's Golden Corral, featured a shared holiday dinner and a special visit from Santa, who delighted the children with gifts. During the evening, Commander Ron Counts was honored with an award recognizing his dedicated service to the chapter. Special appreciation also goes to Nightrain Joe for his outstanding efforts in organizing this memorable event. ✨





Expressing Appreciation for our Supporting Partners

AVAG Chaplain Doreen Matsumoto personally delivered the donations to **ekkklesia.today**, **Bracken's Kitchen**, and the **Richard Breunig Foundation**. These organizations have constantly supported AVAG, and have each contributed to the success of our events over the years. Their service to the veterans of our communities and their families has been essential and so very much appreciated. 🦋



Preparing for Christmas: AVAG Toy Drive Success

With the Christmas season underway, AVAG prepared for three major toy giveaway events scheduled for December.

Toy donation boxes were installed at Hope Chapel Huntington Beach, Santiago Creek Orange, American Legion Post 295 - Cypress, California, Casitas La Verne Mobile Home Park, and Cherokee Mobile Home Park. Additionally, both Chaplain Doreen and Mellissa Arriola Breunig made themselves available to receive donations. The word went out that AVAG was in need of gifts for girls aged 10 to 15 years old and toys for children aged 5 and 10 years old, for both boys and girls.

AVAG thanks all who donated and also to Joe Penna and Gary Magee who sent toys through the mail. 🦋



AVAG Annual Toy Giveaways: Christmas Joy In Action



AVAG's annual Christmas toy giveaway events, hosted in partnership with the Richard Breunig Foundation, were made possible through an outpouring of community support.

This season's toy drive and fundraiser led by American Legion Post 295, along with toy donation boxes placed at Hope Chapel in Huntington Beach, Santiago Creek Orange Estates, American Legion Post 295 in

Cypress, Casitas La Verne Mobile Home Park, and Cherokee Mobile Home Park, provided an abundance of gifts for local children. Additional donations arrived by mail, further expanding our ability to serve.

Because of that generosity, three mobile home communities were able to experience organized Christmas celebrations where children received toys, participated in raffles, and enjoyed food and fellowship. ✨

Pacific Palms & Ninth Street Mobile Home Parks

Children from Pacific Palms in Highland and Ninth Street Mobile Home Park came together for a lively Christmas celebration featuring toys, food, and raffle prizes.

The community manager provided pizza and snacks, while veterans and volunteers arranged a wide selection of toys. Raffle highlights included bikes, a computer, and \$25 gift cards.

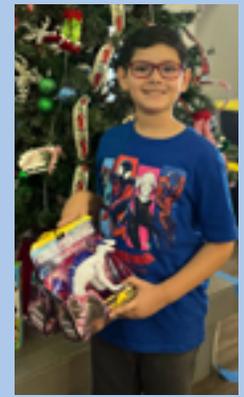
Through Children Giving Gifts, each child selected something meaningful for themselves and a gift to take home to their parents. Navy Veteran Michael Goens, serving as Santa, added warmth and holiday cheer to the day. ✨



Sequoia Plaza Mobile Home Park

Families at Sequoia Mobile Home Park gathered for a festive Christmas celebration filled with toys, treats, and excitement for the children.

Veterans and volunteers coordinated the distribution, ensuring each child received special gifts. David Breunig and Mellissa Arriola Breunig contributed a trailer filled with toys, and Jeff Hall assisted with the raffle, where children selected their preferred bike or Chromebook. Julissa, the park manager, generously provided treats for the children and their families. We also appreciate the continued support of Children Giving Gifts. 🦋



Diamond Bar Estates

At Diamond Bar Mobile Estates, families enjoyed a joyful Christmas gathering centered on giving and celebration.

Navy Veteran Michael Goens traveled from San Bernardino to serve as Santa, sharing smiles and distributing additional gifts. Volunteers worked diligently to prepare the event so that every child received toys and the opportunity to win raffle prizes, including bikes and a Chromebook.

Special thanks to Jeff Hall for donating the bikes and notebook computer. We also appreciate Yessie, the community manager, for providing pizza and snacks; Lana Martinez for bringing cupcakes; and The Party Essentials LLC for the Photo Booth that added to the festivities. 🦋



AVAG Communities Celebrate Christmas

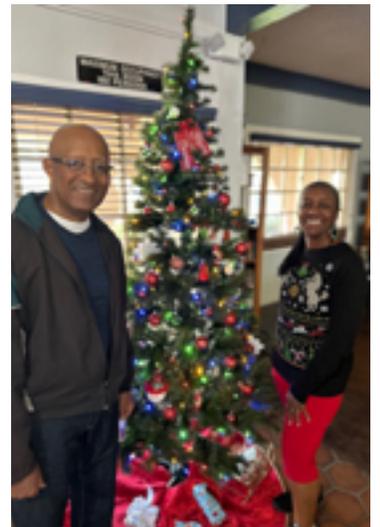


Casitas La Verne Mobile Home Estates

The Christmas party at Casitas La Verne was a joyful success, highlighted by a lively cookie contest and plenty of holiday cheer. Karen Sawyes took first place, followed by Rosemary Quinonez, Raul Sandoval, and Liss Freese. Judges Martha Lucero, Calvin Nichols, and Paul Buron had the delicious task of selecting the winners.

Donna and Maxine won the wrapping contest, earning a gift card to Stater Bros. Guests enjoyed a festive potluck, and the candy cane mystery hunt brought lots of laughs—especially as the men searched high and low for hidden treats. Rick Quinonez claimed the prize.

Special thanks to Sheere, community manager, for partnering with AVAG to make the celebration possible for our veterans and seniors. We are also grateful to our dedicated volunteers and to the community members who generously donated toys for the holiday drive. 🦋



Cherokee Mobile Home Park

The Christmas spirit was on full display at AVAG's Cherokee Mobile Home Park chapter, where residents gathered for their annual holiday celebration. The festivities included a cookie contest, a "best Christmas attire" competition, a gift exchange, and several raffles organized by Commander Manuel Martinez, all adding to the cheerful atmosphere.

A delicious meal, catered by Meals on the Grill and made possible through Jason Cruz, was enjoyed by all.

The evening also included a special moment of recognition, as Max Madrid was honored on his retirement from the Congressman's office. 🦋



Rancho La Paz MHP

The Rancho La Paz AVAG chapter Christmas party drew a wonderful turnout and plenty of holiday cheer. The meal, catered by Meals on the Grill and prepared by Jason Cruz, featured tri-tip, barbecue chicken, beans, mac and cheese, salad, and an assortment of desserts.

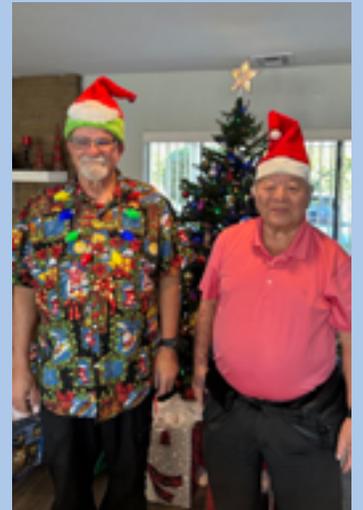
Festivities included a gift exchange, raffles, and a “best Christmas attire” contest, won by veteran Bob Barnett. Each guest also received a gift from Children Giving Gifts.

Guests enjoyed a special piano performance by Army veteran John Hodges, and Pastor Cris added to the excitement by providing gift cards for the raffle. It was a memorable celebration enjoyed by all. 🦋



Santiago Creek Orange Estates

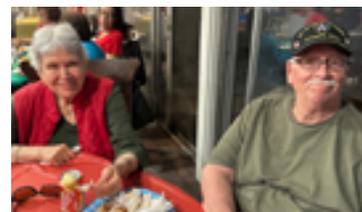
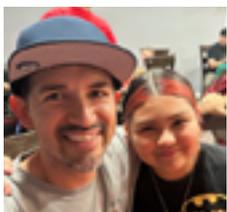
AVAG’s Creek Orange chapter’s Christmas party brought members together for an evening of food, fun, and fellowship. A lively dice game added excitement to the gift exchange. Dinner featured chicken, salad, potato salad, and a selection of fresh fruit, with delicious desserts generously provided by attendees. Special thanks to Pastor Cris for donating gift cards for the raffle. 🦋



Sequoia Plaza MHP

AVAG’s Sequoia Plaza chapter enjoyed a wonderful holiday celebration at its Christmas party. A lively gift exchange game had participants rolling dice to determine which present they would take home, and special gifts were provided for veterans and their families.

Guests enjoyed a delicious potluck of entrées and desserts. Cora—affectionately known as “Miss Philippines”—won the best festive outfit contest. The cookie contest, judged by Jodi, Andre, and Anna Margarita, was won by Michael Goens, while Cindy claimed the prize in the candy guessing game. Contest winners received gift certificates to Stater Bros. 🦋





AVAG's Veterans Connect:

AVAG Veterans Connect Celebrates Christmas and Welcomes the New Year

AVAG's Veterans Connect held its Christmas celebration at Hope Chapel in Huntington Beach, bringing together veterans and their families for an afternoon of fellowship and fun.

Guests enjoyed a "roll the dice" gift exchange, a candy cane scavenger hunt won by Sean, raffles with surprise-wrapped prizes, and the traditional wrapping contest—so well done that all participants received McDonald's gift cards. Veteran Santa Charlie kept spirits bright. Pastor Zach shared about his family's upcoming mission trip to Mexico. In support of their relocation, the chaplaincy team and Veterans Connect group raised \$2,088.

January brought a strong turnout, with veterans and their families gathering for fellowship and a shared meal. A gift card raffle, made possible by donations from Mellissa Arriola Breunig, David Breunig, and Jeff, produced multiple winners. The group is currently studying Operation Timothy, Book 4.

Veterans Connect meets on the fourth Saturday of each month at 12 noon at Hope Chapel in Huntington Beach. 🦋



AVAG In Action

Year-Round Fellowship, Support, and Service

As AVAG chapters celebrate the joy of Thanksgiving and Christmas, they continue the work that defines them year-round. Through regular meetings, game nights, and Bible studies, veterans and their families remain connected, supported, and included in vibrant community life.



Monthly Park Meetings: Staying Connected

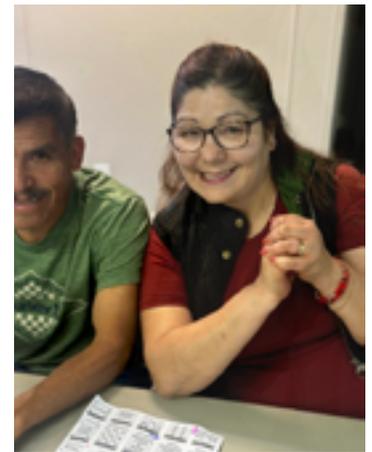
Across our communities, including Cherokee Mobile Home Park, Creekside Mobile Home Park, Rancho La Paz Mobile Home Park, Sequoia Mobile Home Park, and Diamond Bar Mobile Home Park, veterans and their families congregate monthly to share meals, exchange resources, and establish friendships.

These meetings give practical support—updates on VA services, help on benefits, and visits from community partners—but just as essential is the fellowship. Veterans reconnect with old friends, welcome new members, and celebrate milestones together. From celebrating World War II Veteran Howard Koch's 101st birthday (see the photos on this page) to cheering one another on during raffles and games, these moments build friendships and encourage connection. ✨



Game Nights: Laughter Across Generations

Family bingo nights at Pacific Palms Mobile Home Park and Ninth Street Mobile Home Park bring people of all ages together. Veterans, their spouses, and their kids are all laughing in the room as they eat and compete for small prizes. The gift cards aren't the best part; the best part is the happiness we all share and the reminder that every family belongs. ✨



Bible Studies: Growing in Faith and Friendship



Another essential component of AVAG's year-round outreach is spiritual development. Veterans, widows, and community members can gather in friendly settings at Bible studies at Cherokee Mobile Home Park, Creekside Mobile Home Park, Sequoia Mobile Home Park, Westmount Senior Living, and Casitas La Verne to study the Bible, exchange testimonies, and offer prayers for one another.

Children's clubs, men's and women's organizations, and social events foster deep, religious connections. Whether it's a birthday celebration, a prayer over a newborn, or just a meal together, everyone finds support and meaning. 



Celebrating the Life of Patrick Duffy



**September 16, 1943–
November 20, 2025**

U.S. Navy PO3 (Ret.) Patrick Duffy passed peacefully into the presence of the Lord on November 20, 2025, following an extended illness. His life was celebrated by family and friends at Hope Chapel in Huntington Beach on January 2, 2026.

Patrick was an extraordinary man whose kindness and generosity reflected his deep love for Jesus. In an interview with AVAG News, he once shared that one of his most treasured memories was the day he was saved in 1966. He recalled two men approaching him and asking if he wanted to be saved. After pausing to consider the direction of his life, he decided it was time to invite the Lord in. That decision shaped the rest of his journey. With his cheerful spirit and devotion to Scripture, Patrick ministered to many as a chaplain for AVAG, continuing to serve faithfully even while facing physical challenges.

Patrick proudly served in the United States Navy from 1964 to 1967, attaining the rank of Petty Officer Third Class (E-4). His assignments took him to Florida, Southeast China, Japan, Hawaii, and Hong Kong. Early in his service as a seaman, he wondered if swabbing decks would define his entire career. That changed when a senior officer offered him the opportunity to pursue a rating of his choice. From that moment forward, he set his course toward becoming a Petty Officer

Third Class — a role that carries both leadership responsibility and technical expertise within a designated specialty. Advancement to Petty Officer Third Class is highly competitive, with a limited number of billets available each year. Promotion requires rigorous qualification standards, and only a select percentage of sailors are chosen. Patrick met that challenge with determination and excellence.

Growing up in a small town in Wisconsin, Patrick appreciated the opportunity the Navy gave him to serve alongside sailors from diverse backgrounds and cultures. During the Vietnam War, he was assigned to replenishment operations supporting aircraft carriers en route to Vietnam. He often spoke of the significance and purpose he felt in that role, as well as the strong camaraderie he experienced.

After his military service, Patrick carried forward the discipline, organization, and relational skills he developed in the Navy into his civilian life. He frequently expressed gratitude for his wife's steadfast support during his transition, once remarking that adjusting to civilian life is not difficult when you have "the best wife."

Patrick Duffy is survived by his beloved wife, Laurene, his daughters Shannon Slager and Erin Duffy, and grandchildren Jordan, Carson, and Aubrey Slager. ✕

