

# ADVISORY REPORT

*Bi-Monthly Newsletter of UnityPoint Health - Trinity & the QC CVEB*



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## UnityPoint Health - Trinity / Quad Cities Community Veterans Engagement Board Receives Nonprofit Collaboration of the Year Award

In recognition of the collaborative project that is the UnityPoint Health - Trinity / Quad Cities Veterans Engagement Board (CVEB), a nomination was made to the Quad Cities Business Journal for a Connect for a Cause Award, highlighting the 2023 Veterans Experience Action Center. On April 5, the notification arrived that Trinity / QC CVEB had been named the winner in the Nonprofit Collaboration of the Year category for 2023.



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**Nonprofit Collaboration of the Year, Continued from p.1**

The award recognizes a collaborative project that engages relationships with multiple nonprofit organizations and multiple shareholders within the community and that helps solve a community problem or issue. That describes the Trinity / QC CVEB to a tee. The 42-member board, comprising 24 organizations, has been working together since 2016 to bring local community resources together to improve outcomes for Veterans and family members of service men and women.

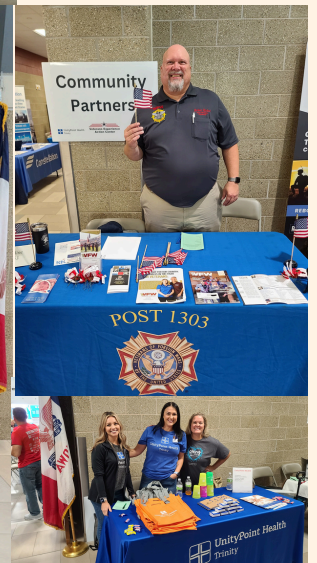
A strategic priority is to engage community partners to connect with Veterans directly through the Veterans Experience Action Center (VEAC). VEACs bring together representatives from the VA, state, and community partners to connect service members, Veterans, their families, caregivers, and survivors in person to services and resources, including benefits and health care, crisis and mental health support, and wellness services. Trinity, the CVEB, and the VA hosted a VEAC on September 29 & 30, 2023, at the Iowa National Guard facility. The CVEB began planning the event in January 2023.

Over 60 VA personnel from Iowa City, the Quad Cities, Chicago & Des Moines, 8 Veteran Service Officers from 2 states and 4 counties, 23 community non-profits and Veteran-serving organizations, 10 employers, 6 educational institutions, 26 financial and in-kind sponsors, 31 CVEB members, and 120 volunteers supported 482 Veterans. Nearly 4,000 services were provided.

Other Connect for a Cause category winners are:

- American Bank & Trust - Corporate Citizen of the Year
- NextGen Motors of Muscatine - Partnership Award - Small Business
- Russell - Partnership Award - Large Business

Join UnityPoint Health - Trinity / Quad Cities Community Veterans Engagement Board at the awards ceremony on June 26 from 5:30-7:30 p.m. at the Figge Art Museum in Davenport. Tickets can be purchased at [Connect for a Cause - Quad Cities Business Journal](#) for \$50 through June 4. Ticket prices rise after that.





# QC Veterans Outreach Center Opens in New Location with More Services

## Grand Opening May 18

Lola VanDeWalle’s mission of honoring the memory of her Veteran dad, who served in both the Marines and Army, has evolved over the past eight years. Their larger location in Davenport opened this week at 4515 North Fairmount Street with an array of new services that promises to make the Quad Cities Veterans Outreach Center a destination for Veterans in the Quad Cities area.

The Center is dedicated to Lola’s father, Emerson “Ted” Walters, who at the age of 17 served during WWII, earning a Purple Heart. It is in his memory that the Center serves over 3,300 registered Veterans. The services provided have increased with the opening of the new Center in the old Buchanan elementary school. The larger space, which includes a gym, allows the expansion of current services and the addition of new services that have long been on their wish list.

The marketplace is re-opening in a larger space, which once per month allows the Veterans to choose their own groceries and supplies rather than being handed a pre-packed box. In the gym, they have an adaptive sports program that includes wheelchair basketball, with pickleball and softball coming soon. An arts and crafts room and sewing and music spaces have been added. The hair salon has doubled in size.

*“The opening of the new location is very emotional for me. To know that we will be able to honor our Veterans with a larger facility offering more programs and services is an amazing feeling.”*

*-- Lola VanDeWalle*

A coffee bar with casual indoor seating sits adjacent to a lovely outdoor courtyard with additional seating. The library, which includes a puzzle board, is larger, as is the DVD exchange area. Veterans who are creative can sell their items in the gift shop either as a donation or on consignment. Proceeds from donations go back to the Center to provide the services to Veterans.

Different types of lunches will be provided at various times during each month, with special meals on holidays. These meals provide a great opportunity for camaraderie.

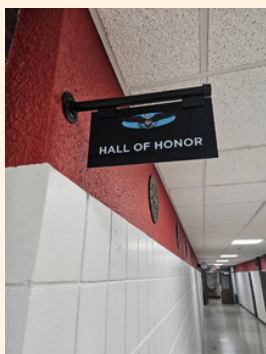
Volunteers for the Center are still needed in varying positions throughout the whole building. The Center is run by volunteers only. Currently, three quarters of the volunteers are either Veterans or their family members. If interested, reach out to them at <https://www.qcvetsoutreach.com/contact>.

Donations are welcomed and appreciated. Their need for food and funds is constant. A big need currently is for hygiene and paper products.

Another way to support the Center is through their Honor Wall. To honor someone who is serving or has served, an engraved plaque can be ordered for \$150. Call 563-529-4782 for more information or email [info@qcvetsoutreach.com](mailto:info@qcvetsoutreach.com).

The Center hours are 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through Friday and is on two bus routes. Veterans can register by going to the Center with proof of Veteran status and be issued a membership card. The long-time board of directors include Gina Acosta, Polly Graham, Carla Wagner, Don Arns, and Matt Marquardt.

(continued on p.5)



**QC VETERANS OUTREACH CENTER**  
4515 NORTH FAIRMOUNT STREET

**Join Our Honor Wall**  
Honor someone who is serving or has served.

Choose your logo and information for your custom plaque

\$150 for engraved plaque

Call (563) 529-4782 for more info or email [info@qcvetsoutreach.com](mailto:info@qcvetsoutreach.com)

[www.qcvetsoutreach.com](http://www.qcvetsoutreach.com)

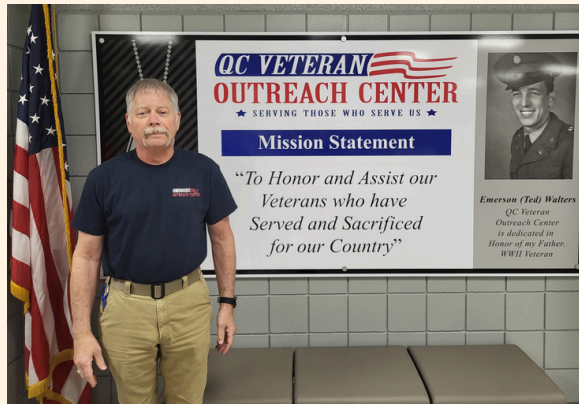
# Member Spotlight

Don Arns, CVEB member since January 2021, is currently on the board of directors for the Quad Cities Veterans Outreach Center in Davenport. Since 2016, Don has been volunteering for the organization after founder Lola VanDeWalle began utilizing him as a resource due to his experiences as a Veteran. He joined the board there in 2017.

Don served in the Army in the ammunitions field for 22 years, retiring in 1999 as a warrant officer. He deployed multiple times to Korea, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Germany, and Johnston Island. He met his wife, Tina, in Kuwait when she was serving there with her reserve unit in support of Don's unit, where he was the ammunition officer. Tina retired as a captain.

Germany was Don's favorite assignment because he was able to work more closely with soldiers and the Air Force. He maintained the facility, ammo storage and moved a lot of ammo around. This was his first assignment after being promoted to warrant officer in a Special Weapons Unit.

He also enjoyed the year he served in Johnston Island (atoll), a 3,200-acre unincorporated territory of the U.S. under the jurisdiction of the Air Force that is 860 miles southwest of Hawaii. Under the control of the military since 1934, it has been used as a naval refueling depot, an airbase, testing site for nuclear and biological weapons, a secret missile base, and a site for storage and disposal of chemical weapons.



When Don retired, his wife was a civilian QASAS Inspector (Quality Assurance Specialist for Ammunition Surveillance) and he joined her in her travels, which eventually led them to the Rock Island Arsenal and settling in the Quad Cities.

Don and his wife have a daughter in Indiana who works as an EMT at a hospital. They enjoy fishing, camping, kayaking, canoeing, and traveling with their trailer. Don is a member of the Walcott American Legion, the Bettendorf chapter of the VFW, the QC Chapter of D.A.V., the Military Officers Association, and the Warrant Officer Association at the Rock Island Arsenal.



**Click the Facebook icon to follow the CVEB Facebook page.**

**Next Meeting for CVEB members is June 20 at 8 a.m. We will meet in person at Trinity Rock Island boardroom.**



The work of the CVEB is supported by the Trinity Health Foundation Military and Veteran Services Fund. To donate visit [Trinity Health Foundation](#), select Other under designation, write in Military Fund.

(QCVOC, continued from p.3)

Join the Quad Cities Veterans Outreach Center for a Grand Opening celebration at 1 p.m. on Saturday, May 18, that will include a ribbon cutting with City officials, dedication of their flag, tours of the Center, and refreshments.

*“Community together makes this happen.”*

~~ Lola VanDeWalle

**OC VETERAN OUTREACH CENTER GRAND OPENING!!**

The Quad City Veteran Outreach Center will be holding a Grand Opening at the new Center:

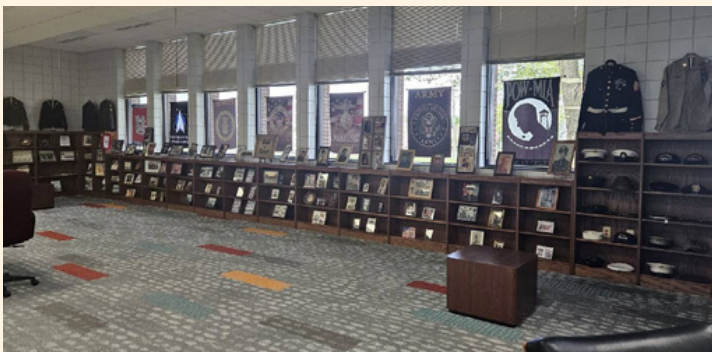
**18 May 2024 1 PM**

The new Center is located at:

**4515 North Fairmount Street, Davenport, Iowa (the old Buchanan School)**

There will be ceremonies, speakers, refreshments and tours.

For more information:  
 (563) 529-4782      www.qcvetsoutreach.com



**JUNE 12 WOMEN VETERANS RECOGNITION DAY**

The Women's Armed Services Integration Act of 1948 allowed women to serve as permanent members of the military.



Learn more about Women Veterans Day [here](#).

### Women Veterans Social Group Forming in Quad Cities

Women Veterans, with the help of the Quad Cities CVEB, are forming a women Veterans social group. During the April 2023 Military Veterans and Families Forum, hosted by the CVEB to learn from Veterans what their needs are, several issues related to women Veterans were raised, including the lack of avenues for camaraderie specifically for women.

The Quad Cities planning group is made up of retired Army LTC Valarie Baker; Army Veteran Kathy Miller, retired Department of the Army civilian, Rock Island Arsenal; Army Veteran Terry Randolph, and non-Veteran Sherri Behr DeVrieze, Co-Chair Quad Cities Community Veterans Engagement Board / Military Program Coordinator UnityPoint Health - Trinity.

As part of the planning, Valarie, Kathy, and Sherri made a road trip to Dubuque last month to meet the Tri-State Women Warriors and learn from them the nucleus of their group and the foundation on which they built their organization. The event attended was the launch of their recently acquired 501c4 nonprofit.

Although the Quad Cities group is in the early stages of planning, the focus of the group will be social. If interested in participating in the group when it is finalized, please email [sherri.devrieze@unitypoint.org](mailto:sherri.devrieze@unitypoint.org) with your name, branch, email, and phone to be added to the communication list.



## UnityPoint Hospice Seeking Volunteers who are Veterans for We Honor Veterans Program



To help provide the care and support that reflects the important contributions made by our nation's Veterans, UnityPoint Hospice is a national partner of We Honor Veterans, a pioneering program developed by the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization (NHPCO) in collaboration with the Department of Veteran Affairs (VA).

As a We Honor Veterans partner, UnityPoint Hospice has implemented Veteran-centered education and resources for staff and volunteers to help provide the best care possible to the Veterans in their care.

They help through companionship, providing assistance with Veteran benefits and honoring their service. They offer the opportunity for our Veteran patients to be honored for their service through a pinning ceremony done by hospice staff.

UnityPoint Hospice also provides a vet-to-vet volunteer program. This allows Veteran patients to be paired with a hospice volunteer who is also a Veteran who may have a better understanding of what the patient has experienced. Veteran volunteers help with:

- Providing companionship
- Life review
- Letter writing
- Respite care for caregivers needing a break
- Participating in veteran recognition
- Assisting with veteran benefits

The program is currently seeking volunteers who are Veterans to serve in this capacity. To learn more about volunteering for the We Honor Veterans program, contact [makaila.burger@unitypoint.org](mailto:makaila.burger@unitypoint.org).

Continue reading Mike Gahagan's story, an Air Force Veteran who has volunteered for hospice for 25 years.

**Mike Gahagan** has been a volunteer with UnityPoint Hospice for 25 years and also within their We Honor Veterans Veteran-to-Veteran program, where he visits with Veterans in their homes or at nursing facilities.

After working at a hospital for over 30 years as a social worker, he learned much about death and dying and wished to give back to his community by working with hospice patients. His father was a funeral director, which meant he grew up being exposed to death. These experiences provided him with insights and the ability to meet patients where they are on their journey.

Mike served in the Air Force from 1969 to 1974 in telephone communications. He spent two years in Thailand in a telephone communications center with switching equipment. Their role was to support the Vietnam War effort by communicating with military bases that sent out missions, such as bombing missions. His rank at the time of discharge was sergeant.



*"Have an open mind about hospice. It's not just about death and dying, it's about making connections and being there for others."*

After earning his B.A. in psychology at Augustana College and a master's degree in counseling at Western Illinois University, he spent the next three decades as a licensed master social worker in the healthcare industry.

**(continued on p.7)**

**Mike Gahagan (continued from p.7)**

In his work with Veterans at UnityPoint Hospice, he provides companionship to his patients. His Veteran status allows him to make a connection and build rapport. Most of them are from the Vietnam-era, like he is. The patients like to reminisce, which gives them the opportunity to relive life experiences.

Mike also provides respite services for the family members, who can have a little free time while Mike is visiting. He usually volunteers from 1-3 hours per week, depending on his patient's needs. He works with 1 to 3 patients at a time, depending on their individual needs, some for only a week, some for over a year. With long-term patients, Mike does develop a bond and friendship with the Veterans.

One does have to be careful about emotional attachment but having worked in a hospital setting for so long, Mike was prepared for this role. "You have to detach and set up boundaries, but with long-term patients, it is hard." New volunteers to the program don't need to have experience because they receive extensive training and attend meetings that provide an educational component.

As to the impact he is having on his patients, Mike said they "have someone to talk to outside of the family." His words of wisdom for potential volunteers include, "Have an open mind about hospice. It's not just about death and dying, it's about making connections and being there for others."

He says that if you are looking for a way to give back to Veterans and to your community, this is a rewarding way to do so. "It is certainly helping others, but I get something from it, too. I am growing as a person and learning different perspectives."

"Don't pry too much, let people share what they want. Don't ask too many questions. Ask general questions, keep it simple and broad. Some won't want to talk about it. It's not about dying. It's about life experience and being a good listener."

**Upcoming Events/Meetings & Observances**

**May, Mental Health Awareness Month**

**May, National Military Appreciation Month**

**May, Month of the Military Caregiver**

**May 1, Rock Island County Veterans Assistance**

**Commission Open House**, 12-3 p.m., 4000 46th Avenue (Blackhawk Rd.), Rock Island, inside Rock Valley Plaza

**May 10, Military Spouse Appreciation Day**

**May 10, Vow Renewal & Reception**, Noon, Iowa City VA Medical Center, 3rd floor Chapel

**May 13, St. Ambrose Medaling Ceremony Honoring**

**Military-Connected Graduates**, 4 p.m., St. Ambrose University Rogalski Center Ballroom. Bryan Miller is speaker. Medals and red/white/blue honor cords will be presented to graduating Veterans. Graduating spouses and children will receive a purple honor cord. RSVP at [St. Ambrose Ceremony Honoring Military-Connected Graduates](#).

**May 16, QC Veterans Network, location TBD**

**May 18, Armed Forces Day**

**May 18, Quad Cities Veterans Outreach Center Open House**, 1 p.m., 4515 North Fairmount St., Davenport, IA (old Buchanan School). There will be several speakers, refreshments and tours of the new building.

**May 27, Memorial Day**

**May 27, Memorial Day Service**, Rock Island National Cemetery, 10:45 a.m.

**May 31-June 2, Fishing For Freedom - Quincy**

**June 12, Women Veterans Day**

**June 14, Flag Day**

**June 14, Army Birthday**

**June 23, Coast Guard Auxiliary Birthday**

**June 20, MAC/CVEB meeting for members**, 8-9 a.m., Trinity Rock Island boardroom

**June 20, QC Veterans Network**, 5:30-8:30 p.m., location TBD

**June 26, Rock Island National Cemetery Open House**, 3-6 p.m. - Staff will be on-site in admin. office and burial sites to answer questions. Tours of the cemetery and help with pre-need eligibility forms for Veterans will be available.

**June 27, PTSD Awareness Day**

**July 27, Rock Island National Cemetery Korean War Armistice Day Ceremony**, 10 a.m.

The Advisory Report is a publication of UnityPoint Health - Trinity and the Quad Cities Community Veterans Engagement Board (CVEB)

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## TheGrayMattersCollective - Veterans Chapter

TheGrayMattersCollective is a mental health awareness and suicide prevention movement and an official 501©3 incorporated nonprofit. [About Us – The Gray Matters Collective](#)

*Mental Health Matters. You Matter.*

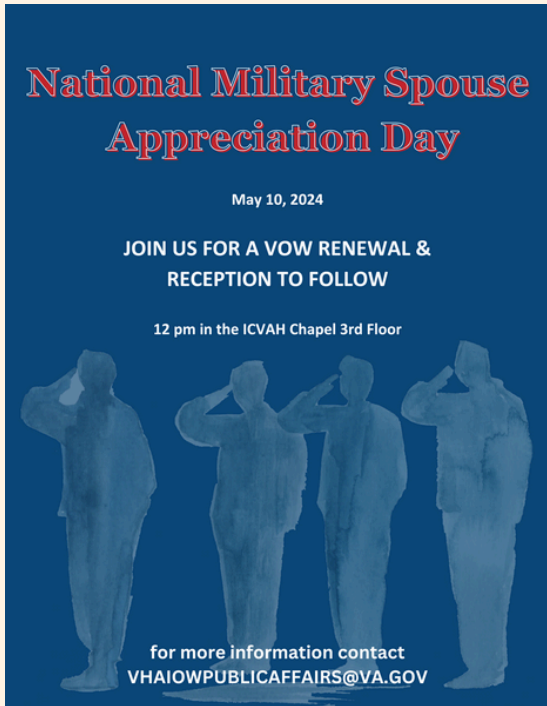
The organization has 40 chapters in area schools that are run by students with a counselor or teacher. They are fighting the stigma of mental illness.

Nick Osterhaus and Alyssa Marti joined the April 18 CVEB meeting in Rock Island to speak on the new Veteran Chapter of the organization.

TheGrayMattersCollective Veterans Chapter has hosted three meetings. Alyssa and Nick are two of the leaders of the chapter. Speakers at their meetings so far have all been members of the CVEB (Carolyn Marty, Joe Laden, and Ben Enlow). Their next meeting is on May 19 from 3-4 p.m. at the National Guard air hangar in Mt. Joy.

The group is about camaraderie and talking as friends who are Veterans. The group has a mental health focus, but they don't just talk about mental health.

Join their Facebook page at:  
[Veterans Gray Matters Chapter | Facebook](#)



The Iowa City VA Health Care System is celebrating National Military Spouse Day by hosting a Vow Renewal and reception in their 3rd floor hospital chapel at noon on May 10.

They are looking for Veteran couples who would like to participate in their Vow Renewal and reception. At least one in the couple must be a Veteran. If interested, notify [VHAIOWPublicAffairs@va.gov](mailto:VHAIOWPublicAffairs@va.gov) by May 1. Once signed up, couples will be sent an invitation so they can include family and friends in the celebration. Cake will be provided. A vow renewal in a patient room can also be arranged.

### Condolences

Long-time CVEB member and RYC Behavioral Health Inpatient Director, Debbie Swanberg, lost her beloved husband this month, Kenneth Erik Swanberg. After his retirement from R.H. Donnelley, Erik worked as a family assistance coordinator for the National Guard and assisted with National Guard family readiness groups. We wish Debbie and her family peace during this time.





# Flag Day - June 14

## The Flower of Liberty

By Oliver Wendell Holmes

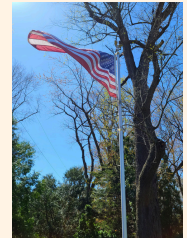
*What flow'r is this that greets the morn,  
Its hues from heav'n so freshly born?  
With burning star and flaming band  
It kindles all the sunset land:  
O tell us what its name may be,  
Is this the Flower of Liberty?  
It is, it is the banner of the free,  
The starry Flower, the Flower of Liberty!*

*In savage Nature's far abode,  
Its tender seed our fathers sowed;  
The storm-winds rocked its swelling bud,  
Its op'ning leaves were streaked with blood,  
Till lo! earth's tyrants shook to see  
The full-blown Flower of Liberty!  
Then hail, then hail the banner of the free,  
The starry Flower, the flower of Liberty!*

*Behold its streaming rays unite,  
One mingling flood of braided light,—  
The red that fires the Southern rose,  
With spotless white from Northern snows,  
And, spangled o'er its azure, see  
The sister Stars of Liberty!  
Then hail, then hail the banner of the free,  
The starry Flower, the Flower of Liberty!*

*The blades of heroes fence it round,  
Where'er it springs is holy ground;  
From tower and dome its glories spread;  
It waves where lonely sentries tread;  
It makes the land as ocean free,  
And plants an empire on the sea!  
Then hail, then hail the banner of the free,  
The starry Flower, the Flower of Liberty!*

*Thy sacred leaves, fair Freedom's flower,  
Shall ever float on dome and tower,  
To all their heav'nly colors true,  
In black'ning frost or crimson dew,—  
And God love us as we love thee,  
Thrice holy Flower of Liberty!  
Then hail, then hail the banner of the free,  
The starry Flower, the Flower of Liberty!*



## Veterans Assistance Commission of Rock Island County has New Address

The Veterans Assistance Commission of Rock Island County recently relocated to a newly renovated facility at 4000 46th Avenue (Blackhawk Road) in Rock Island, inside Rock Valley Plaza. Members of the public are welcome to their grand opening on May 1 from 12-3 p.m.

Their team of dedicated Veteran Service Officers (VSO) stands ready to assist transitioning service members, Veterans and their families with all Veterans benefits available through the Veterans Benefits Administration. Among some of the benefits they assist with are Veteran Affairs (VA) disability claims, VA healthcare enrollment and Veteran survivor benefits. All services are free to the Veteran and their families.

Beyond VA support, their services extend assistance to Rock Island County qualifying Veterans with temporary financial assistance towards rental assistance, food security, utilities, and personal hygiene essentials.

The commission currently has three certified Veteran Service Officers, Todd Harlow, Bradley Bigford, and Parris Silvis, with a fourth in training, Anthony Clifford. He is expected to be fully certified this summer.

For more information, call (309) 558-3549, or [vac@rockislandcountyil.gov](mailto:vac@rockislandcountyil.gov).

★ **OPEN HOUSE** ★

12:00PM – 3:00PM



**4000 46TH AVE**  
**Rock Island, IL**  
**61201**  
(309) 558-3549  
[vac@rockislandcountyil.gov](mailto:vac@rockislandcountyil.gov)

**MAY 1ST**  
**2024**