



The Volunteer Promise

Voluntary Service (603/135)
VA Medical Center
800 Zorn Avenue
Louisville, Kentucky 40206

July 2007
Volume 50

Welcome Home OEF and OIF Veterans

The number of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) service members continues to increase, and it is our honor and privilege to serve the men and women who worked so hard to preserve our freedoms.

Louisville VA Medical Center Voluntary Service has set up a new General Post Fund (GPF) Account to support events and special needs of our newest veterans. Donations for this purpose should be made to General Post Fund (GPF) 532, OEF/OIF Veterans Program.

2007 Student Volunteer Program

The summer student volunteer program is in full swing. This summer, the medical center has the honor of working with over 30 dedicated young people who are participating in our Student Volunteer Program. This dedicated group of young people is providing much needed support by completing tasks for services throughout the medical center.

Student volunteers are invited to take advantage of their opportunity to compete for a variety of different scholarship activities, some of which are exclusive to Louisville VA Medical Center. Students will receive information under a separate mailing outlining multiple of the scholarship opportunities and providing instructions on how to participate.

Scholarships afford students the opportunity to explore and achieve education goals and to secure a successful future. Don't let the opportunity to compete pass you by!

DATES TO REMEMBER

June 19 - 23

Nat'l Veterans W/C Games
Milwaukee, WI

Wednesday, July 4

Independence Day Holiday
Admin. Offices Closed

Thursday, July 26

VAVS Committee Meeting
7:00 PM

VAMC, Room D010

Friday, August 10

Final Day of the
2006 Summer Student
Volunteer Program

August 13 - 17

VAVS Chief's Training
Orlando, Florida

IN THE PROMISE

Volunteers Needed	2
Nat'l Wheelchair Games	3
Veteran Arts	3
Stand Down 2007	3
Construction Update	4
New VA Clinic	4
Funding Need	5
Blood Drive	5
Monetary Needs	6

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: Social Work Service, Geriatrics & Extended Care Service, Newburg Primary Care Clinic and the Vet Center are among the areas needing assistance. There are a variety of assignments in this category.

Clerical Support with Computer Skills: A volunteer is needed in the medical records file room on weekdays for scanning documents and for computer data entry. In addition, Nursing Education and the Nurse Recruiter are seeking volunteers with computer skills for data entry and typing.

Community Volunteer Activities - Help the veterans in your own neighborhood or in one of the many nursing homes located in Kentuckiana by extending a hand in appreciation and support. The variety of opportunities available is endless. For example, visit a veteran in a nursing home, adopt a veteran in the community, develop an e-mail pen pal friendship, or help a veteran in need.

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.

Health Benefits of Volunteering

A 2007 report from the Corporation for National & Community Service reveals the following correlations to volunteerism:

- Higher functional ability
- Lower levels of depression
- Better overall health/decreased decline in overall health
- Lower mortality rates
- Decline in intensity of chronic pain

Possible contributing factors are the increase in physical and social activity involved in volunteerism, as well as the increase in life satisfaction that volunteers experience.

Special Events!

Local Veterans Score at National Wheelchair Competition

More than 500 veterans with physical disabilities, including five athletes from Louisville VA Medical Center, converged on Milwaukee, Wisconsin, June 19 to 23 to test their agility, athleticism and strength of spirit at the 27th National Veterans Wheelchair Games, the largest annual wheelchair sports event in the world. More than 20 veterans injured in current conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq joined veterans from the Gulf War, Vietnam and other conflicts in 17 competitive events. The Wheelchair Games, presented each year by VA and Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA), are open to all U.S. military veterans who use wheelchairs for sports competition due to spinal cord injuries, certain neurological conditions, amputations or other mobility impairments. For the first time at the Games, a demonstration track and field clinic was held for athletes who are able to stand using prosthetic devices. The Clement J. Zablocki VA Medical Center in Milwaukee and the Wisconsin chapter of PVA hosted the 2007 Games. Veterans competing in the National Veterans Wheelchair Games come from nearly all 50 states, plus the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and Great Britain. At the Games, veterans competed in track and field, swimming, basketball, weightlifting, softball, air guns, quad rugby, 9-ball, bowling, table tennis, archery, hand cycling, a motorized rally, wheelchair slalom, a power wheelchair relay and power soccer. Trapshooting and wheelchair curling were exhibition events this year. To obtain more information about the competitive events, visit the Games Web site at www.wheelchairgames.va.gov.

5 local veterans participated in the 2007 events, winning a total of 6 medals. Jim Green won Bronze in javelin and silver in billiards; Alfred Cummings won Gold in slalom, Gold in power chair 220, Silver in power chair relay, and Silver in Motor rally.

To be a part of sending a local veteran team to the 2008 Wheelchair Games, consider making a donation to the medical center's General Post Fund Account #508. Your total donation will go toward making a veteran's dream of participating in this special sporting event come true.



Local Veteran Artists Receive National Honors

Congratulations to two local veterans who will be honored for their artistic talents in the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival that will be held in St. Louis, Missouri during the week of October 22 – 29.

Hager Garriott was recognized for his skill on the piano and has been invited to perform in the show. Carlos Chambers was recognized for his photography. The festival will pay for lodging and meals but we need to pay for transportation. It is estimated that it will cost approximately \$1,000.00 to send both veterans to the national show.

Contributions to support funding of travel expenses for this year's winners and to support ongoing local creative arts competitions may be directed to GPF 509, Veterans Creative Arts Program.

Stand Down 2007

This year, Louisville VA Medical Center's Homeless Veterans Program Coordinator is joining forces with the Coalition for the Homeless to be a part of the weekday community event to be held at Louisville Gardens on Thursday, October 25, 2007.

One of the many advantages to this plan will be the increase in community support. Check out upcoming editions of *The Volunteer Promise* for additional program information.

Construction Updates



Outpatient pharmacy to receive "Face-lift!"

The outpatient pharmacy pick-up window is being remodeled to meet security and privacy standards. Construction is expected to begin on are around July 14 and is projected to require 4 – 6 weeks for completion. During construction, staff, veterans, and visitors may expect to encounter minor inconveniences and delays. Please bear with us as we work to create a more efficient and effective work environment.

Please be advised that the wheelchair storage room, which located behind the telephone operators in room A-103, will be used for a temporary Pharmacy counseling area during the construction project. This plan will allow us to maintain high standards of patient care. Every effort will be made to maintain a supply of wheelchairs in a location readily accessible to the veterans who utilize them on a daily basis. The plan is to store some wheelchairs in the front lobby, some near the Emergency Department entrance, and some near the West Entrance.

Inpatient Ward 4 North

Work is progressing on 4 North to make this a state-of-the-art patient care area. Thanks to donations from very generous VA Voluntary Service organizations, four of the rooms will be equipped with high-quality, motorized, patient lift equipment. This equipment will enhance patient comfort and improve medical staff ability to provide care as efficiently as possible. The system will allow medical or nursing staff to move a patient from the bed

to a variety of different locations in the room in a single movement, and give the caregiver greater flexibility in performing the tasks needed for delivering quality patient care.

Look forward to the grand opening of the newly remodeled ward sometime in late summer or fall 2007.

NEW VA CLINIC IN GRAYSON COUNTY OPENING FALL 2008

We are proud to announce a new Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) was recently approved for the Grayson County area. This outpatient medical treatment center is one more example of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) commitment to offer world-class health care closer to the men and women who have served this nation.

This VA-staffed clinic will provide primary care and mental health services to eligible veterans residing in the Grayson County and surrounding areas. Plans are in the very first stages and an exact location has not yet been determined, but it is projected that the clinic will be fully operational by **fall 2008**.

We are very excited about this wonderful opportunity to expand our services closer to where our veterans live and will keep you informed of significant developments as they occur.

Funding Needed for *Warming Cabinets*



Some areas in the Radiology Department where testing and procedures are done require that lower room temperatures be maintained. This affects the comfort of the patient waiting or undergoing the procedure. The purchase of a warming cabinet would allow us to provide patients with warmed blankets to improve their comfort during their time spent in these areas. Two warmers are needed – one in Diagnostic Radiology and second one in the CT Scan area. The approximate cost of each warming cabinet is \$3,500.

Anyone interested in helping us make this purchase can do so by donating funds to GPF 500 and specifying that they are to be used to support the purchase of a warming cabinet. Donors will be recognized on a plaque that will be prominently displayed in the area. Please direct your donations or questions to:

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

SUPPORT OUR TROOPS

Armed Services Blood Drive
Date: 24 August 2007 (Friday)
Time: 8:00 am – 3:30 pm
VA Medical Center, Louisville
Location: Classroom: D010



When you donate blood to the Armed Services Blood Program, your blood supports:

- Injured Soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan
- Active Duty Soldiers and Family Members
- Your local Military/VA hospital

Your Blood Saves Soldiers' Lives

MONETARY AND MATERIAL NEEDS FOR VETERAN PROGRAMS

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.

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: Louisville VA Medical Center Voluntary Service has set up a new General Post Fund (GPF) Account to support events and special needs of our newest veterans. Donations for this purpose should be made to General Post Fund (GPF) 532, OEF/OIF Veterans Program.

Television Fund: Donations are needed to support the purchase of televisions for patient bedsides. Donations for this purpose should be directed to GPF #505.

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. While the Winter Sports Clinic is routinely held in Snowmass, Colorado, the Wheelchair Games are hosted by different VA Medical Centers annually. Contributions to support local veteran participation in either of these events should be directed to GPF #508.

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. Funds may also be used to pay for one attendant accompanying a veteran artist invited to the out-of-state event if deemed necessary and ordered by that veteran's attending physician. Donations for this program should be directed to GPF #509.

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If you would like to receive your newsletter in full color via electronic mail, please drop us a line and let us know your e-mail address.

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

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