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NEWS RELEASE

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Martinsburg VAMC Youth Volunteer Award Ceremony

MARTINSBURG, W.Va. – The Martinsburg VA Medical Center (VAMC) held its annual Youth Volunteer Award Ceremony Thursday, at the medical center.

The ceremony was held for 44 active summer youth volunteers who served over 1,400 hours to Veterans and staff at the medical center and the Hagerstown Community Based Outpatient Clinic.

“Colleges require volunteer hours,” said Cecil Keel, III, a ninth-grade student at Spring Mills High School. “Volunteering helps me interact with others and makes me a better person.” Keel volunteered 100 hours in the Retail Store at the medical center.

The youth volunteers were presented with service hour pins, certificates of appreciation, letters of appreciation and praises from the Medical Center Director, Timothy J. Cooke, for their participation in the youth volunteer program.

“We truly appreciate the time and effort all of our youth volunteers have showed our Nation’s Heroes,” said Mr. Cooke. “You are a remarkable group of young people and you have brought a lot of smiles to our Veterans as you spent time with them.”

Josiah Johnston, a 12th-grade student at Hedgesville High School volunteered the most with 500 hours. “I enjoyed helping out,” said Johnston. “I liked working with the other volunteers and helping out the staff.” Johnston volunteered in the Pathology & Laboratory services, the Canteen and Prosthetics and Sensory Aids services.

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Nicholas Mullinix, Sophia Brooks, Daniel Roach and Hannah Roach were awarded the highest award, the Voluntary Service Alta Selby Award for exhibiting dependability in service, being an inspiration to Veterans, staff and their peers, making valuable contribution to their service and demonstrating neat appearance and personal hygiene while volunteering. The awardees had to be nominated by their volunteer supervisor.

“I am proud of myself,” said Nicholas Mullinix, the top awardee and ninth-grade student at Hedgesville High School. Mullinix donated over 100 hours in the Alzheimer’s and Dementia unit of the medical center. “We played card games and went on many activities such as going with Veterans to go get ice cream,” said Mullinix. “It feels good to help Veterans and I appreciate them more and more each day.”

“My grandfather was in the Army,” said Sophia Brooks, a 11th-grade student at Musselman High School. “Volunteering helps me feel closer to him.” Brooks donated over 50 hours to the Employee Learning Resources service and is a second year volunteer. Brooks said she would also like to work in the medical field.

Special awards were also presented by the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Military Order of the Purple Heart and the Marine Corps League.

Youth volunteers are able to volunteer in the Canteen, Customer Service, Environmental Management Services, Facility Management Services, the Emergency Department, Employee Learning Resources, Geriatrics and Long Term Care, Medical Administration Services, Outpatient Pharmacy and Physical Medicine.

“I love volunteering,” said Angeline “Angel” Mullen, a five time volunteer with over 240 hours of volunteering. “It helps me with responsibility and being a better person.” Mullen is a Hedgesville High School student and is a first time attendee at the ceremony.

Youth volunteers are needed for the 2015 summer youth program and must be at least 13 years old to participate. For more information on the Martinsburg VA Medical Center Youth Volunteer program, contact Dottie Hough, the chief of voluntary service at 304-263-0811, ext. 3309 or dottie.hough@va.gov.

The Martinsburg VA Medical Center mission is to honor America’s Veterans by providing exceptional health care that improves their health and well-being. Located in West Virginia, the medical center offers a comprehensive range of services, including internal medicine, ambulatory surgery, audiology and speech pathology, dental, nursing home, nutrition, podiatry, prosthetics, women’s health, mental health, and rehabilitation medicine. With a service area of nearly 125,000 Veterans in West Virginia, Maryland, Virginia, and Pennsylvania, the medical center operates seven Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOC). Five of the clinics are VA-staffed and are located in Cumberland, Hagerstown and Fort Detrick, Md., Petersburg, W.Va., and Stephens City, Va. Two of the clinics are contracted and are located in Franklin, W.Va., and Harrisonburg, Va.



Photo 1 caption: The Martinsburg VA Medical Center holds its annual Youth Volunteer Award Ceremony. Volunteers and parents look on as the Medical Center Director, Timothy J. Cooke and the Chief of Volunteer Services, Dottie Hough provides words of encouragement to the summer youth volunteers.



Photo 2 caption: Angeline “Angel” Mullen, a five time volunteer with over 240 hours of volunteering, is all smiles as she shows her awards. This is Angel’s first time attending the ceremony.