Mark Your Calendars!

**Monday, September 7**
Labor Day, Federal Offices Closed

**Friday September 18**
POW/MIA Day
Grand Opening, Scott County Community Based VA Clinic

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

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

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Remembering Robley Rex

On Tuesday, April 28, 2009, mere days shy of his 108th birthday, long-time Veterans advocate and VA volunteer, Robley H. Rex died at the Louisville VA Medical Center. Mr. Rex celebrated life for more than a century. He saw the world reinvent itself over and over again, and often had a front-row seat as new technologies; things that we take for granted now, were unveiled for the first time in history.

A true American hero, Mr. Rex enlisted in the United States Army as a young man in 1919 and served in the military for three years. After his military service, Mr. Rex dedicated his entire life to helping his fellow Veterans, both through his work with veterans service organizations and through his activities as a Louisville VA Medical Center volunteer.

Mr. Rex accumulated over 14,600 hours in his 23 years of service as a VA volunteer. He was a popular and vital member of our VA Voluntary Service team. Robley Rex was a caring individual who consistently went out of his way to assist others, and it was both an honor and a pleasure to have known him and to have worked with him over the years. There is absolutely no question that he will be missed.

To quote Mr. Rex, “The most necessary thing in life is friends and I don’t believe that anybody’s got more than I have.”

Student Volunteer Program 2009

We would like to thank all of the students who volunteered in the Louisville VA Medical Center’s Student Volunteer Program. This special group of nearly 45 volunteers provided a tremendous amount of work and they will be missed when they return to school.

Students are reminded that any volunteer work will be to their advantage as they prepare to further their education. Not only are there a variety of community service scholarships available; some college applications include questions about volunteer activities. Voluntary Service will be happy to assist students with the application process by providing letters of recommendation. Additionally, there are scholarships available only to students who volunteer at VA facilities.

Voluntary Service will mail scholarship information to 2009 student volunteers as we receive it.

For additional information about student volunteer opportunities, contact Rhonda Smith, Student Volunteer Coordinator, at (502) 287-6898.
**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.

One of the many advantages to the weekday schedule will be the increase in community support. 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 and providers for medical, drug and alcohol treatment, employment counseling and referrals, social services, and other community services.

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 room; and to be stationed at various points in the facility to provide directions. As always, monetary donations should be directed to GPF 525. To find out how you can be involved, please contact Voluntary Service at (502) 287-6221.

**Hospice Program Expansion Activity**

The VA Hospice Program is pleased to announce that work is underway to complete a new Hospice Family Room that is located adjacent to the patient rooms on 5 North. This very important addition will allow us to better serve the veterans by providing a very visible level of comfort and support to their families who often stay at their Veteran’s bedside for days at a time.

Your monetary donations, directed to GPF 500 with a memo “For Hospice Family Room,” will help us to comfortably furnish the room. Furnishings include tables that can be adapted for multiple uses, a refrigerator, coffee maker, and other items that will help families remain as comfortable as possible during a very difficult time.

Organizations may further support the families by adopting the area and providing refreshments for the families utilizing the area. The target date for completion is August 15, 2009.

**Welcome Home OEF/OIF Veterans**

On Saturday, July 25, 2009, Louisville VA Medical Center hosted our third annual “Welcome Home” event for returning OEF/OIF soldiers and their families. The 2009 event was held at Louisville’s Kentucky Kingdom. The program included a short recognition ceremony, lunch, door prizes, informational booths, and an opportunity for 300 soldiers/families to enjoy time spent together in a very special outing.

This year we teamed with the 223rd Army Reserve Unit, a unit that has had multiple deployments and that is our most recently returning group.

Your donations made this activity possible, and it was an overwhelming success. Families were able to make a connection that is often made difficult by separation and the experience of active duty. Donations are being accepted for our 2010 Welcome Home event and should be directed GPF 532.
Heroes to Hometowns

"Heroes to Hometowns" (H2H) is a transition program for severely injured service members returning home from OEF/OIF. It establishes a support network and coordinates resources for the service members and their families.

The driving force behind Heroes to Hometowns is The American Legion, and Louisville VA Medical Center is honored to work in partnership with them. It is a major effort, one that requires the support of our entire volunteer community. We can work together to assist our service members and their families on a variety of support issues.

Immediate needs may include:
• Housing
• Employment
• Adaptation of a home or vehicle
• Family support
• Claims assistance

Both the current economy and medical limitations are impacting the incomes of our returning service members, and they are having difficulty in meeting the daily needs of their families.

Currently, our greatest needs include school supplies, back packs, diapers/pull-ups (especially diapers in the larger sizes, and pull-ups in all sizes) for infants and toddlers. There is also a need to provide families with household items and gift certificates for groceries and gasoline. Anyone interested in supporting the program may contact Voluntary Service for further information. We can accept either donated items or monetary donations to General Post Fund (GPF) 511, Heroes to Hometown account.

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.

“I got to be one of those lucky guys who got a hometown hero welcome. I’ll never forget it. I felt like the president of the United States that day.”

Army Staff Sgt. Chris Bain
News from the Clinical Front

Carroll County, Kentucky VA Clinic

On Wednesday, July 22, 2009, rain and a cold breeze could not dampen the spirits of the staff, Veterans and local community as all joined together to formally celebrate the opening of the new VA Community Based Outpatient Clinic in Carrollton, Kentucky. The clinic is open and thriving—and welcoming Veterans from neighboring counties in both Kentucky and Southern Indiana. Originally opening in a temporary site in September 2008, the clinic represents one more effort in taking Veterans healthcare closer to home.

Scott County, Indiana VA Clinic

The newest VA Clinic in Indiana, the Scott County Clinic, first started seeing patients from a temporary location in Scottsburg, Indiana. The Clinic has recently moved into permanent quarters. The grand opening/ribbon cutting for the new clinic will be held on Friday, September 18, 2009. Much like the Carrollton Clinic, this clinic is already accepting new patients who would like to seek medical care closer to home.

C&P Clinic

Anyone who has visited the medical center in recent months may have observed the construction of a new modular building on the hill behind the hospital. This building will soon be completed and ready to serve as the home of the Compensation and Pension (C&P) Clinic. The clinic is currently located in the main building in room D125. After it relocates to the modular building, the Polytrauma Clinic will relocate to the first floor location. Watch for additional updates as plans continue to develop.

Mark Your Calendars!

Louisville VA Medical Center boasts an amazing and dedicated team of volunteers. Collectively, nearly 800 regularly scheduled and countless “occasional” volunteers provide a tremendous level of service. A very popular event, and the medical center’s best opportunity to formally recognize your volunteer efforts, is the annual Volunteer Awards Ceremony. For the past several years, the program has been held at the popular Olmsted, located at the Masonic Home off Frankfort Avenue in Louisville. Each year the challenge to find a date for the program increases. Thanks to the efforts of your VA Voluntary Service (VAVS) Committee, we have scheduled the next two programs. The 2010 program will be held on Saturday, April 3. Though that is Easter Saturday, it was the ONLY day available! The committee voted on accepting the date and for determining the 2011 date. So while you have your calendar out, pencil in Saturday, April 9, 2011, and join us in the celebration!

TCF Intern Update

The purpose of the Technical Career Field (TCF) program is to attract exceptional men and women to the VA workforce and to grow their leadership skills in a specific VA career path. Voluntary Service is a participant in the program, and Louisville VA Medical Center was one of five sites selected to host a 2007 intern.

You may remember that Rhonda Smith was selected to be that intern. At the end of her two year training program in late September, she will have earned the right to the title of Voluntary Service Specialist. We are very fortunate that she will be staying with us here in Louisville!

Voluntary Service will welcome a new intern from the 2009 class. Beginning August 16, Ms. Joan Norman will be joining our staff. She will be embarking on a 2-year internship program that will introduce her to the Voluntary Service Program. Joan is moving from her home in Florida. Please help us make Joan welcome as she starts a new leg in her VA career!
Surprising 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.

Volunteers Transporting Veterans

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.