



Volunteer

at the Philadelphia VA Medical Center



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DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

A Message from the Chief

Thank you for taking the first step to becoming a VA Volunteer! On behalf of the Philadelphia VA Medical Center, we are delighted that you are interested in volunteering at our organization.

Our mission:

"Honor America's veterans by providing exceptional health care that improves their health and well being."

With a unique mission, we also have unique volunteers who bring an abundance of compassion, energy, and spirit to our veterans. Your decision to volunteer at the VA Medical Center will be very fulfilling and rewarding.

Please take a few minutes to review the enclosed information carefully, complete and return the following forms:

- Volunteer application
- Two reference forms from individuals other than relatives

For volunteer groups, please contact Voluntary Service to request a group application form.

The process will begin once Voluntary Service receives all your completed forms. The first step will begin with an interview. Interviews are conducted the first Tuesday and Thursday of every month. All volunteers are fingerprinted on day of interview or shortly after.

We look forward to meeting you and having you serve our veterans. If you have any questions, please feel free to call (215) 823-5868.

Melissa A. Heinlein, MA, MS, CAVS
Chief, Voluntary Service

Pre-Med Program Starting Fall 2008!

Pre-Med Program for college students, post-baccalureate, and change of career. Call (215) 823-5800 ext. 6830 for details.



Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteer opportunities are found in the Medical Center, Nursing Home Care Unit, and our Community-Based Outpatient Clinics. Our goal is to meet the needs of our veterans while meeting your interests, skills, and talents as a volunteer.

Opportunities are categorized in the following areas:

Clerical

Volunteers provide administrative support to departments such as data entry, answering phones, running errands, assisting with department-specific projects. Departments include: radiology, clinical support, and radiation therapy.

Clinical

Volunteers are trained to interact with veteran patients such as reading, listening, and socializing with patients, feeding patients during mealtime, writing letters on behalf of the patient, and much more! Departments include: nursing units, ICU, nursing home, recreation therapy, and emergency room.

Community

Volunteers serve as a liaison for the incoming community (patients, visitors) and assist them with finding their way throughout the Medical Center. Areas include: patient escort program, hospitality/messenger, information desk, and making meals memorable.

"I shall pass through this world but once. Any good therefore that I can do or any kindness that I can show to any human being, let me do it now. Let me not defer or neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again."

- Mahatma Gandhi

Time Commitment

While any time you are able to give to our veterans is valuable, we do ask for a minimum time commitment for our volunteers.

Adult volunteers: Four (4) hours per week

College students: Three (3) hours per week

High School students: Two (2) hours per week (afternoons only during the school year)

Don't worry! If you are unable to serve the minimum time commitment, there are other opportunities available.

If your time availability only allows you to volunteer a few hours a month, no problem. You can serve as a messenger or give some time reading to a patient.

Still tight on time? Well, we have more opportunities to choose from!

If you are affiliated with a group (Fraternity, Sorority, Boy/Girl Scouts, Service Organization like the Veterans of Foreign Wars, or even your place of employment, etc.), we have opportunities for you!

Organizations visit our veteran residents at the Nursing Home (located right across the street from the Medical Center) for bingo games, ice cream socials, "happy hour," summer cookouts, entertainment, and much more. Organizations come in as a group and with assistance from Recreation Therapy, assist with the event! **We ask there be no more than 10 volunteers in a group.**

Contact Voluntary Service for additional opportunities!



Donations

Okay, so you don't have time to volunteer, but still want to help our veterans? We can always use donations – both monetary and gifts-in-kind.

Monetary

Monetary gifts are placed in our General Post Funds (money designated to use only for our veterans). The following General Post Funds need continuous funding:

- **Television Fund**
Monies used to purchase TVs at the Medical Center and Nursing Home
- **National Games**
Golden Age and Wheelchair Games Sponsorship needed for veteran participants
- **Canteen Books**
Funds used to purchase Canteen Books which patients can use to purchase items in the retail store. The books have a monetary value of \$1.00.
- **General Purpose**
Funds used to purchase needed items for veterans, sponsor day trips, food events
- **Nursing Home General Purpose**
- **Mental Hygiene Ongoing Therapy Program**
Funds used to purchase tokens for the Homeless Veterans Program
- **Returning Soldiers Fund**
- If you wish to inquire about other funds, please contact Voluntary Service.

Gift Cards

Any monetary amount to stores such as Wawa, Target, Kohls, Wal-Mart, Acme, Superfresh, Giant

Gifts-in-Kind

While a monetary donation may not be feasible at this time for you, Voluntary Service is always in need of donated items for our veterans. Please call for the most updated needs list.



Organizational Volunteering Opportunities

Elementary School and High School

Our veterans love to get cards. Why not create cards all year round (Veterans Day, Memorial Day, Thanksgiving, etc.). They can be placed on the meal trays for our patients. You could start a book drive, magazine drive, or even a food drive (call Voluntary Service for an approved list of food to be donated). Call Voluntary Service for card requirements.

Colleges and Universities

Not sure what to do on a Sunday afternoon during football season? Why not sponsor a football party and watch the game with our veterans? We also have a Veteran's History Project where you are trained to interview veterans and their story is forwarded to the Library of Congress. Perfect for English and History majors!

Businesses and Service Organizations

Has your business experienced the rewards of a company-sponsored volunteer program? What a great way to get to know your colleagues and to help others. Businesses could sponsor a "happy hour" on Thursday or a summer cookout at our Nursing Home. Voluntary Service can provide you with specific group opportunities.

These opportunities are only a snapshot of what can be done for our veterans!

Call Voluntary Service today at (215) 823-5868 to discuss your options for our veterans at the Philadelphia VA Medical Center.

“

Never doubt that a small group of **thoughtful, committed** citizens can **change the world;** indeed, it's the **only thing that ever has.**

”

Margaret Mead



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