

Veteran donates American flag to Sunbeam

BY NICOLE LEMAL
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FAIRMONT — Saluting the American flag is something Reginald Goodin doesn't take lightly.

After serving nine years in the Army, he understands even more how special it is to do so.

"I have a lot of respect for the flag," Goodin said.

That could be why he felt so compelled to give back to the Sunbeam Early Learning Center, where his daughter and preschool lead teacher Janae Ice works. Once he learned that the flag in front of the center was weathered and in need of replacement, he didn't hesitate to donate one to the facility.

"Everywhere I go, I carry a

new American flag," Goodin said. "And if I run into something like this, I donate."

In addition to donating a flag, Goodin took time to visit the school and talk to preschool children about the importance of the flag, how it should be folded and how to properly take care of it so it stays in good condition.

Dressed in his Legion uniform, he caught the students' attention.

"I think that's what fascinated the children," he said. "I think that impressed them more than anything. They didn't know what to make of it."

"Maybe they thought I was a policeman or something," he laughed.

Whatever sparked their fascination, the students listened

intently as he spoke.

"They were all very much into it," director Helen Brown said. "They were all very quiet and attentive, watching him take it down and fold it up and then hang the new one, so it was really quite moving."

With the new flag blowing in the wind, the students recited the Pledge of Allegiance as a thank you for Goodin's kindness.

"I enjoyed it," Goodin said. "I love them. I love the little ones. I hate to see a distressed flag flying."

Having Goodin at the center was touching for Brown and the students who truly grasped the meaning behind the visit.

"Some of our children actually have parents that are in the service," Brown said. "I think

it's meaningful just thinking about those parents that are not here and that they're fighting for us. So I felt that the children felt that, even if they didn't have the words to say it."

What Goodin wanted the students to get out of his presentation was simple.

"Respect the flag and understand what it stands for," he said. "It gives them something to think about. Every time they go to school, they see that new flag flying and it keeps it in their mind."

For Goodin, it was a way to give back to the country he loves.

"I'm just proud to do it. I do it in the name of American allegiance," he said.

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SUBMITTED PHOTO
Army veteran Reginald Goodin salutes the new flag outside the Sunbeam Early Learning Center. After learning the flag was in dire need of replacement, Goodin took the opportunity to not only donate a flag but to also visit the school a few weeks ago and present the flag to students and staff.