



The Volunteer Promise

VOLUME 73

January 2013

Mark Your Calendars!

February 10-16
National Salute to Veteran Patients

Monday, February 18
Presidents Day
Administrative Offices Closed

Sunday, March 31
Easter

Sunday, May 12
Mothers Day

Saturday, May 18
Volunteer Awards Program

Wednesday, May 22
Run for the Wall

Monday, May 27
Memorial Holiday
Administrative Offices Closed

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CELEBRATING YOUR GENEROSITY!



Donations during the holiday season exceeded \$95,000 with contributions for the Homeless Veteran Christmas adoption program alone totaling more than \$37,000! In all, we helped support 130 homeless Veterans and 41 Veteran families with 80 children amongst them. Volunteers and community partners such as Veteran Service Organizations, corporations, civic groups and students teamed with the VA and VA employees to donate items including clothing, household items, stockings and food. Gifts were distributed among inpatients and outpatients as

well as to those in special programs such as MHICM, HUD/VASH and CRC. The volume and flow of donations was amazing.

Several volunteers stepped up to assist Voluntary Service with the extra workload involved with this program. A special thanks goes to Kathy Bottom, ALA Representative/Volunteer Driver/and prime "Elf in Charge" together with her assistant elf, Dale Winningham, DAV Representative and volunteer, for their tremendous contribution in organizing and managing the Homeless Veteran portion of the Christmas activity.

On behalf of the patients treated at Robley Rex VA Medical Center, thank you for your support and generosity. You provided a happy holiday season for many Veterans and their families.

Volunteer Awards Program

SAVE THE NEW DATE! Due to new processing requirements, the Volunteer Awards Program has been moved to Saturday, **May 18, 2013**, at the Olmsted in Louisville. This is a day to honor and celebrate all volunteers actively involved in the Robley Rex VA Medical Center Voluntary Service Program. Those Regularly Scheduled (RS) volunteers who are currently active will receive an invitation to the Awards Program in the mail sometime in mid-April. Be sure to RSVP as instructed if you plan to attend.

As in previous years, awards are given in specified increments based on hours volunteered through December 31, 2012. If you are due an award, your invitation will include that information.

We appreciate ALL of our volunteers for sharing your time and talent to Robley Rex VA Medical Center in service to those who so selflessly served our country! **VOLUNTEERS ROCK!**

MAY 2013						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	



National Salute to Veteran Patients

The annual VA National Salute to Veteran patients began in 1978 and is observed during the week in which Valentine's Day falls. This time affords an opportunity for individuals and groups to say thank you to Veterans of the U.S. armed services who are cared for every day at Robley Rex VA Medical Center and our outpatient clinics. The purpose of the Salute is not only to honor Veterans but also increase community awareness of the VA's role in providing comprehensive medical care to our Nation's Veterans and encourage Americans to visit hospitalized Veterans and work as VA volunteers. Actor/comedian Charlie Murphy, a Navy Veteran, will serve as the chairman of the Department of Veterans Affairs 2013 National Salute to Veteran Patients.

For the past 25 years, the nationally syndicated column started by Ann Landers, now called "Ask Annie," has devoted a column to the National Salute, and asked readers to send Valentine cards and letters to hospitalized Veterans at VA medical centers. Robley Rex VA Medical Center expects to receive thousands of valentines for distribution as well as schedule numerous visits by individuals and organizations and gift donations for our Veteran patients.

This year the National Salute will be held the week of February 10-16. Volunteers will be needed to assist in escorting visitors and with the distribution of valentines throughout the medical center and through our community programs. Those wishing to visit during that week should call 502-287-6221 and schedule their visits in advance. Thank you for all that you do to "salute" Veterans every day!

Veterans Creative Arts Program

Nationwide, the Department of Veterans Affairs uses the creative arts as one form of rehabilitative treatment to help Veterans recover from and cope with physical and emotional disabilities. Veterans who receive treatment at Robley Rex VA Medical Center are invited to participate in a local Veterans art competition. This event, hosted by Occupational Therapy, includes more than 50 categories of visual art competition. Please note that all entries for the local competition must be received at the medical center by March 2, 2013. Call Tim Neidiffer, Occupational Therapist, at 502-287-5190 if you have questions or to schedule an appointment to drop off your entry.

Local winners will be entered into the National Veterans Creative Arts Competition. Some of the first place national winners will be invited to attend the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival in Reno, Nevada, in October 2013. Should we have a national winner who is invited, funds from GPF 509 will be used to send the Veteran to the event.

For additional information about the local competition and show, please contact Tim. For additional information on the national program, visit www.creativeartsfestival.va.gov



National Veterans Games

The National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic is a world-leader in adaptive winter sports instruction for U.S. military Veterans and active duty servicemen and women with disabilities. Set in stunning Snowmass, Colorado, the Clinic will celebrate its 27th year by bringing nearly 400 Veterans with traumatic brain injuries, spinal cord injuries, orthopedic amputations, visual impairments, certain neurological conditions and other disabilities to this scenic venue. This year's event will be held during the week of March 30-April 6. Under the supervision of Chris Fulks, Exercise Physiologist, Robley Rex VA Medical Center expects to send one Veteran to the event. Donations may be made to GPF 508 to support expenses for our local participant.



In July a team of eight local Veterans will attend the National Veterans Wheelchair Games in Tampa, Florida. Since Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA) sponsors these attendees, GPF funds will not be needed for that event. For additional information on VA Adaptive Sports events such as these, visit www.va.gov/adaptivesports/.

National Advisory Committee (NAC) Meeting

The 67th VA Voluntary Service (VAVS) National Advisory Committee (NAC) Meeting will be held March 4-6, 2013, at the Embassy Suites, Raleigh-Durham Research Triangle Park in Cary, North Carolina. The NAC was established in 1947 and is made up representatives of service member organizations and other VAVS partners. The Committee advises the Under Secretary for Health on matters pertaining to the participation of volunteers in VA medical facilities, assists in recruitment and orientation of volunteers, and keeps the officers and members of participating organizations informed of volunteer needs and accomplishments.

Attendance at the NAC meeting 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. The registration and reservation deadline is January 30, 2013. For additional information about the NAC visit <http://www.volunteer.va.gov/nac.asp>.

Construction Updates

West Entrance Construction is expected to be completed in March 2013. The new addition will house the OEF/OIF/OND and Polytrauma clinics with additional meeting space for those and other programs. With the opening of the new entrance comes a new information desk. We are actively recruiting volunteers to serve as information desk receptionists. Applicants must be friendly, comfortable using computers and willing to commit to a specific four or eight hour shift each week.



The new **Substance Abuse Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Program (SARRTP)** building located next to the water tower is scheduled to be completed in October 2013. SARRTP provides Veterans with an intensive substance abuse treatment program in a residential setting located on the medical center grounds.

New Robley Rex VA Medical Center—Master planning is underway and the design phase could begin as early as October 2013. Construction is anticipated to begin in 2014 with completion in 2018. For additional information, visit <http://www.louisville.va.gov/newmedicalcenter/index.asp>.

Code 13! Do You Know How to Respond?

If someone presents displaying a gun in or around the medical center, immediately dial 911 from any hospital phone and inform the operator; they will announce a CODE 13 using the overhead paging system.

If a CODE 13 is called, you need to do the following:

EVACUATE if possible. Have an escape route in mind; leave belongings behind; keep hands visible.

If you cannot evacuate, **HIDE OUT** behind locked and barricaded doors, under/behind furniture/heavy items. Remain calm, quiet and out of sight. Close blinds, turn off lights, radios, computers; silence cell phones.

TAKE ACTION only as a last resort. If your life is in imminent danger, attempt to incapacitate the shooter; act aggressively and throw items at the shooter.

Be prepared to provide information to police when they arrive.

An on-line training video is available if you wish to view it. For additional information, contact Voluntary Service at 502-287-6221.

Your Volunteer Hours – Creditable or Not?

We want you and your organization to get credit for the hours you spend serving Veterans! Here are some guidelines for counting and reporting your volunteer hours. You must follow these guidelines for hours to be posted.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS:

- * Report your hours at least monthly.
- * Turn in reports in person, by fax or via email no later than the 7th day of the month following the activity.
- * List specific dates (not just the month) of your activity.
- * CLEARLY PRINT your name (if you are reporting for others, clearly print all full names). Names must be legal names; NO nicknames please.

WHAT COUNTS?

Medical Center Service – Ward and/or clinic visits as representatives of your organization or group, activities with inpatients such as Bingo and/or Movie nights and other similar activities, and regularly scheduled volunteer service at the medical center.

Community Service (General) – Hours spent serving Veterans such as visiting Veterans in nursing/care homes, serving as Color/Honor Guard at funerals, burials, flag lines, serving as the organizational representative at an activity in support of Veteran(s), working at special projects for Veterans such as Stand Down for the Homeless and other similar activities. Hours spent in support of Veterans (e.g. shopping for snacks or other items to be donated assembling “care-type” packages, etc.) are also recordable.

WHAT DOES NOT COUNT?

- * Hours spent working for your organization do not necessarily count, i.e. simply attending a funeral or funeral home visitation as a member of your organization does not count.
- * Acting in a capacity for which you are not specifically trained or authorized by the VA, e.g. helping Veterans navigate the VA or disability claims process, talking with/listening to Veterans about their service/disabilities, etc.
- * Veterans Service Officer activities - Regulations prohibit crediting hours spent assisting Veterans in any part of the claims processing procedure.
- * Hours spent traveling to and from a volunteer assignment do not count.

SPECIAL ASSIGNMENTS?

Volunteer Transportation Network Coordinators – You must follow the guidelines listed in “REPORTING” above so that we are compliant with regulations and have records for audit purposes. We no longer automatically post monthly hours.

VAVS Representative/Deputy Representative (Rep/Dep) – In order to get credit for attending the VAVS Meetings as an official Representative or Deputy Representative, the following must be accomplished:

- * Official Appointment Letter from your organization must be received by Voluntary Service. When we receive the letter we send a letter to the appointee and the appointing official acknowledging the appointment.
- * The new Representative/Deputy Representative must schedule and attend Rep/Dep Training with the Chief, Voluntary Service and be entered into our system as a Rep/Dep.

We appreciate your cooperation. If you have any questions about whether or not your activity can be counted or you have other concerns, please do not hesitate to contact Voluntary Service for clarification.

Program Adoption Requests/Donation Needs

Your opportunity to lend a hand



Gift Cards for Heroes—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. Many of these Veterans have families that include young children and just need a hand up. Gift cards are issued only on the recommendation of the Veteran's Social Worker.

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—Items 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 will help them settle more quickly and securely, supporting a much improved new lifestyle. Some groups are choosing to prepare transition kits for the HUD/VASH Veterans. Suggested items include:

Air mattresses
 Sheets and pillow cases
 Pillows and blankets
 Towels and wash cloths
 Soap, shampoo, conditioner, toothpaste
 Laundry detergent
 Toilet paper
 Mop, broom, bucket, and dust pan

Dishes
 Pots & Pans
 Utensils (eating & cooking)
 Can opener
 Dish drainer, dish cloths, and dish liquid
 Paper towels
 Cleaning supplies/agents
 Vacuum cleaners



Program Adoptions—Multiple areas throughout the medical center would benefit from your donation of snack foods for the Veterans receiving inpatient and outpatient care.

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.

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

MONETARY NEEDS FOR VETERAN PROGRAMS

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. Items include such basic necessities as toothbrushes, toothpaste, razors, shaving cream, shampoo and shower gel.

Television (TV) Fund: (GPF 505): While new TVs are often included in the budget for some remodeling or new construction projects, there is no budget to replace TVs in patient waiting areas when they become inoperable. Currently, the Grayson County CBOC is in need of a replacement television for their waiting area.

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 Welcome Home: (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.

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.