



Volunteer Voice

July/August/September 2020

Recognizing the Efforts of Volunteers at Coatesville VAMC



Andy Kraft stopped by Voluntary Service to pick up his much deserved Hazel Harnish Award.



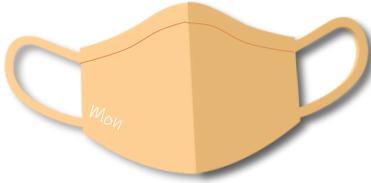
Pictured above, left to right: VAWS Rec Assistant Lorenzo Adams takes a selfie with **Matt Seymour, volunteer for Project Healing Waters**. The PHW volunteers have been faithfully sending snacks to the Veterans along with Zoom fly-tying lessons to interested Veterans.

Compassionate Contact Corps

Our newest volunteer assignment has been embraced by 27 of you since May. The Compassionate Contact Corps, also known as CCC, has proven extremely rewarding for both volunteers and Veterans. Many of the matches have taken off and quick friendships have been forged. Volunteer Don met a kindred spirit in his Veteran who enjoys talking about his incredible world travels and exotic hunting adventures. He even shares pictures of his hunting trophies which are displayed in his home. Volunteer John found out he knew this Veteran previously and now they talk at least twice a week. Volunteer Janet and her Veteran always look forward to their Thursday chat. He knows she will get worried if they don't connect. We have one Veteran that asked the staff if he could have another volunteer because he enjoyed the social calls so much. Volunteer Jennifer calls and connects with two Veterans. Of course, she started with one Veteran and then I found out she was writing letters to her Buddy from the Mobile Veterans Program (MVP). She missed their weekly visits at the Post once everything shut down, so we got her Buddy referred to the CCC; now they talk on the phone. Each of the connections has a story and positive impact for both parties. This virtual assignment has already logged over 200 calls and well over 100 hours of volunteer time. ~ Gina Cybator



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NOTES from the OFFICE



I was reading an article recently on crisis fatigue and how COVID 19 pandemic can impact us. The general idea was that over time when a person finds themselves in a state of sustained crisis, fatigue can set in. We might get burned out. Depressed. Eager for the crisis to be over but having no concrete end to the crisis. Has this happened to you? If you felt that you were alone in these feelings of crisis fatigue – I assure you, you are not. It's been nearly 7 months that we've all been living with COVID. It's not easy. The supports we are familiar with such as volunteering, hobbies, celebrations, civic and religious groups have been disrupted. The term of the "new normal" is a term we are eager to define. Yet, this is hard to do when there is uncertainty about when the crisis will end.

VAVS is eager to define the "new normal" and while we wait for what that definition is, we have been able to resume a few volunteer roles. We recognize that to keep our Veterans safe, we must calm our eagerness to resume our activities. It is this moving forward safely model that has allowed for the successes we've seen on our campus. While we can all celebrate this success, we are indeed still eager for more progress. Please know that we are getting ready, making changes, improving processes so that when we can greet you in person and welcome you back, we'll have done so safely. And while we wait, we are still working alongside you to ensure our Veterans have the supports they need in their treatment.

As you review the newsletter, you'll see many bright spots of the support given to our Veterans over the last quarter! I will add to that we are receiving donations again - albeit with more structure. We ask you call in advance so we can make the proper arrangements. We have dedicated days, times and locations depending on what the donation is. Simply give our office a call and we'll work with you to make the arrangements. We are so excited about the wonderful connections our Compassionate Care Corps is doing. Please take special note of the announcement regarding holiday giving for 2020. We have several types of needs this holiday for our Veterans. If you can help in any way, our Veterans will appreciate your generosity.

I hope as you enter this fall season, you can find ways to beat the crisis fatigue.

As always, we thank you for your support to our Nation's Veterans.

Be well, be safe 😊 Kind Regards,

Jennifer Lilly



2020 Holiday Giving Project

Our Veterans will appreciate your generous giving this holiday as we aim to ensure each Veteran in our hospital receives a gift reminding them of the local community support. Below you will see several giving projects we are organizing this year. If you or your group is willing to support a gift for a Veteran, please contact our office. At that time, you can share which Veteran group you might like to support and we will provide specific details.



- ◆ Gifts for Veterans in our domiciliary programs are always so valued! We have compiled a list of suggestions which include reusable bags instead of one-use gift bags.
- ◆ Consider adopting a resident in the Community Living Center. We will share individual wishes, that will no doubt, brighten their holiday.
- ◆ Our acute psychiatry unit is usually treating about 20 of our Veterans during the holidays. These gifts require special attention to safety concerns. This Veteran group will also appreciate snack items.
- ◆ Household items are appreciated by our Veterans who are transitioning to permanent housing in the community. We can provide specifics on typical items these Veterans are grateful to receive.

For more information on our 2020 Holiday Giving Project please contact us at Voluntary Service:
Jenn Lilly at Jennifer.Lilly2@va.gov, phone: 610-384-7711 ext. 4272;
Gina Cybator at Gina.Cybator@va.gov, phone:610-384-7711 ext. 4900 or
Peggy Watson at Margaret.Watson2@va.gov, phone: 610-384-7711 ext. 4228.

Pantry Project

Last year’s Eagle Scout project by Alex Cruz has been a bountiful addition providing delicious and nutritious fresh garden vegetables. The garden is maintained by Veterans in collaboration with the Chester County Food Bank.

Pictured below: Alex Cruz, 2019 with new garden beds. Pictured right: Krista Lewis, VA Recreation Therapist, packaging up some fresh greens.



Outstanding Service



We would like to extend our condolences to Joanne and Gigi on the passing of their very special therapy dogs. Both Jake and Luka were regular visitors to our Veterans. We know it's never easy to lose a loved one and we share this sadness with you. We are grateful to have had these special pups at our medical center.

*Pictured left: Joanne and Jake
Pictured right: Gigi and Luka*



Our Veterans continue to appreciate the donations of the Welcome Carts. These carts continue to provide our Veterans moving into new housing supplies to tidy up their new housing. Robin Handwerger, VA Case Worker says, "Thanks for the welcome kits! Veterans just moving into their apartment really appreciate the starter kits. It certainly helps feel supported when moving into a new place". Mark Edwards, in his roll as a Peer Support Specialist, also helps Veterans in this process and shares, "When we give the Welcome Home carts to the Veterans and tell them that they are a donation from one of the VSO's they express their gratitude and appreciation to be receiving these needed items, everything helps when moving in."

Thank you to all who continue to support this effort!



Local chapters of the **National Society of Daughters of the American Revolution** have been very supportive of the Welcome Kits program. *Pictured left: Othall Lester, VA Peer Support Specialist, Susan Kline NSDAR Octorara Chapter and Peg Watson, VAVS Program Support. Pictured right: Ginger Gray, NSDAR Chester County Chapter and VAVS NSDAR Representative with Jenn Lilly, Chief, Voluntary Service.*



VFW, Department of PA, Women Veterans' Retreat Committee, donated snacks of white cheddar popcorn, energy bars and cloth bags with snacks for hospitalized Veterans.

100 activity bags were donated by **Helping Heal Veterans.**



Quilt makers of **Brittany Pointe Estates**, in Bucks County, show their colorful quilts which they made for the benefit of hospitalized Veterans.



When you are living through a pandemic how do you make it through the heat of the summer? **David's Drive** had two great ideas!

1. Donate air conditioners to our Veterans needing help in the community.
2. Arrange for Maggi Moo's ice cream truck to give a cool treat to our Veterans in our Rehabilitation and Recovery Treatment Program.

Thank you **DD831** for both of these generous donations!



Pictured left: Dave and Samantha (Sam) Turner, of David's Drive 831, donated new air conditioners and fans.

Pictured below: David's Drive 831 arranged for Maggie Moo's ice cream truck to come on campus to serve a treat to Veterans.





DAR - George Taylor Chapter donated Diddy bags full of personal care items, puzzle books, greeting cards and snacks, along with lap blankets and new men's and women's clothing for the benefit of hospitalized Veterans.



Andrew Newman, BSA Troop 83, donated a collection of plants and bird houses for our Medical Center.



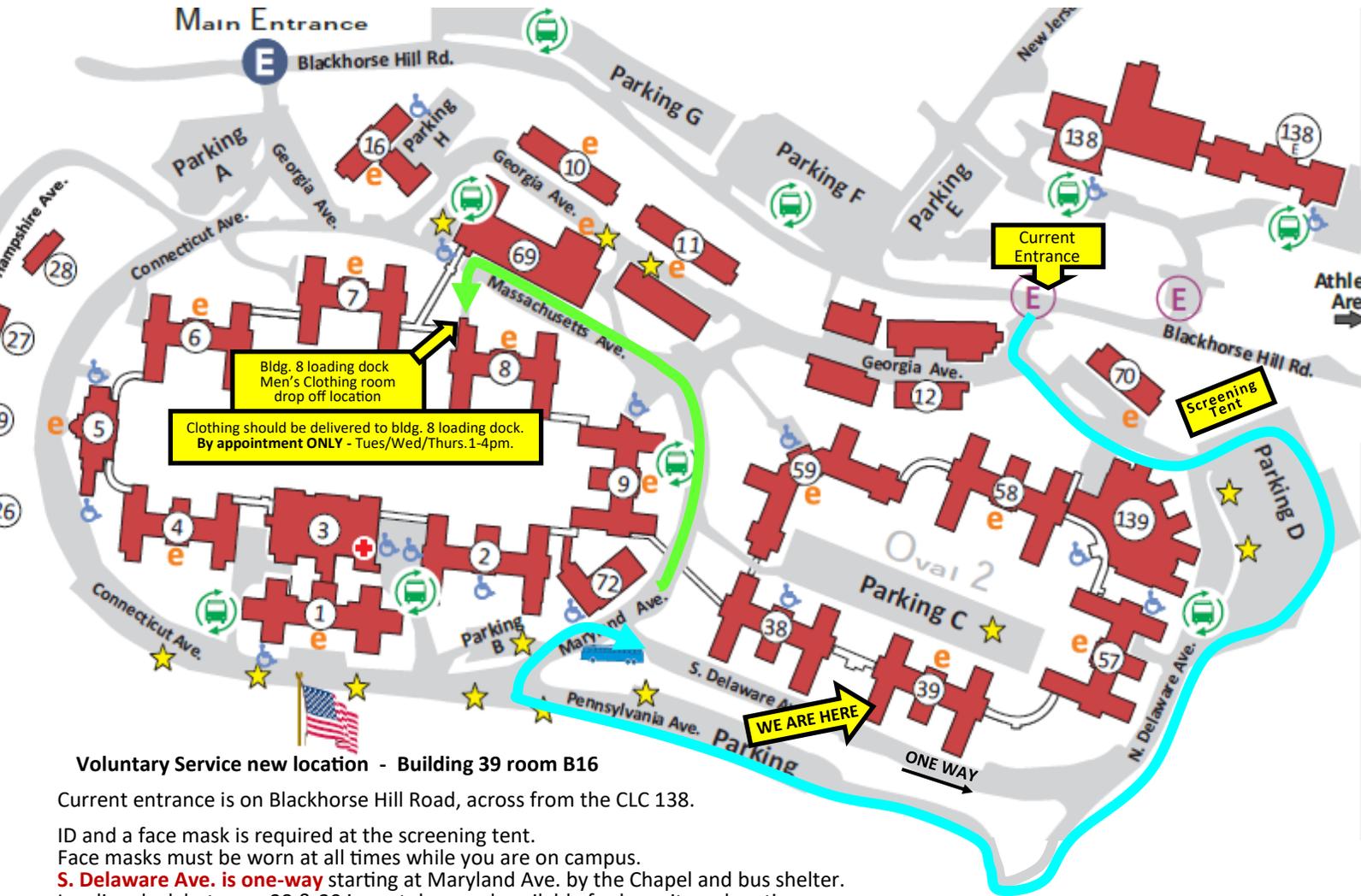
Jenn Lilly, Chief of Voluntary Service accepts a donation from **Buddy Rhodes**. Buddy and fellow members of the **Military Order of the Purple Heart Chapter 1777** continue their support of Veterans.



Stan Wert of Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, Ephrata donated monies for the benefit of hospitalized Veterans. The Elks also treated Veterans of two units to Lancaster style ringed bologna and cheese lunch.

Pictured below: Home Towners of Conshohocken had to cancel a planned bingo because of COVID 19 but shared their donations that would have been used as bingo prizes.





Voluntary Service new location - Building 39 room B16

Current entrance is on Blackhorse Hill Road, across from the CLC 138.

ID and a face mask is required at the screening tent.
Face masks must be worn at all times while you are on campus.
S. Delaware Ave. is one-way starting at Maryland Ave. by the Chapel and bus shelter.
Loading dock between 38 & 39 is next door and available for large item donations.
Enter 39 for volunteer sign in at the kiosk.

Appointments are necessary for all donations.
Please call our office to schedule an appointment. 610-384-7711 ext.4228. Clothing donations will be scheduled for Tues/Wed/Thurs. 1-4pm.

Veterans Week 2020 will offer many virtual events. You will have access to view these events by "friending" Coatesville VA Medical Center on Facebook. The below events will be shared in Facebook Live sessions.

November 4	2:00pm	Celebration of Faith - Facebook
November 6	2:00pm	Saluting Women Veterans - Facebook
November 10	2:00pm	Personal Messaging to Veterans - Facebook
November 11	10:45am	Wreath laying, at Veterans Park - 1 st Ave. Coatesville
November 11	12:30pm	Wreath laying, Medical Center - Facebook

POST IT NOTE

- * Representatives – The next quarterly VA Voluntary Service (VAVS) meeting is Thursday, October 22 - **via conference call. Details will be given to VAVS committee members.**
- * Get a new parking sticker if you have a new vehicle



Integrity ★ Commitment ★ Advocacy ★ Respect ★ Excellence

Trustworthy ★ Accessible ★ Quality ★ Innovative ★ Agile ★ Integrated