



# The Volunteer Promise

Volume 60

October 2009

## What Does Veterans Day Mean to You?

### Mark Your Calendars!

**Monday, October 12**  
Columbus Day,  
Federal Offices Closed

**Thursday, October 22**  
VAVS Committee Meeting,  
3PM, VA Medical Center,  
Room D010

**Wednesday,  
November 12**  
Veterans Day  
Federal Offices Closed

**Thursday,  
November 26**  
Thanksgiving Day  
Federal Offices Closed

Veterans Day is set aside to honor those who fought to defend and preserve the freedoms that we take for granted. They fought, served and sacrificed without expecting anything in return. We would not miss our freedom unless we lost it. Things we take for granted such as education, healthcare, conveniences like television and cell phones, and even hot water, are not available to citizens in some countries. Many of us are moved by the lyrics of Lee Greenwood, "I'm

proud to be an American, where at least I know I'm free." The song also reminds us who gave us the right to that freedom.



We owe a great debt to those who are serving and those who have served in our armed forces. Please remember them, not only on Veterans Day, but throughout the year.

Take the time to say "Thank you." Spend time with a Veteran. You will find that taking just a few minutes with a Veteran makes a significant difference in his/her day and can even impact a life.

Opportunities to serve Veterans are available at Louisville VA Medical Center, whether it is occasional visits or regularly scheduled volunteer hours. To find out more about becoming a Louisville VA Medical Center volunteer, or to schedule your visit, contact Voluntary Service at 502-287-6221.

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## Stand Down for the Homeless

On Wednesday, October 21, 2009, the Louisville VA Medical Center, along with the Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs, Project Homeless Connect and the Greater Louisville Community will host Kentucky's tenth annual Stand Down for the Homeless.

Our goals for Stand Down are to provide:

*Hands on assistance directly to homeless Veterans.*

*Relief from the trauma and isolation of homelessness in a safe, secure environment where basic needs such as food, clothing and shelter can be addressed.*

*Assistance in accessing long-term resources.*

Volunteers who are available to work a weekday event between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. are

encouraged to contact Voluntary Service to confirm participation. Volunteers will be needed to escort participants to various stations; to work in the Veterans' clothing area; and to be stationed at various points in the facility to provide directions. As always, monetary donations should be directed to GPF 525. To discuss how you can be involved, contact Voluntary Service at (502) 287-6221.

## Mental Health Intensive Case Management Program (MHICM)

An important mental health program offered to Veterans who have serious and persistent mental illness is MHICM, (Mental Health Intensive Case Management). The program supports our Veterans in the community who have had repeated psychiatric hospitalizations by providing case management services that are intended to minimize the

need for that hospitalization and to promote overall improved health.

Social isolation is a major health concern for those who have struggled with serious mental illness for years. An important component of the program is to provide opportunities for increased socialization.

Volunteer organizations interested in adopting this program can support Veteran outings to sporting events, the Louisville Zoo, or the Kentucky State Fair. Additionally, groups may provide refreshments for weekly activity groups and picnics, arts and crafts supplies, and various interactive/social games (i.e., chess sets, checkers, playing cards, etc).

## Flu Season is Here!

Ten Tips to Prevent Influenza:

- Perform Hand Hygiene often.
- Cover when you cough and sneeze.
- Throw tissues away immediately after use.
- Perform Hand Hygiene after disposing of tissues into waste receptacle.
- Don't touch your eyes, nose, or mouth.
- Disinfect surfaces with an approved disinfectant (household disinfectant at home).
- Disinfect equipment and objects (Clorox wipes).
- Stay away from others when you are sick.
- Distance yourself from those who are sick, when you are well.
- GET VACCINATED this year for seasonal influenza, and the Novel H1N1 Influenza (Swine Flu).



Flu vaccinations are being offered by Occupational Health Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m., and 3:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. If these times are not convenient, you may contact Nyoka Emily at 502-287-4413 to schedule an appointment. Veterans receiving primary care through Louisville VA Medical Center may also get the flu vaccine at any of our primary care locations.

## Welcome Joan Norman, VAVS Specialist Intern



Voluntary Service is excited to introduce to you our newest team member, Joan Norman. Joan came from

Gainesville, FL, where she worked for the Malcom Randall

VA Medical Center. Joan is an Air Force Veteran with more than 15 years of active duty, including service in support of Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm. Her family is filled with Veterans. Her father was a Merchant Marine. She is married to a 100% disabled Veteran who retired from the Air Force and whose service included the Vietnam era. Joan is the

mother of three sons: a Navy P3 Pilot, an Army OIF/OEF Veteran who is now a nurse, and a third son who works for a security company. Even one of her daughters-in-law is a Veteran. She has eight grandchildren (future Veterans). Joan likes to fish, cook and garden and enjoys traveling.

## Emergency Education Payments for Student Veterans

"Starting October 2, VA regional benefits offices began providing on-the-spot emergency payments up to \$3,000 to student Veterans who have applied for their education benefits but who have not yet received a government payment. Veterans may apply online at [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov), with emergency payments mailed after processing. Those unable to wait for their checks to arrive by mail may go to the regional office in Louisville, Kentucky in person to receive their payment on the spot.



The Veterans Benefit Administration Office is open Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. Veteran students should remember to bring proof of school enrollment and a government ID.

Student Veterans without their own transportation can request free transportation, provided by volunteers, to take them to the regional office. To obtain this service, Veterans may call the nearest VA Medical Center to request assistance from Voluntary Service. Travel arrangements will be made within 48 hours of the initial contact.

### **HOW YOU CAN HELP**

Transportation may be coordinated with volunteers of local veterans organizations that will use privately owned vehicles. Volunteers that drive in their own vehicles will be able to obtain volunteer hours from their organizations. However, they can **ONLY** accumulate hours from VAWS if they are Certified VA Drivers.

Anyone interested in being on an "on call" list to assist veterans may contact Voluntary Service at (502) 287-6221.

## Program Adoption Requests/Donation Needs

**HUD/VASH Program**—This is a long term intensive case management program for homeless Veterans and funding comes from collaboration between the US Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Department of Veterans Affairs. Eligible Veterans receive case management services to resolve their homeless issues and to prevent future episodes. Veterans also receive access to a Section 8 voucher which subsidizes housing rental cost. Veterans are required to attend a monthly mandatory meeting. The HUD/VASH program is in need of snacks and beverages for their meetings.

**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.

**Carrollton Community Based Outpatient Clinic**—Veterans treated in this facility may be advised that they are not to eat or drink prior to their medical appointment. Snack crackers and juice are needed to support their dietary needs after their lab test or appointment.

**Hospice Family Room**—Assorted snack foods, including microwaveable popcorn, are needed to stock the Hospice Family Room. 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.

**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.

**Ambulatory Surgery Unit** - This treatment area is in need of bedside televisions to help the Veterans rest more comfortably while waiting for their procedure. Televisions must meet special medical requirements and will cost approximately \$970 each. Five televisions are needed. Please direct donations to GPF 505.

# VAVS Partner Spotlight

## Help Hospitalized Veterans (HHV)

Help Hospitalized Veterans (HHV), the nation's largest supplier of therapeutic arts and crafts kits to VA Medical Centers and Military Hospitals, has served hospitalized Veterans since 1971, when community organizers visited the Balboa Naval Hospital in San Diego.

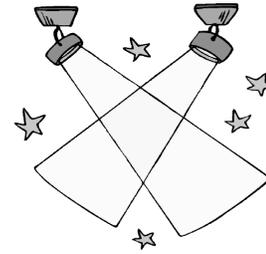
During the visit, when asked what they needed, countless wounded soldiers replied, "Give me something to do with my hands." It wasn't long before the idea of using arts and crafts as therapeutic tools came about. Soon thereafter, HHV was formed.

Now, 38 years later, nearly 25 million therapeutic arts and crafts kits have been delivered to our nation's VA and military facilities. From all reports by VA directors, traumatic brain injury (TBI) coordinators, occupational and recreation therapists and more, the impact HHV has on hospitalized Veterans is astounding. In many cases, an HHV craft kit is prescribed as part of a patient's treatment plan. Whether improving the fine motor skills of a partially paralyzed Veteran or improving the concentration of a TBI patient, the therapeutic value of HHV's arts and crafts has been proven time

after time by measured improvement in a patient's attitude, concentration and overall rehabilitation. Consider these facts and you'll understand why HHV has such a tremendously positive impact on our nation's hospitalized Veterans and wounded soldiers.

As of July 31, 2009, HHV has shipped 103,928 arts and craft kits with a retail value of \$924,040.31 to Louisville VA Medical Center.

*Submitted by Mike Lynch,  
President & CEO*



## Indiana Veterans' Groups Collaborate for 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Veterans' Karaoke Idol

Here is an outstanding example of several organizations joining forces to serve Veterans.

The combined efforts of the New Albany Elks Lodge #270, Hobart Beach VFW Post 1693, Floyd County VFW Post 3281, Knights of Columbus of New Albany, and Bonnie Sloan American Legion Post 28, have resulted in donations totaling \$18,000.00 to Louisville VA Medical Center to support the comfort cart, social work emergency fund, OIF/OEF Heroes to Hometowns, and Stand Down for the Homeless.

The groups formed a committee to plan the karaoke contest, which

spans four weekends in September and October. Individuals wishing to compete were asked to donate \$25.00. They are competing for cash prizes for 1<sup>st</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> place. Organizations were invited to sponsor contestants. Spectators are asked to donate \$1.00 at the door and are given a raffle ticket to enter into a drawing for prizes that include cash.

The 2009 event kicked off on Saturday, September 12<sup>th</sup>, at Hobart Beach VFW Post in New Albany. Round two was held on Saturday, September 26<sup>th</sup>, at Knights of Columbus in New Albany; round three on Saturday,

September 26<sup>th</sup>, at the Floyd County VFW Post; and the final competition was held on Saturday, October 3<sup>rd</sup>, at the Bonnie Sloan American Legion Post.

In 2007, the event resulted in a donation of over \$8,000.00 to Louisville VA Medical Center. In 2008, they were able to donate over \$10,000.00. Their goal this year is to once again increase their donation over the previous year.

The New Albany Tribune quoted Don Harshey as saying, "We're just Veterans helping Veterans." For additional information about this project, you may contact Mr. Harshey, 502-609-3893.

*To share what your group is doing for Veterans at Louisville VA Medical Center, contact Voluntary Service at 502-287-6221 or email [vhalouvavs@va.gov](mailto:vhalouvavs@va.gov).*

## Volunteers *...by Marjorie Moore*

**A VOLUNTEER** is a person who is a light to others, giving witness in a mixed-up age, doing well and willingly the tasks at hand - namely, being aware of another's needs and doing something about it.

**A VOLUNTEER** is a person who remembers to do the thing to make other people happy, who takes the loneliness out of the alone by talking to them, who is concerned when others are unconcerned, who has the courage to be a prophet and to say the things that have to be said for the good of all.

**A VOLUNTEER** is a person whose charity is fidelity, who is faithful in an unfaithful world, grateful in an ungrateful world, giving when all about are grasping, listening when others need to tell about their fears and problems.

## Volunteers Transporting Veterans



Know anyone who recently retired or has plans to retire soon? That is the time when many people are looking for opportunities to give back. This is also the ideal group to recruit for the Volunteer Transportation Network!

The need for qualified volunteer drivers is increasing with the expansion of the transportation

program. The Transportation Network's DAV Hospital Service Coordinator reported that she is currently declining an average of five or more Veteran transportation requests per day. We currently need volunteer drivers for the grounds, for local transportation, and throughout the extended community. Drivers should be available to drive one or more full

days per week and must have current driver's license and proof of insurance. Prior to receiving a driving assignment, volunteer applicants must have a TB skin test and must pass a physical examination. These are provided free of charge by the VA.

## 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:** Medical Service, Radiology Service, Business Office, Newburg Primary Care Clinic, the Homeless Veterans Program, and the Vet Center are among the areas needing assistance. There are a variety of assignments in this category.

**Clerical Support with Computer Skills:** Volunteers (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. 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.

**Evening/Weekend Assignments:** A new assignment is available in our Supply Processing and Distribution (SPD) Section. Volunteers would assist SPD staff in replenishing supplies on the wards. In addition, some of the telephone assignments may take place evenings or weekends. Volunteers who work in the Emergency Department may also work evenings and/or weekends.

## **MONETARY AND MATERIAL NEEDS FOR VETERAN PROGRAMS**

**Television Fund:** Donations are needed to purchase televisions for ASU. Five televisions are needed at a cost of approximately \$970 each. Funds should be directed to GPF #505.

**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:** Funds donated to GPF 511 (OIF/OEF Heroes to Hometowns) will be used to help meet the immediate needs of Veterans who recently served in Iraq or Afghanistan. Funds Donated to GPF 532 (OIF/OEF Welcome Home) will be used to support our annual Welcome Home event, which honors returning combat Veterans.

**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.

**Stand Down for the Homeless:** Funds are needed to support Stand Down 2009. Proceeds will be used to purchase clothing and personal items for homeless Veterans who need our support. Donations to this program should be directed to General Post Fund (GPF) 525.

**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.

**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. Contributions to support local Veteran participation in either of these events should be directed to GPF #508.

**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*

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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.

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

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