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VA Health Care Upstate New York
Canandaigua VA Medical Center
400 Fort Hill Avenue | Canandaigua, NY 14424
www.canandaigua.va.gov

October 24, 2012

Director, Voluntary Service (10B2A)
Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Ave., N.W.
Washington, DC 20420

RE: VA Voluntary Service (VAVS)/Community Relations
VAMC Canandaigua, NY and VA Outpatient Clinic, Rochester, NY
10/01/11-09/30/12, Narrative Report (RCS 10-0006)

- A. PROGRAM WORKLOAD, DEVELOPMENTS AND TRENDS: Programs continue to reach all segments of our diverse Veteran population. We continue to increase our efforts to provide additional volunteers to act as escorts to ensure that Veterans get to clinic appointments as well as the numerous recreational activities and special events held in the auditorium. Volunteer Assignment Request Forms continue to be utilized in assisting with volunteer placement and ensuring there is an accurate Volunteer Position Description in place. Voluntary Service plays an active role in supporting Patient Centered Care initiatives through volunteer resources and donations as another means to ensure that Veterans are afforded an increased quality of care.
1. STATISTICS: Recruitment and retention is monitored monthly, and efforts continue to increase volunteer involvement and closely monitor volunteer sign in procedures. All volunteers on the potential termination list continue to be contacted personally by phone and questioned as to their satisfaction with the volunteer program and their intent as to future involvement. All new volunteers are also personally contacted shortly after their start date to ensure that they are satisfied with their volunteer assignment and to allow for open communication. Recruitment efforts continue to concentrate on service and community organizations, students, employees and Veterans. Requirements to fingerprint volunteers and provide PIV ID badges continue to be adhered to.

Five long-time volunteers passed away during fiscal year (FY) 2012, many of whom donated a significant amount of hours. Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs) continue to have a reduction in volunteers and volunteer hours which is attributed to increased age and availability. The number of VSOs choosing to support the medical center by providing monetary support only; as opposed to volunteer support, continues to increase, though with the current economic climate there is much uncertainty as to the level of future donations. Increased gasoline hours have also caused a decrease in volunteer availability. There continues to be a considerable increase in unaffiliated volunteers as well as short term/episodic volunteers that are processed as occasional.

- a. Volunteers: Though total volunteer numbers have decreased, volunteer hours have increased, which is largely due to the termination of volunteers that are no longer active and/or volunteers that have moved from the regularly scheduled to occasional status. Independent sector values this facility's volunteer hours to equate to \$1,386,737.39 at \$21.79 per hour, or the equivalent to 30.5 FTEE, a significant cost savings and value.

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u># Of RS Volunteers (see Attachment A)</u>
2011.....	739
2012.....	697

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Youth Volunteers Included</u>
2011.....	93
2012.....	69

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>New Volunteers Recruited</u>
2011.....	128
2012.....	139

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>All Volunteers Hours</u>
2011.....	63,004
2012.....	63,641

- b. Gifts and Donations: Total donations for FY 2012 have decreased slightly, which is directly attributed to the donation of 2 wheelchair vans in FY 2011 valued at \$46,000. Procedures are in place to process donations by credit card, though response level continues to be low.

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Material/Activity Donations</u>
2011.....	334,447.49
2012.....	285,925.73

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Monetary Donations</u>
2011.....	87,255.48
2012.....	97,536.82

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Grand Total Donations</u>
2011.....	421,702.97
2012.....	383,462.55

2. VAVS IMPACT ON FACILITY:

- a. Voluntary Service: The VAVS Program has benefited this facility in terms of the number of volunteers, volunteer hours and donations that provide an obvious increase in the quality of life of our Veterans. The volunteer program provides the "extras" to our Veterans that the

facility cannot. The Voluntary Service/Community Relations office is staffed by only three FTEE, who are responsible for the recruitment, orientation, assignment and recognition of volunteers, coordination of a variety of special activities and programs, as well as the coordination of all material and monetary donations and ultimately for strengthening the image of the VA through positive and pro-active media relations, customer service and community involvement. In addition, a temporary Voluntary Service Assistant has been hired thru FY 2013 to provide outreach efforts specifically for MyHealthVet.

- b. Public Affairs: The Public Affairs Officer is responsible for local issues as well as the Veterans Crisis Line and National Care Givers Support Line, internal and external communications to stakeholders, the writing of press releases, Speakers Bureau program, supporting health promotions, outreach, special events, web content, social media, electronic marquee and maintenance of all media articles and photographs. Highlights this FY included national media coverage by CNN, Newsweek, Stars & Stripes and HBO of the VA National Crisis Hotline.

i. Internet: Events on Calendar

Medical Center	June	July	Aug	Sept
Canandaigua	13	12	17	22

ii. Internet: Feature Stories

Medical Center	June	July	Aug	Sept
Canandaigua	2	5	2	3

iii. GovDelivery

Medical Center	June	July	Aug	Sept
Canandaigua	2,305	2,227	2,147	2,170

iv. Also tracked by GovDelivery

Medical Center	June	July	Aug	Sept
Volunteer News	2,591	2,556	2,511	2,573

v. Top 10 Internet Web Pages

June 2012 top ten pages			
Page rank	Page	File name	Number of Visits
10	Volunteer page	vet/volunteer.asp	342

July 2012 top ten pages			
Page rank	Page	File name	Number of Visits
9	Volunteer page	vet/volunteer.asp	493

August 2012 top ten pages			
Page rank	Page	File name	Number of Visits
10	Volunteer page	vet/volunteer.asp	332

- vi. Canandaigua VA Facebook Page – 463 “Likes”
- vii. Canandaigua Home Page Intranet “hits”

Page	Oct 2011	Nov 2011	Dec 2011	Jan 2012	Feb 2012	Mar 2012	Apr 2012	May 2012	Jun 2012	Jul 2012	Aug 2012	Sept 2012
Canandaigua	2,744	2,924	2,998	3,092	3,177	3,465	3,350	3,250	3,181	3,141	3,892	3,519

- c. Alternate Dispute Resolution (ADR) Program: The VAVS Manager also serves as a Certified Mediator in the facility’s ADR Program, and has participated in 5 mediations during FY 12, 2 of which were Equal Employment Opportunities (EEO).
- d. Outpatient Clinics: VAVS staff manages the volunteer program at the Rochester and Clinton Crossings Outpatient Clinics. VAVS/Community Relations is intensely involved with the community and the Speakers Bureau to promote volunteerism to service organizations, corporations, schools, colleges, etc. Clearly, the program provides obvious benefit and resources to this facility compared to the expense of providing three FTEE. VAVS also submitted an application to participate in the 2013 Technical Career Field (TCF) Intern Program.
- e. Volunteer Assignments: Noteworthy volunteer assignments that made a significant impact on Veterans for FY 12 include:
 - i. Greeter Program: Volunteers are the initial contact at the outpatient clinic, providing information and directions to Veterans, family members and the community.
 - ii. No Show Rates: Reminder Calls: Volunteers have had a measureable positive impact on decreasing no-show rates, as evidenced by an increase in no-shows when reminder calls are not made. Behavioral Health reported a 3% decline rate due to volunteer assistance. Many of these appointment reminder assignments, however, are now automated and no longer require the services of a volunteer.
 - iii. Systems Redesign: Voluntary Service staff served on this Committee and utilized

volunteers to make telephone calls and shadow Veterans in order to receive feedback into their "Veteran experience" when enrolling.

- iv. Veteran Escort: Volunteers assist in providing escorts to Veterans to a variety of clinic appointments on-station as well as recreational and special events, thereby facilitating efficiency, a decrease in missed appointments and increased quality of care. Escort Service has recently seen an increase in volunteers due to an increased need.
- v. Veterans Feedings: Volunteers assist with Veterans feedings; ultimately freeing staff to accomplish other tasks and assisting in increased quality of care. Volunteers are trained by nursing staff and receive a silver spoon pin when the class is completed.
- vi. Volunteer Transportation Network (DAV/VTN): During FY 12, 47 volunteers transported 12,954 Veterans in the Rochester and Canandaigua area to clinic appointments. The majority of these Veterans has no other means of transportation available and would seek no health care or emergency room only. The opportunity cost of a missed appointment, as well as reduction in beneficial travel claims, is estimated to be over \$100,000. In addition to vans provided by Disabled American Veterans (DAV), we are utilizing four vans provided to our facility through the Rural Health Care Initiative to assist in transporting Veterans. We have also recruited a volunteer to assist with the Veterans Transportation System (VTS) shuttle.

3. PROJECTS/ACTIVITIES:

- a. Programs: Voluntary Service/Community Relations has coordinated and/or supported the following special events through volunteer resources and donations:
 - i. Veterans Day Observance/Missing Man Ceremony: Traditional Program sponsored by Knights of Columbus. Holiday cakes were provided for each Veteran unit.
 - ii. Women Veterans Day Health Fair
 - iii. American Legion Auxiliary Gift Shop Program: 2-day event at the VAMC. A large number of gift cards are now purchased by the organization as alternatives to offering a large number of gifts, which was a positive alternative.
 - iv. Pearl Harbor Day Service: (see Attachment B)
 - v. Christmas/Holiday Program: Donations purchased gifts for approximately 800 Veterans that are then wrapped at a separate Gift Wrap by 100 volunteers and distributed the Sunday prior to Christmas by approximately 200 volunteers donned in Santa hats singing carols. This year's gifts included a fleece jacket and comfort items for each inpatient as well as outpatients participating in structured programs. Scarves and mittens were purchased for women Veterans. Donations total approximately \$15,000 (see Attachment C, D).

- vi. BPO Elks Ward Distribution: Traditional annual event that includes a medical center wide visitation and distribution of variety of items (see Attachment E).
 - vii. National Salute to Veteran Patients: Events were held daily throughout the week of February 12 and included a variety of events, i.e., off-station outings, complimentary fruit trays, valentine distribution by students and formal presentation of donated television and stereo to the Kinesiotherapy Clinic.
 - viii. Blood Drives: Coordinated at both VAMC and ROPC.
 - ix. Pie, Ice Cream & Plant Sale: Funds raised supplement volunteer recognition activities.
 - x. National Volunteer Week: Refreshments and mementos provided for all volunteers throughout the week at the medical center and outpatient clinics.
 - xi. Volunteer Recognition Program: 190 volunteers/guests were in attendance. In addition to this traditional luncheon and awards program, volunteers were nominated for a variety of individual awards/recognition throughout the year by VAVS staff that are sponsored nationally and locally as appropriate, i.e., Vietnam Veteran Volunteer Award and RSVP-Lifespan. Volunteers were also included in a "Volunteer Profile-Spotlight" in the local community newspaper (see Attachment F).
 - xii. Memorial Day: Programs are hosted by hospice, Chaplain and Voluntary Service to pay tribute to those Veterans who passed away while inpatients and receiving care through the hospice unit. A traditional program and folding of the flag is held as well. Holiday cakes are provided for each ward.
 - xiii. Flag Day Retirement Ceremony and Distribution of Flags
 - xiv. July 4: Holiday cakes are provided for each Veteran ward.
 - xv. Volunteer Picnic/Student Recognition Program: 60 volunteers were in attendance.
 - xvi. Patriot Day
 - xvii. POW/MIA Brunch: 61 Veterans and their family members were in attendance.
- b. Recruitment Initiatives:
- i. Speaker's Bureau: VAVS continues to serve as active members of this facility's Speaker's Bureau, attending events at VSOs, schools, local retirement fairs and throughout the community to inform all about volunteer needs.
 - ii. Volunteer Newsletter: Volunteer needs are included in the quarterly N2 VAVS Newsletter that is mailed to volunteers, VSOs and stakeholders.

- iii. Updating: VAVS utilizes a volunteer in an assignment that entails calling each volunteer on the potential termination list to inquire about their inactivity and possible assignment alternatives as well as relays upcoming program needs. Voluntary Service also makes contact with each new volunteer shortly after their start date as a retention mechanism.
- iv. Recruitment: VAVS continues to be actively involved in web based recruitment from a variety of sources, i.e., www.volunteermatch.org, Finger Lakes Regional Volunteer website, and communicates needs to the community via Volunteer Connection, United Way, Community Wish Book and VA web sites, including Facebook.
- v. Employee Strategies: VAMC employees continue to sign up to volunteer outside their tour of duty and current position description. A special recognition pin is provided to all employees that volunteer their efforts.

An "employee volunteer mail group" continues to be utilized to communicate special events and needs to employees.

Volunteer Supervisor training video is made available to all supervisors and those who manage volunteers in the hopes of increasing the number of quality volunteer assignments and retention of volunteers.

- vi. Community Service: VAVS is actively involved in the Ontario County Community Service Program, where participants volunteer in order to receive their public assistance grants and also perform community service for offenses through court mandates. Though this program has proven to be time consuming and many participants fail to follow through, it has also generated several individuals that have proven to be an asset and provided many volunteer hours. Assignments focus on the grounds crew and laundry.
- vii. E-Mail: VAVS continues to utilize a volunteer e-mail group to make contact with volunteers for assignments, activities and training events. An e-mail is sent to an already established group of volunteers who have indicated their approval to be contacted in this manner. This initiative has proven successful in terms of the number of volunteers who make themselves available to assist, particularly when escorts are needed.
- viii. Static Decal: Community Relations continues to distribute a "static decal" to all volunteers to encourage volunteering and to help market the program.

c. Student Volunteer Initiative:

- i. National Salute to Veterans Program- February 2012: This continues to be an annual event that is highlighted by the attendance of school children and a valentine distribution (Attachment G). One hundred students, including ROTC, participated in the event by visiting wards and distributing valentines, a dance was sponsored by the Boy and Girl Scouts.

- ii. School Participation in VAVS Programs: Local schools continue to be involved in Veteran programs, i.e., National Salute to Veteran Patients and holiday events as well as ward visitations, sing-a-longs, concerts and providing for escort needs that occur throughout the year (see Attachment H). Students continue to provide hand-made cards, posters, decorations and letters for all holidays. Schools and student groups continue to sponsor "collection boxes" to assist us in securing donations for a variety of Veteran needs. Local schools continue to hand paint "Sky Art" ceiling tiles that are installed on the community living centers. Voluntary Service also assists with a variety of shadowing experiences and attends community service fairs at local schools. VAVS participates in the local community college's Day of Sharing; this year students assisted in gardening and recreational activities.

Several groups of students from the local Canandaigua High School and BOCES have committed to assist with Veteran visitations and recreational activities and are volunteering on a variety of wards as well as the laundry on a daily basis. The local Montessori School, School-Age Day Care Program and High School Possibilities Center, who lease space at our facility, continue to interact with Veterans and assist with recreational activities and other activities as needed.

Students from the local high school use our Veteran computer lab as part of a school project "Seniors Helping Seniors" that matches senior Veterans with students to help Veterans develop computer and electronic skills (see Attachment I;1-3)

- iii. Award Ceremonies/Presentations: VAVS is available to attend local school award ceremonies and makes presentations to those students/classes that have made significant contributions and/or includes them in the annual Student Awards Program. Mementos continue to be distributed to student volunteers throughout the year and include a coloring book and crayons, designed locally, as well as assorted patriotic pencils/pens and pins.
- iv. Community Service Hour Requirements: With the requirement of community service hours by high schools, colleges, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, ROTC, and the STAR (a local group for at-risk youth) Program our youth participation grows from a variety of sources in contributions of both hours and donations. Eagle Scout projects this year included construction and maintenance of garden areas.
- v. Student Awards Ceremony/Volunteer Picnic in August, 2012: Students received pins, certificates of appreciation and a variety of mementos.

4. NEW AND/OR UNIQUE VOLUNTEER ASSIGNMENTS INITIATED:

- a. My HealthVet: Program has expanded to include utilization of volunteers on a daily basis. A paid temporary Voluntary Service Assistant position has assisted in this initiative.

- b. The Veterans History Project: Program has expanded to include multiple volunteers who interview Veterans.
- c. Veterans Feedings Program.
- d. Systems Redesign: Voluntary Service staff served on this Committee and utilized volunteers to make telephone calls and shadow Veterans in order to receive feedback into their "Veteran experience" when enrolling.
- e. Mobile Adult Day Health Care: Volunteers assist staff by visiting Veterans in the community.
- f. Geriatric Guide for Veterans at ROPC: Volunteer assigned specifically to assist older Veterans that need assistance when accessing care at the outpatient clinic.
- g. Proctor for New Employee Computer Training.

5. VAVS COMMITTEE ASSESSMENT:

- a. VAVS Committee: Consists of 23 organizations. Attendance continues to be monitored, which is an on-going concern. For some Representatives/Deputies, this is their only volunteer assignment and they are not actively involved in VAVS programs/activities. The timely completion of Annual Joint Reviews also continues to be a problem and is increasingly time consuming for VAVS staff to monitor and continually remind VAVS Representatives of their responsibilities. The quarterly agenda includes presentations from all Care Line Managers and special presentations from a variety of staff. An evening meeting is held annually to accommodate volunteers who work during the day; day time meetings are held both at the VAMC site in Canandaigua and at the Rochester VA Outpatient Clinic (ROPC). Response is favorable. Patriot Guard Riders were added to the Committee in FY 12.
- b. Community Council: Combined with the VAVS Meeting, which has proven to be beneficial and adds additional "non-national" Veterans Service Organizations to the group as well as assorted community members, Veterans Service Officers and politicians. Community Council members attend as needed and continue to receive minutes of the meeting. Organizations on the VAVS Committee that do not meet National VAVS requirements continue to be transitioned to the Community Council membership group. Voluntary Service will continue to focus on a combined VAVS/Community Council membership in order to include the diverse community organizations that do not meet National VAVS requirements.
- c. VAVS Executive Committee: Meets monthly and coordinates the annual Pie, Ice Cream and Plant Sale, the sale of candy bars, and an ongoing can drive to raise monies. The request for nominations from the VAVS Committee to serve on the Executive Committee and replace current terms of office continues to meet with little interest. Fundraising continues to be a source of concern due to the restrictions placed on the Committee. The ability to raise a significant amount of funds to cover expenses for the annual volunteer awards program, volunteer picnic and Volunteer Week continues to be a source of concern, particularly with the uncertainty of the amount of Central Office Advance monies.

d. Staff Advisory Committee: Meets bimonthly with representation from a variety of Care Lines.

B. PROGRAM MANAGEMENT: Community Relations Program - Supervision remains under the Service Line under the Associate Medical Center Director. Voluntary Service has been under the umbrella of "Community Relations", since April 2006 and is responsible for overall management of all aspects of Voluntary Service at both the VAMC and ROPC, providing support for the DAV/VTN Transportation Programs at both locations as well as Public Affairs.

C. COMMUNITY RELATIONS AND ACTIVITIES: VAVS/Community Relations staff is actively involved in the community, attending a variety of service organization functions, community and outreach events, fund raisers, and serving on the Speakers Bureau to promote volunteerism within area community organizations, schools, etc. Staff lead the VAVS/Community Council Meeting, VSO bi-annual meeting, are members of the Finger Lakes Veterans Advisory Council, Canandaigua Chamber of Commerce, Mayor's Round Table, and are also responsible for hosting official visits of dignitaries and providing tours. Specific community contacts/events include:

1. Participation in United Way's Day of Caring.
2. Open community invitation to attend variety of medical center events, i.e., recreational activities, weekend Mass, and assorted special events at VAMC.
3. Coordination of five blood drives held annually to which the public are invited.
4. Volunteer assignments in the community, i.e., recreational activities, Residential Care Homes, Naples Activity Center (NAC), Veterans Service Organization sponsored events at local Posts and Chapters and Rochester VA Outpatient Clinic and Mobile Adult Day Health Care.
5. Collection site for deer hides for the BPO Elks.
6. Informal sharing agreement with Sonnenberg Gardens to allow VAMC staff with ID and accompanying Veteran's free access.

D. BUSINESS/CORPORATE INITIATIVES:

1. Significant monetary and material donations, totaling \$36,336.00 were received from local (L), regional (R) and national (N) businesses, to include: AlpcO (L), Bosch Security Systems (L), CareALot Childcare, (L), Complemar Partners Inc (R), Democrat & Chronicle (L), Elmcliff Subdivision Assoc. (L), Exxon Mobile (L), Federated Wholesale (R), Forum Plastics (L), Garlock Sealing Technologies (L), Gatehouse Media (L), Geneva Red Wings (L), GLK Foods (L), Harris Corporation/Foundation (R), Hudson Valley Federal Credit Union (L), KSB Inc. (R), KT Construction (L), Lab X Technologies (R), Legacy at the Fairways (L), Longs Cards & Books (L), Monroe County Home Bureau (L), Nothnagle (L), NRAD Medical Associates (L), Old Time Candy Co (L) Rochester Marriott (L), Sam's Club (L), Spencer Speedway (L), Tops (L), United Auto Worker (L), Walmart (L), Waterloo Rifle & Pistol (L), Wegmans (L), for a variety of programs.

Local businesses continue to adopt our Veteran wards during the holiday season and provide individual gifts to each Veteran from a prepared "wish list". This program is in addition to the traditional medical center wide Gift Distribution the Sunday prior to Christmas and allows the approximately 200 inpatient Veterans being "adopted" with individualized gifts they are able to open on Christmas Day.

2. Volunteer support in terms of manpower was received from employees of Harris Corporation, who helped escort Veterans to a variety of special events.

E. CUSTOMER SERVICE INITIATIVES: Customer Service as it is defined for the Voluntary Service Program is any activity or interaction that enhances the Veterans experience, exceeds their expectations and enhances satisfaction. Every activity, program, special event, material and monetary donation and volunteer assignment that Voluntary Service is involved in, continues to be about improving the quality of life for the Veterans. VAVS/Community Relations are proactive in all aspects of Cultural Transformation and Patient Centered Care initiatives. In addition, Community Relations (Public Affairs) is responsible for a variety of activities that target employees and community members to increase satisfaction and awareness of medical center activities. Specific noteworthy items not included elsewhere in this report include:

1. Birthday Program: All hospitalized Veterans are provided a birthday card and gift.
2. Clerical: Volunteers continue to work behind the scenes in a variety of areas to provide administrative assistance.
3. Computer Access: The Patient Computer Lab continues to be staffed by computer literate volunteers who provide 1:1 instruction to both inpatients and outpatients, teaching a variety of computer fundamentals including internet usage.
4. Donations/Material: Significant contributions included a variety of craft kits, fishing equipment, kayaks, pre-paid phone and gas cards, musical instruments and an assortment of items too numerous to mention for Veteran use.
5. Donations/Monetary: Funds to purchase holiday gifts, birthday gifts, canteen books, religious needs and an assortment of items too numerous to mention for Veteran use.
6. Food Donations: Voluntary Service maintains an ongoing collection box in the office area for donations that are provided to the Hospice Unit, and assorted outpatient programs. They also coordinated the Feed the Families Food Drive for VAMC employees at this facility.
7. Gardens: Provides maintenance through monetary, material and volunteer resources.
8. Homeless Veterans: VAVS continues to support outreach to homeless/at-risk Veterans through monetary and material resources. Managed donations coordinated with 2K Walk.
9. Hospice: Voluntary Service continues to provide the Unit with furnishings, refreshments and volunteers to assist Veterans and their families. Volunteers attend a formal hospice training program prior to volunteering.

10. Kiddie Cart: Toys and books are made available in the outpatient clinic lobby area to children who are at the facility with their Veteran parent.
11. OEF/OIF/OND: VAVS continues to support OEF/OIF/OND Veterans and their families in terms of donations, resources and communication, as well as supported Veterans Family Day events and Job Fairs through donations
12. Library: Donations of newspaper and magazine subscriptions as well as paperback books and greeting cards.
13. Patient Assistance Program: VAVS provides donations of assorted clothing (new and used), lap robes, mittens, hats, wheelchair bags and various comfort items, ie: shampoo, shaving cream, deodorant to this program that are then distributed to Veterans. Donations also provide for postage stamps and haircuts for indigent Veterans.
14. Pet Therapy: In coordination with Recreation Therapy, pet visitation continues on Veteran wards with visits from screened "volunteer animals". Red bandanas are distributed to all four-legged volunteers to easily identify them as "volunteers".
15. Recreation: VAVS supports an assortment of recreational activities, parties, picnics, refreshments, tickets to off-station special events, maintenance and storage of pontoon boat, equipment and musical entertainment through volunteer resources, monetary and material donations.
16. Refreshments: Voluntary Service continues to furnish complimentary coffee and refreshments in a variety of clinic/ward areas for Veterans.
17. Service Recovery: VAVS provides complimentary coffee and refreshments to Veterans that have experienced extended waiting times for Pharmacy and/or clinic appointments at both the VAMC and ROPC.
18. Special Emphasis Programs: Support of special emphasis programs that are focused on Veteran involvement to promote diversity, i.e., Kwaanza, Martin Luther King Day.
19. Veterans Service Center: Volunteers continue to be an integral part of this program and work behind the scenes performing an assortment of clerical tasks.
20. Veteran Voter Registration: Voluntary Service has taken the lead and ensured that all Veterans receive information on voting. Information has been disseminated through ward staff.
21. Volunteer Transportation: Volunteers continue to assist outpatient Veterans with transportation to clinic appoints with the assistance of the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) Hospital Service Coordinator. Rural Health Vans are also utilized for this purpose. A volunteer also assists with the facility's Veterans Transportation System (VTS).

22. Women Veterans: A General Post Fund has been established specifically for the needs of women Veterans and their families, to include the purchase of food and refreshments as well as items needed for outreach events and attendance for various female healthcare educational programs.

F. REPORT OF PROGRAMMATIC GOALS:

1. Goals for FY 2012 were as follows:

- a. Continue to proactively support Cultural Transformation and Patient Centered Care initiatives through volunteer participation and resources. This goal is ongoing. Staff are active members of the team and continually seek to improve customer service and a homelike atmosphere through an array of volunteer resources, material and monetary donations as noted above.
- b. Improve access to care through Veteran Transportation System (VTS) and Disabled American Veterans/Volunteer Transportation Network (DAV/VTN) – driver recruitment. This goal is ongoing. We currently have 47 volunteers assisting with DAV/VTN and an additional volunteer recruited to assist with the VTS shuttle.
- c. Assist with Voter Registration for Veteran patients. This goal is ongoing; VAVS maintains regular contact with the Veterans and staff regarding the voting process and updates results on sharepoint.

2. Goals for FY 2013 are as follows:

- a. Continue to proactively support Cultural Transformation and Patient Centered Care initiatives through volunteer participation and resources.
- b. Improve access to care through Veteran Transportation (VTS) and Disabled American Veterans/Volunteer Transportation Network (DAV/VTN) – driver recruitment.

G. OTHER:

1. Training: Community Relations staff attend a variety of local and Network training courses as appropriate. VAVS and Public Affairs Network 2 staff continue to communicate regularly to discuss pertinent issues. The only Conference physically attended this year was the Association of Healthcare Volunteer Resource Professionals Conference (VAVS) in September 2012 due to funding and travel restrictions.
2. DAV/VTN Transportation: continues to be a valuable program that provides transportation to many Veterans. A full time Hospital Service Coordinator (HSC) is located at both the Canandaigua VAMC and ROPC. In addition to DAV donated vehicles, 4 Rural Health Vans are utilized for this purpose. A great deal of time continues to be spent monitoring driver requirements as well as concerns related to utilization of vans, repairs, mileage and resulting vehicle turn-ins. VAVS has recruited a volunteer to assist with the newly instituted VTS Program and it hoped that the DAV/VTN and VTS programs will continue to collaborate efforts to meet the needs of the Veterans.

3. Craft Kit Donations: The issues surrounding VA and Help Hospitalized Veterans will significantly impact the material donations of craft kits to our medical center, and ultimately Veteran satisfaction. The Veterans look forward to regular distributions of a variety of high quality craft kits which will no longer be provided once the current stock is depleted. It is hoped that this issue is resolved so that we can continue to receive this generous donation.
4. Increased Workload: VAVS/Community Relations continues to experience an increased workload in order to meet recruitment/retention goals while maintaining an efficient and expanding volunteer program to meet the needs of our Veterans. Monitoring requirements for a variety of programming needs continue to tax an already short staff. Workload has substantially increased in order to provide the following services with no increase in staff:
 - a. Fingerprinting/background checks for volunteers. It is estimated that each new volunteer takes approximately 3 hours to process.
 - b. Food Safety Courses for Volunteers: Monitoring food safety training/certificates for volunteers that bake and donate food.
 - c. Driver Requirement: Monitoring compliance for drivers NYS license, safe driving record, insurance, defensive driving, fleet card training
 - d. General Post Funds: Increased amount of time purchasing a variety of items from donated funds and related requirements to provide fiscal with additional documentation related to specific earmarked donations as well as all material donations, pre-approval for all purchases, separate pre-approval for food purchases from the Medical Center Director, and additional bi-annual food review reports and quarterly reports documenting reviews of purchases made by a mandated limited number of purchase card holders as well as documentation for audit reviews.
 - e. Veteran Voter Registration Program
 - f. Redesign of intranet and internet sites
 - g. Staff recruitment/retention issues

Increased reporting requirements have made it challenging to meet our mission and program goals with existing staff. In anticipation of a pending retirement, we were able to hire our 2009 TCF Intern to fill the expected vacancy of an existing Voluntary Service Specialist who is retirement eligible. A secondary challenge is that the Public Affairs Officer is also retirement eligible. A succession plan will be developed to ensure continuity of services within the Voluntary Service Program.



ROBIN M. JOHNSON
Voluntary Service/Community Relations Program Manager

CONCUR/NON CONCUR



MARGARET OWENS, MBA, FACHE
Associate Medical Center Director

CONCUR/NON CONCUR



for

CRAIG S. HOWARD
Medical Center Director

CONCUR/NON CONCUR



for

DAVID J. WEST, MSHA, FACHE
Network Director

Attachments