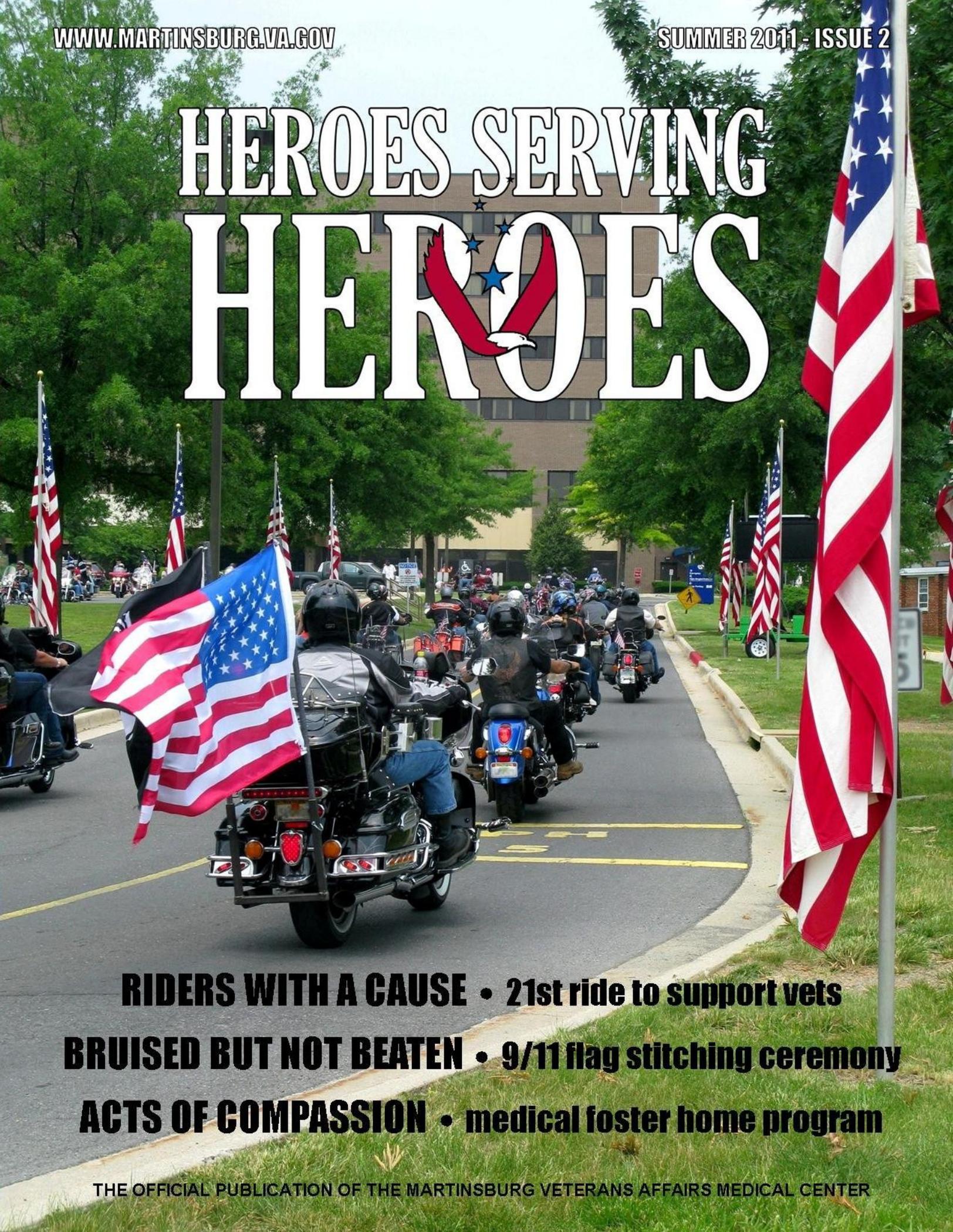


HEROES SERVING HEROES



RIDERS WITH A CAUSE • 21st ride to support vets
BRUISED BUT NOT BEATEN • 9/11 flag stitching ceremony
ACTS OF COMPASSION • medical foster home program

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Medical Center**

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Photo: VA

SUBMISSIONS

Heroes Serving Heroes, the Martinsburg VA Medical Center's quarterly newsmagazine, wants to hear from you! Submit your ideas for stories to MWV-PublicAffairs@va.gov with subject reading Magazine Submission.

ON THE COVER

Riders of the 21st Annual Operation God Bless America Motorcycle Ride roar through the Avenue of Flags. To read, turn to page 9.

ONLINE

www.facebook.com/mvamc

www.martinsburg.va.gov

www.twitter.com/martinsburgmvamc

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear readers,

Glancing through the current issue of *Heroes Serving Heroes*, you'll probably notice that we have boldly changed the design of our quarterly newsmagazine. The simple, direct layout allows us to bring to you more stories and photos than ever before. The new visual style also reflects our own unique style of health care, by providing information to Veterans in a way that is clear, professional, and sincere.

The summer has arrived, the sun is shining, and the medical center is in full swing with patient and community activities. In this issue, you can read about the events we have enjoyed so far this summer — some of which I hope you were able to enjoy with us — including a therapeutic horse show for our inpatients; the annual God Bless America Ride to support Veteran patient programs and pastimes; and the visit of the National 9/11 Flag on its tour across the United States.

There are a number of articles highlighting the programs and services our medical center has to offer our patients, such as the Medical Foster Home Program, the Medical Center Library, and the Heroes Health and Wellness Center, as well as a spotlight on one of our many committed Veterans Service Organizations, the Patriot's Path Foundation.

Finally, I'm excited to announce that beginning with our next issue *Heroes Serving Heroes* will be accepting submissions from our medical center community.

Veterans and staff, I invite you to submit your stories. This is your magazine and we want to hear your voice!



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ann R. Brown".

ANN R. BROWN, FACHE
MEDICAL CENTER DIRECTOR



PROGRAM

Acts of compassion

BY JOHN DOHERTY

The days of packed lunches, curfews, and homework are long behind you. As an adult, you've enjoyed independent living for most of your life now. You decide where to eat, when to sleep, and what chores need to be done. Suddenly, just one event leaves you unable to cope with daily life. Something as minor as a slip or fall can lead to a chronic medical

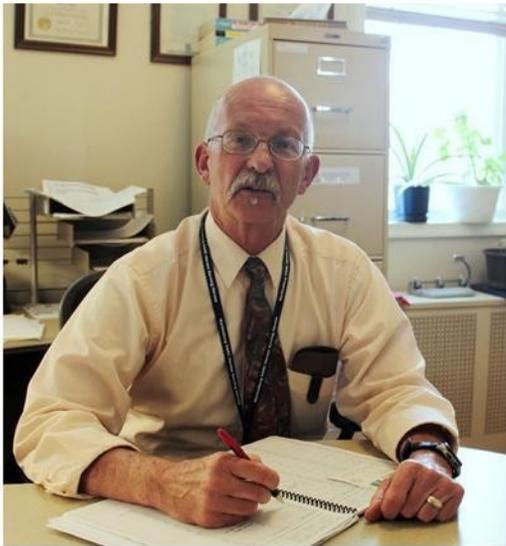
health care in the Nation, but sometimes treatment in a medical environment is simply not enough. The warmth of someone's individual care and home is needed. At the close of last year, the Martinsburg VA Medical Center implemented the Medical Foster Home (MFH) Program to provide an alternative for Veterans who require a nursing home level of care but prefer a home-like environment.

Through the MFH Program, community members open their homes to a Veteran and agree to undertake the responsibility of caregiving, including medication management, 24-hour supervision, and assistance with daily tasks and personal needs. In return for their service, Veterans compensate caregivers for living expenses,

Care (HBPC) team, including medical doctor, advanced registered nurse practitioner, nurse, social worker, dietician, psychologist, and recreational and physical therapist. The HBPC team provides patient care, caregiver education, and home assessment to ensure that the Veteran receives optimum care in the caregiver's home and that the caregiver always has necessary support.

Interested in becoming a Hero's Angel? To qualify, you must:

- be at least 21 years old and financially stable;
- own or rent and live in the home where the Veteran will stay;
- be physically able to provide needed care and have a written backup plan with relief people if unable to provide care;
- be able to communicate the



The Medical Foster Home Program Coordinator John Doherty, left, and Recreational Therapist Sheneal Purvis are just two of your team members dedicated to helping you becoming a Veteran's Caregiver Angel. Photos: VA.

condition or the beginning decline in health. Without the necessary support of family and friends, living at home is no longer an option and you find yourself in a long term care program. Your meal, sleep, and activity schedules are decided by someone other than yourself, and you've lost that confidence and comfort of independent living.

As the next generation of aging Veterans turns to VA medical centers all across the country, they find the best

supervision, and support. As the MFH Coordinator, I can tell you that caregiving is a full-time job that requires more than a financial motivation. What we're looking for in each caregiver is supreme devotion to the Veteran. In the program, we refer to our caregivers as "Angels" because their service is more than an act of kindness – it's an act of compassion.

But the caregiver is not alone. The MFH Program partners Veteran and caregiver with a Home Based Primary

Veteran's progress and changes in health to the HBPC team and to adhere to the Veteran's medical treatment;

- and interview with the MFH Program Coordinator and staff, complete a criminal background check, and provide three personal references.

For more information about the medical center's MFH Program, please contact Doherty at 1-800-817-3807 or 304-263-0811, extension 3272. 

EVENT

Horses for heroes

BY KATHRYN MORRIS

Community Living Center and Domiciliary patients of the Martinsburg VA Medical Center enjoyed a special horse show on the grounds of the hospital campus. Veterans learned to lasso practice bulls, watched a demonstration on the benefits of horseback riding as recreational therapy, and listened to an inspiring anecdote of how one wheelchair-bound rider overcame his disability.

Event co-coordinator Dan Files, a disabled Veteran and cancer survivor, improved his strength and motor skills through the Horses with Hearts therapeutic riding program at Pleasant Ridge Farm in Martinsburg. After undergoing a permanent tracheotomy, Files was unable to speak and learned to communicate through sign language. At first, his inability to give verbal commands while riding concerned him, but he soon discovered that his therapy horse was



A miniature horse surprises Veteran Ford with a visit. Photo: VA.

responsive to subtle, nonverbal communication.

Through Horses with Hearts, Files met Mike McGowan, a horse trainer from Black River Falls, Wis., and together they developed a horse show to honor Veterans for their service. McGowan, who became a paraplegic after a horse-riding accident, was told by doctors that he would never ride again. With a little ingenuity and a lot of stubbornness, he continues to ride to this day and is a testament to the power of positive

thinking. Following his seminar, "What do you mean I can't ride?", McGowan demonstrated for patients how he manages to saddle, mount, and ride his horse unaided.

Veterans who could not leave their rooms to attend the show outside were visited by Doc Holliday, a sneaker-wearing miniature horse. Diane Holmes of the Shooting Star Ranch therapeutic riding program transported her therapy horses Doc Holliday and Nevada Joe from Darby, Mont. ❤️



Veteran Diane "DJ" Jarvis, left, researches for her plan of care with the help of Lois Waybright, Veteran Health Education Coordinator. Photo: VA.

SERVICE

"E" is for education

BY LOIS WAYBRIGHT

Get educated about your health care and find answers — the right answers. While there are vast amounts of information online through websites, blogs, and chat rooms, not all are accurate. Learn about your tests and treatment

plan in the medical center's library. There, specialists are available to direct you to a reliable source that's right for you.

Located on the second floor, our renovated library includes soothing wall colors, "coffee-shop" seating, a classroom dedicated to Veterans' health education, a computer lab, and a fireplace.

Remember, we're on your side to a healthier you — but part of a healthier you means being active in your care. The library staff looks forward to your next visit. ❤️



Bruised but not beaten

BY SARAH TOLSTYKA

Standing opposite the south tower of the World Trade Center, the West Street Building was enveloped in plumes of smoke and debris when the Twin Towers collapsed. The north façade of the building was charred and gutted, but a 30-foot American flag, suspended from the scaffolding of a renovation project, survived. With deep tears and stains, the flag hung as a memorial over the remains of the World Trade Center. A work crew at Ground Zero recovered the flag and placed it in storage, where it waited for seven years.

With the approaching ten year anniversary of September 11, that same flag is being sewn back together one stitch at a time by citizens of every state. The New York Says Thank You Foundation is on a mission to restore the National 9/11 Flag with the help of Veterans, police officers, firefighters, and local service Heroes. On June 21, the Martinsburg VA Medical Center was honored as the second VA medical center in the Nation to host a stitching ceremony for the flag.

As each person entered the room for the occasion, their faces showed with deep emotion. Sadness, respect, and honor overwhelmed them as their eyes met the American flag, lying majestically in the center.

The Veteran Service Organization Color Guard circled the room with flag bearers carrying the American, West Virginia, Veteran Affairs, and POW/MIA flags, while the honor guard of the 167th Airlift Wing, West Virginia Air National Guard assembled at each corner of the National 9/11 flag. The room was silent. For many, faded patches of cloth and thread would never again mean so much. "Veterans, the men and women who pledged to honor and protect this Nation, are like the American flag," said Medical Center Director Ann R. Brown. "They are a symbol of our unity as a people. Without them, we could not be whole."

After guest speakers and honor guard, eight members of the community nominated as local service Heroes were asked to place their stitch in the flag. One such Hero, American Legion Riders, Post 14 Director and Veteran Brian Tolstyka said, "This was a once in a lifetime opportunity to show the honor and love for our country."

Following the ceremony, everyone was invited to stitch. The line of people waiting to leave their mark on history spilled out the door. Veterans unable to stand were wheeled to the flag, their hand guided with the needle through a patch of deep red fabric. One Veteran was so moved that he broke into tears and almost collapsed. Emotion flooded the room and every person was touched. The day came to a close when medical center staff and members of local fire and police departments carefully folded the flag into the traditional triangle before it continued on its journey across this great country. ❤️



VA/Barry Kornacki

Top to bottom: an honor guard of the 167th Airlift Wing, West Virginia Air National Guard stands at attention beside the National 9/11 flag; a Veteran is bestowed with the needle and thread to place his stitch in the National 9/11 flag; and a large American flag extends from two ladder trucks from Martinsburg and Shepherdstown fire departments. Opposite: original remnants of the National 9/11 Flag lay in the foreground, reassembled with restorative patches from American flags destined for retirement. Photos: VA.

PROGRAM

Let's play ball!

BY DARREN YOWELL



In early March, the Heroes Health and Wellness Center (HH&WC) opened its doors to medical center patients and staff. The new facility houses a fitness room, basketball half-court, volleyball court, and track. Other activities, such as string toss, bean bag toss, lightweight bowling, and golf, are available upon request.

Aside from individual patient and staff use, the Community Living Center and Domiciliary programs, including Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Addictions, Homeless, and Health Maintenance, utilize the HH&WC for their recreational therapy activities. Not only does the new facility offer a venue for patients to improve health and weight loss through physical activity, but many sporting events are offered to help develop patient relationships, encourage teamwork, and overcome mental or physical challenges.

While tournaments between different programs encourage a sense of team pride, tournaments where teams are handpicked or decided through draws

create new social networks between Veterans who would not normally interact.

Graduates of Domiciliary programs are welcome to participate in sporting events for continued use of available resources, as well as to maintain positive connections after leaving the medical center and to serve the community of current patients.

The HH&WC sporting events will eventually expand to include outdoor games, such as softball, flag football, and soccer, and activities like frisbee golf, shuffleboard, and horseshoes for the physically compromised Veteran. Those unable to actively participate in sports are encouraged to contribute as judges, referees, and umpires, roles as indispensable to the functioning of the game as that of the players.

Recreational therapy is a cornerstone to any successful recovery program, answering both the physical and social needs of the Veteran. With the opening of the HH&WC, the medical center's Rehabilitation Service provides expanded

recreational options with dedicated staff and volunteers that will become the model for all VA medical centers.

To learn patient and staff hours, visit the HH&WC just beyond the Canteen. 



Like the Veterans they serve, Recreation Assistants Darren Yowell, left, and Timothy Jackson are each graduates of Domiciliary programs with years experience in fitness training, basketball and tennis coaching, and youth mentoring. Above: Patients, staff, and volunteer in the heat of the game. Photos: VA.

EVENT

Riders with a cause

BY KATHRYN MORRIS

Over 1,100 motorcycle enthusiasts from Pennsylvania, Maryland, and West Virginia gathered for the 21st Annual Operation God Bless America Motorcycle Ride to raise funds for medical center patients and to honor all those who served. Veterans, Veterans Service Organizations (VSO), volunteers, community partners, and families attended the event, all in support of America's courageous Veterans.

Riders entered the medical center through the patriotic Avenue of Flags, lined with American flags donated by the families of deceased Veterans. Volunteers representing various VSOs hosted a lunch for riders, followed by a ceremony in which the medical center was presented with a donation of \$58,000 for patient programs and activities.

"When we heard your engines roar through our Avenue of Flags, our



GBA Riders roar through the patriotic Avenue of Flags. Photo: VA/Chris Rose.

Veterans certainly knew they were not forgotten," said Associate Medical Center Director for Nursing and Education Programs Susan George.

Ride coordinators A.J. and Mary Anne Davenport continue with a tradition to recognize and honor the sacrifices made by Veterans and their families. Over the course of the last twenty one years, riders have raised over \$401,000 for patients. In the past, donations helped to purchase the pavilion outside the Community Living

Center and new bowling alley equipment. Last year's donation went towards the purchase of flat screen TVs and Wii games, as well as to install a large aquarium in the Nursing Home Care Unit.

"More important than the donations, the annual ride honors those who served," concluded George. "Their presence on the medical center campus is one of the greatest contributions that can be made to our Veterans." ❤️



OPINION

Survey says...

Your friendly MyHealthVet Program Assistant, **TRACEY HEINLEIN**, asks Veterans, *What is your favorite war film?* Here are the top five answers:

FULL METAL JACKET • IN HARM'S WAY
PLATOON • PEARL HARBOR
SAVING PRIVATE RYAN

Not enrolled in MyHealthVet? Visit Tracey in the medical center lobby to see if you're eligible or contact MyHealthVet Coordinator Rick Nappi at 304-263-0811, x2036.

SERVICE

Road to recovery

BY KATHRYN MORRIS

When a Veteran enters a VA treatment program for mental health, post-traumatic stress disorder, substance abuse, or homelessness, the road to recovery begins straight and narrow. In the structured environment of a health care facility, the path is marked and well-paved, with supportive medical staff standing on either side. But when the Veteran graduates from the program and is discharged – the road can become difficult to travel. The responsibilities and distractions of the real world are overwhelming. Suddenly the path takes on many turns and at times even disappears from sight. It is easy for the Veteran and the progress made through the treatment program to become lost. The Veteran cannot succeed alone – a guide is needed for the journey ahead.

In 2008, the Patriot's Path Foundation partnered with the Martinsburg VA Medical Center to ensure that Veterans successfully reentered society after leaving their treatment program. The nonprofit organization founded by Veterans provides support through multiple services: individual life skills mentoring, job placement assistance, financial responsibility training, safe and affordable residential housing, and community service opportunities. Outdoor activities, such as cookouts, sporting events, and camping trips, are also offered for Veterans both in and out of their treatment programs to help them socialize and build new support networks.

Often, members of Patriot's Path establish a relationship with Veterans during their time at the medical center and are able to explain the mission of the foundation as well as the scope of programs and services available once the Veteran has completed his treatment.

Following the Veteran's decision to enter the Patriot's Path program, an assessment of the Veteran's needs and level of commitment to recovery is conducted and a mentor is assigned to advise the Veteran and to assist with the services offered by the foundation.

The mentor is the cornerstone of the foundation's mission. Oftentimes a Veteran and graduate of a treatment program, the mentor is able to share the experiences of the recovering Veteran, while also providing a positive role model for success.



Veterans Preston Curvey, Jr., left, and James Cotton share their progress since reintegrating into the community. Photos: VA.

The mentor, along with the foundation's board of directors and supporting staff, is a volunteer. The services provided – to prepare the Veteran for job applications and transport to interviews; to plan budgets and be financially responsible; and to provide transitional housing that Veterans share for a modest rent – are accomplished without any payment, except the gratitude of the Veteran.

Patriot's Path could not exist without a group of dedicated volunteers and the

support of community partners through financial donations and employment opportunities. The foundation occupies a small office in downtown Martinsburg, where Veterans can meet with their mentor and utilize the wide range of services. Late last year, the foundation opened its eighth residential house and currently supports up to 26 Veterans in transitional housing.

As OEF/OIF Veterans complete their treatment programs and prepare to return to civilian life, the need for expanded services is even greater. Patriot's Path endeavors to meet its goals to support more Veterans through many fundraising events, such as the upcoming "Pull For Our Heroes" Trap Shoot and 3rd Annual Golf Tournament, both held in September and now open to online registration.

Veterans benefitting from the foundation's services are required to complete monthly hours of volunteer work with community service organizations, churches, or civic groups. As a nonprofit, Patriot's Path is reliant on the support of local businesses, organizations, and individuals, and volunteer work provides Veterans the opportunity to return the service.

Foundation Chairman and CEO Edward Reardon knows the gratification of community service. As a Veteran receiving health care at the Martinsburg VA Medical Center, Reardon was approached by staff to spearhead a community-based project that would become Patriot's Path. "It was a gift to be able to give back," said Reardon. "I can never repay the VA."

For more on Patriot's Path, sponsored events and volunteer opportunities, or how you can help local Veterans on the road to recovery, call 304-264-1776 or visit www.PatriotsPath.org.



PATRIOT'S PATH
FOUNDATION

EDUCATION

Hepatitis C Group

Room 3A-150
Every 1st Monday, 9 to 11 a.m., OR
Every 2nd Monday, 1 to 3 p.m.

High Blood Pressure Group

Library, Room 2B-150
Every 2nd Tuesday, 1:30 p.m.

Lipid Clinic, Cholesterol Group

Library, Room 2B-150
Every Wednesday, 10 a.m.

MOVE!, Weight Loss and Exercise

Fitness Center
Every Thursday, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Diabetes Group

Room 2A-122C
Every 1st Thursday, 9 a.m. to Noon

Visually Impaired Support (VIST)

Room 2A-122C
Every 2nd Thursday, 10 a.m.

Tobacco Cessation

Room 2A-122C
Every 2nd Friday, 2 p.m., OR
Every 4th Friday, 10 a.m.

Pain Management Orientation

Library, Room 2B-150
Every Other Friday, 9 to 11 a.m.

CONTACT

Martinsburg VA Medical Center

510 Butler Ave., Martinsburg, WV 25405
304-263-0811 or 800-817-3807

Medical Advice Line

304-262-4855

Patient Eligibility

Mon - Fri, 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
304-263-0811, ext. 3758/3757

Automated Prescription Refill

304-263-0811, ext. 4870

Outpatient Clinics

Cumberland, MD	866-712-8084
Hagerstown, MD	866-399-0117
Fort Detrick, MD	301-624-1200
Harrisonburg, VA	540-442-1773
Stephens City, VA	866-463-8532
Franklin, WV	304-358-2355
Petersburg, WV	304-257-5817

Vet Center

Martinsburg, WV 304-263-6776

Veterans Benefits Admin.

800-827-1000

CALENDAR

September

- 16** POW-MIA Day
- 17-18** Thunder Over
the Blue Ridge
Air Show
- 23** Fort Detrick CBOC
Grand Opening
- 29** VFW Day

October

- 1-31** Patient Centered Care
Awareness Month
- 1-31** Breast Cancer
Awareness Month
- 16** Oktoberfest
- 22** Welcome Home,
65th Anniversary
Celebration

November

- 9** 5th Annual Hospice
Open House
- 6-11** Veterans Day
Weeklong Programs
- 12** Hero Haven Homeless
Stand-down

No waiting rooms. No on-hold music.
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“Secure messaging
is awesome.”

- Paul Raines, with wife Jessica Raines
OIF Veteran, US Army



Enroll in MyHealthVet for online access to your health care team. Through Secure Messaging, you can request prescription refills, lab test results, changes in your personal information, appointment rescheduling, and reliable answers to health and medical questions.