

Source

A Newsletter for the Patients, Volunteers & Staff of the VA Southern Oregon Rehabilitation Center and Clinics



**VA SORCC Welcomes!
Dr. Sheila Meuse**

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The VA SORCC welcomes submission of articles of interest to our readers. The editor reserves the right to use and edit all contributed articles. Views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Administrative Boards, Editorial Staff, or Department of Veterans Affairs.

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A Message From The

Director

Please Welcome! Sheila A. Meuse, Ph.D., to the VA SORCC. Dr. Meuse was selected as the new Associate Director and began her new role on January 3, 2010.

Dr. Meuse received her Master of Arts and Doctor of Philosophy degrees in Speech Communication from The University of Texas at Austin and was a member of the Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi. She received her undergraduate education at the University of Connecticut.

With over 26 years of federal service, Dr. Meuse has held varied appointments including Acting Associate and Acting Assistant Director at the Charleston (South Carolina) VA Medical Center and as Associate Director Operations with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). She began her career in VA at Central Texas as a student trainee and as a Speech-Language Pathologist. She later obtained additional graduate education in Healthcare Administration from the University of Alabama at Birmingham and the University of Mary-Hardin Baylor and served as a Health Systems Specialist at Central Texas. Other assignments have included Chief Business Office at the Central Florida VA Health Care System (Tampa), Executive Assistant to the VISN 7 Deputy Network Director, and Site Administrator (Montgomery campus) at the Central Alabama VA Health Care System.

Dr. Meuse has held faculty appointments including Assistant Professor, West Virginia University, and Adjunct Assistant Professor, Texas A&M University College of Medicine. She has served as field experience liaison for MBA students from Baylor University and MPH students from the University of South Florida.

Dr. Meuse is a member of the Executive Career Field Candidate Development Program (ECFCDP) class of 2008. She is a past graduate of the VA Management Development Program, the Health Systems Specialist Trainee Program, and the VISN 8 Leaders of the 21st Century Leadership Development Program. She is a member of the American College of Healthcare Executives.

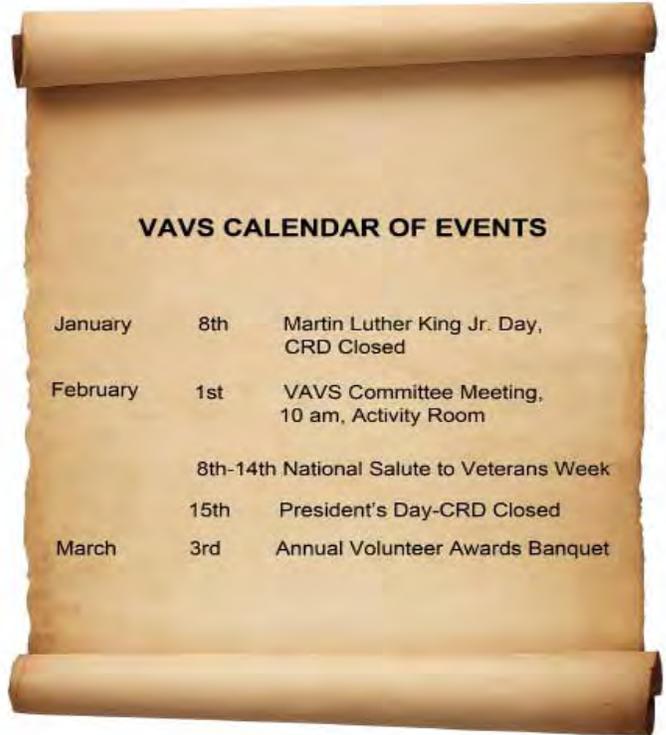
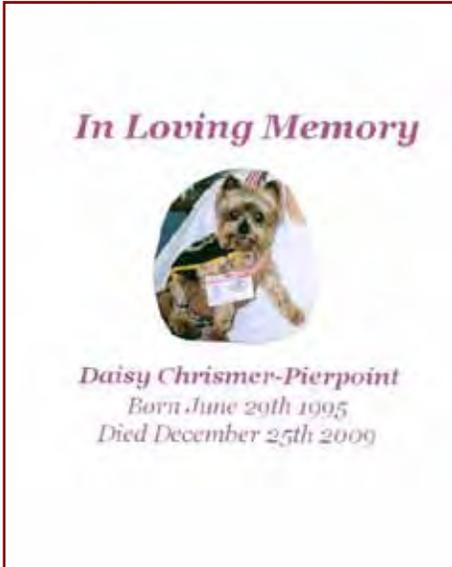
Max E. McIntosh, PhD, MBA
Director





Thank You Volunteers!!!

For All That You Do



VA Volunteers

Continue To Put Smiles On Veterans Faces

Annelise Weston, M.S.W., coordinator for the Volunteer Caregiver Program at the VA, is happy to announce that volunteers continue to bring smiles to the faces of our honored Veterans and their caregivers living in the community. The Volunteer Caregiver Program was created to meet the needs of our aging Veteran population. "It is estimated that by the year 2050, more than one out of every five people will be age 65 or older. Those over the age of 85 remain the fastest growing segment.

Currently, there are seven dedicated volunteers who share their time in a variety of unique ways. After getting to know the Veteran, volunteers find their own creative ways to make a difference. To this date, the Caregiver Volunteers have touched the lives of twenty-six Veterans.

Jim Bausano, one of the program's Caregiver Volunteers, has made such a difference in one Veteran's life. Annelise received a wonderful e-mail from Susan, the daughter of one of the Veterans Jim visits. She expressed how much Jim means to the whole family. "He has been so wonderful for my dad's mental health. Dad has been surrounded by women for ages, and having a man to speak with really gives him something to look forward to. They talk about everything, including the war, which has helped dad with his PTSD. Jim has stuck with my dad through the loss of his wife, a move to a nursing home and now as he transitions to assisted living. Jim is a friendly and outgoing person, quiet and gentle, which is the perfect match for dad's needs. Thank you so much for this program and for sending Jim, who comes all the way from Eagle Point to Ashland every week. He is a great asset to your program." said Susan.



The program hopes to expand the number of Veterans they serve in the community and are actively seeking more volunteers. Home visits to Veterans are a rewarding way to volunteer close to your home for as little as one hour. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Voluntary Services at 541-826-2111, extension 3796.



Residents Gift Wrap

and Residents Holiday Thanks

In preparation for the Residents Holiday Party, (photos page 4) the volunteers (below) once more get together with gift items donated through Veterans Service Organizations and community businesses, to prepare a very nice "Gift Bag" for the nearly 500 resident Veterans. The gifts included everything from candy and other goodies to socks and wallets. (bottom left) While the volunteers were preparing for the Resident Holiday Party, Benjamin Wachter gets the party started early by sharing gifts and treats in the Library with Residential Veteran David Embry and throughout the facility. Benjamin and his friends and family have been coming out to the facility for the past year with cards, gifts and treats for the Residential Veterans to say "Thank You" for all that you do.



Jennifer Ferro and Tom Marshall: Photo by Rhonda Haney



Virginia Martin and Phyllis Eichen: Photo by Orville Hector



Francis Rowan: Photo by Rhonda Haney



Happy New Year!

Residents Holiday Party Photos

Photos by Tom Marshall



The Disabled American Veterans (DAV) selected 12 outstanding young volunteers to receive cash awards under the Jesse Brown Memorial Youth Scholarship Program. The first place scholarship of \$15,000 was awarded to Jamal Donte' Childs of Washington, D.C., who contributed 399 hours of volunteers service at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Medical Center. The second place scholarship of \$10,000 went to Andrew Theodore Kozel who volunteers at the San Antonio, Texas VA Medical Center. Two third place awards of \$7,500 went to Christian Allen Trent of Lexington, Kentucky, and Jeralyn G. Westercamp of Iowa City, Iowa. Eight others received \$5,000 scholarships including our very own Alexis B. Phillips, who volunteered 159 hours and to date has volunteered a total of 487 hours. The Jesse Brown Memorial Youth Scholarship Program honors deserving young people who have donated their time and compassion to sick and disabled Veterans in their communities through the DAV Voluntary Service Program. "This program rewards and encourages young leaders who take the time to serve disabled veterans in their community. At the same time, these future leaders are improving the morale of deserving Veterans where they serve," said DAV National Commander Raymond Dempsey. "Many of the young men and women who receive these scholarships go on to use their education to continue the work they began as volunteers." If you are interested in becoming a volunteer at the VA SORCC please contact Voluntary Services at 541-826-2111 extension 3796.



Alexis Phillips: Photo by Dalton Maurin

Day Treatment Program Holiday Party

by Charles A. Moore, Ph.D.

No group has been more faithful to "tradition" than the Ashland Elks and Friends as they lovingly have provided a Holiday Party at the SORCC for the Day Treatment Program since it opened in 2001. This year was no exception as 40 Elks and Friends hauled in Santa's sleigh filled with goodies for our honored Veterans.

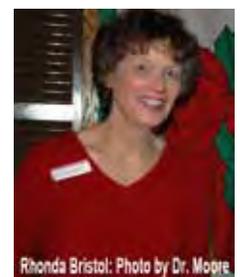
The festivities started with appetizers while Christmas music was being provided by DTP'S own Dom U Jam Band (Ken Thornton – Drums, Rob Golden – Sax, and Charles Moore – Accordion). The second eclectic music set was provided by Elks Dennis Freeze, Jana Kolsban and Ken Thornton. Later Donna Sabin hosted a Christmas sing-along. Festivities included table games, social interaction, and background music. Everyone was a winner at the favorite annual Christmas Card Bingo called by Carol Berger, DTP's Occupational therapist. Rhonda Brustol and Michael Golden, of the Elks orchestrated a wonderfully relaxed, celebratory atmosphere. Veterans received their gifts and had a turn at the 50 foot long gift table. Rhonda Brustol and Polly Stonier lead the year-long fundraising that helped support this year's party. Other contributors included Shop and Kart and Jim Potter of Rooster's Restaurant made all the food tremendously worth eating and eating and eating.

This year the traditional buffet line was replaced by a full-service, sit down, relax-and-be-served dinner. This change seemed to promote even greater interaction and enjoyable conversation between the Veterans and the volunteers. It also foreshadowed the fact that time moves on and traditions change to meet the new realities. This was no longer strictly a Day Treatment party. The 52 Veterans participating were Day Treatment Program graduates, members who had transferred to the new Activities Program and Veterans who had transitioned from the discontinued Day Treatment Program to the new Psychosocial Rehabilitation and Recovery Program (PRRC). The Elks and Friends plan to continue their tradition of honoring our Veterans as they explore new ideas and create wonderful new "traditions" of celebration. Thank You Elks and Friends!

Tradition...Tradition...



Michael Golden: Photo by Dr. Moore



Rhonda Brustol: Photo by Dr. Moore



Elks Volunteers Serves Up Veterans: Photo by Dr. Moore

Community Integration Program

The community Integration Program is designed as a safety and supportive system for Veterans moving from an inpatient setting to a more independent community setting. This program is designed to help Veterans transition into their community with an increased sense of accomplishment, self esteem, independence, pride and ownership while being connected to extra community supports and resources.

The program is designed to:

- Provide services that focus on the Veteran's strengths, abilities, needs, and preferences rather than on illness and symptoms.
- Provide services that address medical conditions, mental illness, addiction, and psychosocial issues.
- Facilitate the transition to safe, affordable, and appropriate community housing.
- Assist Veterans in choosing, accessing, and utilizing the community and natural supports needed to be independent, self-supporting, and successful in their lives.

What Services are available in the Community Integration Program?

- Problem solving
- Social skills training
- Psycho-educational groups
- Symptom management and recovery groups
- Healthy relationships
- WRAP (Wellness Recovery Action Plan Class)
- VET 2 VET support groups in the community:

Tuesdays

**6:30 PM – 7:30 PM at RCC downtown Medford,
building G room 124**

- VET 2 VET Support groups at the SORCC
- Develop sober leisure skills and enhance self-esteem
- Budgeting and stabilization of finances
- Family psycho-educational and family educational programs
- Peer support service: Peer support groups are offered on a weekly basis in the community. These groups are designed as a gathering place to address issues that the Veteran is struggling with. Peers run the group with a facilitator.

For more information on additional group locations contact:

Jody Parrott 541-826-2111, extension 3183, Building 222, Room 110 and Chris McKennett, extension 3891, Room 104.



“As a Volunteer this is a great opportunity to offer support and give back to your fellow Veteran who can be helped by your wisdom and experience”
Jody Parrott

H1N1 Pandemic Flu Vaccine

by Yvonne Chilcoat, Infection Control/Employee Health

The VA SORCC now has H1N1 Pandemic Flu vaccine available for all Veterans. Even though there have been fewer cases of H1N1 influenza reported recently, it is still the primary type of influenza circulating nationwide. If you belong to a high risk group you are especially vulnerable and should consider vaccination.

Persons with chronic diseases or weakened immune systems are at risk for serious complications if they contract H1N1 flu. American Indians and Alaska Natives have been found to have a higher death rate and should consider being vaccinated as soon as possible. Women who are pregnant are at high risk for serious complications, including premature delivery. Persons who live with or care for infants less than 6 months of age should get vaccinated to protect them from becoming ill.

***Protect yourself.
Protect your loved ones. Protect the most vulnerable among us. Get vaccinated today!***

There are three forms of vaccine available at the SORCC: regular flu shots like those for seasonal flu, preservative-free flu shots which are recommended for pregnant women and nasal spray. The nasal spray can only be given to healthy persons up to 49 years of age who will not be coming into contact with anyone who has a weakened immune system.



Esteamed Bean Espresso Shop
Warm up during the cold season with a hot amaretto or latte from the Esteamed Bean Espresso Shop, which are available in many flavors such as amaretto cranberry or Amaretto mocha, and Ginger bread Latte. Mocha and Lattes are: 12 oz. - \$2.25 16 oz. - \$2.75 20 oz. - \$3.25.
located in building 220, next to the Theater. 7:30 AM-4:00 PM, Monday-Friday

The Esteamed Bean Espresso shop is a Compensated Work Therapy (CWT) program

Privacy Laws

Are You Doing Your Part As A VA Employee?

by Bernice Reber, OI&T, Field Information Security

In November, sixteen employees were fired from the state operated Harris County Hospital in Houston, Texas, for alleged privacy law violations. Employees were fired for unauthorized access of the medical records of an employee at the hospital, who later became a patient.

Department of Veterans Affairs employees are strictly prohibited from the unauthorized accessing of any claims, medical and/or personnel files. Accessing the files of family, friends, colleagues, and notable individuals may be very tempting to those curious and/or concerned, but these actions are illegal and a violation of VA policy.



Learn from others. Dont become a violator of these laws and regulations. Respect the privacy of others!

Every year during the holiday season drunken driving increases dramatically. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) 37,261 people died in traffic crashes in 2008 in the United States, including an estimated 11,773 people who died in alcohol-impaired driving crashes. These deaths constitute 31.6 percent of the 37,261 for the cost of \$51 billion annually (Source: NHTSA, 2009).

The newly termed "buzz driving" is when someone drives knowing they have a buzz of alcohol but think they are ok to drive or below the legal limit. The buzzed driver is one who drinks and drives, but does not consider himself a hazard on the roadway or a drunk driver because "only a few" drinks are consumed. Impaired driving is no accident Truth is, most times buzz drivers are over .08 and in the state of Oregon you can still get a DUI with a BA under .08 if you appear impaired.

Law enforcement agencies don't just look at your BA level, they also look at you as an individual driver and assess whether you are impaired and should not be driving. You can blow a .05 and still receive a DUI if you appear to not be able to handle your vehicle appropriately and are a danger to yourself and others on the road. Anytime you have anything in your system that affects your ability to react to other cars, road conditions, and weather, you can be cited even arrested. This includes cold medicine, prescription medications, and prescription narcotics.

There are two types of DUI offenses. The one of which is a "less safe" driver violation. When someone is charged as a less safe driver, the prosecution must prove that the driver was impaired by alcohol or drugs to the extent that it made the driver less safe on the road. The arresting officer can make his or her case by testifying about the condition and/or appearance of the driver at the time of the arrest (i.e., bloodshot eyes, slurred speech, smell of alcohol) as well as any unsafe driving actions the defendant made.

Despite recent reductions in fatalities, impaired driving remains one of America's deadliest social problems. In 2004, nearly 13,000 drivers or motorcycle operators died in crashes with a BAC level of .08 or above- the illegal limit in all states. Most people don't intend to drive home drunk, but too many find themselves at the end of the night without a sober designated driver. Unfortunately, many of these drivers convince themselves and friends that they are able to drive with the comment, "I'm okay, I'm just buzzed."(NHTSA).

This year, the U.S. Department of Transportation is expanding on the "Friends Don't Let Friends Drive Drunk" campaign to include "Buzzed Driving is Drunk Driving." The "Friends" message, designed for the friend or family member, asks them to take the keys of an impaired driver. The new campaign shifts the message to personal responsibility, by talking to the impaired driver him- or herself, those who think it's acceptable to get behind the wheel after they've had enough to drink to feel "buzzed".

In an effort to make our roads safer, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, or NHTSA, did some investigating and found that young men between the ages of 18 and 34 were responsible for the vast majority of drunk-driving accidents. But when asked, these young men made a distinction between being drunk and being buzzed. "Everyone understands dancing-with-a-lampshade drunk and says they would never drive like that. But they do drive with a buzz on because they don't believe they are impaired," said Robin Mayer of the NHTSA. These men defined "buzzed" as having a couple of beers, but when pressed, "A couple of beers" were more like "eight to 10 beers."

Impaired driving is no accident – nor is it a victimless crime. Much of the tragedy that comes from impaired driving crashes could be prevented if everyone would take a few simple precautions such as planning ahead with a designated driver, giving your keys to someone, calling a taxi, call a friend, or just don't use.





This Year, Challenge Yourself to Get Healthy!

On January 11th, sixty employees attended the 2010 New Year's Resolution Employee Challenge. Employees were able to sign-up for the six week challenge, pick-up educational materials, view healthy displays, learn about MyHealtheVet, walk a MOVE walking route, and enjoy healthy refreshments. Employees were encouraged to commit to either: losing weight, increasing physical activity, or achieving other health goals. If you didn't attend the kick-off event, you can access everything you need to sign-up for the challenge, on the MOVE! Website: www.move.va.gov For more information on the MOVE program, please contact MOVE representatives Katie 541-826-2111 ext. 3965 or Paula at ext. 3961.



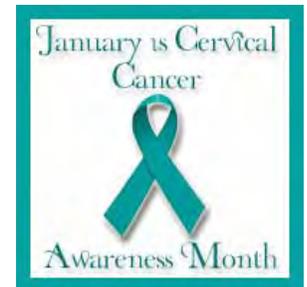
Kati Dodd/MOVE Coordinator

January Is Cervical Cancer Awareness Month

Cervical cancer was once the number one cause of death in women. Thanks to cervical cancer screening with the Pap test, the number of women in the United States who develop cervical cancer has dropped a great deal. With cervical cancer screening doctors can find cancer early or treat changes in the cervix before they develop into cancer. The VA provides gynecologic care, including routine pelvic exams and cervical cancer screening, to eligible women Veterans. Please talk with your VA provider about cervical cancer screening. Your provider can schedule your Pap test at a VA facility or refer you to an outside provider for testing.

The Department of Veterans Affairs understands the health care needs of Women Veterans and is committed to meeting these needs. Women Veterans served and they deserve the best quality care.

Call your local VA for information on eligibility or enrollment to set up an appointment for cervical cancer screening at: 541-826-2111 Ext. 3239



Employee News

Mike Miller, Case Manager for the new Enhanced Range program, is currently working towards his Ph.D. at the Institute for Clinical Social Work in Chicago. Mike started his third year in October of a four year program. Mike was recently chosen Student of the Year by the President of the Institute. The President drafts a letter to the donors and the general community of the Institute, with a brief profile of the student along with where the student works and significant clinical work the student is involved in. Mike is the first student from the West and from Oregon to be chosen. The SORCC will be highlighted briefly along with the clinical work Mike is currently involved in serving our Veterans. Recently, the Institute was approved for Veterans to use the GI bill for them to pursue a doctoral degree. Four active duty social workers have signed up for the program and the school is in the process of developing a separate curriculum for a Veterans Affairs specialization forth which Mike is also assisting. "I am honored to have been chosen for this but am more honored to be able to put the SORCC on the clinical map and let my colleagues and staff at the Institute know of the amazing work that all of us are doing for our Veterans in Southern Oregon," said Mike.



Mike Miller: Photo by Orville

Director's Holiday Open House and Tree Lighting

Photos by Orville Hector

The Director's Holiday Season Open House held on December 2, which was once again sponsored by the Service Chiefs, gave employees a chance to socialize with co-workers. The event was followed by the annual tree lighting by Dr. McIntosh and songs performed by Shady Point E.D.A. Elementary School, directed by Connie Allred.





FREE!
FAMILY-TO-FAMILY

Class on Mental Illness including PTSD * 12 WEEK SERIES

WHEN: FEBRUARY 22 MAY 10: From 6:30pm 9:00 pm on **MONDAY EVENINGS**

WHERE: Southern Oregon Rehabilitation Center and Clinics, White City, OR

WHO: Families, Significant Others, Friends, and Caregivers

PRESENTERS: NAMI TRAINED facilitators with lived experience of family members in need.

HOPE, RESPECT, EMPOWERMENT, RESPONSIBILITY, AWARENESS OF STRENGTHS, & SELF-DIRECTION

Those are some of the qualities that help families and individuals prevail over the challenges they face.

CONTENT: Includes information on diagnosis and treatment options for schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, major depression, borderline personality disorder, PTSD, co-occurring brain disorders and substance abuse. Also included are segments on **communication, advocacy and coping skills for family and friends** of people living with mental illness and PTSD. *Coffee and refreshments every meeting*



FOR DETAILS: contact NAMI-Southern Oregon Library at **541-774-7872** leave voice mail if library closed

Wolfgang Agotta, Patient Advocate
Gail German-Rightnour, Patient Representative

Can help you with: Compliments, complaints or unmet needs. If you have SORCC policies and procedures questions not answered elsewhere, come see us we have an open door policy. Our hours are:

7:00a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Monday—Thursday
Building 201, Room 272 and 274
Ext. 3657 (Wolfgang)
Ext. 7504 (Gail)

