

GRATEFUL

U.S. Army and Vietnam Veteran David Griffith, “Griff”, struggled with drinking and drugs almost his entire life, which also led to jail time and estrangement from family. The Veterans Justice Outreach (VJO) Specialist at the James E. Van Zandt VA Medical Center (Altoona, PA) provided Griff the opportunity to come to

Butler VA’s Domiciliary rather than do additional jail time. In May 2017, Griff started at the Domiciliary (Dom).

“While in the Dom, I decided it was time I listen to someone. There was comradery, other Veterans, and all the people there were very helpful, kind, and talked to me like I was somebody for a change – not an addict (like I was),” said Griff.

The Butler VA’s 56-bed Domiciliary is a residential facility for eligible Veterans who may be dealing with issues such as homelessness, mental health, substance abuse and unemployment. The Domiciliary provides a residential, rehabilitative, therapeutic community with a goal of successfully reintegrating Veterans back into the community.

“Being an addict all my life, I lied to a lot of people. At the Dom, I learned to tell the truth – get honest with all the

people involved in my recovery, with God, and with myself,” shared Griff.

While still at the Dom, and through VA’s Compensated Work Therapy (CWT) Program, Griff started working in the kitchen at the Butler VA. Soon after, a job opened up, and with encouragement, he applied and was hired. When selected for the position, Griff cried because he was so grateful.

“You often hear negative news about the government and VA, but the Butler VA is an amazing, amazing facility and the people here are outstanding!”

Today Griff is a full-time food service worker at the Butler VA, his family is back in his life, and he recently celebrated two years sobriety. Griff also is active in the Veteran “X” program at VA Butler (and plans to continue). He recently got a service dog to continue to help with his mental health recovery, and plans to buy a house in the spring.

“All of these things wouldn’t have happened without all the people here at the Butler VA. I have the life I have today thanks to all of the people here – from the CWT workers to the doctors! I’m proud to be a Vietnam Veteran now. There was a time when I was ashamed of it. I hold my head high and I walk with dignity and pride, and it’s all because of what I learned here.”

Griff’s advice to other Veterans: “Get involved with the VA. Any bad thoughts you’re having, call the Veterans Crisis Line.” (Dial 1-800-273-8255 and press 1 to talk to someone.)

“I’m proud to be a Vietnam Veteran now. There was a time when I was ashamed of it. I hold my head high and I walk with dignity and pride, and it’s all because of what I learned here [at the Butler VA].”

-Griff (David Griffith), U.S. Army Veteran

THIS MONTH IN HISTORY...FEBRUARY

- 1 Abraham Lincoln signs a joint resolution that proposes the 13th amendment to the United States Constitution [National Freedom Day] (1865)
- 3 Four U.S. Army chaplains give their lives to save others as the *Dorchester* sinks during World War II. They helped other soldiers board lifeboats and gave up their own life jackets when the supply ran out. The chaplains joined arms, said prayers, and sang hymns as they went down with the ship [Four Chaplains Memorial Day] (1943)
- 13 The first medal of honor is awarded (1861)
- 23 Desert Storm ground war begins (1991)
- 23 U.S. Marines plant an American flag atop Mount Suribachi on Iwo Jima [Iwo Jima Day] (1945)



BE THERE

Sending a text, getting a cup of coffee, or volunteering—even seemingly small actions can make a world of difference for someone going through a challenging time. Learn how to “Be There” for the Veteran loved one in your life:

www.veteranscrisisline.net/BeThere





NATIONAL SALUTE TO VETERAN PATIENTS

The week of February 14 each year is your opportunity to say thank you to a special group of men and women, more than 98,000 Veterans of the U.S. armed services who are cared for every day in VA medical centers, outpatient clinics, domiciliaries, and nursing homes. During the National Salute, VA invites individuals, Veterans groups, military personnel, civic organizations, businesses, schools, local media, celebrities and sports stars to participate in a variety of activities at the VA medical centers. The week also provides an opportunity for the community to become acquainted with the volunteer opportunities within the medical center.

In honor of the week, the Butler VA will hold its annual Community Living Center Lunch Date with a Veteran Program on Wednesday, February 13, host a visit by the Butler County Jr. ROTC on February 14, and hold another lunch program for Adult Day Health Care on Friday, February 15.

To learn more about the National Salute program and how you can become a lunch date for one of our Veterans, please contact Paula McCarl, Voluntary Services Coordinator, at 878-271-6957.

WEEKLY MEDITATION CLASS AT THE BUTLER VA

Every Saturday at 12 p.m., join us for a half hour meditation and instruction in Kundalini Maha Yoga, an ancient science of consciousness raising. It is a complete and holistic science covering every aspect of the human condition and can provide many benefits.

Potential Benefits of Meditation:

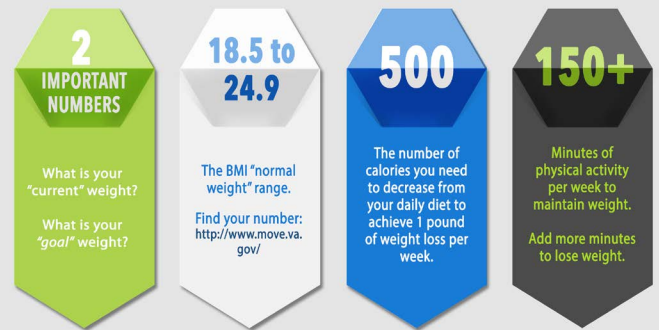
- Reduces pain and enhances the immune system
- Reduces feelings of depression, anxiety, anger and confusion
- Decreases cigarette, alcohol and drug abuse
- Increases blood flow and slows the heart rate
- Provides a sense of calm, peace, and balance
- Helps reverse heart disease
- Helps control thoughts
- Increases energy
- Reduces stress
- Improves sleep

For more information, please call the Patient Centered Care Coordinator/Health Promotion & Disease Prevention Program Manager at 878-271-6484.

KNOW YOUR NUMBERS: *Strive for a Healthy Weight*

Looking to lose some weight? Want to improve your health in 2019?

Check out these numbers...



Make some changes and do it for you...this year!



We want to hear from you! Email amanda.kurtz2@va.gov to share your story with us!

EVENTS

National Wear Red Day

11 Friday, February 1
Butler VA Health Care System

11-15 National Salute to Veteran Patients Week
February 11-15

15 Butler VA Health Care System (nationwide)
Town Hall Meeting

20 Wednesday, February 20 • 5pm
Abie Abraham VA Clinic (HCC)

Music is Medicine

27 Wednesday, February 27 • 11:30am-12:30pm
Abie Abraham VA Clinic (HCC)
2nd Floor Lobby



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration
Butler VA Health Care System



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