

McGuire



Serving Our Nation's Heroes Monthly



Photo: Regional Veterans & Community Health Benefits Summit

THIS ISSUE

Veterans Integrative
Pain Center

Fly Fishing

All Employee Survey

UPCOMING

2016 Summer
Olympic Games

Veterans & Family
Resource and
Employment Fair

Immunization
Awareness Week

EDITORIAL STAFF

Darlene Edwards · Armenthis Lester · David Hodge
Patrick Gordon · Mary Beatty-Brooks · Jason Miller

All content within McGuire Monthly was written and
compiled by the editorial staff unless otherwise noted.

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT



— Ben Durham —

Where do you work?

I work in the Director's Office.

How many years have you worked at VA?

I've worked at VA since the end of June, so only a few weeks.

What are you looking forward to most about working at the VA?

As an Administrative Resident, I'm looking forward to doing special projects to make improvements to things, be they big or small, that ultimately help our veterans.

Tell us something about you that most people would not know.

I've been a competitive Men's Saber Fencer for many years.

What does being a VA employee mean to you?

For me, being a VA employee means that I get to serve those who have given their all in defense of us and this country, while also getting to honor the memory of the many veterans in my own family.



Russell L. Scott

A World War II Veteran and former Prisoner of War, Russell Scott, 98, is retiring as a volunteer after 29 years of service.

Mr. Scott held one assignment in Pharmacy service for 29 years at McGuire VA Medical Center. He also is a volunteer with Retired Senior Volunteer Program and the Virginia War Memorial.

As of July 27, 2016, Mr. Scott has volunteered for 7,023 hours and is widely recognized as "seasoned volunteer".

VIP TREATMENT AT MCGUIRE GETS RESULTS

Everybody needs a break, right? For Veterans dealing with problems like chronic pain, coupled with weight problems and poor diet, the first step may seem insurmountable.

The McGuire VA Medical Center has a group dedicated to teaching Veterans to take the steps needed to overcome chronic pain. The Veterans Integrative Pain (VIP) Center uses self-management techniques to break the pain cycle and turn around someone's overall health.

"Think of VIP as an empowering wellness center where you take back your health," said Dr. Meghan Rooney, a psychologist and co-clinical coordinator at the VIP Center. Rooney said she is not aware of any other program like this in our medical center region.

VIP offers wellness initiatives such as acupuncture, anti-inflammatory diet group, biofeedback, mindfulness and meditation, Qi Gong, and Tai Chi. "We have front row seats to the changes in people's lives," Rooney said. "This stuff is working. People are living again."

At the VIP Center, Veterans are encouraged to take the lead in their health care. One of those Veterans, Marine Corps Veteran Kelvin Willis has been coming to McGuire since 1982.

"I used to have a lot of pain," Willis explained. "Now, the pain is mild compared to what it used to



At the Veterans Integrative Pain (VIP) Center at the McGuire VAMC, acupuncture is often a first step for Veterans looking to manage chronic pain. Sixteen sessions of acupuncture are said to have a cumulative effect to calm the nervous system and kick start the release of pain-diminishing endorphins, according to Dr. Mark Farrington, a psychiatric clinical nurse specialist at the VIP Center.

be. I'm exercising and eating the proper food."

During a recent Qi Gong class, each class member worked to replicate the fluid-like hand and arm motions while maintaining a steady midsection and firmly-planted feet. Dr. Mark Farrington explained to the class how this traditional Chinese practice uses a combination of body posture, movement, and breathing control to bring healing and energy to the body.

Farrington, a psychiatric clinical nurse specialist at the VIP Center, also performs acupuncture and mindfulness and meditation. Many of the techniques and methods used at the VIP Center are used in private practice all over the world, he said.

"In everything I do, mindfulness has a direct effect on the perception of pain—leading to more acceptance and less stress," Farrington said.

Imagine cutting a wedge out of a lemon and placing it to the tongue, Farrington posited. The body automatically begins to respond with increased saliva or the lock-jaw feeling. The body's response from the brain is an example of the power of the mind.

"Pain comes from injury, but chronic pain activates the nervous system," Farrington said. "Learning to accept the pain improves the overall reaction to chronic pain."



Dr. Mark Farrington, a psychiatric clinical nurse specialist at the Veterans Integrative Pain (VIP) Center, McGuire VAMC, demonstrates the Archer pose during a class of Qi Gong, a traditional Chinese practice designed to practice use a combination of body posture, movement, and breathing control to bring healing and energy to the body.

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JULY LEADERSHIP FORUM

YEARS OF SERVICE AWARDS

30
YEARS

- Julia Rives LPN,
Unit 4B
- Lorraine DiMeoSpeights,
*Managerial Cost
Accounting*

ACCOMPLISHMENTS and AWARDS

Toastmasters International
Competent Communicator Award
Tequila Herron-Smith

Toastmasters International
Competent Leader Award
Willie McDonald

**IT'S YOUR
NEWSLETTER!**

**WE WANT
TO HEAR
FROM YOU!**

*Please share your
department news with
us:*

[vharicpublicaffairs@
va.gov](mailto:vharicpublicaffairs@va.gov)



WELCOME to our NEW EMPLOYEES

Al-Baiyina, Zaheerah	Hou, Joan	Perkins, Troy
Allen, Craig	Jackson, Nickie	Preeti, Panchang
Andrion, Jeremy	Jones, Ashley N	Reeves, Richard
Barber-Taylor, Diane	Jones, Erica	Rivers, Wayne
Blount, Terry	Kane, Caitlin	Rowe, Tammy
Bremer, Justin	Kelley, Shelkieta	Ruckhardt, Samuel
Cagle, Derron	Khan, Feras	Scott, Richard
Choi, Phillip	Kim, Jae	Sharma, Amreeta
Dabney, LaTonya	Labega, Tasha	Shepperson, Keith
Davis, Erskine	Laughlin, Jay	Simpson, Kelly
Davis-Bonner, Paula	Lehew, Cynthia	Singleton, Joseph
Desai, Shivan A.	Lekberg, David	Smith, Terry
Desmangles, Rodney	Loew, Angel	Sutton, Patricia
Dillon, Edward	Major, Mildred	Tate, Victoria
Exaire, Emilio	Mason, Constance	Tennefoss, Robin
Francis, Rasjahmid	McMillian, Asisa	Thornton, Sandra
Frasier, Bevon	Miles, Lauren	Valentine-Thompson, Denise
Gallardo, Jennifer	Miller, John	Wallace, Duane
George, Ansa	Miller, Patricia	Walton, Shamara
Goldberg, Erika	Mirzaie, Mandy	Watson, Simone
Gordon, Patrick	Mobley, Donald	Wells, Donna
Hammie, Trian	Morton, Tiffany	Willis, Chasity
Haynes, Tanya	Murdock, Brittany	Womble, Ericka
Haritha, Josna	Ono, Kenichiro	
Hennings, Cynthia	Patel, Pujan	

EMPLOYEE **WELLNESS**

McGUIRE TOTAL BODY FITNESS

4:30 pm - Tuesdays in MPR and
Thursdays in the Fitness Center

YOGA

12:00 pm - Wednesdays in MPR

ZUMBA

4:30 pm - Tuesdays & Thursdays in MPR

BASKETBALL LEAGUE

6:30 pm - Tuesdays

WEDNESDAY WALKS

12:30 pm -

COMING SOON

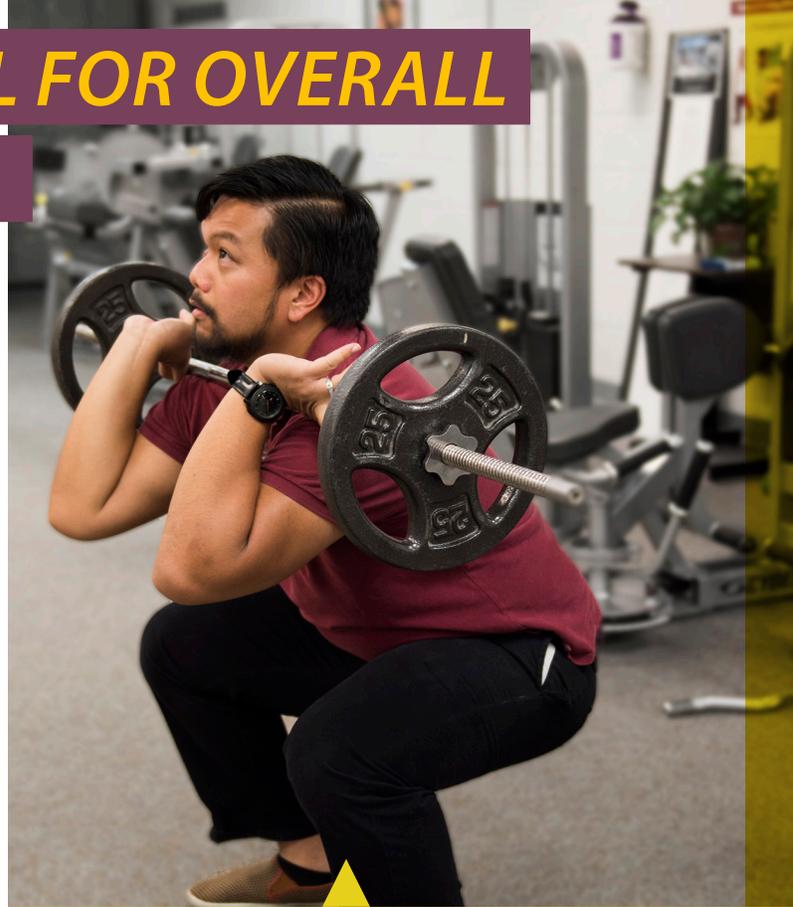
VOLLEYBALL LEAGUE

For more information: [Ryan Ballou](#),
Wellness Coordinator, ext. 6210

SQUATS: BENEFICIAL FOR OVERALL HEALTH AND FITNESS

The squat is an exercise that many stray away from due to fear of injury to the knees. This exercise myth limits many people from adding this great exercise to their physical regimen. In actuality, the squat is a beneficial exercise that helps promote core strength and stability, burn fat, and promote a fundamental functional movement from birth that many people have strayed away from. Squats also promote an anabolic environment for the body, which in turn triggers the release of testosterone and human growth hormone for building muscle mass.

What is the perfect squat you may ask? A toddler picking up a toy from the floor is the best example. The even distributions of weight on the heels, inner and outer balls of the feet are evenly distributed on the floor, as well as keeping the knees from going over your toes. This in turn spreads the distribution of body weight and force evenly throughout the lower body.



Ryan Ballon, McGuire Wellness Coordinator, demonstrates correct squat form.

HERE ARE 8 BENEFITS FROM SQUATTING:

1. Builds muscle in the entire body
2. Translates to real-life activities
3. Burns fat
4. Maintains mobility and balance
5. Prevents injury
6. Increases athletic performance
7. Helps tone backside, abs, and the body as a whole
8. Helps with waste removal

PROPER SQUAT FORM IS CRUCIAL WHEN PERFORMING A BODY SQUAT.

1. Stand with your feet shoulder width apart
2. Keep your back in a neutral position, knees centered over your feet
3. Slowly bend knees, hips and ankles, lowering until you reach a 90-degree angle, breathe in as you lower and breath out as you return to standing
4. Return to starting position
5. 15-20 repetitions and 2-3 sets: two or three times a week

References and toddler photo credit: McGrath, C. (2013, November/December). *Myths and Misconceptions – Squats and Lunges*. Retrieved July 13, 2016, from <http://www.acefitness.org/acefit/healthy-living-article/59/3605/myths-and-misconceptions-squats-and-lunges/>

Mercola, Joseph, Dr. "Squats: 8 Reasons to Do This Misunderstood Exercise." *Fitness Peak*. [Mercola.com](http://www.mercola.com), Nov.-Dec. 2012. Web. 13 July 2016.

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Willis, who has participated in Qi Gong, Tai Chi and the anti-inflammatory diet group, said he has lost 28 pounds since he began programs at the VIP center.

“But, I’m looking to go 40 pounds,” Willis added.

“If you don’t think you can do things on your own, come to VIP,” Willis stated. “I didn’t think it would be this beneficial. I know it is working because I can feel the difference. •

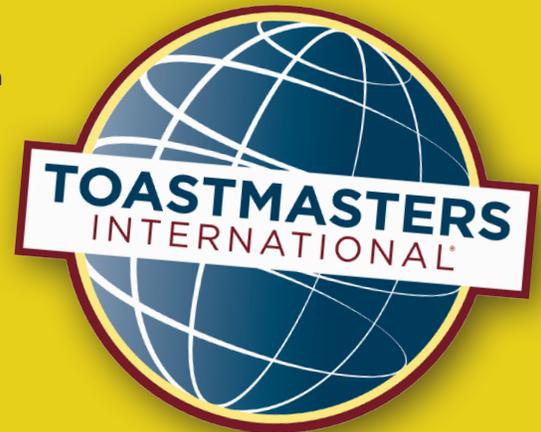
Toastmasters International is a non-profit educational organization that teaches public speaking and leadership skills through a worldwide network of clubs. Our local Toastmasters Club - VAMC (Very Articulate Master Communicators) at McGuire currently has over 20 members. Our club was awarded the President Distinguished club award which is the highest honor for 2015 and 2016.

Toastmasters offer many benefits. As a result of participating in Toastmasters, you will:

- Increase your self-confidence
- Improve public speaking
- Become a better leader
- Communicate more effectively

If you’re looking to develop speaking and leadership skills, ace a job interview, and/or ignite your career, Toastmasters is for you.

We cordially invite you to attend our meeting as a guest on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday at 12pm in room 2K-115 and the 2nd Wednesday at 4:30pm in room 2K-115.



For more than ten years, volunteers from Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing (PHWFF) have joined the recreation therapy department at Richmond VAMC to teach Veterans the joys of fly fishing. This relationship has evolved to PHWFF sponsoring multiple fly fishing trips in the community. In addition, the participants are nominated and selected to attend all-expense-paid fishing trips around the country with other service members and Veterans.

“It is such a valuable program and I have seen so many successes, and it allows people to heal themselves through healing each other, which is a neat thing,” said Paulette

Beasley, recreation therapist, at Richmond VAMC. She has been with the program from the beginning. According to Beasley, the first interaction between PHWFF and her patients was an introductory fly fishing class which taught Veterans to tie flies and cast.

Originally established to meet the physical and emotional needs of wounded service members recovering at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, PHWFF has partnered with VA hospitals and military treatment facilities across the nation. Their efforts are primarily volunteer driven and financially supported by charitable donations from private and corporate sponsors.

According to their mission statement, “Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing, Inc. is dedicated to the physical and emotional rehabilitation of disabled active military service personnel and disabled veterans through fly fishing and associated activities including education and outings.”

Steve Lewis, program manager for PHWFF in Virginia over sees the nine programs running in the state. Lewis explained the broad scale of the sport and how it can accommodate an angler at any level. Lewis stated that fly fishing is suitable for both fresh water and salt water. He said depending on the lure, a fly can catch a small sunny fish or a 300-pound marlin.

Participants and coordinators alike feel the success of PHWFF lies in the comradery and fellowship between Veterans and service members. Also, many of the participants go on to teach and mentor newcomers.

Nicky Dayton, a former Army engineer with the 82nd Airborne has been a part of PHWFF for two years. Dayton, an Iraqi Veteran suffered a mild traumatic brain injury while on active duty. When she returned home she said she suffered from depression and a suicidal episode. In expressing her appreciation for being a part of PHWFF, Dayton said, “Healing Waters saved my life. They have showed me through fishing and relationships that there is hope for people like me. Now I want to get up every day and fish and live!” Currently, Dayton is a

mentor to many participants in the program. She helps them check their equipment, tie their flies, cast their lines, and catch their fish. She also stands by as a listening ear for anyone who wants to share their story or struggles.

Andre Holcomb has participated in the PHWFF program for five years. During that time, he has gone on various fishing trips around the county and Canada. From the beginning, Holcomb said he was excited to work with PHWFF because it was an opportunity to do something he had never done before. Although enjoyable, learning to fly fish is a challenge. “There are several steps,” said Holcomb. “This is the opposite of fishing. It took me one year to learn to cast out. You can’t just wake up and do this. It is a long and tedious avenue. You have to have patience.” Since being in the program Mr. Holcomb can tie his own flies and has passed on this skill to his grandchildren. He also helps mentor and teach newcomers.

Beasley said she is excited about the future of the relationship between her therapy program and PHWFF and feels the program is invaluable and beneficial to Veterans. She has watched it grow and feels it can only get bigger and better. •



*Left: Nicky Dayton teaches a Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing participant how to cast his line.
Right: Andre Holcomb and a Project Healing Water Fly Fishing Volunteer celebrate the catch of a sunfish.*



Veterans Health
Administration

