

Source

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

Three Stooges



Voluntary Services Annual Banquet

INSIDE

Cover.....	2
Women's History Month.....	9
Employee Spotlight	5
The Source of a Great Man.....	13

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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

Our Volunteers are Our Brightest Stars!

What is a volunteer? We all know what the word means, but let's take time to really think about our VA Volunteers and their impact. From the moment we walk in the door of the facility, we realize that without volunteers, life at the VA and for our Veterans would not be the same.



Our volunteers take time every day to make life better for our residents and outpatients, including activities such as greeting and reception, providing transportation, special projects, and planning, hosting, and participating in innumerable special events.

Volunteers serve as inspiration to our patients and our staff. I think of Sue, a young woman who has difficulty walking due to a medical condition. Although Sue herself is not a Veteran, her dad was a Veteran. Sue works every day as a volunteer assisting with managing patient concerns and problem-solving.

Volunteers serve as examples of citizenship and community. Our volunteers enhance the quality of life for all of us in the community. I recently became aware of the history of our golf course here at the SORCC. Without the support and dedication of our volunteers we would be unable to continue to operate the golf course for the benefit of our residents and outpatients. I heard how our volunteers established and now sustain the golf course project as an all-volunteer operation. This work exemplifies the talent, skills, and commitment of our volunteers in working together to improve our Veteran community.

Every day our Veterans and staff are positively impacted by the hard work of our volunteers. I'm reminded of the number of hours and years our volunteers individually and collectively contribute. A number of our volunteers have participated in the program for over 25 years and for thousands of hours. Volunteers work together to make a difference and are essential to our success.

Serving our Nation's Veterans alongside our dedicated volunteers is a privilege and an honor. Our VA Volunteers represent the highest level of commitment to our nation's deserving Veterans. They are truly our brightest stars.

Sheila A. Meuse, PhD
Acting Director

A Message From The

Chief, Community Resources/Public Affairs

Dear Volunteers:

"There's nothing stronger than the heart of a volunteer", said Actor Alec Baldwin in his role as an Army Air Corps Captain while taking cover from enemy fire in one of the final scenes in the movie Pearl Harbor. Hollywood has produced, fictionally and factually, many movies about American soldiers and the wars America battles. But in VA, staff and volunteers witness the real outcomes of war. Daily reminders that freedom is not free and that the heavy price was paid in full by our Veterans.

I find interesting correlations exist between American soldiers and VA Volunteers. Both possess strong wills and indomitable spirits. Both believe in country and duty without question. Both epitomize the words honor and respect. Both are patriots and humanitarians. The question of both is not "What's in it for me?" but rather "What can I do to make a difference?" And, reward for both is certainly not bright lights, fame or fortune. Reward for both is in unselfish giving.

Every day is one more day closer to a new chance at healthier, happier lives for our Veterans and their families thanks in tremendous part to your volunteer acts of compassion and genuine caring.



Anna L. Diehl

Anna L. Diehl
Chief, Community Resources/Public Affairs



John Howard (left) and Dr. Meuse (right) present Rhonda Bristol with commendation award



(left) Al Link received Star Award (center) Sandra Wright received Silver Bowl Award and (right) Mary Ann Powers received Eagle Award for 25 years of services



The Greatest Stars of All Time

And The Awards Go To...

50 Hour "Shirley Temple" Youth Award - Lisa Higgins, Tabitha Newcomb, Miriam Sevilla

100 Hour "Tatum O'Neal" Youth Award - Brian Harrel, Jordan Marshall, Brod McLaughlin, Bradley Miller, Veronica Sagert, Amber Wright

150 Hour "Keisha Castle-Hughes" Youth Award - Kaily Smith

300 Hour "Marlee Matlin" Youth Award - Rachael Buck, Angie Kalivas, Brittney Mellor, Brittney Woods

500 Hour "Jackie Cooper" Youth Award - Alexis Phillips
(No YOUTH award photos)

100 Hour "Betty Davis" Award - Michele Boddicker-Scheffler, Rhonda Brustol, Denis de Dici, Dustin DeVlaeminck, Antonio "Tony" Diaz, Donald Dietl, Mae Donaldson, Blanche Douma, Fred Douma, Karl Eddings, Michael "Ike" Eichele, Susan Eikenbary, Edward Fenner, Mark Flynn, Jack "John" Gallagher, Ernie Gallo, Steven Graham, Rhonda Guches, Li Harder, Melvin Harder, Lowrey "Larry" Harlan, Thomas Haro, Anne Haynes, Mark Hellervik, Josef Holec, Thomas Holland, Richard "Rick" Leffler, Michael Lockett, Melvin "Joe" Malone, Ellaine Manalo-Strickland, Donald McCasland, Patrick "Rick" McMullen, John Merrill, Ralph Miller, John Misenhimer, Linda Rae Barker Monroe, Eric Niemeyer, Mike Nowland, Loren Otto, Elizabeth "Beth" Petery, Thomas Piete, Thomas Potter III, Micheal Prince, Patricia Rebello, Bonnie Rishforth, Jesse Rosenzweig, Thomas Santrizos, Mike Thompson, Allen Turner, Gary Wagner, Teresa Wilkinson, Oscar Willis, Stanley Wright, Bonnie Yates

300 Hour "Gary Cooper" Award - Ronald Ballard, Patricia "Pat" Brinkley, Jeffery Brooks, Bud Cordes, Rod Fueston, Donald Gale, Lawrence Gibson, Leon Griffin, Larry Halme, Jess Hanon, Phillip Harbin Jr., Carlos Hinojosa, Max Hodson, Richard Huebner, Gordon Hull, Irvin Johnson, Chuck Kilpatrick, Erlinda "Linda" Lite, William Lite, Gloria Minneci, Marc Monroe, Robert M. Monroe, Robert Moreno, William Morris, Kay Morse, Carl Muck, Nicholas Olivas, Bruce Pellecchia, Dodie Picanso, Carolyn Poole, Erica Savage, Joseph Schacher, Carolyn "Carrie" Schultheiss, Ray Shafer, Lee Siedlecki, Steve Smith, Robert J. Thomas, Randie Velasquez, Marjie Warner, Joyce Wollam, Dick Young

500 Hour "Clark Gable" Award - Thomas Baskin, James Bausano, Edie Berry, Donald Blankenship, Mark Bowen, Fred Conn, Charles Ebner, Alberta Frey, Keith Frey, Steve Gooding, Clyde Halfhill, Christine Hess, Robert "Bob" Huff, Robert "Bob" Jacobsen, Kathleen McLearn, Dorcas Phelan, Frank Reach, Rick Rice, Michael Stewart, Michael Swick

750 Hour "George C. Scott" Award - John Bromstead, John Dollison, Donald Dougherty, David Dunn, Phyllis

Continued on page 4



Continued from page 3

Eichen, Donald Gardner, Frank Kula, Kari Liekkio, Robert Stark, Michael Stoerrle, Gary Zurmuhle

1,000 Hour "Katherine Hepburn" Award - William Ashby, Richard Backes, Robert Coombes, Elsie D'Orazio-Martin, Paul Grimsrud, Roger Johnson, Connie Kidd, Amelia Lucht-Robinson, Rex Nofziger, Gary Payton, Frank Quin, Tom Ruhl, Preecha Srisarakorn, Lois Stephenson, Edward Sullivan, Paula Waldrop, Howard Zelich

1,750 Hour "Humphrey Bogart" Award - Richard Bickel, Sue Faubion, Donald Green, Floyd Hackman, Lois Huntley, Judith Pierpoint, Robert Seaton, Ronald "Jeff" Weigant

2,500 Hour "Clint Eastwood" Award - Jerry Bassett, Glenn Bates, Aiko Briles, Jeanette Gold, Edward Madison, Leslie "Chuck" McGilvray, Michael Reynolds, John Wright

3,750 Hour "Jane Wyman" Award - Raymond Bledsaw II, Edward Mazza, Ronald Stein, Lucile Walden

5,000 Hour "Jessica Tandy" Award - Virginia Murdock, Daniel Stephens

6,250 Hour "Hattie McDaniel" Award - David Pence

7,500 Hour "Sally Field" Award - Glenn "Don" German, Ilene Kiser

Special Awards Presentation

"Caring Critters"
Pet Volunteer Awards

Molly
Dolly
Pinky
Mikey
Myia
Zoe
Jo-Jo
Willy
Basco
Chili
Sage
Bugsy
Guy
Whitney
Foxy Shadow
Duke
Sasha
Friday (the only cat)



(left) are our 5000 hours and 3750 hour awardees: (left) Daniel Stephens, 5000 hours, Lucile Walden, 3750 hours, Ronald Stein, 3750 hours, Virginia Murdock, 5000 hours and presenter (right) Stacy Webster-Wharton



(below) Are the Caring Critters Pet Awards being accepted by their mommies and was presented by (left) Sharon "Jake Blues" Kalvel. The Caring Critters Poster was designed by Dona (front center) and her daughter Sally.

Continue on page 5

Continued from page 4

Mileage Award - Virginia Murdock-17,062

Honorable Mention Mileage Awards - Robert Seaton (Roseburg), Carl Muck (Grants Pass), Ron Stein (Klamath Falls), William Reilly (Local)

10,000 Hour Silver Bowl Honor Award - Sandra Wright

15,000 Hour Exceptional Honor Medallion Award - Al Inlow (Also received top honor "Star" award)

25 Years Award - Aiko Briles, Mary Anne Powers

Extraordinary Contribution Awards - Eloise Anderson, Rhonda Brustol

"Jack Pallance" Years & Hours Certificates - Gary "Don" Boone, Brian Busch, Joyce Button, Don Davis, Garth Ellard, Leland Everist, Tom Felton, Joseph Fidura, Norma German, Dennis Gloyn, James Holbrook, Irene Hunter, Henry Kahili, Virginia Kula, Don Lystra, Virginia Martin, Deborah Mazza, William Moeggenberg, Clifford Moore, Ted Morehouse, Herbert "Bert" Plannette, Jim Prevatt, James Rainery, Jim Rawles, William Reilly, Hayden Robertson Jr., Chuck Shinn, Coral Shinn, Barbara Shrode, Robert Silva, Dona Spence, Paul Stark, Angelo Trotta, Johnnie Waldrop, Beverly Washburn, J.J. Weigant, Patricia Wright, Herm Yates, Dolly Yount



(Above Left) Dan Kelly presented Ilene Kiser with a 3750 hour pen and David Pence with a 7500 hour award.

(Above Right) John Howard, (Representing Congressman Walden) and (Right) Dr. Sheila Meuse, VA Acting Director, presented Al Inlow (Center) with the 15,000 Exceptional Honor Medallion Award.

(Below Left) Dr. Randy Nelson presented, (from Left to Right) Carl Muck, Robert Seaton, Virginia Murdock and Ron Stein with Mileage awards.



Best Costume Volunteers



1st Place Ms. "Lucille Ball" 19" Flat Screen



2nd Place Laurel "Scarecrow" Warden
DVD Player

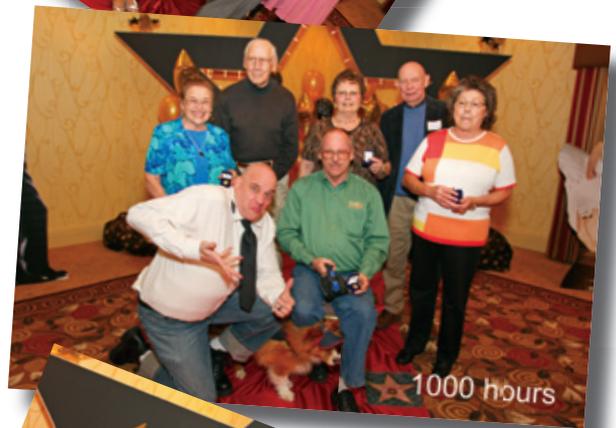


3rd Place Chuck "Dracula" McGilvray CD/MP3 Player



Honorable Mention
Eddie "Baby" Jane Huddon Berry

...more Voluntary Service Award Photos



Photos of the stars were provided by our "Paparazzi" Volunteer Photographers, Dalton Maurin, Orville Hector and Adam Bickel



“Star”

Employees



James "Howdy Doody" Cunningham



Randy "Al Pacino" Nelson and Sharon "Jake Kewels"



Karen "Holly Golightly" Allen



"Special Agent" Tom Marshall



"Actress" Anna Diehl
Official Awards Presenter



Rhonda "Mammy" Haney

Women's History Month

She Served So That We Could Live Free

She Deserves...

The Women Veterans Health Program is making dramatic progress in enhancing women's health care at the SORCC and other VA facilities. Women constitute nearly 15 percent of today's active duty troops and represent the fastest growing subpopulation of the U.S. military. Correspondingly, women are enrolling in the VA health care system at record levels. Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom have added approximately 100,000 women Veterans to the rolls. Based on Department of Defense active duty rosters, the number of women Veterans will continue to climb.

Understandably, most VA health care facilities were built with men in mind. For decades, the system was accustomed to serving mostly men. The landscape is now changing and more women Veterans, young and old, are turning to VA for health care.

The Women Veterans Strategic Health Care Group, VA Central Office, has set a goal of ensuring that all women Veterans receive timely, equitable, high-quality health care services at VA facilities. This significant effort involves everything from changing the perception that VA health facilities serve only men to making certain that facilities have the necessary women's health equipment and clinical expertise to offer women comprehensive care with adequate privacy.



Specifically, the Women Veterans Health mission is to assure that all eligible women veterans requesting VA care receive:

- comprehensive primary care by a proficient and interested primary care provider
- privacy, security, dignity and sensitivity to gender-specific needs
- the right care in the right place and time
- state-of-the-art health care equipment and technology
- highest quality preventive and clinical care

Continued on page 10

Performance data show gaps between the quality of care that women and men receive at VA. Some women Veterans are forced to travel long distances to reach a VA facility that offers appropriate gender specific care. Misconceptions exist; many women Veterans believe that they must have served overseas or in a war zone before they can be called “Veterans,” regardless of the number of years served. These women are less likely to identify with VA or come to a VA facility for health care, even when they lack other health care options. The VA needs to reach out to these women Veterans.

The Women Veterans Health program outreach efforts focus on changing this. The motto of the Women’s Health Program is “She served, she deserves ...,” which is included on all program materials distributed inside and outside VA facilities throughout the nation. Women Veterans program managers at the SORCC and other facilities are collaborating with Veterans groups and Programs in their communities to educate women Veterans about VA services available to them.

In July 2009 a female Army Veteran stated before the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee, “The confusion about what role women play in war today extends beyond the general public. Even VA employees are still sometimes unclear about the nature of modern warfare, which presents challenges for women seeking care. For example, being in combat is linked to post-traumatic stress disorder, but since women are supposedly barred from combat, they may face challenges proving that their PTSD is service-connected. It is vital that all VA employees, particularly health care providers, fully understand that women do see combat.”

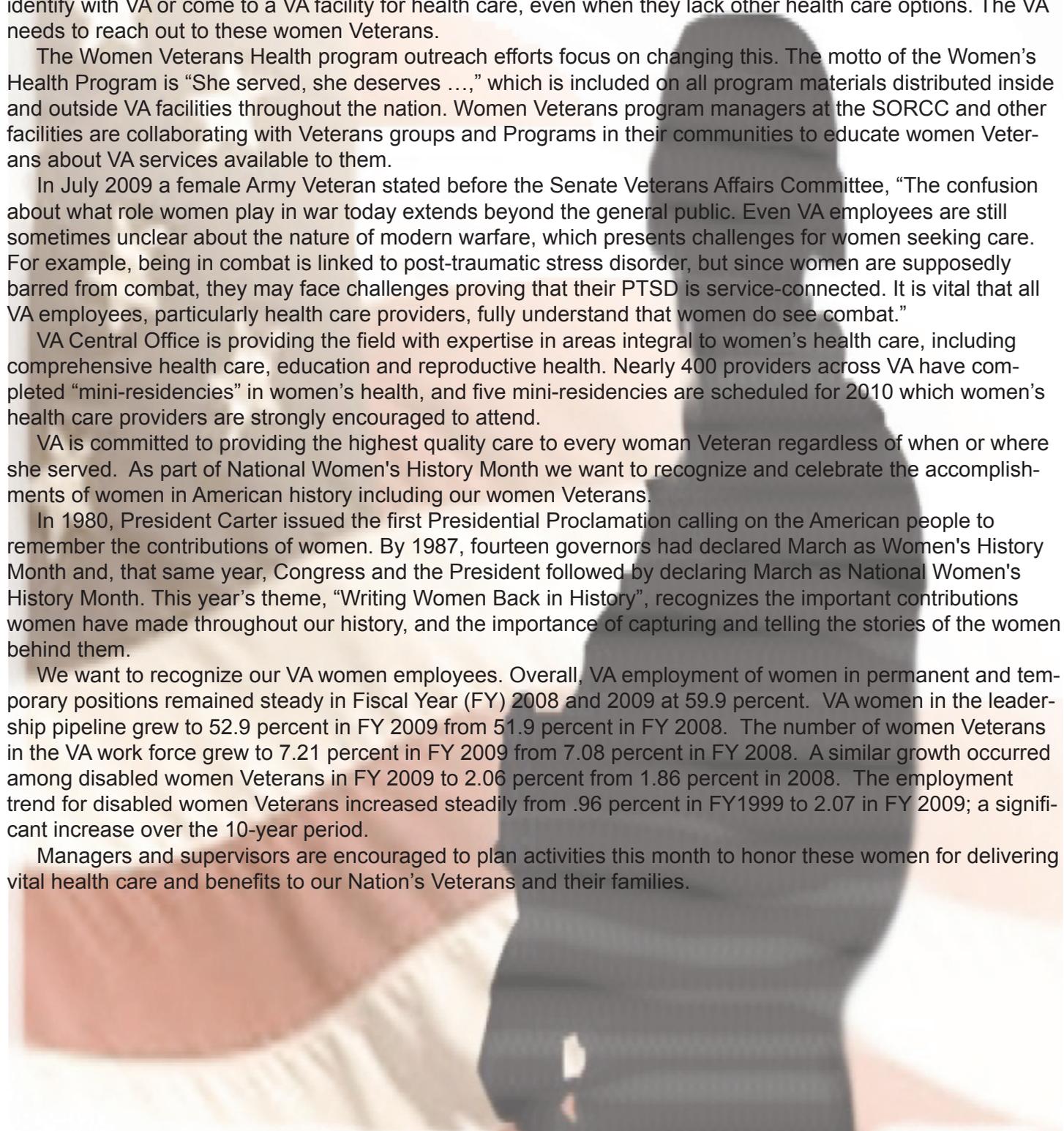
VA Central Office is providing the field with expertise in areas integral to women’s health care, including comprehensive health care, education and reproductive health. Nearly 400 providers across VA have completed “mini-residencies” in women’s health, and five mini-residencies are scheduled for 2010 which women’s health care providers are strongly encouraged to attend.

VA is committed to providing the highest quality care to every woman Veteran regardless of when or where she served. As part of National Women’s History Month we want to recognize and celebrate the accomplishments of women in American history including our women Veterans.

In 1980, President Carter issued the first Presidential Proclamation calling on the American people to remember the contributions of women. By 1987, fourteen governors had declared March as Women’s History Month and, that same year, Congress and the President followed by declaring March as National Women’s History Month. This year’s theme, “Writing Women Back in History”, recognizes the important contributions women have made throughout our history, and the importance of capturing and telling the stories of the women behind them.

We want to recognize our VA women employees. Overall, VA employment of women in permanent and temporary positions remained steady in Fiscal Year (FY) 2008 and 2009 at 59.9 percent. VA women in the leadership pipeline grew to 52.9 percent in FY 2009 from 51.9 percent in FY 2008. The number of women Veterans in the VA work force grew to 7.21 percent in FY 2009 from 7.08 percent in FY 2008. A similar growth occurred among disabled women Veterans in FY 2009 to 2.06 percent from 1.86 percent in 2008. The employment trend for disabled women Veterans increased steadily from .96 percent in FY1999 to 2.07 in FY 2009; a significant increase over the 10-year period.

Managers and supervisors are encouraged to plan activities this month to honor these women for delivering vital health care and benefits to our Nation’s Veterans and their families.



The Key to a Healthful Diet

is Improving Your Nutrition from the Ground Up

Submitted by Katie Dodd

It's common knowledge that a healthful diet is an important part of a healthful lifestyle, but most people have trouble figuring out what to do when planning a complete diet overhaul. During National Nutrition Month®, the American Dietetic Association reminds everyone that an easy way to focus on eating better is to start with the basics: build your nutritional health from the ground up.

“By starting slowly and giving yourself a good foundation, you can work towards a healthier life,” says registered dietitian and ADA spokesperson Toby Smithson. “Change doesn't have to be dramatic to make a difference.”

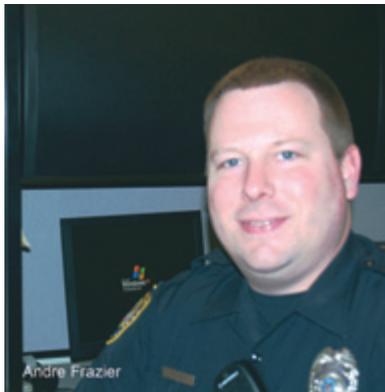


Ways to improve your nutrition from the ground up:

1. Focus on fruits and veggies: “Take a good look at your current diet and you'll probably realize you're not eating enough fruits or vegetables,” says Smithson. “Add a serving each day to one meal and increase it every few weeks. Adding more of these foods into your diet is important whether you buy frozen, fresh or organic.”
2. Look locally: From farmer's markets to community-supported agriculture, you have many options to find new, fresh foods in your area. “This can be a great way to eat well and support your community at the same time,” Smithson says.
3. Make calories count: “Too often, people think of foods as good or bad and that only those on the 'good foods' list are okay to eat,” says Smithson. “When you're choosing between options, focus instead on the one with more of the vitamins and nutrients that you need. Sometimes, foods with fewer calories aren't always the healthiest options.” To figure out how many calories you need to achieve a healthy weight, visit www.mypyramid.gov.
4. Test your taste buds: A healthy eating plan emphasizes fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat or fat-free dairy and includes lean meats, poultry, fish, beans and nuts. “Those are the basics, but within this wide range there are always opportunities to try new things and find new favorites,” Smithson says. “Expand your horizons. Try a fish you've never eaten before or find a new vegetable recipe. By testing yourself, you might find new healthy favorites to add to your regular grocery list.”
5. Trick yourself with treats: “A healthful diet doesn't mean deprivation,” says Smithson. “If you have a sweet tooth, have fruit and yogurt for dessert. If you want a snack in the afternoon, have some trail mix or nuts. There is no reason to go hungry just because you're making healthful changes.”

For more tips on building your healthful diet from the ground up, during National Nutrition Month and all year long, visit www.eatright.org and click on “For the Public.”

The American Dietetic Association is the world's largest organization of food and nutrition professionals. ADA is committed to improving the nation's health and advancing the profession of dietetics through research, education and advocacy. Visit the American Dietetic Association at www.eatright.org.



Employee Spotlight

Andrew Frazier

by Katie M. Dodd



Andrew Frazier has been with the SORCC since February 2007 and has been with the VA Police Department for just over a year. He began his assignment as Customer Service Liaison for the Police Department in November 2009. Andrew was born in Medford, Oregon and raised in Imbler, Oregon and graduated from Imbler High School in a class of 26 students-GO PANTHERS!

Question: What would you like SORCC employees and patients to know about Customer Service?

Answer: I think good customer service is primarily a function of two words: attitude and awareness. The attitude that you project (and trust me, people pick up on it) will have the greatest impact on your ability to successfully perform in a customer service role. With a positive attitude, people will not only be more receptive to your suggested solutions for their problem, but will almost always feel more engaged in the process, and will often present solutions of their own. The second part of the equation, Awareness, is the “force multiplier” of good customer service: Being available and responding to someone’s requests is customer service. Anticipating someone’s need and being proactive to meet that need is great customer service. Any success that I’ve had in my front-line customer service role begins with Attitude and Awareness.

Question: What is your favorite thing about working at the SORCC?

Answer: Having the opportunity to help people problem solve.

Question: Do you have anything else you would like patients to know about you or the police department?

Answer: Yes, there are two things: One, I place a large emphasis on community relations and the use of communication to police effectively. This I feel helps me to continue to always strive to be a better police officer, and two, the police here are very approachable, so please approach us with any problems you might have. If we don’t know the answer, we will make sure you get connected to someone who can.

The Source of a Great *man*

by Residents' Counsel

Craig Greatman, Addiction Therapist, was raised in southern California where he took the High School Equivalency exam in 1986 and joined the Army. He served in the US Army from 1986-1991. Challenges throughout childhood led to a lot of dissonance growing up. Craig began to relieve that dissonance by using alcohol and drugs at the age of eleven. Substance abuse was a regular part of daily life until August 1998. Although brief intermittent stays in out-patient rehabs and jails allowed for glimpses of clean time, sobriety was never fully and truly realized as an option.

Homeless and on the streets of San Francisco and addicted to methamphetamine, Craig found his way to a VA facility in Menlo Park California. The Homeless Veteran Rehabilitation Program (HVRP), an inpatient Cognitive Behavior Therapy treatment facility, was instrumental in helping Craig to regain a sense of purpose and where he received clarity on some very important ideas. One was that living in the truth and relationships of accountability with others was vital to his recovery. Second was that a personal love relationship with Jesus Christ was life changing. Upon graduation from HVRP, Craig entered the field of psychiatric nursing in hopes of someday becoming an Addiction Therapist. "The one thing above everything else that I learned at HVRP was that I am responsible for the choices I make and behavior=intent. I

believe these basic principles are integral to come to grips with for anyone struggling with a substance abuse issue, and something that I have learned to communicate therapeutically to those with whom I work," stated Craig. Although there are many techniques, including motivational interviewing, 12-steps, etc, that are used to help those in recovery grasp these ideas, the plainness of the objective is something that Craig likes to help his clients focus on. Understanding our problems and barriers are important, however, helping others to focus on the solution is Craig's primary motivation. Today, Craig is singularly focused on helping other Veterans with substance abuse issues come to grips with their choices and realize the hope of a better life through personal responsibility and service to others. As an Addiction Therapist, Craig practices using straight talk and asking questions that motivate patients to explore truth and possibilities.



Continued on Page 14

Craig spends his free time leading a Celebrate Recovery ministry at New Beginnings Church, while working towards his Masters in Theology. His hobbies, aside from passionately loving and church community are hunting and writing and has recently begun a non-profit ministry called The Next Right Thing, which was created to engage in providing a solution to homelessness. Craig shared that he believes, "with the tools available through VA services, Veterans around the nation can be instrumental in serving their country, families and themselves with even more success than they did while in uniform." Craig said that he daily finds hope in the Bible and is reminded through every circumstance that is faced on the journey of recovery that love covers a multitude of sins and used Romans 8:28 as a reference for everyday living. "We know that all things work together for the good of those who love God: those who are called according to His purpose" to interview and write about Craig was influenced by his way of teaching SATP with straight talk. While enrolled in SATP, a Residents' Council member witnessed Craig straight talking patients to the degree where they would get mad, only to come to class the next day and say; "you know Craig, you were right yesterday." This happened regularly in class. The Residents' Counsel would like to say, Thank You! Craig, for being a Great Man.

I came to the SORCC at the end of July 2009 with confidence issues, lack of trust in my decision making and little respect for another program. To my advantage the Addiction Therapist assigned to me is a man I have come to admire, who is a valuable asset to the SATP staff at the SORCC. His name is Craig Greatman. *Bruce Bennett, Residents' Council Member*

ology. His hobbies, aside from serving his wife, Lisa, and hunting, playing fantasy football and fishing, playing fantasy football begun a non-profit ministry Inc., which was created to provide a solution to homelessness. Craig shared that he believes, "with the tools available through VA services, Veterans around the nation can be instrumental in serving their country, families and themselves with even more success than they did while in uniform." Craig said that he daily finds hope in the Bible and is reminded through every circumstance that is faced on the journey of recovery that love covers a multitude of sins and used Romans 8:28 as a reference for everyday living. "We know that all things work together for the good of those who love God: those who are called according to His purpose" to interview and write about Craig was influenced by his way of teaching SATP with straight talk. While enrolled in SATP, a Residents' Council member witnessed Craig straight talking patients to the degree where they would get mad, only to come to class the next day and say; "you know Craig, you were right yesterday." This happened regularly in class. The Residents' Counsel would like to say, Thank You! Craig, for being a Great Man.

OEF/OIF Veteran Services

The VA Southern Oregon Rehabilitation Center and Clinics is committed to providing medical care and counseling services for returning OEF/OIF service members. The OEF/OIF Program is designed to serve our returning severely injured and/or seriously ill combat Veterans as they transition into the VA or through standard discharge from their respective service back into the community. Our purpose is to provide service to OEF/OIF Veterans that augment existing services and by bringing the existing services together in an effort to limit and reduce service gaps. These services include assistance with the transition into VA care, advocacy across all services, and case management. All OEF/OIF Veterans that can benefit from any of the services listed above are encouraged to contact the OEF/OIF Program at 541-826-2111 ext 3798.

Establishing Combat Veteran Eligibility

The Department of Veterans Affairs has promoted new eligibility rules that provide Active Component and Reserve Component personnel who served in designated combat zones (since November 11, 1998) with five years of free medical care from the date of separation from active duty if you meet basic eligibility requirements. After the five years of free medical care expires, you may be eligible for VA health care under normal eligibility standards. Refer to the VA website for more info on eligibility standards: <http://www.va.gov/healtheligibility/>.

NOTE: Free medical care refers to all services for related conditions to the Veteran's combat experience that was made worse by the service, started during the service, or is clearly related to service based on the VA clinician's judgment. Co-payments may be charged for treatments of non-combat related conditions.

Military Sexual Trauma

TOP 10 THINGS ALL VA STAFF SHOULD KNOW ABOUT MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA (MST)

1. Military sexual trauma (MST) is sexual assault or repeated, threatening sexual harassment that occurred during a Veteran's military service. MST can occur on or off base and while a Veteran was on or off duty. Perpetrators can be men or women, military personnel or civilians, commanding officers or subordinates, strangers, friends, or intimate partners.

2. A significant number of men and women seen in VA report having experienced MST. About one in five women and one in 100 men have told their VA healthcare provider that they experienced sexual trauma in the military. Though rates of MST are higher among women, because of the disproportionate ratio of men to women in the military there are actually comparable numbers of men and women seen in VA that have experienced MST.

3. Every VA facility has an MST Coordinator who serves as a point person for MST-related issues. He or she can tell you about treatment and other resources available in your area.

This facility's MST Coordinator is: Donna Naglich, MSW, at extension 3824; Bldg 202, Room 217.

4. MST affects both mental and physical health. Sexual trauma is more likely to result in symptoms of PTSD than are most types of trauma, including combat. Although MST can affect Veterans' mental health in a variety of overt and subtle ways, depression and substance abuse are particularly common. MST can also have severe



Continued on page 16

consequences for physical health and is associated with higher rates of headaches, gastrointestinal difficulties, sexual dysfunction, chronic pain, and chronic fatigue.

5. Like any other personal information, a Veteran's MST status should remain confidential. Given that MST is a potentially sensitive topic area, healthcare providers and other staff should make extra efforts to respect Veterans' concerns about privacy.

6. VA Directive requires that healthcare providers screen all Veterans for MST. Most Veterans won't disclose that they experienced MST unless asked about it directly. All VA healthcare providers should thus know how to screen for MST using the MST clinical reminder in CPRS. Information about how to screen can be found in the Provider Training & Education section on the MST Resource Homepage (see below.)

7. Treatment for all mental and physical health conditions related to MST is free. Completing the MST clinical reminder in CPRS activates the MST checkbox in a Veteran's encounter forms, thereby giving him or her access to free MST-related healthcare provider to involved treatment for If in his or her clinical provided, this should be checked on the encounter form. Checking this box notifies the provider that the Veteran should not be charged for the

8. Veterans may be eligible for free MST-related care even if they are not otherwise eligible for VA services. There are special eligibility rules associated with MST and many of the standard requirements related to length of service or financial means do not apply. Veterans connected to have reported the incident(s) at the time, or to have other documentation that MST occurred in or care.



**SORCC MST
Coordinator is:
Donna Naglich, MSW
Bldg 202, Room 217
541-826-2111 Ext. 3824**

care. It is up to the individual determine whether a given visit conditions related to MST or not. In the provider's opinion MST-related care was indicated by checking the MST checkbox on the encounter form associated with the visit. The provider should bill that the Veteran should visit.

eligible for free MST-related care otherwise eligible for VA services. There are special eligibility rules associated with MST requirements related to length of service or financial means do not apply. Veterans connected to have reported the incident(s) at the time, or to have other documentation that MST occurred in or care.

9. Treatment resources, patient education materials, and training opportunities are available on the MST Resource Homepage. Visit <http://vawww.mst.va.gov/> for more information.

10. As a representative of the VA, every staff member has the power to help veterans recover from MST. Veterans can be reluctant to disclose their experiences of MST or ask for help due to fear of other responses. They may feel that hurtful and insensitive reactions of others can be as damaging as the MST itself. Every VA staff member has the power to alleviate these concerns and demonstrate VA's commitment to Veterans' recovery by responding sensitively to inquiries about MST, remaining knowledgeable about VA's MST-related resources, and ensuring that information about Veterans' MST status is kept confidential.

All VA staff members should be familiar with this information. If you have questions, please call the MST Coordinator: Donna Naglich, MSW, at extension 3824.

Walking Your spiritual Journey

by Dr. Charles Moore and Rhonda Haney

It has been said that every physical creation is preceded by a mental creation. One day in July of 2005, SORCC Day Treatment Program Occupational Therapist, Carol Berger, returned from the inspirational experience of witnessing profound changes in behavior by Veterans who had just traveled the labyrinth in Ashland, Oregon. She remarked to Psychologist Charles Moore, at that time the Coordinator of the program, "Wouldn't it be wonderful if we had a Labyrinth right here at Day Treatment instead of having to take Veterans to Ashland?" In those brief hours, the Labyrinth somehow managed to seal its destiny. Soon after, Dr. McIntosh issued the short but definitive statement, "Build It!"

During the months and years to follow we learned that inspired creations don't just get "built." Like seeds they choose a suitable location, germinate, sprout, and become physical realities according to their nature and the whims of synergy. In its own time the Labyrinth adopted a PTSD friendly original design by Charles Moore, adopted a preferred location, and employed many Veterans, SORCC staff, and supportive donors from the community (including generous donations from the Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary, American Legion Auxiliary, Military Order of the Cootie Auxiliary, OHSU School of Nursing, the Non Commissioned Officers Association, and many others) to establish its physical presence.

Soon all Veterans, SORCC staff, and citizens from the general community will be able to participate in the ancient traditions of the Labyrinth. Whether for spiritual, meditative, physical, or mental purposes they can experience the awareness of being on a path that will lead them to their destinations without any trickery or deception. Such an experience is said to be similar to the awareness of staying the course on the path of life with certainty that whatever is around the bend will ultimately be OK. No one knows this better than Tony DeLuca.

Tony became aware of the VA SORCC's labyrinth from his Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) facilitator, but didn't take advantage of it until he had to make a phone call to his daughter to wish her a Happy 14th Birthday. Tony has a hard time with his emotions when speaking to his children on the phone because he misses them. As Tony explains, the guilt of not being more directly in their lives at this time starts to hit him and he can hardly get his words out.

This time, however, Tony thought of going to the labyrinth while talking on the phone to his kids. As he was walking around the brick maze and speaking to them, he was able to focus on the physical act of staying in the maze and he had a lot less of a hard time with his emotions because there wasn't any room or time for those other bad thoughts.

"As I walked and talked on this neat brick maze I could relate to my own life with the straight long path then a few turns to navigate through, then more straight paths. The whole area with the benches and bridges reminds me of my life. Having challenges in my life that I have to cross over a bridge then find the bench to rest for awhile then find the right path and continue my walk until I find the right way. Then I find my exit point to other times and places. But all in all you have to keep on keeping on."

Tony has been here at SORCC for ten months and while he has been here he has learned many things from SATP, ELP, Anger Management and CBT. "These classes have given me many tools to use. It is now up to me to use them. I have made many steps forwards and I will continue slowly so that I don't fall backwards."

A formal dedication of the Labyrinth and its beautiful garden will be held on June 18, 2010.



What is the Thrift Savings Plan?

The Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) is a retirement savings and investment plan for Federal employees, offering the same type of savings and tax benefits offered under 401(k) plans. The purpose of the TSP is to provide retirement income. You may contribute to a regular TSP account, and if eligible, you may also make Catch-Up contributions, if you are age 50 or over and expect to contribute the maximum amount throughout the year. TSP contributions are before-tax and tax-deferred contributions. You will not pay taxes on them until you make a withdrawal.



What part does TSP play in my retirement?

Your TSP contributions are voluntary, and in any amount you choose (subject to certain Internal Revenue Service annual limitations). Your TSP benefits are in addition to your Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) or Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) annuity. If you are a FERS employee, the TSP is an integral part of your retirement package, along with the FERS Basic Annuity and Social Security. If you are a CSRS employee, contributing to TSP will supplement your CSRS annuity.

When can I enroll in TSP?

You may start, change, stop, or restart regular TSP contributions at any time. Elections are effective at the beginning of the pay period following the one in which you submit your election. You may use Employee Express or Form TSP-1 to make your election. You may contribute up to the IRS annual limit to a regular TSP account in any calendar year. You may designate any whole percentage of your basic pay or a specific whole dollar amount.

What are Agency automatic contributions and when do I receive them?

CSRS-covered employees may contribute to TSP; however, only FERS-covered employees are eligible for agency contributions. FERS employees receive an agency automatic 1% contribution and agency matching contributions up to 4%. The agency automatic contribution is equal to 1% of your basic pay and is paid whether or not you contribute your own money. Agency matching contributions apply to the first 5% you contribute, as follows: dollar-for-dollar for the first 3% and 50 cents on the dollar for the next 2%. Contributions you make above 5% of your pay will not be matched, but you will still benefit from before-tax savings and tax-deferred earnings on these contributions. If you reach the IRS annual limit before the end of the year, your own contributions and agency matching contributions will be suspended until the next contribution year.

- New FERS employees are eligible to receive agency contributions immediately upon their appointment to Federal service.
- Rehired employees with a break-in-service of 31 or more full days may sign up for TSP contributions at any time. If covered by FERS, the agency automatic 1% contribution begins immediately upon rehire and the agency matching contribution will begin when you begin contributing your own money.
- Rehired employees with a break in service of less than 31 full days, if previously contributing to TSP, will have their contributions automatically resume based on the last valid contribution election on file. You may submit a new election to change or stop contributions at any time. If not previously contributing, you may sign up to begin TSP contributions at any time.

For additional information go to www.tsp.gov

Employee News

Submitted by: Human Resources

WELCOME ABOARD:

Business Management Office: Eric Wilson, Patient/Travel Funds Clerk
Canteen Service: Calinda James, Clerk/Cashier
Primary Care Patient Service: Dr. Hugh Naylor MD; Connie Johnson, LPN ; Julie Schrick, LPN

MOVING AROUND:

Clinical Support: Cecilia Howard, RN CCHT

RETIREEES:

None this month.

VA SORCC Blood Drive Dates 10:00AM to 4:00PM

**May 20th
July 22nd
September 23rd
November 18th**

In The Theatre



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)

