AMERICAN LEGION

"The Friendly Word" from "The Friendly Post"

news@alpost178.org Volume 14—Issue #5 November, 2026

Ranya Kelly's 40 Years of Service Are Worthy of National Recognition

Post 178 is spearheading an effort to recognize the extraordinary 40-year mission of Post 178 Auxiliary member and friend, **Ranya Kelly.** Her tireless efforts to help Veterans, active-duty military members, and countless others in communities throughout the nation have prompted a movement to nominate her for the P***residential Medal of Freedom.***



Most Post 178 members are familiar with Ranya's generosity. She's the one who keeps our Bread Store stocked with thrice-weekly deliveries, regularly provides food for our kitchen, and has supplied all the plants and flowers that beautify our backyard every summer for years.

It's Ranya who organizes a huge Christmas party every year, inviting active-duty military families from Fort Carson to the Post. Many of these families are dealing with injuries, illnesses, or other hardships. Ranya makes sure they leave with gifts that include appliances, televisions, winter coats, and a variety of toys for their children. Cash donations generously contributed by Post 178 members are distributed through the Auxiliary's ***Angel Tree Program.***

And the gift-giving doesn't stop at Christmas. With the help of approximately 170 volunteers whom Ranya recruits and oversees, assistance continues throughout the year.

In 2025 alone, 300 turkey baskets were distributed to Veterans, and 2,000 families received a total of 17,500 coats, hats, and socks. Their children received 6,000 toys, and 700 backpacks filled with school supplies.

Each of Post 178's units supports Ranya's two nonprofit organizations, ***Redistribution Center Inc. (RCI)*** and ***Warriors Warehouse,*** with periodic monetary donations. She knows we're always ready to help.

Last March, when the ***1st Space Battalion*** stationed at Prince Sultan Airbase was hit by rockets that destroyed their living quarters and personal belongings, and killed one American soldier, Ranya immediately sprang into action, and so did Post 178.

The Sons wrote a check to purchase 21 pairs of new combat boots. **Legion Adjutant Nick Trujillo** secured new regulation uniforms from Camp George West. Ranya then packaged and shipped the items. Within 24 hours of the rocket attack, the collected supplies were on their way to Saudi Arabia.

Many Post members are familiar with how Ranya's remarkable journey began in 1986. She was looking for a cardboard box in which to package a gift when she discovered a dumpster full of boxes containing 500 pairs of brand-new shoes. She retrieved as many as she could and took them to ***Father Woody's Samaritan House.***

While there, Ranya found herself surrounded by desperately poor people. Her attention was drawn to a shoeless woman in tattered clothing holding a three-year-old child. It was January, and Ranya could hardly believe her eyes. Having grown up in an upper-middle-class family on Colorado's Western Slope, she had never before witnessed such poverty. It was a profound culture shock, but it was also the moment she found her calling.

Ranya returned to the dumpster several times to collect more shoes until she was caught by store employees. The police were called. Payless ShoeSource claimed ownership of the dumpster's contents and wanted her

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Legion Chaplain
Tim Karlson

Hi everyone. What a nice October we had, and I ate Sunburst tomatoes almost up to Halloween.

A neighbor came by the other day and brought me Halloween cookies. Another simple random act of kindness. They really are something special.

Speaking of which, **Ranya Kelly,** who provides us with all the special goodies in our ***Bread Store*** and does so many things to help military families at Fort Carson needs to be recognized! Thank you so much Ranya, we love you. I encourage our members to join the effort underway to award Ranya with the ***Presidential Medal of Freedom*** by sending a letter or email expressing your support of her to your favorite congress person or to the president himself.

And a big thank you to our own volunteers who deliver all the ***Bread Store*** goodies to us each and every week. Please honor their volunteer efforts by dropping a donation in the bucket when you take anything home to enjoy. It's what makes our world go round here at Post 178.



My son, Kody; daughter in-law, Brittany; and my sweet grandkids, Cooper and Cash, in Minnesota. And yes, I'm showing them off.

I've started trying to volunteer a little more myself, and it makes me feel like I'm doing something that matters. I sometimes struggle with health problems, but I can usually find something I can help with. Please volunteer to help us out. When you do I promise you'll feel good too!

We would be nothing and have nothing if it wasn't for every one of our volunteers. I personally thank each and every one of you for your valuable time and tenacious energy. You are appreciated and respected. Everyone please remember to thank our volunteers often. They are the backbone of our post.

I hope everyone will have a great Thanksgiving and are able to be with your families. If not, come be with your Legion family here at Post 178 and enjoy Thanksgiving Dinner prepared and served, of course, by volunteers.

I just got to see my son and his family last month, who live in Minnesota. It was long overdue!

Thank you Lord for giving me the health, means, and ability to make that trip happen! I have been trying to go for so many years, but my health wouldn't allow it, and you Lord, made it happen! I am so grateful for your grace and compassion. It renewed my reasons for living and put a little pep in my step.

Lord we give you thanks this and every month, but especially now as Thanksgiving and the holidays are getting closer. Please keep us all safe, healthy, and happy during this Holiday season. Keep watch over all of our Soldiers and their families as they sacrifice to keep us free in this great nation, especially during these trying times. And Lord, be nice to our mountains this winter and cover them with a wonderful white deep blanket of snow. Amen.

Commander's Report
Russ Scott

Ranya Kelly is one special lady who tirelessly works for Veterans and active duty personnel. She provides food for our Post, bread and other bakery items, meat, fruit, vegetables, and desserts. If we have a need, Ranya is the first person we call. She is the one who orchestrates the annual ***Christmas Party*** for active duty personnel and their families. No one leaves empty handed from the party. Ranya also operates ***Warriors Warehouse*** at Fort Carson, meeting the needs of active duty soldiers. She is one amazing woman.

No one has shown interest in the Commander position here at Post 178. As I stated in the previous newsletter, I will be stepping down from that position in July, 2027. There are items that the future Commander needs to be prepared for and knowledge necessary for operations. Please let me know if you are interested.

The Auxiliary is starting a ***Queen of Hearts*** game soon. Date to be announced. It is a progressive raffle that can potentially build large payouts. Play will happen on Wednesdays. Watch for future announcements from the Auxiliary.

Business Report
Bob Heer

A big thank you to **Brad Hall** and **Mark Ward** for their help this past month on several maintenance projects. Mark repaired the kitchen entry door installing new thresholds and weather stripping. Brad installed the patio sliding doors, covered the evaporative coolers, and helped repair bar rails. Thank you both for all you do for the Post.

On Thanksgiving the lounge will open at 11:00 a.m. **Shari Davis** is the coordinator for ***Thanksgiving Day Dinner*** at our Post. If you are available to help cook, serve, setup, or cleanup please get in touch with her.

We have a new bartender, **Jena Davis,** who will be primarily covering the Saturday evening shift. Please stop by and welcome her.

We are now offering ***Samuel Adams Boston Lager*** in bottles at the bar. The cost for this excellent beer is $4.50 for a bottle or $18 for a bucket of five. Cheers.



New bartender **Jena Davis** *(r.) with* **Alysyn Harvey-Green.** *Please welcome Jena in the lounge Saturday evenings or find her regularly volunteering in the kitchen.*

If you haven't been to the Post for one of Alysyn's ***Wednesday Night Dinners*** *you've missed some great cooking. Next up is her reknowned Oyster Stew—her own recipe.*

Auxiliary Report
Kay Scott

Here we are again in "the most wonderful time of the year" season! Fall, the Holidays, a New Year, which can be filled with fun, laughter, good food, and gift-giving for most. However, this joyous season can be not so wonderful for some who are experiencing loss and sadness. Let's all be mindful of others during this season: welcoming, encouraging, listening.

On November 1st, the annual ***Angel Tree*** will be up and ready for your donations to benefit the Fort Carson Military Families attending the ***RCI Christmas Party*** here at the Post on December 19th. Thank you, **Beth Hall,** for your time and hard work, and thank all of you for your generosity!



Queen of Hearts progressive raffle will hopefully begin on Wednesday November 4th with the drawing at 6:00 p.m. Ticket purchasing begins at 4:30 and end at 5:55 p.m. You must be present to win!

On ***Veterans Day,*** Wednesday, November 11th, ***Bingo*** will be played starting at 1:00 p.m. Post Veterans can receive 1 FREE Bingo card or Blackout Card. We will serve our ***Spaghetti, Meatball, and Sausage Dinner*** from 3:30 until 7:00 p.m. Post 178 Veterans are invited to eat FREE; all others will pay $11. The ***Queen of Hearts*** raffle drawing on Veterans Day will be at 6:00 p.m.

The Auxiliary is asking all of you to help our member ***Ranya Kelly*** be considered for the ***Presidential Medal of Freedom*** for her volunteer service since 1986. Details about how you can help appear below.

arrested. The police disagreed. The battle had begun, and this petite, tenacious registered nurse wasn't about to be defeated by a giant corporation.

Months passed. ***Westword*** heard about Ranya and began writing her story. They contacted Payless. It had taken two years, but the company finally relented, instituting a new corporate policy for all 50 of its Denver stores as a six-month test. The policy remained in effect until Payless closed its stores in 2019.

Ranya expanded her efforts beyond shoe stores, establishing relationships with numerous other businesses. In 1991, she founded ***Redistribution Center Inc. (RCI)*** in Wheat Ridge. Her mission grew to include providing assistance by the semi-truckload to victims of floods, hurricanes, and fires. American Indian reservations also receive assistance from Ranya.

She's there for first responders, too. For example, she appeared on-site with bottles of water immediately after the September 11 attacks.

Ranya's son, ***Justin,*** entered West Point in 2002 and later served two tours in Iraq as a combat helicopter pilot. Through his military experience, Ranya became increasingly aware of the needs of military families and naturally expanded her efforts to help them.

In 2011, Ranya opened ***Warriors Warehouse*** at Fort Carson. The facility allows eligible active-duty military personnel with the rank of sergeant and below to shop free of charge. The store also serves personnel from ***Peterson Air Force Base*** and ***Schriever Space Force Base.***

With the help of the many volunteers recruited by Ranya, Warriors Warehouse serves approximately 1,000 families each month. The store is restocked twice weekly by truck from RCI's storage facility at Ranya's home.

Since founding RCI, Ranya has distributed more than $100 million worth of new household goods, toys, school supplies, bicycles, clothing, furniture, food, and other items. More than 900,000 pairs of shoes have been collected and given away. Ranya herself has logged an astounding 65,432 hours of community service.

Now It's Our Turn to Help Ranya!

For 40 years, Ranya has given her time, energy, and resources to help others. We believe she is well-qualified to receive the ***Presidential Medal of Freedom.***

We can all help by writing letters supporting Ranya's nomination for the highest civilian award in the nation.

Sample letters appear on the following pages to help inspire those who wish to participate. You don't need to use them word for word. In fact, we encourage you to personalize your letter(s) by sharing your own experiences with Ranya, what her work means to you, or why you believe her service deserves national recognition.

Even a short, heartfelt letter can make a difference. Every letter adds another voice to this effort.

Address your letter(s) to the official(s) of your choice. Feel free to write to one or all of them then deliver your letter(s) to the Post in person or by U.S. Mail addressed to:

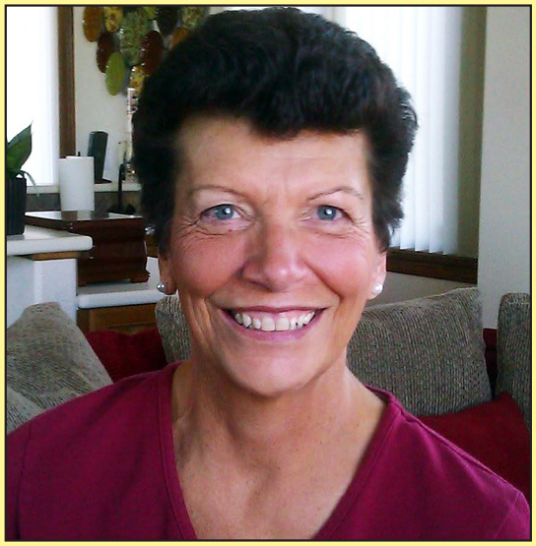
Commander Russ Scott
Lakewood American Legion
1655 Simms Street
Lakewood, CO 80215

Email your letter(s) to: news@alpost178.org

Deadline for submission is Tuesday, December 1st.

We will bundle all of the letters and printed emails, add cover letters from each unit commander/president plus a variety of relevant photographs, and send the packages to each of the officials listed.

Let's show Ranya how much she means to all of us at Post 178 and how deeply we appreciate everything she has does for our Veterans, our military families, and our community.



Paper Pumpkins Benefit Ft. Carson Thanksgiving Food Bank

The spirit of giving was on full display at American Legion Post 178 as members, families, and guests came together to support the ***Fort Carson Thanksgiving Food Bank*** *through the purchase of paper pumpkins.*

Every paper pumpkin purchased represents a commitment to helping military families enjoy a warm and meaningful Thanksgiving meal. A special thank you goes out to the Legionnaires, Auxiliary, Sons, and Riders for your exceptionally generous donations that reflect the core values of The American Legion family. ***—Dita Alexander***

Donations of over $3,100 have been received thanks to the amazing effort of **Shari Davis.**

Sample Letter to President Donald Trump

The President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Subject: Recommendation of Ranya Kelly for the Presidential Medal of Freedom

Dear Mr. President:

I am writing as a member of American Legion Post 178 in Colorado to respectfully recommend Ranya Kelly for consideration for the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

For approximately four decades, Ranya has dedicated her life to helping others, with a particular commitment to military families, veterans, and those facing difficult circumstances. Her work is not simply charitable giving. It is a sustained demonstration of compassion, leadership, patriotism, and service to our fellow Americans.

Through her leadership of Redistribution Center Inc. and Warriors Warehouse, Ranya has helped build an extraordinary network of volunteers and resources. Her organizations have provided essential goods, clothing, shoes, school supplies, toys, and other necessities to families who need assistance. The scope of this work is remarkable, but what makes it especially meaningful is the number of lives touched along the way.

As a member of the American Legion, an organization whose mission is rooted in service to veterans, military families, and our communities, I believe Ranya represents the very best of American citizenship.

I respectfully ask you to consider Ranya Kelly for the Presidential Medal of Freedom. Her decades of selfless service deserve recognition at the highest level our nation can bestow upon a civilian.

Thank you for your consideration and for recognizing Americans who dedicate their lives to making this country stronger.

Respectfully,
[Member's Full Name]
Member, American Legion Post 178
[Address]
[City, State, ZIP]
[Email / Telephone]

Sample Letter to First Lady Melenia Trump

The First Lady of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Subject: A Request for Your Support in Recognizing Ranya Kelly

Dear Mrs. Trump:

I am writing as a member of American Legion Post 178 in Colorado to bring to your attention the extraordinary humanitarian work of Ranya Kelly.

Ranya has spent approximately 40 years helping individuals and families facing hardship. Her work has had a particularly meaningful impact on military families, children, veterans, and others who often need assistance but may have nowhere else to turn.

Through her leadership and dedication, she has helped establish and sustain organizations that provide clothing, shoes, school supplies, toys, and essential household goods to thousands of families. Her efforts have also inspired hundreds of volunteers to give their time and energy to helping others.

I believe Ranya's work reflects the values of compassion, service, and concern for the well-being of American families. Her commitment to children and military families is especially deserving of recognition.

I respectfully ask that you consider bringing Ranya Kelly's extraordinary contributions to the President's attention and supporting her consideration for the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

I believe her story deserves to be heard nationally, and her example deserves to be recognized.

Thank you for your time and favorable consideration.

Respectfully,
[Member's Full Name]
Member, American Legion Post 178
[Address]
[City, State, ZIP]
[Email / Telephone]

Sample Letter to Secretary of War Pete Hegseth

The Honorable Pete Hegseth
Secretary of War
Washington, DC

Subject: Support for Presidential Medal of Freedom Recognition – Ranya Kelly

Dear Secretary Hegseth:

I am writing as a member of American Legion Post 178 in Colorado to ask for your support in bringing national recognition to Ranya Kelly, whose decades of humanitarian service have made an extraordinary difference in the lives of military families and veterans.

For approximately 40 years, Ranya has worked tirelessly to provide assistance to those in need. Her organizations have become important resources for military families, helping provide necessities that can make a substantial difference in the lives of service members, veterans, and their children.

What I find especially remarkable is her sustained commitment. This is not a short-term charitable project or an occasional act of generosity. Ranya has devoted much of her life to this mission and has inspired an extensive volunteer network to join her efforts.

As a member of the American Legion, I understand that supporting those who serve our nation also means supporting their families. Ranya has demonstrated that commitment through action, year after year.

I respectfully request that you consider supporting Ranya Kelly's nomination for the Presidential Medal of Freedom and bringing her accomplishments to the President's attention.

Her contributions to military families and the broader community represent a remarkable example of service to our country.

Thank you for your favorable consideration.

Respectfully,
[Member's Full Name]
Member, American Legion Post 178
[Address]
[City, State, ZIP]
[Email / Telephone]

Sample Letter to Senator Michael Bennet

The Honorable Michael Bennet
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Subject: Colorado Citizen Deserving of the Presidential Medal of Freedom – Ranya Kelly

Dear Senator Bennet:

I am writing as a member of American Legion Post 178 to ask you to support national recognition for an extraordinary Colorado humanitarian, Ranya Kelly.

For approximately four decades, Ranya has dedicated herself to helping individuals and families in need. Her work through Redistribution Center Inc. and Warriors Warehouse has provided tremendous assistance to military families, veterans, children, and others throughout our communities.

The magnitude of her accomplishments is impressive. Equally important, however, is the compassion and personal commitment behind those accomplishments. Ranya has built organizations, mobilized volunteers, and developed a sustained system of assistance for people who might otherwise struggle to obtain basic necessities.

As a Coloradan and an American Legion member, I am proud that someone from our state has made such a significant contribution to the well-being of others.

I believe Ranya Kelly's decades of service deserve recognition beyond our state. I respectfully ask that you support her consideration for the Presidential Medal of Freedom and bring her accomplishments to the attention of the President.

Colorado has many outstanding citizens, but Ranya's record of sustained humanitarian service is exceptional.

Thank you for representing Colorado and for favorably considering this request.

Respectfully,
[Member's Full Name]
Member, American Legion Post 178
[Address]
[City, State, ZIP]
[Email / Telephone]

Sample Letter to Senator John Hickenlooper

The Honorable John Hickenlooper
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Subject: Request for Support – Presidential Medal of Freedom for Ranya Kelly

Dear Senator Hickenlooper:

I am writing as a member of American Legion Post 178 in Colorado to recommend Ranya Kelly for the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

Ranya has spent approximately 40 years demonstrating what it means to be a truly dedicated public servant, even though her work has been accomplished outside government.

Through her leadership of charitable organizations and her ability to bring people together around a common purpose, she has developed an extraordinary record of helping those in need. Her efforts have been especially important to military families and veterans, providing necessities and support to people who deserve our nation's gratitude.

Her accomplishments reflect more than generosity. They demonstrate organizational leadership, perseverance, and an unwavering commitment to improving the lives of others.

I believe her work is an excellent example of the positive difference one determined American can make. She has not simply helped individual families; she has built a network of volunteers and resources that continues to serve communities.

I respectfully ask you to support Ranya Kelly's consideration for the Presidential Medal of Freedom and help ensure that her contributions receive the national attention they deserve.

Thank you for your time and for your continued service to Colorado.

Respectfully,
[Member's Full Name]
Member, American Legion Post 178
[Address]
[City, State, ZIP]
[Email / Telephone]

Sample Letter to Congresswoman Brittany Pettersen

The Honorable Brittany Pettersen
United States House of Representatives
348 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Subject: A Hometown Hero Deserving of National Recognition – Ranya Kelly

Dear Congresswoman Pettersen:

I am writing as a member of American Legion Post 178, located in Colorado's 7th Congressional District, to ask for your support in recognizing one of our area's most extraordinary citizens, Ranya Kelly.

For approximately 40 years, Ranya has devoted herself to helping people in need. Her work has touched thousands of families, including veterans, active-duty military families, children, and others facing difficult circumstances.

Through her leadership and determination, she has helped create and sustain organizations that provide essential goods and services to people who need them most. She has also inspired hundreds of volunteers to become part of this continuing mission.

As someone who represents the community where Post 178 is located, I believe you should know about the remarkable work being accomplished by Ranya right here in Colorado. Her contributions extend well beyond our district, but her roots and her commitment to helping our neighbors make her accomplishments especially meaningful to us.

I respectfully ask that you support Ranya Kelly's nomination for the Presidential Medal of Freedom and help bring her extraordinary record of humanitarian service to the attention of the President.

It would be a tremendous honor for Colorado to see one of its own citizens recognized with our nation's highest civilian award.

Thank you for your consideration and for representing our community.

Respectfully,

[Member's Full Name]
Member, American Legion Post 178
[Address]
[City, State, ZIP]
[Email / Telephone]

Music Brings Us Together!

HOLIDAY CELEBRATION

WITH

The All American Big Band

Faith
Family
Friends
Music
Together



FRIDAY, DECEMBER 4TH

★ BIG BAND STARTS AT 6 PM ★



Dinner prepared by the Riders.

Dinner starts at 5 PM

Prime Rib, Twice Baked Potato,
Veggies and Side Salad

$17.00

The All American Big Band is a non-profit group and is performing for **FREE.**

Please consider bringing a little extra cash for a donation to their organization.

Celebrate the Season • Support Live Music • Keep the Spirit Alive!