

## **BEYOND THE YELLOW RIBBON MOORHEAD (BTYR)**

Governor Dayton declared Moorhead a Beyond the Yellow Ribbon city on August 23, 2012. Our mission is to connect servicemembers and their families with community support, training, services and resources. The BTYR was incorporated in the Minnesota and has been operating as a 501(c)3 charitable organizations since 2013.

1. Creating awareness through the Yellow Ribbon Community Campaign and synchronizing sustainable community support networks.
2. Connecting and coordinating organizations, agencies and companies to provide resources and support to Servicemembers and their families.
3. Delivering a series of formal Yellow Ribbon Training events to Servicemembers and their families before, during and after deployment.
4. Providing an opportunity for Minnesotans to support Servicemembers and their families.

The BTYR is only in the State of Minnesota, started by Commissioner of Veterans Affairs, Larry Shellito. Shellito is a MSUM alum and served as Commander of the MN National Guard.

**Activities** of the BTYR include an annual fundraiser to provide funds to the recreation funds at the Fergus Falls Veterans Home and the VA Hospital in Fargo. In cooperation with the VFW and American Legion, we host annual Christmas parties for our local guard units and their families. We provide help to local needy families with food cards, gas cards and bus passes. Local businesses provide strong support to the BTYR. For instance, A-1 Auto, a local auto service business gave the BTYR tires at cost so we could replace the bald tires on the car of a deployed Guard member. When the owner saw the condition of the breaks, he replaced them at no cost. Financial assistance was provided to the Armory for an upgrade in their sound system. Along with Scheels Hardware and a donation from a local individual, the BTYR upgraded the exercise equipment at the Moorhead Armory. The BTYR works very closely with the Clay County Veterans Service Office providing assistance as needed. In turn the VSO provides the screening of requests, making sure any financial request is legitimate. The BTYR provided funds for our recent Clay County Veterans Conference, held at the Moorhead Armory.

Charitable gaming at the VFW provides most of our financial support and hosts are monthly meetings. Our meetings are the second Thursday of each month. Our committee is comprised of representatives of the Moorhead City Council, Clay County Commission, Public Safety, Moorhead School District, local Veterans organizations, community leaders, social service organizations and dedicated residents. For additional information, check out our website <http://www.btyr.org>, <http://www.btyrmoorhead.org> or contact Les Bakke, BTYR president at [lesbakke@gmail.com](mailto:lesbakke@gmail.com).

Beyond the Yellow Ribbon is united to bring Servicemembers all the way home.