Sharon Kalvels Receives 2009 Under Secretary for Health Award

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Dear Fellow Employees, Volunteers, Veterans and Friends of VASORCC:

Proud American men and women are serving and sacrificing for freedom around the world as America’s military defends us against terrorism. Many of these Veterans are coming to the VA with special needs and challenges that require the hearts and hands of a new generation of VA volunteers.

White City’s VA SORCC invites citizens young and old to join us in honoring our Veterans and learning more about the VA Volunteer Program during the National Salute to Veterans Week, February 7 – 14. Visit a Veteran at our facility and remind them that their sacrifices are not forgotten.

Every citizen can make a positive difference in the life of a Veteran. Visits from school children and other community groups do much to lift the spirits of our Veterans. We invite every member of our community to participate. Call the Voluntary Service office at 541-826-2111, extension 3585 to schedule a visit and learn how to become a volunteer at the VA SORCC.

Max McIntosh
Director, VA SORCC

“The most persistent and urgent question is ‘What are you doing for others?’”

--Rev. Martin Luther King
I was walking across our campus the other day and exchanged greetings with a veteran. He showed a very positive attitude, and I asked him how his day was going. He said things were great, but that I probably wouldn’t be seeing him around. After being in treatment for several months he was ready to go home to another state. He was happy and excited.

Those are the exchanges that are not only rewarding but also help us remember the value of the work we do every day to support the health and well-being of our veterans. I believe we must sustain our focus on our primary mission to honor America’s Veterans by providing exceptional care that improves their health and well-being. With this focus, we will work together effectively and creatively to overcome barriers and challenges to meet our mission.

During my tours of the campus, I have noticed several construction projects to modern and enhance the therapeutic environment for our residential programs. In addition, we are continuing to expand and improve our outreach and access to veterans through our clinics in Grants Pass and Klamath Falls and our growing Home Based Primary Care Programs.

It is exciting to be part of a dynamic and progressive organization striving to meet the needs of our nation’s heroes. It is my personal mission to support these efforts to provide healthcare second to none and to exercise financial responsibility and the highest standards of professional ethics in all that we do.

In the short time I have been at the SORCC, I have been impressed by the friendliness, dedication, competence and compassion of the staff. It is an honor and a privilege to be working alongside such a well respected group that has such a positive reputation within the VA and with the community.

Sheila Meuse
Associate Director, VA SORCC
Thank You Volunteers!!!
For All That You Do

VA Volunteers
Photo Gallery

VA Voluntary Service
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

This year’s Annual Volunteer Awards Banquet will be held Wednesday, March 3 at the Red Lion Hotel in Medford from 11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. This year’s theme is The Greatest Stars of all Time: The VA Volunteers Oscars awards denoting a Hollywood theme.

VAVS CALENDAR OF EVENTS

February
- 8th-14th National Salute to Veterans Week
- 15th President’s Day-CRD Closed

March
- 3rd Annual Volunteer Awards Banquet

http://vaww.visn20.med.va.gov/white-city/
Sharon Kalvels Receives 2009 Under Secretary of Health Award

Sharon Kalvels, Nutrition and Food Service Chief received the 2009 Under Secretary for Health Award in Nutrition Excellence.

The services provided by Veterans Health Administration (VHA) dietitians have a significant impact on the comprehensiveness and quality of nutrition care. Within VHA, dietitians work collaboratively with interdisciplinary teams to ensure that the nutritional needs of patients are met. Dietitians provide leadership and guidance to ensure quality nutrition and food services are provided for the Veterans served. This award recognizes VHA dietitians whose work has had a significant impact on the provision of patient care services.

This award is given annually and may be issued to any VHA dietitian in an administrative, management, education, or clinical position. The ad hoc selection committee convenes annually by the Under Secretary for Health: it includes representatives from the Office of the Chief Patient Care Services Officer; the Office of the Chief Consultant, Medical Surgical Services, the Office of the Director, Nutrition and Food Services; a nominee from the Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Operations and Management; a facility Director or Associate Director; a field-based administrative dietitian; and a field-based clinical dietitian. This committee is responsible for reviewing all nominations received and making final recommendations to the Under Secretary for Health.

Significant accomplishments by Sharon include providing unprecedented recognition for her staff, development of a strong relationship with American Dietetic Association (ADA) Commission on Accreditation for Dietetics Education (CADE) as a reviewer, completing Fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives, (FACHE) Executive Career Field (ECF) and Leadership VA (LVA) programs, and demonstrating excellent results in the Management Analysis Business Process Re-engineering (MA/BPR) initiative. Sharon was joined by VA SORCC Associate Director, Dr. Sheila Meuse, and her husband, Leo, at the recognition ceremony in Washington, D.C. The award was presented by Dr. Gerald Cross, Acting USH and Dr. Robert Petzel, Acting Deputy USH at the National Leadership Board meeting in Washington D.C. on January 20, 2010. (Above) Sharon Kalvels, Dr. Sheila Meuse and Dr. Max McIntosh. (Cover) Dr. Petzel, Sharon Kalvels, Ellen Bosley, Dr. Cross, and Dr. Meuse.

Sharon Kalvels, Chief, Nutrition and Food Services
Behind the Lines by Resident Council

Start with three cups of desire, mix in two cups of determination, stir ingredients in a large bowl of compassion for seeing people grow healthier through education and better nutrition. However, Sharon’s professional career began at the collegian level at South Dakota State University as an instructor in Nutrition. Over the past 25 years, Sharon has honed her skills always looking for new ways to deliver her message of a longer and better life through the simple practice of eating better.

Also paramount is the proper preparation and presentation which is essential to the dining experience Sharon endeavors to create, three times a day year round. After talking with her, it becomes apparent that she has a core belief that Veterans come first, the dining hall is not just a place to wolf down your food in her eyes it’s a meeting place, a social environment where you can enjoy a meal while chatting with a friend or making new friends. “Customer satisfaction is job one” and this may be the most challenging and antagonizing part of her job realizing and accepting the fact that everyone is not going to be satisfied and despite the reviews as she puts it, “the curtain goes up three times a day rain or shine.”

However, the magic doesn’t happen by itself, the backbone of any dining facility are the workers. The cast of characters, if you will, from the cooks to the servers and the people that clean-up, after the Veterans have gone. Under her watchful eye the dining hall received some of the highest scores in the VISN 20 area, which consists of seven VA Hospitals, three in Oregon, three in Washington and one in Idaho. Adding to her list of accolades, Sharon is the project manager for all seven hospitals in the Performance Improvement Initiative.

When asked about the future of the dining hall at SORCC, Sharon’s eyes had a glow and her voice went up an octave with excitement as she talked about a new and improved facility on the drawing board. New enhancements will make the dining experience even better, using state of the art equipment in the kitchen, designed to retain the nutritional value of the meal. Sharon has devoted her life to the proposition of a better life through better nutrition.
Did You Know?

VA African American History Facts

Historian Carter G. Woodson established Black History Week to commemorate and celebrate the contributions to our Nation made by people of African descent. The first celebration occurred on February 12, 1926. For many years, the second week of February was set aside for this celebration to coincide with the birthdays of abolitionist/editor Frederick Douglass and President Abraham Lincoln. In 1976, as part of the Nation’s bicentennial, the week was expanded into Black History Month. Each year, U.S. presidents proclaim February as National African-American History Month.

The Central Branch Home located in Dayton, Ohio (now known as Dayton VAMC) was the first to admit African Americans after the Civil War. Veterans of the U.S. Colored Troops were admitted in March 1867; several of them were former slaves.

The first government hospital established exclusively for African American Veterans was Tuskegee VA Hospital in Alabama. Originally known as the “Hospital for Sick and Injured Colored World War Veterans,” it operated as an all-black Veteran’s hospital for 31 years—from its opening on February 12, 1923 until it was desegregated by VA in 1954.

Dr. Howard W. Kearney became the first African American director to integrate leadership at VA hospitals (excludes Tuskegee). Dr. Kearney became the VA hospital director at East Orange, New Jersey, July 1962. He had been director at the Tuskegee VA hospital since 1959 prior to his assignment to East Orange.

Vernice Ferguson was the first African American director of VA’s Nursing Service. The status of the nursing service improved with the elevation of Ferguson to the new position of deputy assistant chief medical director for nursing programs in 1980.

There are two VA Medical Centers named after African Americans: The Jesse Brown VA Medical Center in Chicago was named after Jesse Brown, a Vietnam War Veteran appointed by President Bill Clinton to serve as VA’s Secretary; he served from 1993-1997. Secretary Brown was also the first African American to serve as VA Secretary.

The Ralph H. Johnson VA Medical Center in Charleston, South Carolina, was named for Marine Corps Pvt. Ralph H. Johnson, who was killed in action during the Vietnam War and awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor.

The nation’s first full-figure, “in-the-round” (360 degrees) monument to honor Civil War U.S. Colored Troops is located at the Nashville National Cemetery in Tennessee. The monument was dedicated in 2006 to the United States Colored Troops who fought in the Civil War. 1,447 known and 463 colored soldiers are buried at Nashville. Memphis National Cemetery has the most U.S. Colored Troops burials at approximately 4,209; followed by Natchez 2,200 and Nashville 1,910.
On January 12, 2010, an earthquake with a magnitude of 7.0 rocked Part-Au-Prince, Haiti, causing massive devastation, injuries and deaths. Many countries and organizations are assisting Haiti in the aftermath of this devastating catastrophe. The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has authorized Department of Veterans Affairs and other Federal agencies to allow a special solicitation of Federal employees at the workplace to support Haiti in its time of extraordinary need.

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has recommended cash contributions as the most effective way to help. Special solicitations will allow Federal employees to assist the ongoing relief efforts in Haiti with a one-time cash or check donation, outside the normal Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) procedures. USAID has provided a list of relief organizations and further information on its website at http://www.usaid.gov/locations/latinamericacaribbean/country/haiti/eq/. In addition, a list. While special solicitations are the best option for Federal employees to provide relief assistance through the workplace, employees can also provide assistance by giving directly to charities involved in relief efforts, regardless of whether the charities participated in their local Combined Federal Campaign (CFC).

Please consider helping by donating to the Red Cross to assist current disaster relief efforts. Contribute online to the Red Cross, or donate $10 to be charged to your personal cell phone bill by texting "HAITI" to "90999". Under no circumstances may such a charge be made to a U.S. Government land-line phone, Blackberry or other official cell phone. Other ways to help is through the Center for International Disaster Information at http://www.cidi.org/incident/haiti-10a/. Families of Americans living in Haiti are encouraged to contact the State Department at 888-407-4747.

To date, the Red Cross is meeting any requests for blood due to the Haiti tragedy through current supplies. At this time, we do not anticipate the need for a special donor appeal to support their efforts in Haiti. However, the American Red Cross must continue to meet its goals.

Make an appointment to save up to three lives with a single donation! Donors may schedule an appointment by contacting their American Red Cross Representative Christina Dunlap directly at 541-842-4707, or the American Red Cross Call Center at 1-800-GIVE-LIFE (1-800-448-3543).

There is always a need for blood and only volunteer donors can fulfill that need for patients in our community. Nationwide, someone needs a unit of blood every 2 to 3 seconds and most of us will need blood in our lifetime. Type O Negative and Type B negative donors are especially needed to meet needs here at home.

VA SORCC Blood Drive Dates
10:00AM to 4:00PM
March 18th
May 20th
July 22nd
September 23rd
November 18th
In The Theatre
DoD to Implement Retroactive Stop Loss Special Pay

On January 5, 2010 The Defense Department announced the services' implementation plans to provide retroactive stop loss special pay. Active, reserve and former service members who had their enlistment extended or retirement suspended due to stop loss are eligible for this special pay, if they served on active duty between September 11, 2001 and September 30, 2009.

Service members may begin submitting their claim for retroactive stop loss special pay on October 21, 2009. In accordance with the 2009 Supplemental Appropriations Act, all applications must be submitted to the respective services no later than October 21, 2010. Eligible personnel will receive a payment of $500 per month for each month (or any portion of a month) that a member was retained on active duty due to stop loss. Applicants for retroactive pay who are no longer in the military had to be honorably discharged, and for those who were stop lost in fiscal 2009, may only receive payment from one stop loss authority – either the money appropriated for stop loss special pay in the Duncan Hunter National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2009, or the money allocated for retroactive stop loss special pay in the 2009 Supplemental Appropriations Act, but not both.

Service members must provide documented proof they were stop lossed with deceased service members military service for assistance in filing their claim. Information on how to contact each of the services is listed below:

Army: Go to https://www.stoplosspay.army.mil or email RetroStopLossPay@CONUS.Army.Mil

Navy: Email NXAG_N132C@navy.mil

Marine Corps: Go to https://www.manpower.usmc.mil/stoploss or email stoploss@usmc.mil

Air Force: Go to http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/stoploss/

Stop loss provides a valuable and critical tool to quickly retain and generate forces to surge in a major conflict. However, as deployment schedules stabilize, the department must then adapt and minimize its use of stop loss. The secretary of defense announced in March a comprehensive plan to eliminate the current use of stop loss, while retaining the authority for future use under extraordinary circumstances.

UPDATE: Section 8108 of the 2010 Defense Department Appropriations Act, effective December 19, 2009, contained provisions that modified eligibility for retroactive stop loss special pay. Stop-lossed service members who voluntarily reenlisted or extended their service, and received a bonus for such reenlistment or extension of service, are no longer eligible to receive retroactive stop loss special pay.

Applications from affected service members will be returned with an explanation of the change in law that made them no longer eligible. The military services will not recoup previously issued payments.

Congress also extended legal authority for stop loss special pay to continue payments to active duty service members extended under stop loss authority through fiscal 2010.
IINDIVIDUAL AWARDS:

GARY SOMMER (Nominator: Jaime Torres)
Whenever there are computer problems in the Outpatient department, Gary is on top of it. He demonstrates excellent customer service and care. His positive attitude and professionalism are appreciated.

KEVIN LEE (Nominator: Anna Diehl)
After noticing unattended news media on station, Kevin immediately alerted Public Affairs and drove them to intercept the situation. Thanks to Kevin’s quick intervention, positive media relations was maintained.

CINDY ZIPPI (Nominator: Stacey Harvey)
Cindy assisted a co-worker with the time consuming job of completing Statements of Work and Request for Contract Actions while performing her own job duties and those of the secretary.

GARY GIMENEZ (Nominator: James Smith)
In the absence of the Material Manager, Gary took it upon himself to fulfill these extra duties. This is above and beyond his normal duties. He is a dedicated Veteran.

TEAM:

JENNIFER RAGAN AND JASON PETERSON (Nominator: Kurt Barthel)
Jennifer and Jason voluntarily took on the responsibility of training employees in CPR, AED and First Aid, which required shift changes, overtime and comp time to ensure employees certifications were kept current.

EDDIE BLAZIO, KIM MEREDITH-MATE, MARCIA TACKETT, MICHAEL ELLIS, GREG ACEDO, TEDDI DEYOUNG, DAVID CONNOLY, TAMMI DEFOREST, SEAN O’CONNOR, TERI DAVIS, KAREN FIDURA, JAIME TORRES, TRUMAN SANDERSON AND SHERRI MASTERS (Nominator: Tracy Dekelboum)
Assisting with the very lengthy and detailed “Unassigned Patient” list, approximately 1300 patients.

TOWN HALL AWARDS:

Leadership: 4th Quarter Fiscal Year 2009
Phil Miller (nominator: Shawn Roberts) for his leadership within Residential Care.
Katie Dodd (nominator: Linda Vollrath) for Katie’s Home Based PC/MOVE work.
Mary Gotshall (nominator: Cindy Sweet) for Mary’s Klamath Falls CBOC leadership related to Prosthetics and other areas.

ANNUAL LEADERSHIP:

Katie Dodd (nominator: Linda Vollrath) for all of Katie’s work in Home Based Primary Care/MOVE, clinical award.
Kerry Paperman, (nominator: Keith Welsh) for all of her leadership in BOS, management award.
Scott Sarver, (nominator: Mike O’Malley) for all his leadership with the MHSL, non clinical award.

MAGICIAN ANNUAL:
Ron Dewy, (nominator: Stephanie Yates) for Ron’s customer service in PMR&S.
If you are overweight or obese you are at increased risk for a number of health conditions including heart disease, diabetes, some cancers, sleep apnea and gallstones. The best way to manage your weight is to keep a balance between what you eat and drink and how active you are.

The MOVE! Program has been tailored to meet the individual’s need. MOVE! Provides guidance on nutrition and physical activity and allows you to set the pace through goal setting and a stepped level approach.

Your MOVE! Healthcare team representative is Katie Dodd. For more information to help you begin your MOVE! Goals, contact Katie at 541-826-2111 ext. 183965 who can also provide lots of support and follow up.

Thank you all for everything you do to make this facility a very special place to work and to serve our Veterans. I will miss you all.

Judy

Understanding Grief and Loss

Approximately 50 VA SORCC Veterans and employees attended a one-hour presentation on Grief and Loss and the impact it can have upon every day life. The guest speaker, Chuck Ross, is a Volunteer and Board member with the local non-profit organization, WinterSpring Center for Transforming Grief and Loss. Their primary mission is to support children, families, and adults through the grief process. Mr. Ross lost his teenage son three and a half years ago, which served as a catalyst for him to become involved with WinterSpring. He shared about his family’s journey with their loss, as well as important ways to move toward healing. The presentation was a springboard for the upcoming Veteran Grief and Loss Group scheduled to begin March 3, 2010, at the VA SORCC. Valerie Neck, Social Work Intern, and event organizer, discussed details about the upcoming group, its criteria, objectives, and the referral process. For more information about the group, please contact Valerie at, Valerie.Neck@va.gov, or 826-2111, extension 3894, or Amy Twiest, LCSW, Amy.Twiest@va.gov or 826-2111, extension 3807.
With the U.S. Census process beginning, the Better Business Bureau (BBB) advises people to be cooperative, but cautious, so as not to become a victim of fraud or identity theft. The first phase of the 2010 U.S. Census is under way as workers have begun verifying the addresses of households across the country. Eventually, more than 140,000 U.S. Census workers will count every person in the United States and will gather information about every person living at each address including name, age, gender, race, and other relevant data.

If a U.S. Census worker knocks on your door, they will have a badge, a handheld device, a Census Bureau canvas bag, and a confidentiality notice. Ask to see their identification and their badge before answering their questions. However, you should never invite anyone you don't know into your home.

Census workers are currently only knocking on doors to verify address information. Do not give your Social Security number, credit card or banking information to anyone, even if they claim they need it for the U.S. Census. While the Census Bureau might ask for basic financial information, such as a salary range, the Census Bureau will not ask for Social Security, bank account, or credit card numbers nor will employees solicit donations. Eventually, Census workers may contact you by telephone, mail, or in person at home. However, the Census Bureau will not contact you by Email, so be on the lookout for Email scams impersonating the Census. Never click on a link or open any attachments in an Email that are supposedly from the U.S. Census Bureau.

Social engineering is the act of manipulating people into performing actions or divulging confidential information.

U.S. Census Bureau
Employee News

WELCOME ABOARD:

Business Management Office: Joshua Zirkle, Medical Support Assistant Comp & Pen; Rodney Johnson, Medical Support Assistant Comp & Pen.; Doris Ruder, Nurse Practitioner, Comp & Pen
Clinical Support Service: Shawn Furdiaga, Lead Medical Supply Technician; Beverly Eaton, Licensed Practical Nurse
Director’s Office: Sheila Meuse, PhD., Associate Director
Facilities Management Service: Candace Harris, Secretary
Nutrition & Food Service: Kelley Reagan, Food Service Worker; Louis Cate, Food Service Worker; Ronald McEntee, Food Service Worker; Stephen Haney, Food Service Worker; Merri Wright, Food Service Worker; Dustin Steele, Food Service Worker; Edward Neville, Food Service Worker; Christopher Doran, Food Service Worker
Primary Care Patient Service: Lawrence Oppert, Health Technician; James Matthews, Health Technician; Patricia Aguilar, Program Support Assistant;
Social Work Service: Kristy Huddleston, OEF/EIF Registered Nurse Case Manager; Norene McElreath, Registered Nurse; Roxanda Radomsky, MHICUM Registered Nurse; Cheryl Roberts, Nurse Practitioner; Dr. Curtis Hanst, Klamath Falls CBOC
Utilization Management Service: Ben Bryan, Social Worker

MOVING AROUND:

Clinical Support: Karen Adams, RN Occupational Health - Reassignment
Facilities Management Service: Ralph Sinsel, Environmental Care Specialist; Stephen “Clay” Perdue, Boiler Operator Apprentice, Transferring to another facility
HR: Frank Busch, Human Resource Specialist (Employee Relations/Labor Relations) – Promotion
Pharmacy: Anne Patterson, RN - Reassignment
Primary Care Patient Service: Roberta McCoy, LPN – Reassignment
Social Work Service: Cindy Zippi, Program Support Assistant – Promotion

RETIREES:

Facilities Management Service: Roxy Bentley, Administrative Officer; Randy Jameson, Environmental Care Specialist; Juan Jaramillo, Boiler Plant Operator
ITOS: Judy Hall, IT Supervisor

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)