

# Volunteer of the Month

## October 2016

*David Thomas*



David Thomas is Buddy-to-Buddy's October 2016 Volunteer of the Month! David has spent nearly his entire adult life, both professionally and personally, working with and assisting service members and veterans. Since he trained to become a Volunteer Veteran in May of 2012, he's enriched Buddy-to-Buddy by doing the same as part of the volunteer corps.

David served in the Marines from 1969-1971, which included a life-changing tour in Vietnam. After his time serving, he attended college for a couple of years before beginning his long career working with veterans. David explains, "I never thought that's what I'd do with my life, but being in the military and Vietnam changed all of that." David has not only demonstrated his total dedication to helping other veterans in his professional life, but

also as a volunteer with various organizations, including Buddy-to-Buddy. As a Volunteer Veteran, he's assisted others with issues including financial, legal, benefits/claims, and homelessness. David finds the experience of helping other veterans and seeing the look of relief on their faces when they realize that things are going to get better very rewarding.

He began his career working as a veterans counselor for Lenawee County before going to work for the VA, for which he was a department head in Ann Arbor, Milwaukee, Allen Park, and Detroit for 22 years. During that time, he also completed a BA in History and Political Science and earned a teaching certificate from U-M Dearborn, and later completed an MBA from Davenport University. After his time at the VA, David worked for a faith-based homeless shelter in Wayne County and then was a Regional Coordinator for Buddy-to-Buddy for almost four years before transitioning to his current position as the Regional Coordinator for the Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency serving Wayne, Oakland, and Macomb Counties. He's a very active member of Disabled Veterans of America and also a member of the VFW and American Legion.

David has a son who's in the Navy, a daughter who works in home health, and three grandchildren. He loves to travel and recently returned from a trip to Arizona. David is also a voracious reader and typically reads at least two books a month, one for professional and personal development, and one for pleasure.

**Thank you for all you do helping other veterans, David!**