

VOLUNTARY SERVICE NEWS

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NEWS FROM THE CHIEF'S OFFICE



When I came aboard as the new Chief of Voluntary Service in March, I jotted a variety of goals and dates on my calendar to guide me as I got to know the people and processes of my new position. Surprisingly, two important notations landed on the same day – May 31st.

Jacalyn Hardy, Chief,
Voluntary Service

And what a glorious day it turned out to be! May 31st was the Welcome Home Event for veterans. Voluntary Service partnered with the OEF/OIF Program and the Public Affairs Office to organize a celebration picnic for veterans and their families.

And the event was a hit – with over 1,000 people in attendance! Even Mother Nature was in on the celebration, providing a clear, bright sunny day at Oaks Park for everyone to enjoy. There was food for all and two bands provided music. The vendors and community partners handed out helpful information to vets and their families. There were fabulous door prizes. The kids had face painting and ride bracelets for all day rides and roller skating at the amusement park.

But what really made the day a success in my book was the dedication and hard work so willingly given by so many. The event was funded completely by donated funds and an army of volunteers responded to the call for help in organizing and staffing the event. Whether an employee or a volunteer at the medical center, everyone worked together to welcome home our veterans.

As I stood in the park watching the color guard march and the band play the Star Spangled Banner, I felt proud to be veteran. I also felt extremely proud to be a part of such a great team — a team that orchestrated this event so well - a team that put their caring and compassion into action on a regular basis.

When I next looked at my calendar I realized that May 31st was not just the Welcome Home Event, it was also my 90 day anniversary in my new position as the Chief of Voluntary Service. So, for me, May 31st goes down as a great day and I know there will be many more to come!

Thank you to everyone who helped make May 31st a most wonderful day for veterans and their families - and for us all!

Jacalyn Hardy
Chief, Voluntary Service

MEDICAL CENTER EVENTS

One of the most noticeable accomplishments was the elevation of the helicopter, Lady Belle, at the Memorial Garden on the Vancouver Campus. On May 5th, this 46 year old Bell UH-1 (Huey) helicopter found its new home. It was rescued and restored from a wrecking yard in 1994 and had been displayed in



North Vancouver near the American Legion Post #176 until August 2007 at which time it was donated by Post #14. Vandalism was wrecking the craft until about 150 community residents went to work to save it. The mounting pillar of 25 feet puts the Lady Belle at an elevation where it can be seen from I-5. It also serves as a permanent memorial to those who served in the Vietnam War.

It is never dull at the Nursing Skilled Care Unit. The big excitement is the two Wii Nintendo, a computer video game system, donated by members of 40 et 8. It offers residents a chance to bowl, box, play table tennis, throw darts and other activities through physical interaction with the video screen. The second system is being used by Occupational Therapy. Summer activities are also on the agenda which include a fishing trip, an All-American barbecue in June, Hawaiian theme in July, on to a Western barbecue of steaks in August and finishing up in September with brats for Oktoberfest.

At the Vancouver Campus on May 17th, Armed Forces Day, residents were honored and entertained by James Thompson, a group that features old rock and country western music. Also cake donated by the Elks Lodge was cut and served on May 22nd followed by residents being treated to sundaes and root beer floats on May 23rd at the traditional Memorial Day Ice Cream Social.

A Memorial Day Massing of the Colors was held at the Vancouver Campus in the Columbia Room on May 25th with approximately 70 people attending.

Bob Peake of VFW Post 4278 spoke about the new piano in the Chapel, showing pictures and explaining the best ways to donate. Donations must go through Voluntary Service.

All Portland and Vancouver volunteers are invited to use the services of the Forest Park Federal Credit Union located in Building 101 at PVAMC.

PVAMC is in great need of Bereavement quilts. They must be 5' by 7' and or 6' by 7', made of fabric, filled with batting and can be hand tied. The fabric can be red, white and blue or a cheerful color. These quilts are given to the veteran when he/she is moved into comfort care and they stay with the veteran after death and then given to the family. These quilts are embroidered with "FOR YOUR COMMITMENT TO OUR FREEDOM, THE PVAMC THANKS YOU". If you can help with this project and need more information, please call the Voluntary Service office at 503-273-5042.

The joint Vancouver and Portland Welcome Home Committee chaired by Barbara Weatherill has been very busy stuffing bags for returning OEF/OIF veterans. Members of this committee have distributed many to the veterans at the Traumatic Brain Injury Clinic. The Vancouver Campus is also very active in the distribution of these special bags. The committee was very active stuffing bags for the big Welcome Home Event held at Oaks Park as well as being very supportive in other areas.

The American Legion Auxiliary was host to the luncheon for the Rose Festival Court princesses held in the auditorium on June 3rd. The delicious lunch consisted of chicken salad, fresh fruit skewers, home-made cookies and punch. Mr. David Stockwell, Deputy Director Administration/Finance and Jacalyn Hardy, Chief, Voluntary Service, were the guest speakers followed by others. The escorts were men from different departments at the PVAMC. All patients were visited by the princesses and presented a long stem rose.

The Voluntary Service draws names of volunteers each month and presents them with a prize in recognition of their hard work. The lucky winners were: February – Tara Hurley: March – William Heslington: April – Larry Leitch: May - Benny Graves. Congratulations to each of these dedicated volunteers!

Volunteers are needed to play piano. If you know of someone who has this special skill and would like to play for our veterans in the atrium of the PVAMC, please have them call Voluntary Service at 503-273-5042. Anyone interested must audition first.

VOLUNTEER AWARDS BANQUET



3rd Place

2nd Place

1st Place

On April 16th approximately 200 volunteers attended the Annual Volunteer Awards Banquet at the Monarch Hotel in Clackamas. The theme for this year’s banquet was “Volunteers Make a World of Difference”.

This year was unique in that all the centerpieces were made by services around the medical center and then raffled off to volunteers in attendance. The staff at the medical center did a wonderful job and it was a tough decision to choose a winner but they were as follows:

3rd Place: Emergency Dept/Forrest Park Credit Union- “Volunteers Light the Way”

2nd Place: Recreation Therapy- “Fly’n High With Our Volunteers”

1st Place: Laundry Service Vancouver- “A Warm Thank You”

Thank you to all who attended and participated in this lovely event and as always we look forward to next year’s banquet.

ROSE FESTIVAL DIGNITARIES VISIT

On Saturday, May 31st, thirty Royal Rosarians visited the inpatient veterans at the Portland VA Medical Center to and handed out roses to kick off the Rose Festival celebration. “Royal Rosarians welcome visiting dignitaries from around the world, host hundreds of out-of-town visitors, march in parades throughout the region, and perform ceremonial rose plantings in honor of worthy individuals both in Portland and during Rosarian ambassadorial trips to distant cities throughout the world. Organized in 1912, the Royal Rosarians are a non-profit, civic organization. All services rendered by its members are gratuitous.” <http://www.royalrosarian.org/>.

VAVS COMMITTEE



Rex Hopper
VAVS Chairperson

Vancouver – The members have been very busy and many accomplishments were made.

We have held successful craft, bake and ice cream sales. All proceeds from these sales go to hospitalized veterans needs.

The volunteer of the Quarter award was presented to Don Wagner, VAVS representative from the Knights of Columbus. He was nominated for the enormous amount of work he spent on raising funds for the beautiful stained glass windows in the new Chapel.

The employee of the Quarter award was presented to Frank Cardinaux, a nurse in NSCU. He was nominated not only for the excellent care he provides but also for his compassion and friendliness to patients, staff and visitors.



Barbara Weatherill
VAVS Chairperson

PORTLAND - For Memorial Day several VAVS members cut and served cake in the atrium, the cakes were donated by the Benevolent and Protective Order of the Elks.

The members held their craft and ice cream sale on May 14th & 15th which was very successful. The ice cream was in such a demand that we ran out before the 3:00 PM closing time. All proceeds from these sales are used for the veterans’ needs throughout the hospital.

The committee selected the Volunteer and Employee of the Quarter Award and they will be recognized at the Quarterly VAVS Committee meeting on August 12th.



AUSTIN HEALEY AUTO CLUB DONATES



On May 10th Barbara Parker attended the annual community charity event hosted by the Austin Healey Club at the AAA Hagerty Insurance Company in Beaverton, OR to accept bright and beautiful fleece blankets made for the Portland VA Medical Center. The blankets will be placed in the welcome home bags for the OEF/OIF veterans returning home from Iraq/Afghanistan and inpatient veterans. It was nice to meet other charity organizations and the Austin Healey Club's fabulous cars!

By Barbara Parker

VOLUNTEER PROFILES

PORTLAND - Donna Burns, DAV Auxiliary Deputy, has been a real asset to our volunteer team. She has volunteered at the Portland VA since December 1995. She is a very cheerful person taking the personal care items to the wards and always willing to help with whatever needs to be done in the volunteer workroom. Donna comes up with good ideas to help veterans. One of which was making bags to hold the Christmas gifts for the DAV/DAVA adopted ward. These bags are very colorful and can be used to store or carry items afterward. She has made 25 to 30 bags each year for the past three or four years – that is a lot of time spent at the sewing machine. She and her husband Jim are always there to help with the Christmas party.

She has also been an inspiration and true leader for local DAV Auxiliary. Especially making sure members have a way to get to and from meetings. Her children, Mark and Angela, are also active members. Mark was

the first male member of their auxiliary. Donna has served on the DAVA Department Finance Committee a couple of times. Her husband is also active in the DAV Chapter and the Oregon DAV Department. A couple of years ago at the DAVA Convention, Donna received the Auxiliary Member of the Year Award.

Raymond, Washington is where she spent her childhood years. She and her husband still own that property. After high school graduation, Donna and a friend moved to Portland to go to College of Beauty to become beauticians. They were living at her friend's Great Aunt and Uncle's home. She met Jim, a cousin of a friend, when he came to visit the Great Aunt and Uncle. They were married after Jim finished Navy boot camp. In 1972 they went to Spain for duty. While there they visited 17 countries. They enjoyed seeing the other countries but Donna said, "believe me, there aren't any of them I would trade for the good ol' USA". Andorra was one of the most unique countries as it is an independent country and changes advisory every six months between Spain and France. They have no taxes and no budget. Two main crops are wool and tobacco. Hawaii was the last duty station for Donna and Jim. They still get together with friends they made while in the military.

Thanks Donna for being such an inspiration to all of us and for helping veterans.

By Nita Lucht

VANCOUVER - Don Wagner received the prestigious Volunteer of the Quarter award at the May VAVS Committee meeting. This award recognizes the outstanding service of the volunteer and his/her commitment to serving the veterans at the Medical Center. Don certainly exemplifies this qualification.

As the volunteer representative on the Vancouver Chapel Beautification Committee, Don contacted numerous organizations, both veteran and others, to raise money for the chapel's needs. According to Chaplain James Asparro, it was largely due to Don's efforts that thousands of dollars were raised to pay for a new altar and the stunning stained glass windows that transformed a bare room in the NSCU into a beautiful chapel. "Veterans from all faith groups have benefited from his efforts" praised Chaplain Asparro.

Donald J. Wagner, born and raised in Marion, South Dakota, came to Vancouver in 1964 with the U.S. Army. Vancouver Barracks was his last assignment before retiring in 1965. He liked it here and made it his permanent home. His Army career began in 1943.

Don's second career, twenty years in length, was based in Vancouver and Portland with companies that manufactured building materials.

He and Virginia, his home town sweetheart, now deceased, were married shortly after he joined the Army. His family includes two sons in southern California (the older one a Vietnam veteran), a daughter in Eugene and three grandchildren. A brother still lives in Marion and Don returns there every year for a visit.

He has been a VA volunteer for the past 12 years and is the Knights of Columbus Representative and the Military Order of the Cooties Deputy Representative on the VAVS Committee. He is also an active member of the DAV, VFW, 40 et 8 and still manages to find some time to play golf.

By Marjorie Varner

DEVOTED VOLUNTEER "CALLED HOME"

Richard (Dick) Lucht passed away on June 5th. He volunteered at the Portland VA Medical Center for 24 years and accrued 3,485 hours. His wife, Nita and his daughter Kathy volunteered with him.

He was very involved with the DAV Transportation program. If there was a question or problem, everyone would say "call Dick as he would know the answer and/or solve the problem". Dick was also instrumental in the organization of the Oregon State Veterans Home. He worked many tireless hours to improve his fellow veterans' lives. Dick will be greatly missed by the VA Medical Center staff, volunteers, veterans and Veterans Organizations.

By Barbara Weatherill



NATIONAL CANCER SURVIVORS DAY WINNER
Leland Fletcher

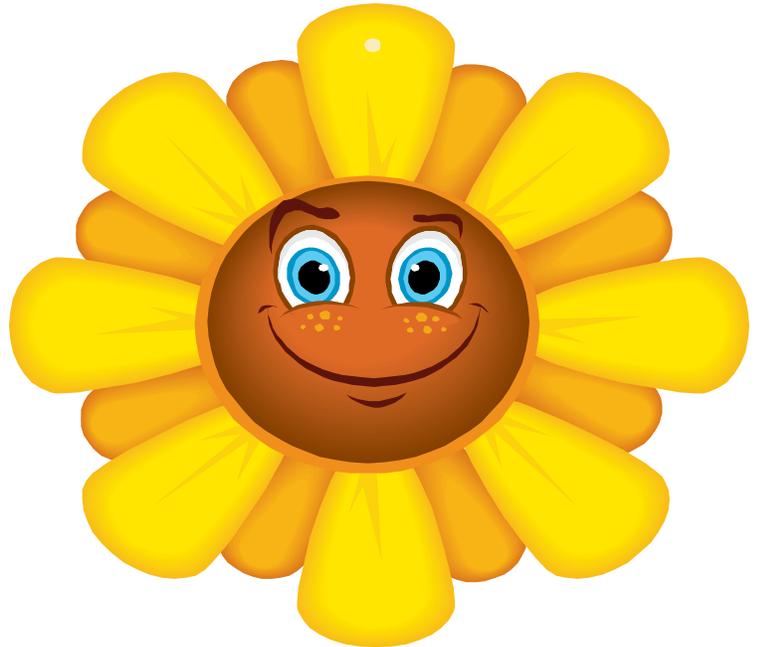
NATIONAL CANCER SURVIVORS DAY was a big success. The auditorium was packed with cancer survivors. There were many wonderful baskets donated by the different departments of PVAMC to be raffled off. The theme this year was "A Celebration of Life". The Voluntary Service department's basket "A Celebration of Life's Travels" was awarded the title "**THE MOST PRACTICAL**".



MANDATORY ANNUAL TRAINING REQUIRED FOR ALL VOLUNTEERS!

If you have computer access, you will lose unless you complete your annual mandatory training. Even if you do not have computer access, in order to work as a volunteer in the medical center you must complete this yearly training by September 2008.

Time is flying – do it today! Call or visit the Voluntary Service office for more information.



SUMMER QUOTE

Service to others is the payment you make for your space here on earth.

Mohammed Ali