Providing News to Our Veterans

A CHAMPION FOR HOMELESS WOMEN VETERANS AND THEIR CHILDREN

U.S. Army Veteran Mary Chitwood worked with a variety of non-profit organizations as a Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) Case Manager. Through SSVF, Mary assisted over 200 Veterans with housing needs, employment opportunities, and other supportive services. While working in this role, she saw a need in our local Butler community: a housing program just for women Veterans and their children.

Mary is the founder and executive director of Robin’s Home, the first and only home specifically for women Veterans with and without children in Butler County. Robin’s Home provides supportive housing services to the five counties covered by the Butler VA Health Care System—Armstrong, Butler, Clarion, Lawrence, and Mercer counties.

“For approximately three years, I volunteered my time to get Robin’s Home started. I did everything from demolishing rooms and meeting with social workers for referrals, to attending zoning meetings,” said Mary. “The house we purchased for the program had been vacant for over 20 years and needed extensive renovations. Today, the home is a beautiful, comfortable, and a safe six-bedroom home.”

Robin’s Home officially opened in July 2019 and since then has provided services to nine homeless women Veterans. “One of the things I learned is that many women Veterans give up custody of their children, temporarily, while they do their best to secure housing. Since Robin’s Home is able to accept children, women Veterans do not have to make that hard choice,” said Mary.

In addition to being the executive director of Robin’s Home, Mary also works full-time as a mobile psychiatric rehabilitation case worker, and serves as an excellent role model for her daughter. Additionally, she is a member at American Legion Post 778, a lifetime member of Disabled American Veterans Chapter 64, a mentor for Butler County’s Veterans Treatment Court, and a member of Soroptimist International (Butler County).

Like Mary, VA is committed to ending homelessness among Veterans. Learn more: www.va.gov/homeless.

Robin’s Home is named after Mary’s friend, Robin Arnold, a fellow U.S. Army Veteran who served in support of Operation Desert Storm. Robin was 100% VA Service Connected for Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Military Sexual Trauma (MST). Robin passed away on January 27, 2017 from complications of surgery.

THIS MONTH IN HISTORY...APRIL

1 The Battle of Okinawa begins (1945)
5 The first U.S. Chamber of Commerce is founded (1768)
7 The World Health Organization (WHO) is founded (1948)
14 The Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA) is established (1946)
16 The first National Stress Awareness Day is recognized to raise awareness of stress and promote healthy solutions (1992)
30 The Fall of Saigon marks the end of the Vietnam War (1975)

VA HOMELESS RESOURCES FOR WOMEN

The Butler VA is committed to helping homeless women Veterans live independently. Services include emergency shelter, transitional, and permanent housing. Butler VA resource contacts for women Veterans:

Summer Drummond, Women Veterans Program Manager: 878-271-6989
Leslie Pugliese, Homelessness/HUD/VASH Coordinator: 724-285-2210
Jackie Cannon, Intimate Partner Violence Assistance Program Coordinator: 878-271-6124
The Butler VA Health Care System’s primary care providers and mental health professionals are trained to deliver telehealth services to a Veteran’s home or non-VA setting. If Veterans are unable to come to an appointment in-person, they may utilize VA Video Connect (VVC) to receive virtual care.

The following types of VA appointments and services are available via VA Video Connect:

- **Tele Urgent Care**: many common conditions, such as: minor cuts, rashes and skin irritations; insect bites, itching; common cold, cough and flu symptoms; headaches; sprains, back pain; eye complaints; urinary tract infections; elevated blood pressure or blood sugars, etc.

- **Primary Care Appointments**: medication changes, blood pressure checks, symptom checks, etc. Appointments can be with any health care professional on a Veteran’s health care team - primary care provider, nurse, dietitian, pharmacist, or social worker.

- **Mental Health Appointments**: any consultative care appointment

VA Video Connect can be used on almost any computer, tablet or mobile phone with an Internet connection, a web camera and microphone. VA Video Connect uses encryption to ensure privacy in each session. Virtual care is personalized, safe and effective, and there are no co-payments associated with VVC appointments.

**VA IS READY FOR CORONAVIRUS — AND WORKING TO PROTECT YOU!**

We have plans in place to protect everyone who gets care, visits or works at one of our facilities.

If you’re a Veteran seeking medical care, call your VA health facility if you have symptoms of the virus. Or, sign in to My HealtheVet and send a secure message. You may be able to get diagnosed and receive care through VA telehealth without having to come in at all.

For the latest VA updates on coronavirus and common-sense tips on preventing the spread of disease, visit www.publichealth.va.gov/n-coronavirus/.


**APRIL 23–29 IS NATIONAL INFERTILITY AWARENESS WEEK**

VA is committed to helping Veterans navigate challenges that may arise from issues with fertility and the conception of a child.

VA offers a range of services to treat infertility and is here to partner with Veterans throughout the treatment process. Through VA health care, enrolled Veterans have access to many different types of fertility treatments, procedures and services including infertility counseling, laboratory blood testing, genetic counseling, sperm testing, ultrasounds, surgery, reversal of a vasectomy or tubal ligation, medication, and other treatments.

Thank you for your service
RAYMOND FRANCIS SARACCO, JR.
U.S. Marine Corps Veteran

1963 to 1969
8th Division/
1st Battalion
3531 Motor
Transport/
FMF Atlantic

Defense Distinguished Service Medal Recipient

Let us “Salute You!” Contact the Butler VA Public Affairs Office for more information.