



# The Volunteer Promise

Volume 68

November 2011

## Mark Your Calendars!

**Friday, November 11**  
Veterans Day, Offices Closed

**Friday, November 18**  
Homeless Christmas Project begins

**Thursday, November 24**  
Thanksgiving, Offices Closed

**Sunday, December 25**  
Christmas Day

**Monday, December 26**  
Federal Holiday, Offices Closed

**Sunday, January 1**  
New Years Day

**Monday, January 2**  
Federal Holiday, Offices Closed

**Monday, January 16**  
Martin Luther King Day,  
Offices Closed

**February 12-18**  
National Salute to Veteran Patients

**Monday, February 20**  
Presidents Day  
Offices Closed

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## Stand Down for the Homeless



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, hosted Kentucky's 12th annual Stand Down for the Homeless at St. Anne's Catholic Charities on Algonquin Parkway. The ambitious, one-day community outreach project offered access to food, 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. This year we served nearly 200 Veterans. Total participants exceeded 500.

Your generous donations allowed us to provide each homeless Veteran a complete set of new clothing, a draw-string backpack and a hygiene kit. The fight to end homeless does not stop here. Stand Down will return next fall. In the meantime, we will continue our efforts through additional programs and activities. 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.

## Christmas for Homeless and Indigent Veterans



Once again, we have the opportunity to truly experience the spirit of Christmas as we are called to assist those less fortunate than ourselves. You are 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 200 Veterans, some of whom have families, enrolled in the homeless Veterans program or in the HUD/VASH assisted housing program. Additionally, we have multiple indigent Veteran families in other VA sponsored programs. 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 18. A second one will be set up in the Medical Center Lobby. Each ornament represents one clothing item (shirt, pants, sweater, coat, socks or underwear) for a homeless Veteran. Each Veteran and family member will receive a complete outfit. Families with children will be adopted as a unit—and the gift request will include toys from Santa.

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.

## Arts in Healing

Join the Robley Rex VA Medical Center in welcoming our newest volunteer group to the medical center! A corps of various artists from both the performing and visual arts genres has begun providing education and entertainment for the Veterans, the families and the staff on an recurring basis. Some days you may find drummers and other days painters.



*The purpose of The Kentucky Center's Arts-in-Healing program is to provide opportunities for people to encounter an artistic experience in a place of healing. We believe that the shared experience of artistic creativity can contribute to the well-being of patients, families, and staff.*

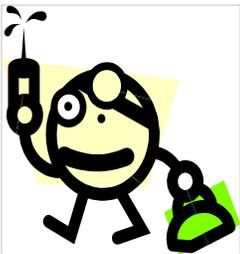
Using this community's rich artistic environment and progressive hospital and healthcare corporations, Arts in Healing builds a collaborative and innovative program that brings the power of the arts into the healthcare setting.

The Kentucky Center provides the core talent, training and coordination for healthcare providers to offer Arts in Healing Programs that will be unique to their setting and their organization's specific needs.

The public and semi public area arts experiences are designed for patients and their families, staff, or volunteers and include performing and visual arts. These experiences offer entertainment, personal expression, comfort, inspiration, stress-relief, and a positive distraction, but are distinct from arts therapies which are have prescribed medical outcomes.

Watch for flyers and other announcements for events or activities scheduled in D010, the Chapel or other areas of the medical center. Veterans, family members, staff and volunteers are invited to participate. For additional information, contact Rhonda Smith in Voluntary Service at 502-287-6898.

## Flu Season



It's that time of year again - time to get vaccinated to help prevent the flu. Protect yourself, protect your family, and protect the Veterans you serve. For the 2011-2012 flu season, the vaccination will protect against three different flu viruses. These viruses include: influenza A (H1N1), influenza A (H3N2) and influenza B. Have you received your flu shot yet?

Flu shots are available to volunteers at our Employee Health Office, room A104.

Volunteers may report for a flu shot on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesday from 8:00 a.m. until 9:00 a.m. and again from 3:00 p.m. until 4:00 p.m. If you are unable to come at these times, please contact Occupational Health at 287-5301 to see if arrangements can be made for a different time.

NOTE: No evening times will be available.

## The Medical Center Is Expanding!

Pardon our dust as the medical center is expanded to better serve Veterans. The West Entrance has become a construction zone as the Robley Rex Medical Center grows to accommodate service to Veterans in the OEF/OIF/OND treatment program. This will be a two-story addition that will house treatment rooms on the second floor and a more customer-friendly entrance, public restrooms and conference rooms on the ground level.



# Holiday Activities

The holiday season is upon us. From Veterans Day to Valentine's Day, many groups choose this time of year to show their appreciation to our nation's Veterans in the form of hospital visits and/or gifts. This show of support from our means a lot to the Veterans treated at Robley Rex VA Medical Center.

Here are some reminders to assist in planning your holiday activities:

## Visit Reminders

- \* Schedule in advance. Call Voluntary Service to schedule a time for your group to visit Veterans. Unless you are a regularly scheduled group, your visit may need to take place during regular VA business hours.
- \* Children under age 13 may not visit inpatients unless they are direct family members.
- \* Always check in at the nurse's station on each floor.
- \* Please do not enter rooms with an Isolation sign posted on or outside the door.
- \* Please do not take photographs unless accompanied by Voluntary Service Staff.

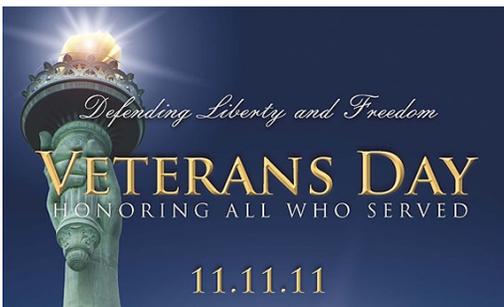
## Gift Reminders

- \* Homemade food items cannot be distributed to patients.
- \* All food items should come individually wrapped.
- \* Candy/Sweet items should be sugar free to accommodate those on special diets.
- \* All donations must go through Voluntary Service.
- \* Gifts are intended for veterans receiving treatment, not for employee veterans.

Thank you for your continued support of our nation's heroes! If you have questions about visits or donations, or would like to schedule a visit, please call Voluntary Service Monday through Friday between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. at 502-287-6221.



## Veterans Day



This Veterans Day, we come together as a nation to remember, honor and pay tribute to our nation's heroes – heroes who set aside their personal safety to defend and protect their family, their community and their nation from those who would threaten our way of life.

As Americans, we could not enjoy the blessings of freedom and liberty without the service of these men and women fulfilling an extraordinary duty. Let us remember and honor all those who wore the uniform. From those who crossed the Delaware with our nation's first President 235 years ago, to those who served at places like Gettysburg, Cantigny, Iwo Jima, Seoul, Khe Sanh and Fallujah.

These humble men and women who understand the importance of duty have served our great nation in both times of war, and in times of peace. They did not serve and protect our great nation for public recognition or fanfare. They served to preserve our democracy and to provide a safe and secure future for generations of Americans.

Their quiet courage, sacrifice and commitment deserve our deepest appreciation and respect for the very freedom and liberty we treasure. Since the birth of our nation, generations of patriots have stepped forward to say, "send me". These men and women are those willing to risk it all; to save all. For this, we honor them today and renew our commitment to provide timely access to benefits and quality care from the day they first take their oaths of allegiance until the day they are laid to rest.



# SPOTLIGHT VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION (VHA)

**As you already know, the United States has the most comprehensive system of assistance for Veterans of any nation in the world, but did you know these other interesting facts about VHA?**

- ♥ 6 million patients treated in 2010
- ♥ More than 1,600 sites of care. Includes 152 hospitals, 965 outpatient clinics, 133 community living centers, and 293 Vet Centers
- ♥ 244,000 employees
- ♥ More than 20,000 physicians and more than 53,000 nurses
- ♥ 139,000 volunteers provided more than 12.5 million hours of service in 2010
- ♥ More than 75 million outpatient visits in 2010
- ♥ Nearly 680,000 inpatient admissions in 2010
- ♥ The number of women Veterans using VA healthcare doubled from 2000 (160,000) to 2010 (315,000)
- ♥ VA provides more public data about quality and safety than any healthcare system in the world.  
[www.hospitalcompare.va.gov](http://www.hospitalcompare.va.gov), [www.hospitalcompare.hhs.gov](http://www.hospitalcompare.hhs.gov).
- ♥ Affiliations with more than 1,200 educational institutions
- ♥ More than 100,000 health care students receive clinical training from VA each year

## Did you know VHA also...?

- ♥ Created the nicotine patch to help people stop smoking
- ♥ Performed the first successful liver transplant
- ♥ Invented the cardiac pacemaker
- ♥ Pinpointed genes for HIV, diabetes, and obesity susceptibility
- ♥ Identified schizophrenia gene and developed a unique preventive drug
- ♥ Created the bionic ankle
- ♥ Contributed to the development of the CAT (or CT) scan
- ♥ Developed new drugs and treatment for diseases such as AIDS/HIV, diabetes, Alzheimer's, and osteoporosis
- ♥ Originated the use of Bar Code Medical Administration to prevent inpatient prescription errors.
- ♥ Reduced a common healthcare-associated infection (MRSA) by more than 60 percent in intensive care units nationwide
- ♥ Created the first enterprise-wide Electronic Health Record
- ♥ Jointly performed the first U.S. hand transplant with University of Pittsburgh
- ♥ Since 2007, rescued more than 18,000 Veterans in serious danger of suicide through Veterans Crisis Line and counseled more than 490,000 callers



***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

### *Your opportunity to lend a hand*



**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.

**Radiology Pagers**- Radiology Department, is requesting funding for pagers to be used by patients who are scheduled for CT scans and ultrasounds. The device will allow patients flexibility to move about while waiting on their appointment. The request is for six pagers for a total of \$53.70 and \$600 for the annual pager service fee.

**Televisions** - The Cardiac Cath Unit is requesting the purchase of four flat screen televisions and installation accessories for the cardiac suite. The total purchase is approximately \$3500.56. Donations for the radiology pagers and televisions can be made to GPF Account 505.

**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)** The Cardiac Cath Unit is requesting the purchase of four flat screen televisions and installation accessories for the cardiac suite. The total purchase is approximately \$3500.56.

**Radiology Pagers (GPF 500):** Radiology Department, is requesting funding for pagers to be used by patients who are scheduled for CT scans and ultrasounds, allowing them flexibility to move about while waiting on their appointment. The request is for six pagers for a total of \$53.70 and \$600 for the annual pager service fee.

**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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