

NEWS



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Students aid local veterans through service

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Created by Dillon Hagy (senior, entrepreneurship and small business), IUP's Military Philanthropy Organization (MPO) operates with one specific mission in mind: giving back to Indiana veterans and their families.

As the president of MPO, Hagy began giving back to the community's veterans last semester by raising money for a retired Marine and his family.

"We did a crowd funding event on GoFundMe.com a month after we created the organization, and it was a pretty simple concept," Hagy said.

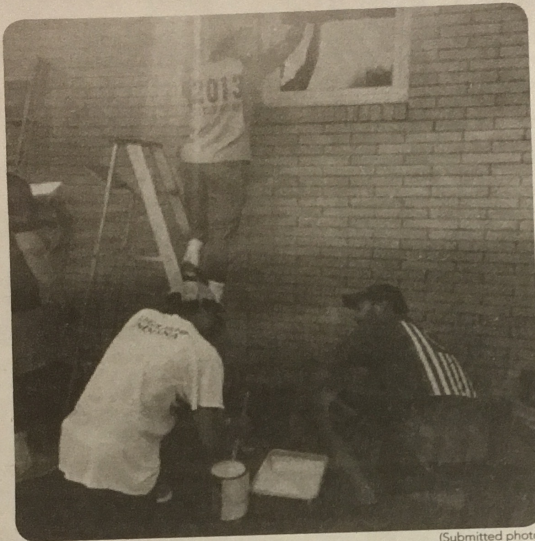
"We just went around to our families and friends – everyone, as many [people] as we could – and just asked them to donate whatever they wanted, and we ended up raising \$1,300, and we took that money and donated it to a retired Marine."

This past Saturday, MPO volunteers got their hands dirty, helping to landscape and remodel the outside of a local veteran's house.

"Our goal for Saturday [was] to give the family the help that they need," Hagy said.

Repaying the veterans for their service through any helpful act is the heart of what MPO does, and its help does not go unnoticed.

"The families we go see say how great it feels to be appreciated and to be remembered and



(Submitted photo)
MPO members did housework for a local woman while her husband is deployed.

just to see that people actually still care about them after they're out of the military," said Public Relations Chair Anthony Petrucelli (junior, political science).

"This organization has become almost a part of the family for some of these people. It's a family thing, and that's the friendly nature of the organization."

This semester, MPO has several events planned in partnership

with Team Red, White and Blue (RWB), a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting veterans, in order to give back to more Indiana veterans.

MPO is also volunteering at RWB's half marathon Oct. 21.

"We're going to be doing administrative work, handing out water bottles, doing sign-in sheets and working the medical tent," Hagy said. "We're [also] volun-



(Submitted photo)
Public Relations Chair Anthony Petrucelli (left) and President Dillon Hagy (right) helped to paint the exterior of the house.

teering for a pig roast through RWB on Nov. 5."

Hagy, Petrucelli and Vice President Tony Juhasz (junior, economics and journalism and public relations) said they want anyone who is interested in volunteering to join.

"We want the whole school to know there's no joining process," Hagy said. "You come to a meeting, you sign up and you go and

volunteer and that's it.

"There's no process. Anyone can join. We would love to see people realize that. The more people we get, the more events we can volunteer for."

With more volunteer projects being planned, MPO is looking forward to meeting both new members and veterans as they continue giving back to the community.

MILITARY PHILANTHROPY ORGANIZATION FAST FACTS

- **Mission:** "To serve those who have served us and to positively impact as many veterans' lives as possible."
- **Future goal:** To have enough donors to send veterans and their families on vacations of their dreams, which was never thought possible.
- MPO organized the first 5K Hike for Heroes in April to raise money for the Wounded Warrior Family Support foundation.
- It raised \$1,000 in spring 2017 through canning to purchase a mattress for a local veteran.
- It raised \$1,300 through crowdfunding in October 2016 to donate to a retired Marine, who president Dillon Hagy served with in Afghanistan. The money was used to buy the veteran's daughter, who has moderate autism, an iPad for therapy class and three months of individual dance lessons.
- Hagy founded the organization in 2016 and received the 2018 Foundation for IUP Community Volunteer Service Award for his work in founding MPO.
- Only 20 percent of the group is military affiliated.