



The Volunteer Promise

Volume 65

January 2011

Mark Your Calendars!

February 13-19

National Salute to Veteran Patients

Monday, February 21

Presidents' Day
Federal Offices Closed

Thursday, March 17

St Patrick's Day

Saturday, April 9

Volunteer Awards Program,
The Olmsted

Sunday, April 24, 2011

Easter

Inside this issue:

National Salute to Veteran Patients	2
National Rehab Events	2
Volunteer Awards Program	2
Welcome Home	3
National Advisory Committee meeting	3
Sruvey Says...	3
Program Spotlight: Volunteer Transportation Network	4
Volunteer Needs	5
Program Adoption Requests / Donations	5
Monetary and Material Need for Veteran Programs	6

Expansion of SAR RTP

The Robley Rex VA Medical Center is pleased to announce the expansion of the Substance Abuse Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Program (SAR RTP). The existing SAR RTP is a 10 bed residential program, treating both alcohol and drug abuse, and is located at the main medical center campus on the 7th floor. Since opening, the unit has maintained an occupancy rate of 98% and during the last fiscal year the average wait time for admission was 10.69 days. The Veterans placed on a waiting list were assigned to the intensive outpatient program which required them to travel to the medical center or a CBOC 3 to 5 days a week.

Using mental health enhancement funds, the SAR RTP unit is undergoing construction to increase the number of beds from 10 to 14. The increase in beds will allow the medical center to serve more Veterans and to provide the level of care they need. The construction should be completed by January 31, 2011.

Homeless Veterans Christmas Project



In the spirit of the holiday season, Robley Rex VAMC, Voluntary Service, hosted a Veterans Gift Tree to help make the holiday season brighter for homeless Veterans and for needy Veterans and Veteran families in our local community. VA staff and volunteers, along with multiple corporate, Veterans and community partners, supported the project by selecting a gift tag and providing a coat, hat, gloves, pants, shirt or sweater for an enrolled Homeless Veteran, or by adopting a Veteran family in need. Thanks to the generosity of these sponsors, who provided clothing, toys, gift cards and household goods valued at **\$31,336**:

- ◆ 121 veterans residing in three local residential treatment centers received a complete set of clothing for Christmas.
- ◆ 9 HUD/WASH Veterans and their families received clothing and toys.
- ◆ 6 OEF/OIF Veterans and families received clothing and toys
- ◆ 3 PolyTrauma Veterans and families received clothing and toys
- ◆ 1 other Veteran received gifts for his daughter

PLUS! Because the response to the project was overwhelmingly successful and donations exceeded our expectations, we were able to provide Christmas gifts for all of the veterans enrolled in Community Residential Care (CRC), Mental Health Intensive Case Management (MHICM), and Medical Foster Care. In addition, two cart-loads of assorted clothing items were packed and shared with the Homeless Veterans Program Coordinator for distribution to needy veterans throughout the winter. A third cart loaded with clothing items was delivered to Social Work Service to support needy veterans as they are discharged from the hospital.

Of course, the hospitalized Veterans and those visiting the outpatient clinics were not neglected. In addition to special visits throughout the month, Veterans benefited from material donations/gifts valued at \$21,209 and monetary donations valued at \$8200.

National Salute to Veteran Patients



Each year, the week of Valentine's Day is set aside for the National Salute to Veteran Patients (formerly known as National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans) Program. This year the salute will be held the week of February 13-19, 2011. The official purpose of the National Salute to Veteran Patients is to:

- ♥ pay tribute and express appreciation to Veterans;
- ♥ increase community awareness of the role of the VA medical center; and
- ♥ encourage citizens to visit hospitalized Veterans and to become involved as volunteers.

If you wish to schedule a visit for your group or if you have questions, you may contact Voluntary Service at (502) 287-6221. Because but the Robley Rex VA Medical Center does not limit the opportunity to visit in the spirit of salute to that week alone, it is our hope that your expressions of gratitude and concern will continue throughout the year and not just during special observance periods.



Veterans Creative Arts Program

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) sponsors several national rehabilitation special events for our nation's Veterans each year. All of these annual programs promote the healing of both body and spirit as they motivate eligible Veterans to reach their full potential, improve their independence, achieve a healthier lifestyle and enjoy a higher quality of life overall. One particularly successful event is the Creative Arts competition, which allows Veterans to express themselves using a variety of mediums in the visual and performing arts.

Local entries must be received no later than February 26, 2011, and the show will be held March 8, 2011. Local winners will be entered into the National competition. National winners are invited to attend the National Creative Arts Festival, scheduled for October 17-23, 2011, in Fayetteville, Arkansas. For additional information on rules, categories and applications for the local competition, please contact Tim Neidiffer at (502) 287-5190.

While Veterans' meals and lodging expenses are paid by the national organization upon their arrival at the event site, local medical centers are tasked with providing the transportation funds to get them there. Donations to support transportation costs for local veterans should be directed to GPF 508 (Wheelchair Games, Winter Sports Clinic) or GPF 509 (Creative Arts Festival).

Volunteer Awards Program

On Saturday, April 9, 2011, the Robley Rex VA Medical Center will "Roll Out the Red Carpet" for our "Star" Volunteers. The 65th Annual Volunteer Awards Ceremony will be held at the Olmsted in Louisville. Adult Regularly Scheduled (RS) volunteers who actively participate in the program will receive an invitation in the mail in mid-February. The invitation will include a card stating the award that the volunteer may expect to receive.



Please remember that the program will include credit for all hours worked/recorded through December 2010. If you do not receive a card or have questions about your award level, please call Voluntary Service, at 502-287-6221, so that we may address concerns and correct errors before the program is published.

Be sure to make your reservations, mark your calendars and plan to join us at this star studded event! Only volunteers who make their reservations in advance can be assured admission, lunch and entry in the door prize drawings!



WELCOME HOME 2011

Plans are under way for the Robley Rex VA Medical Center annual Welcome Home Event. This year we will honor personnel of the Navy Operational Support Center of Louisville. The Support Center has approximately 300 military personnel in 9 separate units and more than 85% of those personnel have served in Iraq or Afghanistan.

This event is tentatively scheduled for Saturday, June 11, 2011. As in previous years, it will include lunch, family friendly activities, and the availability of important resources and information for these newest Veterans. Although the location has not yet been selected, your support will be needed to make it as successful as it has been in years past. In addition to volunteers, monetary support is needed. Donations in support of the Welcome Home event should be directed to General Post Fund (GPF) 532.

65th VAVS National Advisory Committee Meeting



The 65th Annual VA Voluntary Service (VAVS) National Advisory Committee (NAC) meeting will be held in Cincinnati, Ohio, April 27 - 29, 2011. The host hotel for the meeting is the Hyatt Regency Cincinnati located at 151 West 5th Street. The deadline for hotel reservations is March 28, 2011. Please contact the hotel directly at (513) 579-1234 or toll free (888) 421-1442 and make your reservations under the Department of Veterans Affairs - VAVS National Advisory Committee Meeting room block.

Attendance at the NAC is open to members and other interested parties at their personal or their organization's expense. If you are planning to attend, you must register using the appropriate form. For registration forms and hotel information, you may call the Voluntary Service office at Robley Rex VA Medical Center or visit <http://www.volunteer.va.gov/nac.asp>.

Survey Says....

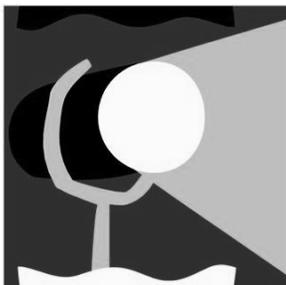
Last October, Voluntary Service sent out 500 Volunteer Satisfaction Surveys to determine the strengths and weaknesses of our Volunteer Program. We want to thank those 214 volunteers who took the time to respond.

While most of the responses we received were very positive, there were some concerns that lend opportunities for improvement. The most common areas of concern to volunteers were parking and cleanliness of work areas. Parking is a real concern for not only volunteers, but patients, visitors and staff as well. As such, the Medical Center continues to work to find ways to address our parking dilemma. Just recently, the parking lot was redesigned so that additional spaces were added. We are now looking at leasing additional spaces off campus for employees so that more spaces on campus will be available for patients and volunteers. Cleanliness issues are also being addressed. Housekeeping is giving more attention to the specific areas of concern.

In addition to specific concerns, we also received praise for several staff members and the Volunteer program as a whole. Thank you again for your responses. You are welcome to submit ideas and suggestions at any time throughout the year. We appreciate opportunities to make your program the best that it can be!

Spotlight on Volunteer Programs

Volunteer Transportation Network (VTN)



The Robley Rex VA Medical Center Volunteer Transportation Network (VTN) is one of the largest in the country with 106 qualified drivers operating 20 vans in 34 counties in Kentucky and Southern Indiana.

The volunteer transportation program is designed to assist Veterans seeking treatment at the Robley Rex VA Medical Center and our Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs) with their travel needs. Veterans must be ambulatory, i.e. capable of boarding and departing the van without the driver’s aid and attendance in order to use this service. Voluntary Service works closely with the DAV Transportation Network in operating this program, serving as liaison between the VA and the DAV and assuring that the volunteers meet the regulatory requirements to serve as drivers for the VA. In addition to standard volunteer requirements, volunteer drivers are required to pass a physical.

The volunteer transportation program plays an important role in the medical center’s mission to provide healthcare to Veterans. The program supports many of the “key business drivers” associated with that mission:

Access—This service provides many Veterans the ability to access VA healthcare.

Cost—The VTN is a very cost-effective tool for the medical center.

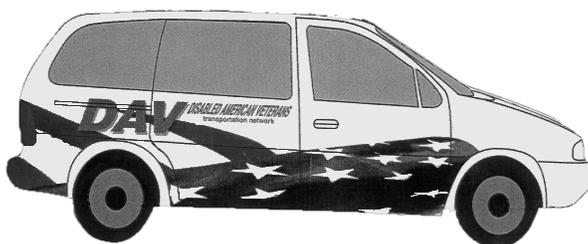
Healthy Communities—Facilitating access to care provides opportunities for improved health.

Satisfaction—Veterans benefit from a friendly, free service that provides them with access to the high quality medical care provided by Robley Rex VA Medical Center.

By the numbers:

VTN Activity	FY09	FY10	% Change
Miles Driven	290,392	284,607	-1.99%
Patients Transported	10,315	10,444	1.3%
Hours Worked	33,894	35,939	6%

The drivers and coordinators of the Volunteer Transportation Network are to be commended for their dedication and service to this valuable program which serves our nation’s heroes. To learn more about the volunteer transportation program, contact Voluntary Service at 502-287-6221.



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

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. **Contact Voluntary Service to discuss your personal interests.** Some of the more critical needs at this time include:

Clerical Support Activities: There are a variety of assignments in this category. Additionally, volunteers (age 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. 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.

Helping Hands: An assignment is available for a volunteer to sit with a Veteran who may be a risk to fall. They would try to keep the Veteran in bed or get the nurse if the Veteran had to get up. They may also read or write letters for the Veteran, set up meal trays, record food and fluid intake.

Evening/Weekend Assignments: A few assignments are available during evenings and weekends. There are assignments in SPD, Helping Hands, Telephones, or the Emergency Department.

Program Adoption Requests/Donation Needs

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.

Hospice Family Room— Located on ward 5 North, 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. Your assistance in providing refreshments for this area is appreciated.

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.

Ward Adoptions—As the patients are generally unable to leave their bedsides to seek companionship and entertainment, the Adopt-A-Ward Program offers the opportunity to customize their participation in the Voluntary Service Program by concentrating their activities on a single ward or patient area. All donations provided by the organization or individual are used specifically to meet the special patient needs that are not funded through the medical center's budget for program operations. Especially needed for several inpatient wards are individually wrapped snack foods.

Contact Voluntary Service at (502) 287-6221 to discuss your ability to provide assistance.

MONETARY AND MATERIAL NEEDS FOR VETERAN PROGRAMS

Monetary Donations:

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

Television Fund: (GPF 505) Donations are needed to purchase televisions for ASU. Five televisions are needed at a cost of approximately \$970 each.

Social Work Service Emergency Fund: (GPF 502) 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.

OEF/OIF Veterans Fund: (GPF 532) Funds Donated to GPF 532 (OIF/OEF Welcome Home) will be used to support our annual Welcome Home event, which honors returning combat Veterans.

Stand Down for the Homeless: (GPF 525) Funds are needed to support Stand Down 2011. Proceeds will be used to purchase clothing and personal items for homeless Veterans who need our support.

Material Donations: Program Adoptions (additional information can be found on page 5)

Community Residential Care: snacks, juice, toiletries and similar items.

Hospice Family Room: assorted snack foods, including microwave popcorn, and drinks.

Medical Procedures Unit: crackers and fruit juice.

OEF/OIF Veterans: gift cards for groceries/gasoline, diapers, and pull ups.

Ward Adoptions: Multiple wards have requested assorted snacks and drinks for distribution to the veterans. Wards in particular need for new or additional donors include 6 South and 7 North.

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.

The Volunteer Promise

VA Medical Center (603/135)
800 Zorn Avenue
Louisville, KY 40206-1499
Phone: (502) 287-6221

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

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.

EDITOR IN CHIEF
MaryJane Crowder, Chief, VAVS
WRITER/EDITOR
Rhonda Smith, VAVS Specialist
CONTRIBUTORS
Don Pfannenstiel, Program Analyst
Joan Norman, VAVS TCF Intern