

McGuire

Serving Our Nation's Heroes

Monthly



NEWS FROM:

Nutrition

Ride to Recovery

Volunteers

Re-Creation



Chaplains: Helping VA Care for the Whole Patient

The Department of Veterans Affairs is concerned with taking care of the whole person: body, mind and spirit. The chaplains at Richmond VAMC play a vital role in VHA's goal of providing holistic, quality health care to our Veterans. VA chaplains offer spiritual/pastoral care to patients regardless

“We help people find comfort, make meaning, and draw from their own spiritual resources for strength.”

of their religious background or affiliation. Chaplain Service provides continuous programs of specialized care for inpatients, outpatients, families and hospital staff. Chaplain Downs said, “We accommodate each person’s individual needs, regardless of spiritual background. We don’t tell them what to believe.”

“Spirituality” is defined as a sense of connection that gives meaning and purpose to a person’s life. However, illness, loss or a stressful event can affect how we see the world and others in it. During these challenging times, chaplains provide comfort and guidance. “We help people find comfort, make meaning, and draw from their own spiritual resources for strength,” said Chaplain Linder.

Veterans, who have returned from war, return with invisible spiritual and emotional scars as a result of their experiences while deployed.

As a result, many Veterans question their long held personal beliefs and values. VA chaplains help Veterans process their emotions and offer compassionate and non-judgmental pastoral care. According to Chaplain Simmons, “We attend to moral injury.”

In addition to our Veterans, VA chaplains provide care for family members and staff. They are a welcome presence on the medical and residential units. For staff and family, chaplains assist with grief support and help navigate ethical dilemmas. They also facilitate effective communication between the Veterans, family and staff.

The job of a VA chaplain can be challenging, but the team has means of coping. “We have a serious job, but we do not take ourselves too seriously,” said Chaplain Connolly. Chaplain Stone added, “Our self-care is laughter. This is how we process all of the bad stories.”



The Chaplain Service, from left: Chaplains Harry E. Simmons; Alvin M. Downs; Kenneth J. Linder; Secretary Ms. Keiona L. Nuckles; Chaplains James M. T. Connolly; O. Dewane Stone; Mark Flores

It is said, “Laughter is good medicine.” Therefore, if you hear laughter spilling out of the Chaplain Service office, know they are simply taking their medicine.

Care and compassion are the key principles that guide the Chaplain Service. “When you need someone to listen, we listen,” said Chaplain Downs.

The Chaplain Service offers a variety of scheduled periods of worship, memorial services and religious resources in printed and digital format. For additional information regarding the Chaplain Service here at Richmond VAMC, please visit: www.richmond.va.gov/services/Chaplain_Service_at_Richmond_vamc.asp

The Chapel is located near the main entrance in Room C1X-1.

Re-Creation

The group Re-Creation, a troupe of all-volunteer entertainers performed for Veterans March 10 at the McGuire VA Medical Center multipurpose room. The group honored Veterans with a selection of patriotic mainstays including the "Armed Forces Medley" which included individual tributes in the crowd. The group also performed collections of soul, pop and rock classics from the last 40 years in honor of their 40th year of

entertaining Veterans around the country, taking them on a musical journey starting in the 70s and moving through present day hits. The group said this year they have been averaging around 300 travel miles per day. Road manager and singing bass for the group, Tirus Twyne, summed up the group's motivation, "We are all volunteers and give freely of our time because we know you have given so much more."



Re-Creation tours across the country, performing for Veterans at medical centers and state homes. It is an all-volunteer cast and they have formal dance and vocal training.

March is Red Cross Month

President Barack Obama recently proclaimed March as Red Cross Month across the country, a tradition upheld by each of our nation's leaders since President Franklin D. Roosevelt first recognized Red Cross Month in 1943.

That honor is well deserved, especially here at the McGuire VA Medical Center. The Red Cross has been a valuable partner and has cast a huge footprint on McGuire for decades.

Their many volunteers host a variety of activities like monthly horse race games in the Community Living Center, maintain a healing garden, the delivery of Valentines and Christmas gift bags and the popular monthly ice cream social.

Virginia Central Region coordinator, Christy Carneal, said when Red Cross volunteers found

out one of the floors did not have a Christmas tree, they sprang into action, providing a tree just in time for the holidays.

1800

Volunteer Hours served at McGuire in 2014

The dedication of the volunteers to the medical

center is as large as the impact they have amassing 1800 volunteer hours last year, which puts McGuire in the top 15 VA hospitals in the country for Red Cross activities.

To all of the volunteers: the Veterans, families and staff of McGuire SALUTE YOU!



Red Cross volunteers working in one of McGuire's gardens.

Voluntary Service

Mr. Reginald White has been an active volunteer since 2003 and is associated with the Vietnam Veterans of America.

Mr. White has earned the Presidential Lifetime Achievement award and now has over 5,000 hours of service.

He served in Vietnam for a total of 2 1/2 years, serving a 12-month tour with the 11th Armored Cavalry and an 18-month tour with the 1st Squadron 10th US Cavalry, the famed Buffalo Soliders.

He had this to say of his service in Vietnam: "Vietnam was nice because I had a job to do."

Mr. White is pictured here in the 2F physical therapy room where he volunteers on Tuesday and Friday.

Thank you Mr. White!



NURSING JOB FAIR

April 14, 2015 | 3:00 PM - 7:00 PM
Room 2K-113



SAME-DAY INTERVIEWS AVAILABLE FOR INTERESTED CANDIDATES!

Cycling: Benefits not just physical

Rickey Wood and his fellow Veterans are all participants in McGuire's Ride to Recovery cycling program. Although the rides take Veterans out of their comfort zones to battle the elements and challenge them physically, the program is gaining more and more popularity. "In 2011 we had eight riders," said McGuire recreation therapist and program manager Nicole Shuman. "We slowly increased our numbers, and last year we had 44 riders."

The cycling program, officially called "Ride to Recovery" is the only one in the country that is run out of a VA Medical Center. Since it is such a unique program, Shuman, Shawn Simmons, also a recreation therapist and kinesiologists Alicia Frazier and Chris Mund, have been doing patient evaluations of the program, getting feedback and incor-

porating the data into program policy. Roy Webb, a Marine and Vietnam Veteran says the cycling program has helped him tremendously. "I suffer from asthma and biking really builds up my lungs," Webb said. He likes seeing the physical results of his hard work. He boasted that his systolic blood pressure, which is the pressure measurement of blood being pumped through the body and important for seniors, is 111. A good systolic number is less than 120.

Another benefit that Webb and many of the riders agreed upon, is help with their PTSD. Webb was recommended for the program by his therapist and that turned out to be just what the doctor ordered.

"It helps me with the PTSD tremendously," Webb said. "It brings me to the VA, and I'm always happy the whole time I'm here, and it brings me here five times a week." Another Veteran that arrived through the recommendation of a counselor was Marina Libro who came

"It helps me with the PTSD tremendously, it brings me to the VA, and I'm always happy the whole time I'm here..."

Kinesiologist, Alicia Frazier gives patient and cycling program participant Rickey Wood an assist at the end of their ride. The cycling program is part of recreation therapy and is an important part of a patient's recovery. "Riding as a group in the community has a strong reintegration component," said Frazier. "That is combined with strong reconditioning and endurance. That is a transdisciplinary approach to patient-centered care."



to McGuire for care from a Warrior Transition Unit (WTU) in 2011.

Libro says the strength of the program lies in the therapy team that runs it. "Chris [Mund] and Alicia have really taken the workouts up a notch thanks to their being able to ride with us."

That networking is also an important part of the program. "The biggest improvement we see outside of the actual cycling is when people first come to the class, they stay to themselves," said Shuman. "Then you see them open up and start talking to one another, even making plans outside class."

Interactions are what helped Army Veteran Audie Wilkins to not only be healthier, but make a return to living again. "I love the social part of cycling, you know, being around the Veterans," Wilkins said.

Wilkins also suffers from PTSD, and the resulting depression made him isolate himself and that led to him gaining weight and getting out of shape. You wouldn't know that by look-



The McGuire VA Ride to Recovery cycling program uses several trails. The Capital Trail shown here offers a course with many grades and elevations that especially challenge recumbent riders.

ing at the muscular Veteran who says he has grown and come a long way since entering the program a year ago. His turnaround has led him to embrace cycling. He now participates in races and has even trained for, and finished his first marathon.

"This program has resulted in helping to get me outdoors," said Wilkins. "I love the program and it's been a lifesaver for me."

EEO March Words of Wisdom – Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)

The VA Workplace Conflict Guide describes ADR as a voluntary alternative to, not a replacement for, more traditional and formal systems, such as grievances, discrimination complaints and appeals. ADR does not exist to determine a "winner" or a "loser." ADR allows VA employees to examine what is going on in their workplaces and to work out solutions that are agreeable and fair to everyone.

ADR seeks dispute resolution by using facilitation, mediation, early neutral evaluation and other methods.

What can you expect from ADR? Confidentiality, a non-adversarial atmosphere and process, neutrality and open lines of communication.

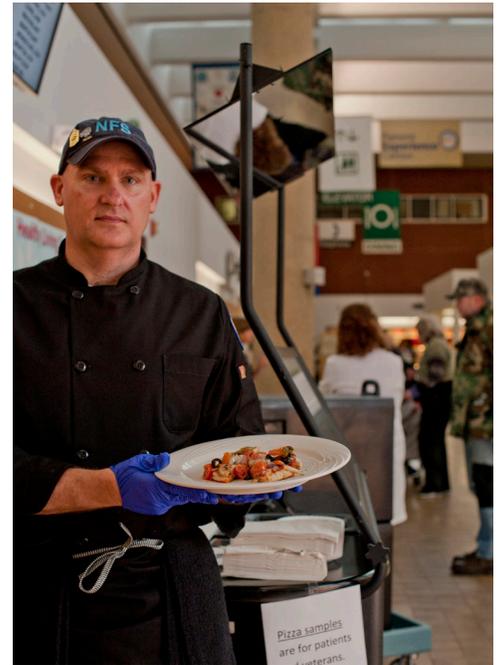
If you are interested in using ADR, or even becoming a conflict coach, contact Vanessa A. Falden, EEO Manager/ADR Coordinator at 804-675-5243.

Find additional information about the ADR program: <http://www.va.gov/adr/ADRLinks.asp>

NATIONAL NUTRITION MONTH



Back row from left: Milissa Janisko, Anne Leary, Jenn Wilson, Lauren Early, Ka Wong, Monica Malo. Front row from left: Stephanie Sherman, Susan Tatum, Teneka Wortham, Michele Bedwell. Right photo: Chef Thomas Millican. Photo below right shows the Food Service staff just before the lunch rush.



March is National Nutrition Month® and the goal of the dietitians and nutrition staff here at McGuire is to motivate Veterans to live their best lives through healthy eating. A side

Greater than 20% of Veterans seen at McGuire, have diabetes

effect of poor nutrition is poor health. Among the Veterans seen here at McGuire, over 20% (7,800) Veterans have diabetes. According to the American Diabetes Association, among persons age 65 and older, 25.9% of them have diabetes. Also, the incidence of diabetes among younger Veterans is on the rise.

These grim statistics mirror what is happening in America. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), more than 29 million Americans (9.3%) have diabetes. One in four people have diabetes, but don't know it. One in three Americans are "pre-diabetic," which means their blood sugar levels are higher than normal, but not high enough to be diagnosed diabetic. If left unmanaged, diabetes can lead to vision loss, heart disease, stroke, kidney failure, amputation of limbs and premature death.

But, there is hope!

Diabetes can be managed through physical activity, diet and appropriate use of medications to lower blood sugar levels. Dietitian Michele Bedwell states that through lifestyle changes alone, a person who is pre-diabetic can decrease their risk of developing the disease by 58%.



This year's National Nutrition Month® theme is "Bite into a Healthy Lifestyle." Throughout the month, the dietitians and VA chefs at McGuire provided healthy eating tips and healthy cooking demonstrations to motivate Veterans to eat healthy. The cooking demonstrations were conducted on brand new "healthy kitchen" units awarded to Dr. Laura Nihan, chief of Nutrition and Food Services. Dr. Nihan submitted

a national grant for the units and McGuire was one of 10 medical centers to receive them.

It is encouraging to know the positive impact healthy eating can have on one's health and we are grateful to the dedicated dietitians and VA chefs who are improving Veterans' health, one bite at a time.

LEADERSHIP FORUM SERVICE AWARDS



Shirley Hackett - 35 Years

Shacquelyn McCormick - 30 Years



Edwinette Moses - Quality and Performance Award

Antoinette McGeorge - 30 Years

Deborah Washington - 30 Years

Recently at McGuire

Please share your events with us for inclusion in
upcoming newsletters.
Send an email to: VHARICPublicAffairs@va.gov

Taiwanese Medical University Tour

Forty students and profes-
sors from Kaohsiung Medical
University, Taiwan, toured
McGuire VA Medical Center on
March 12. McGuire has had a
long standing affiliation with
the Taiwanese university and

has hosted previous groups. The group was given an overview of the VA health-care system, and then they received demonstrations and briefings on some of the exciting programs ongoing at the medical center such as the exo suit, polytrauma unit and prosthetics lab where the visitors tried on mechanical arms and enabled them with computer-generated signals.

Top left, John Fox, chief of McGuire Prosthetics Lab, hooks sensors onto a professor's arm to demonstrate how an amputee can replicate the use of a functioning hand. Top right, Dr. Donald Tower, medical director of the McGuire Polytrauma Rehab Center, explains to the group how the center uses games like poker and billiards in rehab to assist Veterans with their cognitive abilities. Lower right, Dr. Ashraf Gorgey, Chief of McGuire Spinal Cord Injury Research, shows the group how they use an assistive device to rehabilitate Veterans and gather data.



Daniel Hoffman, VISN 6 Network Director
discusses current affairs at a Town Hall meeting
with Richmond employees.

Pfc. Tyler McGibbon, a patient in the polytrauma unit at McGuire, was promoted to specialist in a special ceremony held for him at the hospital. McGibbon was injured in Kuwait December 21 during a training mission when the Humvee he was traveling in rolled over. His parents George and Donna attended the ceremony and have been at his side since then, and have followed him until he arrived at McGuire in mid-January. At right, Tyler and his father at the ceremony.



Thanks to Elizabeth Murphey, MSW, our HPC Coordinator pictured above. Ms. Murphey and the Hospice and Palliative Care Team have worked to organize and sustain "The We Honor Veterans Program." This successful program includes partnerships with our community hospice providers to hold branch of service metal pinning in the CLC for our Veterans and their families.