

Full Circle

Official Newsletter of VA Butler Healthcare



Celebrate
SUCCESS!

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CELEBRATING VA BUTLER HEALTHCARE'S SUCCESSES

in our transformation into a 21st century VA Medical Center helps maintain our focus and stay motivated. Each step brings us closer to our goal: to provide the best care anywhere to our nation's heroes.

- **Veteran Focused:** This past October, 20 Veterans were recognized for their achievements in their own recovery with various mental health issues. "Everyone here was able to work together to help me get my life back together," said Award recipient Victor Cousins.
- **Results Oriented:** With the assistance of VA Butler Healthcare, Navy Veteran Peter Loeb has totally transformed his life. With more than 18-months sober, Peter is rebuilding his relationships with his family, stopped his cycle of homelessness and found employment as a peer counselor.
- **Moving Forward:** On August 30, VA Butler Healthcare broke ground for the construction of a new 56-bed Domiciliary. "This is a great day for our Veterans and we have been looking forward to this moment for a very long time," said Associate Director Rick Cotter.

Renowned motivational speaker Rosemarie Rossetti said, "It is important that you recognize your progress and take pride in your accomplishments. Share your achievements with others. Brag a little. The recognition and support of those around you is nurturing."

I encourage all of us to share our successes with each other.

Have a joyous holiday season and a new year filled with many celebrated successes.

Patricia Nealon | Medical Center Director

executive leadership



patricia nealon
Director



richard cotter
Associate Director for Operations



varsha mehta, M.D.
Chief of Staff



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sharon parson
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director's Perspective



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full circle

To submit articles, editorials, letters or story ideas for possible inclusion, please contact Paula McCarl at 724-285-2575 or email at Paula.McCarl@va.gov.

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stats

Veterans served

18,527

outpatient visits

141,620

unique patients

18,527

inpatients treated

280

volunteers

583

volunteer hours

40,861

employees

650

As of September 30, 2010
(End of 4th Quarter, FY 2010)



on the cover

VA Butler Healthcare staff, residents and volunteers break ground for VA Butler's new 56- bed Domiciliary. Pictured, left to right, are: John Bridges, MHRR Chief; Judy Sperdute, Engineer; Jeff Heiger, Chief Engineer, Facility Management; Dan Meyer (resident); Rick Cotter, Associate Director of Operations; David Gindelsperger (resident), Damian Hambley, volunteer and member of the American Legion and VFW; and, Mary Hambley, volunteer and member of the American Legion Auxiliary and VFW Ladies Auxiliary.

VA Butler Breaks Ground for New Domiciliary

On August 31, 2010, VA Butler Healthcare held a soft ground-breaking ceremony with staff, residents and volunteers to officially kick-off the construction of a new 56-bed Domiciliary on the facility's 88 acre campus. John Bridges, Mental Health Residential Rehabilitation Chief, commented: "We are very excited to provide

This residential treatment facility will be constructed directly behind (south of) the main building on the site of the former ball field. The facility will be built in phases. Phase one of the project includes two separate multiple story apartment buildings with a total of 24 private bedrooms of which up to 12 have been desig-



Construction for phase one has already begun with an anticipated completion date the end of fiscal year 2011. The estimated cost for phase one and two is \$8,500,000.

nated for women Veterans. The apartment buildings will be situated adjacent to a central common treatment complex. Phase two is expected to be designed and awarded in FY 2011 and will include two additional apartment style buildings with 16 bedrooms each and therapeutic gardens.

the most optimal level of care for our Veterans. The new Domiciliary will greatly aid the ultimate goal of successfully re-integrating our Veterans back to their respectful communities. The new facility will also allow us to provide homeless and substance abuse treatment to female Veterans, which will be a first for the VA Butler Healthcare."

VA Butler Healthcare awarded the contract for the construction of phase one of the new Domiciliary on the VA's 88 acre campus this past July to R.A. Glancy and Sons, Incorporated, of Gibsonia, Pennsylvania. The modern residential design concept of the new facility was developed by Radelet McCarthy Polletta Architects and Interior Designers.

calendar



Dec. 24 | Christmas holiday,
Offices Closed

Dec. 31 | New Years holiday,
Offices Closed

Jan. 17 | Martin Luther King Jr.
Day, Offices Closed

Feb. 2 | Groundhog Day

Feb. 13-19 | National Salute
to Hospitalized Veterans Week

Feb. 14 | Valentine's Day

Feb. 21 | President's Day, Offices Closed

For more information about upcoming events, visit our website, social media sites, or call us at 800-362-8262.

From “Homeless” to “Homeful” — Veteran Success Stories

John's Story

IT HAS BEEN ALMOST 7 MONTHS that John Harding has been “homeful” not “homeless”. Earlier this year, we introduced you to John, a homeless Veteran who was struggling to find his place in the world. Through persistence and collaboration with community partners, VA Butler Healthcare was able to help John move from a cold tent in the woods to a comfortable, warm one-bedroom apartment.

Transitioning from being homeless to having a home and responsibilities can be stressful and difficult to manage. However, in John's case he has acclimated well to his new surroundings. He is a good neighbor and takes pride in his home making sure things are neat and clean. The most significant change for John is that he has reconnected with his family. According to Misty Miller, Lawrence County Catholic Charities, John has started visiting with his mother whom he has not seen in almost 6 years. “That is the most positive thing that has happened to John since moving into his apartment.”

“I will never be
homeless again.”

Even though he is still somewhat of a recluse, John does enjoy having visitors and showing off his home. Once a week Social Services stops by to see how he is doing and to monitor his progress. Dan Slack, VA Butler Healthcare Homeless Veterans Coordinator (pictured below) stops by periodically as does



representatives of Catholic Charities. And, from time to time, John invites some of his friends from the river camp to come visit, helping them as much as he can. He has even made a few new friends.

When asked if he would ever go back to being homeless, John replied: "Once I get a home, I will never be homeless again." John knows the hardships of being homeless and is determined not to go back to that way of life. He is currently applying for disability with the hopes of becoming self-sufficient and managing his life anew.



Peter's Story

"**MOST OF THE HOMELESS VETERANS** I see have the same issues," said Peter Loeb. "The majority have post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or difficulty dealing with their health or mental issues." Peter is a certified recovery

““ The VA saved my life. ””

specialist and homeless peer support employee at VA Butler Healthcare. He understands the difficulties homeless Veterans face firsthand. After nearly twenty four years of dealing with depression, addiction and homelessness, Peter was able to get help through the VA.

"I got out of the Navy in 1976 and moved to California," said Peter. "I was using alcohol and drugs to self-medicate my depression." In an attempt to run away from a methamphetamine addiction, he returned to his hometown of Butler. After running out of hospitality from friends and family, he found

himself living in the woods behind Butler County Community College for two months. "There are a lot of these homeless communities in Butler," said Peter.

Eventually, he was arrested for various alcohol related incidents and found himself in jail. It was there that a parole officer suggested he try the Domiciliary Residential Rehabilitation and Treatment (DRRTP) program at VA Butler Healthcare. "The trouble is that when you have a problem everyone sees it but you," said Peter. With more than 18 months sober and lots of support from the VA, Peter has transformed his life. He is building bridges with his family, helping other homeless Veterans and taking care of his health.

"The VA saved my life," said Peter. "Luckily homelessness is a priority for the VA so our Veterans don't have to struggle with the life I did."



for more information

If you know of a Veteran who is homeless, or at a risk of becoming homeless, contact Dan Slack at [724-285-2439](tel:724-285-2439) or Dan.Slack@va.gov. More information on the Veteran Homeless program can be found at <http://www.butler.va.gov/services/Homeless.asp>.

Women Veterans

This is the third installment of an on-going series saluting women Veterans—their unique accomplishments and their perspective on their military service.



Joan Dunlap

JOAN DUNLAP heard the call to duty and served her country. By 1944, her fiancé had already served two years in the Pacific on a destroyer, while she waited impatiently at home. She had promised him they would marry when he returned, but after two years, she wanted to do more than wait.

Joan Dunlap needed to do her part to end the war so she could get him home quick and safe. Trading in the memories of the Buckeye trees on her family's New Brighton farm for the Cherry Blossoms of Washington D.C., Joan Dunlap served as a Navy code writer. "I was proud to wear my uniform: even the cotton gloves that did nothing to keep your

Her Story

**VALERIE EILEEN
(MCCUTCHEON) HANSEN**

Enlisted in the US Air Force Nursing Corps from 1977 - 1980 achieving the rank of Captain. Hansen is currently employed with VA Butler Healthcare as a Nurse Practitioner in the Center for Behavioral Health Department. Of her military career, Hansen comments: "I enjoyed my experience in the Air Force. It took some time to get acclimated to my duty station because we were constantly on "alert". I was stationed in South California at March AFB, a Strategic Air Command (SAC) base. It was a great assignment and I met some wonderful people that I still stay in touch with and visit."



hands warm," Joan said proudly. "I knew it was my codes that were helping save Sailor's lives: especially my Sailor."

Today, Joan is in her eighties. Her husband passed away 12 years ago and her children have lives and families of their own. For Joan and other senior Veterans it is a challenge finding those connections with

I was proud to wear my uniform...

others who understand her life experience. She recently suffered an injury that required her recuperation at the VA Butler Healthcare Center. It was there that she discovered the Adult Day Health Care (ADHC) program, and it has made a world of difference in her life. The ADHC program provides a day-group community, promoting social, physical and emotional well-being for our senior Veterans.

Now that Joan has recovered, she still returns regularly to get the social and health care support that is important to older Veterans. "At home, I have no one to really talk to," said Joan. "Here I collect crafts and have a sense of fellowship. We can really talk here because we all have that shared experience. I have a

lot of praise for the VA."

The ADHC program stresses partnership with other Veterans, which is essential for the mental and emotional well being of senior Veterans. The newly renovated ADHC area also offers other services such as kinesiotherapy, speech therapy, audiology, family counseling and other therapeutic and social service needs.

"This is the only place I know of that takes care of you and you can make friends at the same time," said Joan. Her time at the ADHC program is so important to her, that her daughter has made special arrangements with her employer to make sure that Joan can come as often as possible.



for more information

To participate in the ADHC program, Veterans must have been honorably discharged and enrolled in the VA Butler Healthcare system. Veterans interested in the program should contact their VA Butler Healthcare Center primary care provider to see if they are eligible and would benefit from the program.

What's Your Cholesterol Level?

ABOUT ONE OUT OF EVERY SIX Americans has high blood cholesterol, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. This increases the risk of heart disease, which is the number-one killer of women in the United States.

Cholesterol is a waxy, fat-like substance that your body needs. However, elevated amounts in the blood can lead to a buildup on artery walls, resulting in a heart attack or stroke. There are two types of cholesterol. HDL (good) cholesterol tends to be higher in women because it is associated with the female sex hormone estrogen. LDL (bad) cholesterol can increase with age and weight and is found in foods with saturated and trans fats.

The first step in managing your cholesterol is to know your cholesterol level. Your doctor can do a simple blood test that will show the amount of cholesterol in milligrams (mg) per deciliter (dL) of blood. Engaging in physical activity, maintaining a healthy weight, and eating plenty of fruits, vegetables, low-fat dairy foods, and whole grains can help lower cholesterol levels. If your level is especially high, your doctor might prescribe medication to help lower it. You can keep track of your cholesterol levels with My HealthVet, a free, online program to educate Veterans about health care topics.

Women are now the fastest growing subgroup of U.S. Veterans. The number of women Veterans is expected to increase dramatically in the next 10 years, and VA health care is in high demand by the women Veterans of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. The Department of Veterans Affairs understands the health care needs of women Veterans and is committed to meeting these needs. Women Veterans served and they deserve the best quality care.

informational web sites

- www.cdc.gov/cholesterol
- www.americanheart.org
- www.prevention.va.gov/Resources_Cholesterol_Veterans_and_Public.asp
- www.myhealth.va.gov

WOMEN VETERANS HEALTH CARE

Knowledge is power.
What is your cholesterol level?

Let VA help.

199 mg/dL
 257 mg/dL
 167 mg/dL

★ *You served, you deserve the best care anywhere.* ★

Department of Veterans Affairs | www.publichealth.va.gov/womenshealth
 Women Veterans Health Strategic Health Care Group, VACO 12/2010

for more information

For more information about VA Butler's Women Veterans Program, please contact Brenda Sprouse, Women Veterans Program Manager, at 724-285-2756 or 1-800-362-8262, ext. 2756. You can also obtain additional information by logging onto: www.publichealth.va.gov/womenshealth

RECOGNITION

2010 Federal Women of the Year Awards

The Pittsburgh Federal Executive Board (FEB) presented the 2010 Federal Women of the Year Awards on August 26, 2010. There were a total of 26 awards presented and VA Butler Healthcare staff took 11 of the 26 awards presented. Congratulations to all who received awards. Award winners were:

gold

- Jessica Price, Nursing, Community Living Center, for **Technical Support**
- Louella McKee, Corporate Compliance & Community Relations, for **Staff Support**

silver

- Rose Woodward, Corporate Compliance & Community Relations, for **Professional Supervisory**
- Stacy Zanicky, Recreation, for **Technical Support**
- Lauren Heiger, Corporate Compliance & Community Relations, for **Professional Non-Supervisory**
- Linda Smith, Environmental Management Services/Interior Design, for **Professional Non-Supervisory**
- Jean Cole, Environmental Management Services, for **Staff Support**

bronze

- Cherie Clamidori, Facility Management, for **Professional Supervisory**
- Christine Meyer, Medical Center Education, for **Professional Supervisory**
- Mary Ann Capuzzi, Recreation, for **Professional Non-Supervisory**
- Denise Tilko, Environmental Management Services, for **Staff Support**



L to R: Gold winners for the 2010 Federal Women of the Year Awards, Jessica Price and Louella McKee.

RECOGNITION

VA Butler's Susan Black Receives ADR Award

RECENTLY, SUSAN BLACK, EEO/SPD MANAGER, was recognized for her service as a Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) 4 Certified Mediator and for facilitating the implementation of the Civility, Respect, and Engagement in the Workplace (CREW) Program at VA Butler Healthcare. She was also recognized for her role as Chairperson of the EEO Diversity Committee that increased cultural and diversity awareness through employee education and quality Special Emphasis Programs. Black received the Secretary of Veterans Affairs Excellence in Alternative Dispute Resolution Award at The Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Program held in Washington DC on July 23, 2010.



L to R: Ralph Torres, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Resolution Management; Susan Black; The Honorable John U. Supu'veda, Assistant Secretary for Human Resources and Administration; and, The Honorable Will A. Gun, General Counsel for Department of Veterans Affairs

The ADR Excellence Awards Program was established in 2007. The Program emphasizes the importance of effectively managing conflict and resolving disputes, thereby saving time and resources.

MILESTONES

Employees
with **20** or more
years of service



20 Years

Linda Osborne
Behavioral Health

25 Years

Thomas Legacy
Chief of Staff

Dennis Rager
Facilities Management

(As of September 30, 2010.)