



The Volunteer Promise

Volume 61

December 2009

Mark Your Calendars!

Thursday, November 26
Thanksgiving Day
Federal Offices Closed

Friday, December 25
Christmas Day
Federal Offices Closed

Friday, January 1
New Year's Day
Federal Offices Closed

Monday, January 18
Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day
Federal Offices Closed

Thursday, January 28
VAVS Committee Mtg
Conference Rm D010
VA Medical Center

Homeless Veterans Christmas Tree

You are cordially invited to help spread the goodwill of the holiday season by participating in a very special gift-giving project to benefit homeless Veterans. Voluntary Service, in conjunction with the VA Homeless Veterans Program, is sponsoring a Christmas Gift Tree. We have nearly 120 Veterans, some of whom have families, enrolled in the homeless Veterans program. They need our help to keep warm this winter. A Christmas tree will be set up in the medical center at the West Entrance beginning on Friday, November 20.

Each ornament will represent one clothing item (shirt, pants, sweater, coat, socks or underwear) for a homeless Veteran or family member of a homeless Veteran. Each Veteran and family member will receive a complete outfit.

Individuals wishing to participate in the project should choose a name and purchase items indicated on the ornament. Remember, this is a Christmas project; gifts should be limited to **new items only**. Gifts should be delivered **UNWRAPPED**

to Voluntary Service, Room A008 no later than close of business on December 14. This allows Voluntary Service time to wrap the packages and deliver them to the shelters in time for their holiday parties.

If you have any questions or if you would like additional information, contact Voluntary Service at (502) 287-6221.



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HUD/VASH Holiday Adoptions

The HUD/VASH program is a long term intensive case management program for homeless Veterans. The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) have collaborated to assist Veterans in transition out of homeless shelters.

Eligible Veterans receive access to a Section 8 voucher from

HUD, which subsidizes housing rental cost, and case management services from VA to resolve their homeless issues and to prevent future episodes. Many of these Veterans have young children.

Voluntary Service is partnering with the HUD/VASH case managers to provide opportunities to adopt these families for the holidays. Case managers provided

Voluntary Service specific information, including clothing sizes for each member of the family.

We invite you to take advantage of this opportunity to spread holiday cheer.

If you or your organization is interested in adopting a HUD/VASH family, please contact Voluntary Service at 502-287-6221.

Holiday Visits at the Medical Center

Patient visits provide another opportunity to spread holiday cheer. Don't forget to consider the week between Christmas and New Years Day for your visit. That week can be particularly quiet in the medical center.

Also, keep in mind that flu season is in full swing.

Here are some reminders intended to protect our Veterans and make your visit go more smoothly:

DO:

- Schedule your visit in advance.
- Do not visit if you are sick.
- Observe all infection control instructions and signage, i.e. use of hand hygiene and isolation signage.



DO NOT:

- Do not bring snacks for inpatients unless you have formally adopted a ward.
- Do not take photographs unless directly supervised by Voluntary Service.
- Respect patient privacy at all times.
-

Enjoy your visit! Thank you for your time and commitment to America's heroes!

To schedule your visit, contact Voluntary Service Monday-Friday, between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., at 502-287-6221

The C.A.R.E. Channel™ - Now Available at Louisville VA Medical Center

Louisville VA Medical Center and Healing HealthCare Systems, Inc. are committed to providing an environment that supports healing, health, and care. The C.A.R.E. (Continuous Ambient Relaxation Environment) Channel™ is now available on channel 32 at Louisville VA Medical Center.



The C.A.R.E. Channel™ provides ambient television programming for patients and their family members during their time at the

medical center as a restful alternative to commercial television.

The C.A.R.E. Channel™ has been developed to create an environment that is supportive of recovery and to improve comfort and rest. Our staff is committed to the highest standard of care which includes responding to both medical and non-medical needs.

Available on a 24-hour basis, The C.A.R.E. Channel™ provides beautiful nature images and instrumental music that has been composed and produced specifically to support healing environments. The programming is designed to be in pace with the day/night cycle, with late-night programming providing both soothing music and a soft, subdued midnight starfield. For additional information on The C.A.R.E.

Channel™, visit their website at www.healinghealth.com.

Giving Thanks



Just how long have Americans celebrated Thanksgiving?

Thanksgiving or Thanksgiving Day, presently celebrated on the fourth Thursday in November, has been an annual tradition in the United States since 1863. It did not become a federal holiday until 1941.

Most Americans celebrate by gathering at home with family or

friends for a holiday feast. One common tradition is for each member of the family to name something for which they are thankful. Many will express thanks for family, friends, or good health.

In recent years, many books have been written about living a grateful life. One author says that living a grateful life means living a joyful life.

We should each take this opportunity to reflect on all of the things for which we are grateful.

We must remember to include in our gratitude our country, our freedom, and those Veterans and service members who have fought and are fighting to preserve that freedom.

Program Adoption Requests/Donation Needs

HUD/VASH Program—This is a long term intensive case management program for homeless Veterans and funding comes from collaboration between the US Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Department of Veterans Affairs. Eligible Veterans receive case management services to resolve their homeless issues and to prevent future episodes. Veterans also receive access to a Section 8 voucher which subsidizes housing rental cost. Veterans are required to attend a monthly mandatory meeting. The HUD/VASH program is in need of snacks and beverages for their meetings.

Medical Procedures Unit—Patients are admitted to this treatment area when they come to the medical center for any of a variety of medical procedures that do not require full hospitalization. Veterans typically are instructed not to eat or drink prior to their procedure and would benefit from your donation of snack crackers and fruit juice for that time when the dietary restriction is lifted after their procedure is completed.

Carrollton Community Based Outpatient Clinic—Veterans treated in this facility may be advised that they are not to eat or drink prior to their medical appointment. Snack crackers and juice are needed to support their dietary needs after their lab test or appointment.

Hospice Family Room—Assorted snack foods, including microwaveable popcorn, are needed to stock the Hospice Family Room. This room is reserved for the family members of hospice patients. The families often will not leave their veteran even long enough to take care of personal needs. Our goal is to make them as comfortable as possible during a very difficult time.

Heroes to Hometowns—Our youngest population of veterans are in need of items to help them support their families. Items especially needed include gift cards for groceries/gasoline, diapers in all sizes—especially needed are diapers in size 4 or 5 and pull-ups in all sizes..

Community Residential Care Program—Veterans enrolled in this program are living in reduced circumstances in the community. They often find it difficult to purchase the little things most of us take for granted—an occasional snack, toiletries, and similar items.

Ambulatory Surgery Unit - This treatment area is in need of bedside televisions to help the Veterans rest more comfortably while waiting for their procedure. Televisions must meet special medical requirements and will cost approximately \$970 each. Five televisions are needed. Please direct donations to GPF 505.

Louisville VA Medical Center Wins 2009 Robert W. Carey Performance Excellence Trophy Award



The Louisville Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center (LVAMC) is winner of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs' **2009 Robert W. Carey Performance Excellence Trophy Award** - the highest level of achievement for this prestigious award! The award was presented during a ceremony on October 30, 2009 at the Liaison Capitol Hill Hotel in Washington, DC. The Robert W. Carey Awards, presented annually, recognize Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) organizations with demonstrated noteworthy levels of performance excellence in seven

areas: leadership; strategic planning; customer and market focus; measurement, analysis, and knowledge management; workforce resource focus; process management; and results. With core values of quality, satisfaction, access, resource efficiency, and the theme, "Louisville VA Medical Center - The Pattern to Organizational Health, Stitch by Stitch" the LVAMC continues to accomplish significant improvements. LVAMC was previously recognized at the Carey Awards for Achievement (2007), Excellence (2008). 2009 is the first year Louisville has brought

home the top award. This award again signifies the LVAMC's commitment to providing our nation's veterans with the highest level of quality healthcare that is delivered with compassion, respect and honor. The award is dedicated to the memory of the late Robert W. Carey, who as Director of the Veterans Affairs Regional Office and Insurance Center in Philadelphia, PA, was recognized as a quality leader and champion of excellence in the Federal government.

Volunteer Impact

Volunteers make a significant impact on several of the medical center's performance measures.

For example, the Volunteer Transportation Network (VTN) and the pre-call program impact access to care, missed opportunities and patient satisfaction.

The volunteer program results in significant cost avoidance from donations as well as other areas, including those VTN riders who would otherwise be eligible to collect travel pay.



The value of volunteers is not lost on VA staff. Here are a few comments from supervisors of volunteers:

- A supervisor in the Business Office called her volunteer "a treasure." She said that he never complains, completes his tasks and even takes initiative to do other tasks.
- A pharmacy employee voiced her amazement that volunteers drive all the way here, fight for a parking space, then come in with smiles on their faces!

BY THE NUMBERS (Fiscal Year 2009):

- Total Volunteers: 756 volunteers
- Total Hours: 173,546 (valued at more than \$3.2 million in service!)
- Material donations: \$311,543
- Monetary Donations: \$170,045
- Total value of ALL contributions: \$3,778,962

To share what your group is doing for Veterans at Louisville VA Medical Center, contact Voluntary Service at 502-287-6221 or email vhalouvavs@va.gov.

New Clinic Locations—C&P and Polytrauma



The Compensation & Pension (C&P) clinic has moved to the new modular building, T-22, located adjacent to the Business Office/Ambulatory Care building. Patients scheduled for C&P appointments may take advantage of reserved parking near the new building.

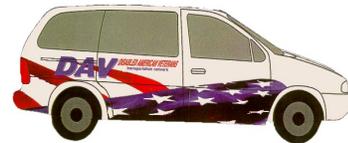
The Polytrauma Clinic has relocated to the first floor, room D125, and is now co-located with the Medicine/Purple Primary Care Clinic (PCC).

Volunteers Transporting Veterans

Know anyone who recently retired or has plans to retire soon? That is the time when many people are looking for opportunities to give back. This is also the ideal group to recruit for the Volunteer Transportation Network!

The need for qualified volunteer drivers is increasing with the expansion of the transportation

program. The Transportation Network's DAV Hospital Service Coordinator reported that she is currently declining an average of five or more Veteran transportation requests per day. We currently need volunteer drivers for the grounds, for local transportation, and throughout the extended community. Drivers should be available to drive one or more full



days per week and must have current driver's license and proof of insurance. Prior to receiving a driving assignment, volunteer applicants must have a TB skin test and must pass a physical examination. These are provided free of charge by the VA.

Volunteer Help Needed

Volunteers provide a unique brand of support for the Louisville VA Medical Center, assisting staff with a variety of activities that support the care and treatment of Veterans. Volunteers may provide clerical support, direct or indirect patient care, mechanical support, transportation support or grounds maintenance support. **Assignments are available throughout the medical center and interested individuals may contact Voluntary Service to discuss their personal interests.** Some of the more critical needs at this time include:

Clerical Support Activities: Medical Service, Radiology Service, Business Office, Newburg Primary Care Clinic, the Homeless Veterans Program, and the Vet Center are among the areas needing assistance. There are a variety of assignments in this category.

Clerical Support with Computer Skills: Volunteers (18 years or older) with computer skills are needed in multiple administrative areas. Additional details are available in the Voluntary Service office.

Telephone Skills Needed – An assignment is available to support the clinics in making appointment reminder calls to patients. This could be an evening or Saturday assignment. The Patient Advocate for Inpatients is also seeking volunteers to make follow-up telephone calls to Veterans following an inpatient stay. Training and materials will be provided.

Transportation Services - Drivers and Transportation Coordinators are needed for the Volunteer Transportation Program, a special service staffed by volunteers who are dedicated to assuring that Veterans have the transportation they need to come to the medical center and to community-based outpatient clinics.

Shuttle Transportation Drivers – Drivers are needed to operate the VA Medical Center's Grounds Shuttle. The drivers in this program remain on the VA property and offer transportation assistance to Veterans moving to and from their automobiles and the medical center entrances.

Evening/Weekend Assignments: A new assignment is available in our Supply Processing and Distribution (SPD) Section. Volunteers would assist SPD staff in replenishing supplies on the wards. In addition, some of the telephone assignments may take place evenings or weekends. Volunteers who work in the Emergency Department may also work evenings and/or weekends.

**MONETARY AND MATERIAL NEEDS
FOR VETERAN PROGRAMS**

Television Fund: Donations are needed to purchase televisions for ASU. Five televisions are needed at a cost of approximately \$970 each. Funds should be directed to GPF #505.

Social Work Service Emergency Fund: Donations to this account support patient emergency needs in situations not covered by medical center resources. These include certain travel expenses and clothing needs for patients upon discharge from the medical center. Donations for this purpose should be directed to GPF #502.

OEF/OIF Veterans Fund: Funds donated to GPF 511 (OIF/OEF Heroes to Hometowns) will be used to help meet the immediate needs of Veterans who recently served in Iraq or Afghanistan. Material donations needed include diapers, especially larger sizes, and gift cards for groceries and gas. Funds Donated to GPF 532 (OIF/OEF Welcome Home) will be used to support our annual Welcome Home event, which honors returning combat Veterans.

Patient Comfort Items: Donations to this account will be used to support the Comfort Cart, a program in which volunteers provide personal hygiene items to hospitalized Veterans. Donations for this purpose should be directed to GPF #515.

Stand Down for the Homeless: Funds are needed to support Stand Down 2010. Proceeds will be used to purchase clothing and personal items for homeless Veterans who need our support. Donations to this program should be directed to General Post Fund (GPF) 525.

National Veterans Creative Arts Program: Donations to this account are used to support the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival and the local competition. Funds are used for transportation costs for patients who are invited to participate in the national festival. Under some circumstances, funds may also be used to pay for one attendant accompanying a Veteran artist. Donations for this program should be directed to GPF #509.

National Veterans Sporting Events: Funds are needed to support patients wishing to participate in the National Veterans Wheelchair Games and the National Veterans Winter Sports Clinic. Both programs combine the thrill of competition and therapeutic support to Veterans who would otherwise not be able to compete. Contributions to support local Veteran participation in either of these events should be directed to GPF #508.

Program Adoptions: Several programs are in need of adoption to provide health snacks on a routine basis. To find out more about program adoptions, contact Voluntary Service.

For a complete list of General Post Funds Accounts and their definitions, refer to the *General Post Funds and Material Donations* booklet published by Voluntary Service.

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You may also view our newsletter on line at <http://www.louisville.va.gov/>. Scroll down and click on "Volunteer or Give," then click on Volunteer Promise Newsletter.

We welcome your thoughts about this newsletter and your ideas for articles. Contact Voluntary Service to share your suggestions.

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