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The VAVS newsletter has been created for all volunteers and potential volunteers of VA Healthcare Network Upstate New York. This publication is meant to showcase the wonderful work all of our volunteers contribute to VA. Please do not hesitate to contact anyone on the Advisory or Editorial Boards with your comments, corrections or suggestions.



Visit Our Network Web Site

www.va.gov/visns/visn02

William F. Feeley Named Network Director



The VA Healthcare Network Upstate New York is pleased to welcome our new Director, **William F. Feeley**. Before Mr. Feeley was appointed to the position, he was Director of the VA Western New York Healthcare System, which includes the Buffalo and Batavia VAs.

Mr. Feeley's career with the Department of Veterans Affairs spans more than 27 years. He joined the Coatesville VA in 1975 and served as an Associate Medical Center Director at the VA Medical Centers in Grand Junction, Colorado (1991); Northampton, Virginia (1992); and Buffalo, New York. (1996). In 1998, he was appointed Director of the VA Western New York Healthcare System. Mr. Feeley is committed to improving the delivery of health care to veterans and providing care to veterans that meets or exceeds their expectations. He is a nationally recognized leader in customer service. Customer service initiatives implemented under Mr. Feeley's leadership include:

- The Greeter Program, designed to help veterans and guests feel welcome and find their way around the hospital
- Quick Cards, which are comment cards veterans can complete immediately after a visit to the hospital or outpatient clinic-cited as a best practice for implementation throughout the VAs nationwide hospital system
- "On-Demand" video system, which lets patients watch health-related videos on bedside TVs and rate their satisfaction with their care
- "Hoptels," or hospitality suites for outpatients and caregivers traveling a distance

His consistent emphasis on timely access to health care services and promptness at scheduled outpatient appointment times has resulted in Network 2 being at or near the top of all VA Networks in patient satisfaction for access to and timeliness of care.

As Network Director, Mr. Feeley will continue his mission to oversee the management and delivery of quality health care services to veterans living in upstate New York. Mr. Feeley replaces **Lawrence H. Flesh, M.D.**, who served as Interim Network Director since January 2002 when former Network Director **Frederick L. Malphurs** accepted a position at the VA Medical Center in Gainesville, Fla. Dr. Flesh will resume his position as Chief Medical Officer/Deputy Network Director.





Volunteer Opportunities

Job descriptions are often available for review in Voluntary Service. Orientation and training is also provided.

Albany

- Ambassador Greeter: greet veterans as they arrive by vans, get wheelchairs for those who need them, and escort them to clinic appointments
 - Cemetery Information Booth: staff the information booth at the entrance of the Saratoga VA National Cemetery (weekdays and/or weekends)
 - Clerical Assistance (Clifton Park, Fonda, and Catskill community based outpatient clinics): assist with light office work
 - Office Assistance (home care/geriatrics and extended care offices, patient financial services, accounts receivable, and performance management office): answering phones, assisting staff with daily activities
 - Parking Lot Shuttle Driver: provide shuttle service in a government van from patient parking lot to front door of Medical Center and back (weekdays)
 - Volunteer Transportation Program Driver: bring veterans in a government van from home to their medical appointments (Thursdays)
- Clerical
 - Information Desk (Tuesday and/or Friday)
 - Women Veteran Program
 - Escorts
 - Feeding assistance on Nursing Home Care Units

Canandaigua

- Companion Therapy
- Special Care Companion Therapy for Palliative Care Ward
- Reminder phone calls to patients for appointments at the Rochester Outpatient Clinic and Canandaigua VA
- Clerical
- Assisting with recreational activities
- Golf Course
- Walk In Center at St. Mary's (in Rochester); mornings
- Volunteers needed to provide interaction with dementia clients
- DAV/Volunteer Transportation Network: transporting veterans to and from their homes for medical appointments
- Performance groups - musical, hobby, performance, etc. to perform for the patients

- Evening Escorts: transporting patients, delivery of specimens, etc.
- Pharmacy: deliver prescriptions (to wards); work at window dispensing filled prescriptions, mailing prescriptions, etc.
- Rehab Unit (Outpatient): scheduling appointments, reminder calls, filing, transporting patients back to floors, etc.
- DAV Drivers

Western New York (Buffalo and Batavia)

- Activity Buddy Program for the Nursing Home Care Unit - Batavia
- Clerical - filing, photocopying, running errands, mailings, paper shredding, etc. - Batavia and Buffalo
- DAV Volunteer Transportation Program - transport veterans to and from clinical appointments - Batavia and Buffalo
- Greeters - welcome veterans and visitors, help them get to all appointments and other related areas - Buffalo
- Guest Parking Lot Shuttle - transport veterans and guests from cars to and from outpatient entrance - Buffalo
- Patient Escort/Transport Service - assist veterans to and from scheduled appointments and other needs as they occur - Batavia and Buffalo

Bath

- Historical Museum (Seasonal)
- Fair Booth
- Women Veteran Mentors
- Respite/Community Visiting

Syracuse

- Clerical/General: escorting, filing, making reminder calls, answering telephones, etc. at the Binghamton and Rome outpatient clinics





News from...

Albany

The annual **Cancer Survivors Day** program is held the first Friday in June under the VIP parking ramp pavilion. It's a reunion for veterans who have been diagnosed and treated for cancer to celebrate with the staff and who cared for them. This uplifting event includes a breakfast and a barbecue lunch. A resource guide booklet is updated every year and given to all attendees. The program includes physician speakers, as well as survivors who share their experiences of "fighting the good fight" and rejoicing with the staff who helped them through the treatments.

Each year's **Independence Day** at the Stratton VA Medical Center is an example of great teamwork between members of fraternal and veterans service organizations. On July 4th, a picnic is held for our hospitalized veterans, participants in our Adult Day Health Care, Community Day Program, Compensated Work Therapy/Transitional Residences and Mental Health Clinic. Volunteers donate, prepare and serve the food under the decorated parking area pavilion. Volunteers eagerly transport patients by wheelchair from their hospital rooms, across the sunny patio to the shady pavilion to enjoy the tastes and aroma of barbecue-grilled foods and picnic treats. Musical entertainment, gifts, American flags, canteen books and photos are

given to the veterans. Inpatients confined to their hospital beds receive bedside visits and gifts. Fun, food, laughter, and camaraderie between veterans and friends of veterans - is what makes VA volunteers the best!

On Monday, July 28, at 10:00 a.m., a ceremony will be held to commemorate the **50th Anniversary of the Korean War**. It will be held at the New York State Korean War Memorial on Madison Avenue in Albany. The ceremony will commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the Military Armistice Agreement when the cease-fire became effective, July 27, 1953. All are invited.

Bath

The National Poppy Program was placed under the leadership of the American Legion Auxiliary in 1924. The paper poppy was originally chosen so that hospitalized disabled veterans who received little or no compensation had some means of profitable employment by shaping these little red flowers.

Today, our local Poppy Program (which begins in early winter) is one of the biggest in the State of New York. Every poppy (made by veterans taking part in the program) is purchased by the American Legion Auxiliary for 10 cents a piece. This year, Bath veteran outpatients made 229,470 poppies at a total cost of \$23,511.

The poppies are shipped to locations throughout the country based on orders placed through the American Legion Auxiliary. Funds collected from the poppy distribution may only be used for specific veteran programs such as rehabilitation of veterans and for the welfare of families of veterans.

When Memorial Day approaches, you will see many Auxiliary volunteers with bunches of red poppies. Remember veterans are in need today just as they were at the end of WWI. By wearing that red crepe paper poppy you are not only honoring deceased veterans, you are helping the living. Wear that poppy with pride!

Special thanks go to Bath volunteers: Chairperson, **Yvonne McConnell, Mable Barnes, Mariam Straight, Onalee Dewey, Margaret Mulhair, George Mulhair, Judy Pickering, Charlotte Clayson, and Sharon Rooks** who helped with this program.

Canandaigua

On April 23, **Warren Jordans**, a volunteer at the Canandaigua VA Medical Center and a retired Army Colonel, sponsored a traditional Italian luncheon for 40 veteran patients. Colonel Jordans provided assorted cheese and crackers, antipasto, baked ziti, cake, soda and even red wine! The event was held in the pavilion, courtyard 1, which was

(continued on next page)





News from...

Canandaigua (continued)

theme-decorated for the occasion. Veterans dined to the sounds of Frank Sinatra while enjoying this special treat. Many of the veterans dressed up for the event and Warren even provided ties for the veterans that wanted to wear one! The event was a huge success and a welcome diversion for the veterans. Thank you to Warren for doing all the shopping and baking and to all the volunteers who helped him serve this delicious meal.

Syracuse

Syracuse VA Medical Center marks its 50th year of operation in 2003. Formal opening/dedication ceremonies took place on June 14, 1953. The brand-new facility occupied ten acres on University Hill and cost \$7.6 million to build. Today, the same structure would cost an estimated \$175 million.

When the Syracuse VA opened its doors, there were approximately 375 employees compared to today's 1,200 employees and more than 600 volunteers. The budget for the first fiscal year was \$1.6 million, compared to 2002 budget of \$115.6 million.

A research wing was added in 1968. With an annual budget of over \$2 million, the Research and Development Service supports a comprehensive medical research program with more than 40 researchers.

In 1986, the entire hospital was renovated for asbestos removal and the installation of a new heating and air conditioning system. In 1989, the Syracuse VA became the first medical facility in upstate New York to become a "smoke-free" facility.

The 1990's brought many changes to medical care as the focus shifted from inpatient to outpatient care. Eight community based outpatient clinics across an 18-county coverage area were established. As a result, no central New York veteran has to travel more than 30 minutes to access VA healthcare.

In 1996, the Women's Health Center was created and in 1997, a toll-free number, known as Tel-Care was established to provide veterans with 24-hour/day access to VA healthcare information.

Later that year, the VA established 21 Networks that linked area facilities together. Network 2 (VA Healthcare Network Upstate New York) was formed to bring together the five VA medical centers in the central and western New York areas.

Syracuse VA continues to grow. In 2002, construction began on the multi-million dollar emergency department that triples the size of the urgent care unit.

The Syracuse VA 50th anniversary celebration includes a gala event at the Oncenter on Friday, June 13, 2002 and a rededication and open house at the Medical Center in the fall.

Western New York

"National Salute" Well Attended

The Valentines Day Open Houses at Batavia and Buffalo were host to many local, area, and regional guests. In Batavia, Metropolitan New York's USO performers "highlighted" a week of patient activities, while at Buffalo, several television, radio, and sports personalities, "teamed-up" with mascots from the Buffalo Bills (football team), Buffalo Sabres (hockey team), and the Bisons (baseball team).



Buffalo Bills players Tony Driver #25 and Joey Hollenbeck #65 visit with veterans.

National Former Prisoner of War Recognition Day - April 9, 2003

The VA Western New York Healthcare System paid tribute to more than 75 former prisoners of war in a formal ceremony and luncheon to commemorate this annual event. In addition, family members, distinguished guests, staff, volunteers, and community members came out to say "thank you" for the hardships they endured more than 50 years ago.





Wish Lists

Albany

- ❖ Canteen books for haircuts
- ❖ Search-a-word activity books
- ❖ Sneakers (mens - all sizes, new only)
- ❖ Denture adhesive
- ❖ Newspaper subscriptions
- ❖ Funds for:
 - TV/VCRs and stands
 - Geri chairs
 - Physical therapy mat table
 - A new van for the Volunteer Transportation Program
 - Sending patients to the Winter Sports Clinic, Wheelchair Games, Golden Age Games, and Creative Arts Festival

Bath

- ❖ Fish tank and tropical fish
- ❖ Health and comfort items (razors, toothpaste, toothbrushes, etc.)
- ❖ Lab robes and afghans
- ❖ Entertainers
- ❖ Duffle bags, etc. for discharging veterans
- ❖ Phone cards
- ❖ Canteen books
- ❖ Items for the birthday program (stationary/stamps, etc.)
- ❖ Playing cards
- ❖ Board games
- ❖ Non-skid socks
- ❖ White socks
- ❖ New electric shavers
- ❖ Items for the Jump Start Program (new household items such as: electric mixers, toasters, pots, pans, bowls, cups, dishware, toasters,

shower curtains, silverware, sheets, blankets, canisters, etc.)

- ❖ Sponsors for:
 - Holiday programs
 - Recreational programs, summer BBQs, ice cream trips
 - Keuka Maid program

Canandaigua

- ❖ Sponsored luncheons, pizza parties, trips
- ❖ Tickets to sporting events and outings
- ❖ Decaf coffee
- ❖ Disposable plates, bowls, cups, and plastic dinnerware, and napkins
- ❖ Personal care items (shampoo, shaving cream, deodorant, toothpaste, toothbrushes, lotion, new socks and underwear, etc.)
- ❖ Washer and dryer
- ❖ Funds for:
 - Palliative Care rooms
 - Recreation services
 - General-purpose account
 - Storage and maintenance of pontoon boat on Canandaigua Lake (\$2,000/ year)
- ❖ Craft Items
- ❖ Gift Certificates for Wal-Mart, Wegmans, pizza, McDonalds, Wendy's, movies, etc.
- ❖ Postage stamps
- ❖ Pool table
- ❖ Sweatpants - sizes large and XL
- ❖ Canned goods for meals served at the Day Treatment Centers
- ❖ Microwaves
- ❖ Games (checkers, dominos, chess)

- ❖ Memorabilia and monetary donations for the Veteran Heritage Museum
- ❖ Water color paints and brushes
- ❖ Black ballpoint pens
- ❖ Battery operated or manual alarm clocks

Syracuse

- ❖ Cable television service for the Rome and Binghamton Community Based Outpatient Clinics
- ❖ Coffee Service (\$40/year)
- ❖ Personal care items (toothpaste, shaving cream, razors, etc)
- ❖ Satellite TV Program (1 year/\$7000)
- ❖ Telephones, TVs, VCRs
- ❖ Wheelchairs
- ❖ White T-shirts - various sizes
- ❖ Funding for:
 - National Rehabilitative Games
 - Quality of Life Fund

Western New York (Buffalo and Batavia)

- ❖ Funding for patient activities - both sites
- ❖ Treadmills - both sites
- ❖ Travel funds - Buffalo
- ❖ DAV/Volunteer Transportation Program - both sites
- ❖ Coffee Cart Program - both sites
- ❖ 9" color television - both sites
- ❖ Patient comfort items - both sites

Before purchasing any item, please contact the Voluntary Service to make sure that the item has not been already purchased/donated.





Calendar of Events

June 20 11:30 a.m.
Voluntary Service Rep/Dep Conference
Luncheon/Workshop/Entertainment
Wyndham Hotel, Syracuse

July 19 4:30 p.m.
Elks Pig Roast/Karaoke
Nursing Home Care Unit

Syracuse

June 13 5:00 p.m.
50th Anniversary Gala Reception
Syracuse OnCenter 6:00 p.m.
Convention Center Dinner

June 15
Father's Day Celebration - VFW

June 28
Hospital-Wide Picnic - VFW

July 19 11:30 a.m.
Hospital-Wide Picnic - VFW

August 9 Noon
Hospital-Wide Picnic - VFW

August 23 Noon
Hospital-Wide Picnic - VFW

September 6 11:30 a.m.
Labor Day Celebration - Picnic

Western New York

June 6
Golf Tournament (Scramble 10:00 a.m.
Format/No Rain Date) Tee Time
Batavia Country Club 4:30 p.m. - Dinner

July 4
Happy Birthday America - Holiday

July 16 1:30 p.m.
VAVS Meeting
Room 301 - Buffalo

July 27 11:30 a.m.
Patient/Family Picnic
Recreation Patio - Batavia

August 11
Veterans Day at the Erie County Fair
Erie County Fair Grounds - Hamburg, NY
Parade and VA healthcare information.

Albany

June 6 10:00 a.m.
Cancer Survivors Day Ceremony
Under VIP Parking Ramp

June 14
Saratoga Elks Flag Day Parade

June 18 1:30 p.m.
Saratoga VA Cemetery
Support Committee Meeting
Saratoga

July 4 11:30 a.m.
Patient Picnic
Under VIP Parking Ramp

July 16 1:30 p.m.
Saratoga VA Cemetery
Support Committee Meeting
Saratoga

July 28 10:00 a.m.
Korean War 50th Anniversary
Commemoration Ceremony
Korean War Memorial,
Madison Avenue, Albany

August 20 1:30 p.m.
Saratoga VA Cemetery
Support Committee Meeting
Saratoga

Bath

June 14
Flag Day Program

July 4 1:00 p.m.
WINK 106 Pride Ride
VA Grounds

August
VAVS Picnic Meeting
TBD

September 20
National POW/MIA Recognition Program

Canandaigua

July 10
Blood Drive
Bldg. 5, Auditorium

August 14 5:30 p.m.
Volunteer Picnic and Student Awards
Program
Courtyard 1, Pavilion

***June 19** 6:30 p.m.
New Horizons Band & 50th Anniversary of
the Korean War Commemorative Program

***July 3** 6:00 p.m.
Miss USA '79 Salute to America's Veterans
and the Rochester Brass & Electric Band

***July 17** 6:00 p.m.
Meyer & McGuire

***July 31** 6:00 p.m.
Weekender & Motorcycle Show

**Volunteers are needed to escort patients to these concerts. Without your help, patients will not be able to attend. Call Hank Riegel at 585-393-7370 for more information.*

Special thanks to the Wayne County Chapter of American Bikers Aimed Toward Education (ABATE) for making these summer concerts possible.





Tribute to Our Shining Stars (continued from page 1)

Syracuse

Pat Cudd was selected as the Syracuse VA Medical Center Volunteer of the Year. Pat has been volunteering at the VA Medical Center since April 2001. She starts her day in the Transitional Care Unit (TCU) where she is instrumental in encouraging patients to participate in the recreational activities. Pat is known in TCU for taking the extra effort to encourage even the most reluctant patient to participate. Pat then goes to the laboratory where she assists staff with a variety of clerical activities. Her watchful eye for detail goes above and beyond what is expected of her.

Western New York

The VA Western New York

Healthcare System had some substantial hourly awards.

Raymond Lodyga, Buffalo, 27,500 Hour Award, has volunteered for the past 20 years. He is affiliated with Destroyer Escort Sailors Association, AMVETS, and the Disabled American Veterans. He serves as the Deputy Representative for Destroyer Escort Sailors Association. He volunteers at the Volunteer Office, and evenings with recreational therapy. Ray volunteers five days a week, often arriving as early as 6:30 a.m. and rarely ever leaving before 4:30 p.m.

Rocco (Rocky) Porcellio, Buffalo, 27,500 Hour Award, began volunteering in April 1988. Rocco volunteers in Nuclear Medicine where he serves as the receptionist and assists with various clerical duties five days a week. Rocky is the Deputy

Representative for the Fleet Reserve Association and is affiliated with the U.S. Submarine Veterans - World War II.

Maryanna Sitzlow, Batavia, 30,000 Hour Award, joined the volunteer program in 1983 and has helped in the Health Information Processing Unit, Medical Care Cost Funds, Recreation Service and the Volunteer Office. She also helps with Sunday chapel services. Maryanna is the Representative for the Military Order of the Cootie Auxiliary, as well as an active member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary.

Although this article recognizes just a few of our precious resources - our volunteers - we honor each and every one of you for your selfless acts of kindness and dedication to our nation's veterans. Thank you for all that you do!



VA Healthcare Network
Upstate New York
Network 2 Communications
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Rochester, New York 14620

PRESORTED STANDARD
U.S. POSTAL PAID
Permit No. 41
Bath, NY 14810

Official Business
Penalty for private use
\$300