

McGuire



Serving
Nations

Monthly



THIS ISSUE

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Dedication

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UPCOMING

National Breast
Cancer Awareness
Month

National Mental
Illness Awareness
Month

Lung Cancer
Awareness Month

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.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT



Meet Eileen Osmolski

Where do you work?

I work as a Hospitality/Greeter and in Palliative Care.

How many years have you volunteered at the VA?

I have volunteered at VA for seven years.

What was your most memorable experience while volunteering at the VA?

The most memorable experiences are the conversations with Veterans that show me their amazing courage to bravely face aging and wounds with grace and dignity.

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

I play the flute.

What does being a VA volunteer mean to you?

Volunteering gives me the opportunity to serve Veterans. That has been the duty and privilege of Gold Star Mothers since World War I.

On the cover: Paul Galanti (left), prisoner of war during Vietnam, met with Russell Scott, POW during World War II at the Phyllis E. Galanti Arboretum dedication ceremony, Sept. 16, at McGuire VA Medical Center.

Back cover: An engraved stone dedicated to Phyllis E. Galanti rests in the middle of the memorial arboretum at McGuire VA Medical Center.

NASCAR, RIR CONTINUE PARTNERSHIP WITH VA

For NASCAR XFINITY Series driver Ryan Reed, meeting with Veterans from the Richmond VA Medical Center is a little more relatable than it is for some of his peers. While Reed isn't a Veteran, he shares a daily battle in common with many Vets who have been diagnosed with diabetes.

Reed, who has Type 1 Diabetes, visited the hospital on Thursday, Sept. 8 along with fellow driver Brandon Jones. They signed autographs for Veterans, toured the facility, and met with staff. He talked to Dr. Sonja Fredrickson in the Diabetes Clinic and expressed admiration for the things that the clinic does every day for Veterans. He mentioned that he was diagnosed with the disease five years ago and has been on a daily insulin regimen ever since.

Reed and Jones began their visit by signing autographs for fans. An official Pace Car was also sent over from Richmond International Raceway. Members of the RIR staff were on hand to give out free tickets to the Friday night race. They also held a raffle to give away tickets to Saturday's Sprint Cup race.

Reed has been on several similar visits throughout his 3-year career, but was impressed with the size of the Richmond VA Medical Center. He called it an awesome space, and praised the work that is being done here by the staff.

On Friday, Reed and fellow driver Brendan Gaughan invited some Veterans with diabetes to come to the race track and enjoy a meet-and-greet before the race. The visit was facilitated through the Veterans Benefits Association. The drivers spoke with the group for several minutes each, answered questions, posed for pictures and signed more autographs.

Gaughan, who speculated that this might be his last season as a NASCAR driver, said that meeting with fans, particularly Veterans, was his favorite part of the job.

"This is so much fun," he told the group. "I love to meet great people and talk to Veterans. This is the best part of my job. Every day older I get, the more I appreciate it."



NASCAR XFINITY drivers Ryan Reed and Brandon Jones visited the McGuire VA Medical Center, Sept. 8, to sign autographs for Veterans, caregivers and staff members, and tour the facility ahead of their weekend race at Richmond International Raceway. Pictured from left to right: Rob Reynolds, Deputy Undersecretary for Disability Assistance, Veterans Benefits Administration; Ryan Reed, NASCAR driver; Brandon Jones, NASCAR driver; and John Brandecker, Director, McGuire VA Medical Center.

Gaughan said that one of his college friends went on to be the commander of a team of Navy SEALs. That gave Gaughan a greater appreciation for the military, and he has gone out of his way to meet with as many Veterans and active duty service members as possible. He has taken trips to meet with troops in Iraq, Kuwait, Qatar and more.

William Jeffress, who served in the Marine Corps from 1970 to 1972, is a patient in Richmond with Type 2 Diabetes. He's also a huge NASCAR fan, and was thrilled to get the opportunity to meet with the drivers behind the scenes.

After the meet-and-greet with Gaughan and Reed, Jeffress was able to watch the Sprint Cup qualifying session from Pit Road, which offered an incredible behind-the-scenes look at the races.

Richmond VAMC thanks Ryan Reed, Brendan Gaughan and Brandon Jones for meeting with our Veterans, and also thanks RIR for their generosity and hospitality. More than 150 free race tickets were donated to Veterans and their families. •

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

MONDAY & WEDNESDAY WALKS

12:30 pm - meet at 2nd Floor, East
Elevators

ACCOMPLISHMENTS and AWARDS

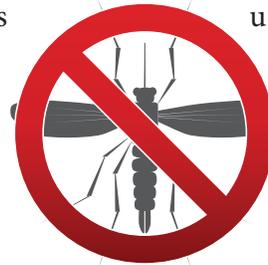
- Richard Thorne - 45 Years
- Elizabeth Murphey - *Lean Six Sigma Green Belt Certification*

{ WELCOME to our NEW EMPLOYEES

Kuhlman, William	Jones, Toni
McMillion, Donna	Jones, Beverly
Deshazo, Vanessa	Bill, Eris
Studnicki, Katrice	Brennan, James
Richey, Sarah	Freeze, Kathleen
Cousin, Ronette	McKenzie, Mallory
Williams, Donielle	Fitzsimmons, Jaclyn
Fearnow, Monica	MacMullan, Peter A.
Medina, Carl	Garren, Jr. , William
Page, Deron	Chin, Joanna
Van-Aken, Rachel	Coleman, RaShaun
Brown, Myesha	Edwards, Joshua
Harris, Mallisena	Luedke, Brian
Jones, Tiffany	Osler, Toy
Brent, Lee	Valentine, June
Shuman, Indrani	Yates, Michael
Copeland, Hannah	Davis-Fortune, Trina
Heers-Porter, Jan	Cunningham, Khaliah
Holewa, Gina	

One cannot turn on the TV/Radio, or log into the internet without seeing, reading, or hearing something about Zika. In regards to what VA is doing, here is what you should know: The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is a partner in national public health efforts to educate communities about the Zika virus and is actively working to identify and treat Veterans presenting with Zika. VA has taken steps to ensure Veterans Health Administration clinical

staff are prepared to screen, test, treat, and prevent Zika infection among Veterans and to work with Veterans Choice clinicians to address the specific health needs of pregnant female Veterans with Zika. Educating and protecting VA employees is vital and efforts to do this are underway. VA will continue to closely monitor the status of the Zika outbreak and maintain a state of readiness in order to ensure the best possible care for the Veterans we serve.



ZIKAVIRUS

Question: What can people do to prevent Zika?

Answer: The best way to prevent Zika is to protect yourself and your family from mosquito bites:

- Use Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-registered insect repellents.
- Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants.
- Sleep under a mosquito bed net if air conditioned or screened rooms are not available or if sleeping outdoors.

In addition, Zika can be spread by a person infected with Zika to his or her sex partners. Thus, use protection.

The most up to date source for information and guidance about ongoing Zika transmission in the United States is currently available at the CDC website <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/index.html>.



With the great success of the inaugural basketball league, McGuire Wellness is proud to present an upcoming opportunity to play in a volleyball league. In response to questions from employees about a sport during the fall season, a co-ed volleyball league is underway! The league will feature with weekly drop-in rosters and random assigned teams on the day of play. Games will take place in the multipurpose room from 5pm to 6:45pm and playing days to be announced in the near future. We invite all staff to participate! So, grab a colleague and join the McGuire Employee Volleyball League.

For registration & information, please contact [Ryan Ballon](#), Wellness Coordinator.

EMPLOYEE BASKETBALL LEAGUE COMPLETES FIRST SEASON



McGuire Wellness hosted the 1st annual Employee Basketball League banquet for the league's participants. The league featured five employee teams! The teams were: Too Many Weapons, NFS, Showtime, Dreamteam, and Penny's Ballers. In the end, it was Too Many Weapons winning the championship. They went undefeated with a record of 9-0. McGuire VA Medical Center Director John Brandecker, and Associate Director Alan Lombardo were on hand to acknowledge and show support for the employee driven league. •

VIRGINIA WOMEN VETERANS

LICENSE PLATE



Apply here for your PROUD WOMAN VETERAN License Plate.
450 applications are needed by December 7th to make this possible!

For questions, please contact: Beverly Ross, 804-675-5389

ATTENTION PROUD WOMEN VETERANS

Are you interested in a specialty Virginia Women Veterans license plate? If so, Dec. 7 is the deadline for applications. We need 450 applications before a bill can be presented to the

Virginia General Assembly in early 2017. If you need an application or have questions, please contact Beverly Ross at 804-675-5389 or by email at Beverly.Ross@va.gov. •



National Surgical Technologists Week

September 18 - 24

Thanks to Richmond's Surgical Technology Team



Thank you to our DIALYSIS TEAM

LATEST ADDITION TO VA POLICE REALLY 'NOSE' JOB

In early September, a new police officer was hired at the McGuire VA Medical Center. Her unique talents set her apart from her colleagues, as does her behavior and appearance. When asked about her new responsibilities as part of the force, she responded by panting and tilting her head sideways.

Bella is not an ordinary officer. She's an energetic two-year-old miniature Labrador retriever with a sleek and shiny coat of black fur. She is trained in multiple law enforcement functions, including search and rescue operations, explained Officer Alonzo Pitmon, her handler at McGuire.



Bella is a two-year-old miniature Labrador retriever and the newest addition to the police force at the McGuire VA Medical Center. She is trained in multiple law enforcement functions for the facility.

During a brief demonstration of Bella's ability to track people and objects, Pitmon had another officer hide an object in a parking lot full of cars while Bella continued to play. Unbeknownst to her, she would soon be asked to find the object by following the other officer's scent. With no idea where the

object was hidden, Bella led Pitmon straight to the object, practically following the same path of the officer. Bella was happy she found the object—her favorite chew toy.

“Bella's favorite thing to do is to be petted and play with her toy,” Pitmon stated.

Bella is a second generation police officer; her

dad serves as a police dog in North Carolina, according to Pitmon.

“She is still a puppy but she's good,” Pitmon said. “She is still learning things here.”

Pitmon spent seven years as a dog handler while in the Army and as a civilian police officer. He has worked primarily with the German shepherd and Belgian malinois dog breeds. Bella is the first Labrador retriever Pitmon has worked with. He said the breed was chosen because it is known to be non-aggressive. Her non-threatening appearance is a positive attribute because she is going to be around many people in the facility.

Bella's presence at McGuire is sure to enhance the capabilities of the VA police force and brighten the day for many dog-loving Veterans and guests who visit the medical center on a daily basis. Pitmon said Bella is very friendly but people should still ask permission before petting her.



COMMUNITY GATHERS FOR GALANTI ARBORETUM DEDICATION

The Phyllis E. Galanti Arboretum was officially dedicated on Friday, Sept. 16, at the McGuire VA Medical Center during a ceremony which included many local leaders and community partners. Phyllis, who passed away in 2014, was the wife of Vietnam Veteran Paul Galanti.

Paul was held captive as a prisoner of war (POW) in North Vietnam from 1966 to 1973, and during this time Phyllis grew to be known as an advocate for POW rights. Her role in life went from housewife to POW/MIA crusader. Through her Write Hanoi project, Phyllis garnered more than 750,000 hand-written letters from Richmond and throughout Virginia, then personally delivered them to the North Vietnamese Embassy in Sweden.

Rep. Dave Brat (R – VA, 7th District), who sponsored the bill in congress to name the arboretum, celebrated the arboretum dedication and spoke about his friends Paul and Phyllis.

“Today is all about Phyllis, a true hero,” Brat said. “I’m so pleased that we’re here today to honor Phyllis Galanti, who came to be known as ‘Fearless Phyllis’ for her tireless advocacy for the rights of US prisoners of war. Phyllis fought courageously for these people for years and years on end. That’s what this is about, honoring someone who thought of others and made a difference. She was a beloved member of the Richmond community.”

Brat went on to note how Phyllis spent decades tirelessly working for US prisoners and hostages and gave hundreds of presentations to leaders in the United States, including then President Nixon, former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, and Mills E. Godwin, past governor of Virginia.

Through her efforts, and other like-minded concerned citizens, Phyllis

helped to secure the return of more than 600 soldiers, and worked to ensure that POWs were treated in accordance with the Geneva Convention.

During the ceremony, Paul praised the Richmond VA Medical Center, calling it “the best facility in the entire United States for Veterans.”

“Phyllis would absolutely be ecstatic if she were here for this,” Paul said.

Over the past year, the arboretum has been developed through a partnership between McGuire, Green Infrastructure Center (GIC) and several volunteer agencies. GIC, based out of Charlottesville, Virginia, provided many of the new trees added to the space. In the future, it is the plan to preserve and maintain the arboretum through donations of labor and money.

Some of the other agencies credited with helping make the arboretum a reality are: Virginia Department of Forestry, Altria Group, Dominion Virginia Power, American Red Cross and others.

Information about the trees located within the arboretum can be found at: <http://www.plantsmap.com/organizations/24785>



Representative Dave Brat, left, and Paul Galanti share a laugh during the dedication ceremony for the Phyllis E. Galanti Arboretum at the Richmond VA Medical Center.

THE ARBORETUM IS
DEDICATED TO

PHYLLIS GALANTI

DEVOTED WIFE, MOTHER, GRANDMOTHER
AND VETERAN AND COMMUNITY ACTIVIST WHO
DEMONSTRATED GREAT STRENGTH AND GRACE
WITH EVERYTHING SHE ACCOMPLISHED IN LIFE.

HER MOTTO WAS SIMPLY,

"NO WHINING"



Veterans Health
Administration

