

Veterans Administration & Rehabilitation Service Report– Sabina Iniguez

My name is Sabina Iniguez, and I am proud to serve as Chairman and vetted volunteer for the Veterans Administration & Rehabilitation at the Carl T. Hayden Veterans Hospital in Phoenix, Arizona, under the Department of Arizona Auxiliary.

Since June 2025, I have met with and visited more than 35 Veterans on a weekly basis while dedicating over 1,000 volunteer hours. The Veterans I serve are primarily patients and residents of the Community Living Center, many of whom are battling Dementia or Alzheimer's disease. Some are receiving end-of-life care through Hospice, while others are undergoing short-term or long-term rehabilitation.

The Veterans I visit come from all walks of life and from many different places throughout the United States. The one thing they all have in common is that they each have incredible stories to tell about their lives. Some spent their entire careers serving in the military, while others chose to serve for only a few years. Some traveled the world, while others lived quieter lives rooted close to home. Many raised families, while others remained single. Each Veteran carries a lifetime of experiences, sacrifice, and memories that deserve to be heard.

The majority of the Veterans I visit are elderly and facing debilitating illnesses that leave many bedridden and unable to participate in everyday activities. Many have outlived their spouses, children, family members, and close friends. Some never married or had children at all. During my visits, I do my best to truly listen and connect with them. I have spent hours talking with a single Veteran. Sometimes, all they want is someone to sit quietly beside them. Sometimes, they simply want a hand to hold. Other times, they ask if I will stay and watch a movie with them.

For some Veterans, I may be the only person they have to talk to, especially those without family or friends nearby. I often think about the loneliness they must feel. Knowing that I can brighten their day, even in a small way, means everything to me. Sometimes, simply being present is enough to remind them that they are not forgotten.

In my capacity as Veterans Administration & Rehabilitation Chairman for the Phoenix VAMC, I have also been able to make purchases through the Department of Arizona Auxiliary to help meet several high-priority needs identified on the Phoenix VA wishlist. These purchases have included nail clippers, shampoo, & conditioner, body wash, disposable razors, Tide Pods, catheter covers, magnifying glasses, mesh shorts, shirts and

remote controls, all of which are donated directly to the Community Living Center. Not only do these items meet the needs of our Veterans but they promote the feeling of a much needed home environment, which helps tremendously in the well being of our Veterans.

Additionally, I purchased a variety of art supplies specifically requested by the Recreation Therapy Department to support activities and programs for Veterans. Through a generous donation from an American Legion post, I was also able to purchase bus passes for Veterans in need. Since the VAMC is no longer able to purchase bus passes directly, these now rely entirely on outside donations. These passes are critically important in helping Veterans without transportation attend their medical appointments.

One project I have continued to maintain is a relationship with a local Crumbl Cookie location. Every Saturday, I pick up leftover cookies, and every Monday, I deliver them to the VAMC. The Community Living Center receives some of these cookies for the Veterans, and the Substance Abuse Unit also receives a large portion for the Veterans in their program. I also make sure our hospitality volunteers receive cookies as a small thank-you for everything they do. Many of our hospitality volunteers are Veterans themselves, and they deeply appreciate the gesture. The Veterans truly enjoy the cookies, and it is amazing how something so simple can bring such happiness and comfort. Sometimes, it is the little things that create the biggest smiles.

I absolutely love what I do, and I look forward to many more years of serving not only our Veterans, but also the Department of Arizona Auxiliary and its mission. It has been an incredible honor and privilege to serve those who have sacrificed so much for our country.

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