



# The Volunteer Promise

Volume 67

July 2011

## Open House for Women Veterans

### Mark Your Calendars!

**Monday, September 5**  
Labor Day  
Federal Holiday, Offices Closed

**Friday, September 16**  
POW/MIA Remembrance Day

**Monday, October 10**  
Columbus Day  
Federal Holiday, Offices Closed

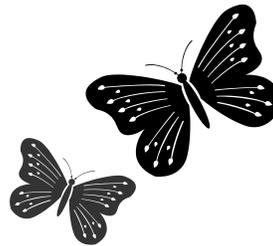
**Wednesday, October 19**  
Stand Down for the Homeless

**Thursday, October 20**  
VAVS Committee Meeting, 3PM  
VA Medical Center

The Robley Rex VA Medical Center Customer Service Board is rolling out the red carpet to honor women Veterans. We have scheduled a special open house that will be held on Saturday, August 13, 2011, at the Medical Center on Zorn Avenue. VA staff from throughout the medical center will offer valuable information on health and benefits. In addition, guests will have the opportunity to network, form new relationships and explore new ideas. The following information and activities will be available at the Open House:

#### Health/Benefits Information

Women's Preventive Health  
Nutrition  
Mental Health  
Spiritual Care  
Veterans Benefits Information  
Health Benefits Enrollment



#### Special Offerings

Massage  
Hand Treatment  
Fitness  
Demonstrations  
Healthy Cooking  
Refreshments  
Door Prizes

Your donations to support the purchase of refreshments will be greatly appreciated. A poster listing and acknowledging our appreciation of donors will be on display throughout the day.

Donations to support this event may be directed to GPF 500, with a note stating that the funds are to be used for "Women Veterans Open House." For additional information, contact Rhonda Smith, Voluntary Service Specialist, at 502-287-6898.

### Inside this issue:

National Creative Arts Festival	2
Stand Down for Homeless	2
Staffing Changes	2
Volunteer Needs	3
VA Core Values	3
Organization Spotlight	4
Material Donations/Adoption Requests	5
Monetary Donations	6



## Student Volunteers On The Go!

During the summer of 2011, more than 50 student volunteers between the ages of 14 and 17 are volunteering to assist Veterans at Robley Rex VA Medical Center. These future leaders, dressed in their smart blue polo shirts, are assigned in areas throughout the medical center and provide a variety of services that enhance care for our Veterans.

Upon completion of their assignments in August, volunteers will receive a letter of appreciation with specific information about their work assignments as well as information about scholarships available through VAVS, Paralyzed Veterans of America, Veterans of Foreign Wars, and other sources. These are valuable scholarship opportunities and should be treated with the utmost importance.

**Hint to students:** Be sure to keep that letter of appreciation in your portfolio. The information will become important to you as you begin filling out those college and scholarship applications!

## Local Artist to Participate in National Veterans Creative Arts Festival

The National Veterans Creative Arts Festival (NVCAF), honoring Veteran artists from across the country, will be held in Fayetteville, Arkansas this year from October 17 through 24. The NVCAF is an event featuring Veterans who have won awards for their art at one of three annual national art shows. Thousands of entries in multiple categories representing both visual and performing arts are judged at these national shows. The NVCAF allows the winners to share their talents with fellow Veterans and the extended community.



We are pleased to announce that this year one of our own Veterans, Mr. J.E. Massey, will be honored at the NVCAF. Mr. Massey entered and won the local competition for the first time this year at the Robley Rex VA Medical Center and subsequently won at the national level with his beautiful, original sculpture. We are proud of Mr. Massey and know he will be an excellent representative of our medical center as he travels to Arkansas for the week-long NVCAF event this fall.

While the stay in Arkansas is provided without cost to Mr. Massey through donations received at the national level, the local facility is responsible for assisting with transportation costs. Monetary donations to support this effort should be directed to GPF 509. If you have questions or need additional information, please contact Voluntary Service at 502-287-6221.



## Stand Down for Homeless Veterans

On October 19, 2011, the Robley Rex VA Medical Center, along with the Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs, Project Homeless Connect and the Greater Louisville Community, will host Kentucky's 12th annual Stand Down for the Homeless at St. Anne's Catholic Charities on Algonquin Parkway. Stand Down is an ambitious, one-day community outreach project where representatives from the VA and multiple community service

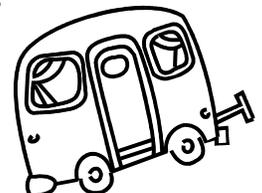
organizations come together in one location to address the collective needs of the homeless during a single visit. Resources available at the event will include food, shelter, clothing, health screenings, VA and Social Security benefits counseling, and referrals to a variety of other necessary services such as housing, employment and substance abuse treatment. We expect to serve more than 200 Veterans. Our community partners are prepared for more than 800 total participants, including the non-Veterans who are also invited to attend.

Your generous donations will allow us to provide each homeless Veteran a complete set of new clothing and a hygiene kit. This year, due to the limited space available at the new location, volunteer assignments in the clothing room are limited; however, there may be other assignments available. For additional information on volunteering, please call (502) 287-6221. Your donations allow us to maintain the tradition of honoring and recognizing Veterans for their service and offering assistance to Veterans in need. Monetary donations to support the ongoing Stand Down effort should be directed to GPF 525.

## Staffing Changes Coming to Voluntary Service!

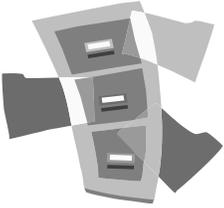
Guess who is retiring in September? That shouldn't be too hard to figure it out! Someone has been talking about it on a daily basis around here. We hear him telling volunteers how many (or how few) days he has left all the time! Yes, Don Pfannenstiel will be leaving us on September 24 after 20 years at the VA. Join us in wishing Don well as he moves on to his new adventures!

AND, Don isn't the only one leaving us. After two years serving as our VAVS Specialist Intern, Joan Norman has accepted a job at the Denver, Colorado VA Medical Center. Her last day with us is Thursday, July 28. Please join in congratulating Joan as she takes this next step in her career.!



## 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, including filing, mailing, answering telephones, collating documents, and additional office-based jobs. Additionally, volunteers (age 18 years or older) with computer skills are needed in multiple administrative areas. Opportunities for providing services are available in many services including Infection Control, Information Security, Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Service, to name a few. Additional details are available in the Voluntary Service office.

**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. Volunteer driver applicants must pass a physical exam, which is provided free of charge by the medical center, prior to beginning an assignment.



**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. Shuttle drivers must also pass a physical exam, given free of charge, prior to operating the shuttle.

**Helping Hands:** Assignments are available for volunteers to sit with Veteran inpatients. These Veterans may be at risk to fall, need assistance writing letters, or simply desire company. Volunteers may also help the nursing staff with tasks such as setting up meal trays and recording 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.

## VA Core Values & Characteristics - I CARE

On June 22, 2011 VA Secretary Eric K. Shinseki introduced senior VA Leadership to overarching core values and characteristics that encompass Veterans Health Administration (VHA), National Cemetery Administration (NCA), and Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA). These core values and characteristics culminated in the acronym I CARE which stands for Integrity, Commitment, Advocacy, Respect, and Excellence. I Care allows the Department of Veterans Affairs to further its efforts to transform VA into a 21st Century organization. Under the new I CARE program all employees will use this acronym as the foundation for the way they interact with each other, with Veterans, their families, volunteers, employees, and with people outside of the VA organization.

Because **I CARE**, I Will .....

**Integrity** - Act with high moral principle. Adhere to the highest professional standards. Maintain the trust and confidence of all with whom I engage.

**Commitment** - Work diligently to serve Veterans and other beneficiaries. Be driven by an earnest belief in VA's mission. Fulfill my individual responsibilities and organizational responsibilities.

**Advocacy** - Be truly Veteran-centric by identifying, fully considering, and appropriately advancing the interests of Veterans and other beneficiaries.

**Respect** - Treat all those I serve and with whom I work with dignity and respect. Show respect to earn it.

**Excellence** - Strive for the highest quality and continuous improvement. Be thoughtful and decisive in Leadership, accountable for my actions, willing to admit mistakes, and rigorous in correcting them.



# Organization Spotlight

## Veterans Voices of Kentucky Mental Health Consumer Council

The purpose of the Council is to provide a forum for members to express their views and opinions regarding VA services. In partnership with the VA, we strive to assure that all Veterans receive the highest quality of these services available to them from the Department of Veterans Affairs and within their community, enabling them to achieve their greatest degree of independence and recovery.

### The functions of the council are to:

1. Develop methods of education about mental illness and available treatments
2. Reduce stigma associated with mental illness
3. Assist consumers and their families in accessing services and coping more effectively with mental illness.
4. Explore current resources in the community of mental health service providers, and working towards establishing formal or informal sharing agreements to more effectively utilize existing resources, minimize duplication of services and create collaborative services to address unmet needs.
5. Develop methods of measuring customer satisfaction, advocating for needed changes, and setting priorities for recommended changes.

We sponsor such events as the Stand Down to end homelessness, the Mental Health Art Show, food and clothing drives, educational booths at VA clinics and in the community, and projects to increase the health and wellness of our fellow Veterans.

The Veterans Voices of Kentuckiana is always in need of new members who will dedicate themselves to helping their fellow Veterans.

*What is expected of the members of the Mental Health Consumer Council?*

### **Council Members should:**

- Attend meetings regularly.
- Have time to devote to the work of the council (2-3 hrs per month).
- Be interested in working constructively towards goals within a group environment.

**Meetings are every other Tuesday at 11:00 AM at the Dupont CBOC**

For more information, please call Richard Hayes, Chair (502) 794-5061 or Chris Johnson, Co-chair at (502) 222-3477

***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](mailto:vhalouvavs@va.gov).***

## Program Adoption Requests/Donation Needs

**Mental Health Intensive Case Management (MHICM)**—Veterans in this program are often isolated from others, largely due to their medical conditions. Your donation of tickets and passes will allow case workers to take these Veterans on occasional field trips that will support socialization. Suggested opportunities include Kentucky State Fair tickets, bowling passes, museum tickets, ball game tickets, fast food restaurant coupons, etc. Staff would like to take groups of approximately 12 Veterans on any trip.

**HUD/VASH Treatment Program**—Air mattresses and sheets are needed to support Veterans entering the HUD/VASH Treatment Program. Veterans in this program are in transition from homelessness to homes of their own. VA and HUD work together to place the Veterans and their families, and VA works with them on an ongoing basis to ensure that they continue the habits and skills necessary to remain in their new homes. Often, the Veterans move into their homes with limited resources or furnishings. Your donations of air mattresses and sheets will help them settle more quickly and securely, supporting a much improved new lifestyle.

**Suicide Prevention Week Program**—Suicide is a leading public health problem in the United States and has become of increasing concern among recently returning active duty personnel and Veterans alike. In fact, the suicide rate among military personnel is twice as high as that among the general population. Further, more than 90% of persons who commit suicide have a diagnosable and treatable mental health condition. On Tuesday, September 6, our Suicide Prevention Team will host a workshop with a national speaker on hand to talk to Veterans and interested clinicians/staff/family members about the suicide epidemic and ways to identify concerns and take appropriate action. The morning program will be dedicated to Veterans. You are invited to assist the effort by providing a boxed lunch for up to 70 Veterans who will be in attendance. Meals will be provided at \$7.68 each, with a maximum total of \$538.

**Program Adoptions**—Multiple areas throughout the medical center would benefit from your donation of snack foods for the Veterans receiving care. These include:

**Medical Procedure Unit**—Snack crackers are appreciated by Veterans after they complete a procedure that requires a period of fasting.

**Hospice Family Room**—Located on ward 5 North, this room is reserved for the family members of Hospice patients. Having snacks available help us keep them as comfortable as possible as they stay extended hours with their terminally ill family members. Helping the families ultimately serves the Veteran!

**Ward Adoptions**—Veterans on multiple inpatient care units benefit from your donation of individually wrapped, nutritionally sound snack foods for consumption between meals.

**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, particularly sizes 4 and 5 and pull-ups in all sizes..

**Community Residential Care (CRC) 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 such as an occasional snack, toiletries, and similar items.

**Privacy Curtains for the Emergency Department (ED)**—Our Infection Control Nurse has asked for our support in replacing the soiled privacy curtains in the ED with more practical disposable curtains. These curtains help us maintain patient privacy while saving costs of laundering and maintaining the more costly cloth curtains. A case of 10 curtains costs \$275.

Contact Voluntary Service at (502) 287-6221 to discuss your ability to provide assistance with any of these projects or activities.

# 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.

**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.**

***Please refer to page 5 of this newsletter for information about Material Donations/Program Adoptions***

## **Remember, Your Gift is Tax Deductible**

Although VA is not a 501(c)(3) organization, the Internal Revenue Service authorizes that donations made to the VA are tax deductible according to the Federal Tax Code as "Donations to the United States," in the manner and to the extent allowable by law (***NOTE: The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) has special rules regarding the tax deductibility of contributions of \$250 or more.***)

The VA ensures that all contributions are used efficiently and responsibly. Donors should know that **100%** of every contribution goes directly to benefit Veterans and their families.

### ***The Volunteer Promise***

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

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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.