



Summer Youth Program pays off for Everyone

We've heard it before. Someone, in an exasperated tone says 'Kids today,' and when they do - they call into question the ethics, moral compass, and priorities of our youth. And, while this age-old question has been repeated regularly from one generation to another, if the participation in this year's CAVHCS Youth Summer Program is any indication - there are plenty of youth in the area that have their priorities straight.

"This year we had youth in the program that volunteered more than 7,000 hours," said CAVHCS Voluntary Services Chief, William Petty. "That translates to well over \$100,000 worth of time and effort. I'd say these kids came in and did a wonderful job."

CAVHCS Youth Summer Program gives youth an opportunity to interact with veterans, as well as

getting some hands-on experience. "With more than 35 participants we had youth volunteers all over CAVHCS," said Petty. "From supporting Medical Administration and the Diabetic Clinic to manning our



Summer Youth Program participants like Ashlee Pitts (r), here supporting a veteran in Physical Therapy, provided more than 7,000 volunteer hours in more than a dozen services throughout CAVHCS during this year's program.

information booth and supporting Physical Therapy they had a great opportunity to see what it is we do here."

While giving youth an opportunity to gain experience in some of a VA Medical Center's activities may be an acceptable tradeoff for the time committed - there were countless reports of CAVHCS receiving a priceless return. "I can't tell you how many times I heard about the smiles," said Petty. "Those smiles and the genuine concern that followed were not only contagious, but they undoubtedly had a positive impact on customer service."

To show appreciation for a job well done, CAVHCS hosted a bowling outing for all the program participants.

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VFW selects member of Columbus CBOC Employee of the Year

It's always nice to be appreciated. And, recently the Georgia Department of Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) made a special effort to show their appreciation to one of CAVHCS' top performers by selecting her as the VFW VA Healthcare Employee of the Year.

"I was very happy and surprised," said Ms. Phaedra Pitre, who serves as Administrative Assistant to the Clinic manager of the Columbus, Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC). "It's always nice to be appreciated, but this was more than I could have expected."

According to the VFW nomination document, Pitre's approach to job accomplishment could also be described as more than expected. "Ms. Pitre displays a genuine interest in our veterans and their families," states the nomination. "...she is supportive of voluntary services and the VAVS organizations that support our veterans, taking on many tasks beyond her job description. She presents herself with a cheerful spirit and a smile, even in the face of adversity."

Since her arrival to the Columbus CBOC, Pitre has volunteered to serve on the CBOC Advisory Committee, providing influential input and support in securing additional space and providing additional services.

"I don't really think I do that much above and beyond," said Pitre. "I think when you work with veterans, doing whatever is necessary to ensure they get the support they deserve seems like part of the job."

Pitre's 'can do' attitude is readily observable. "Several veterans have commented about her unique work ethic," states the nomination letter. "...with her genuine love for our veterans and seeing them doing well. We are fortunate to have her on our team."



Ms. Phaedra Pitre(r) accepts her citation as VFW VA Healthcare Employee of the Year from VFW Third District Commander, Franky Hicks.

From the Director

Judith L. St. Onge, PhD, FACHE

Providing service to those who've served means that we all are required to stay vigilant that we are providing the highest standards of care. This commitment was maybe best exemplified when the VA established a System Wide Ongoing Assessment & Review Strategy (SOARS).

CAVHCS is scheduled to have a SOARS visit in late October. Considering your ongoing commitment to excellence a SOARS visit should serve to verify that we are on the right path. However, for many of us hearing that we're about to have a SOARS visit can be equated with the anxiety of going through an inspection.

I want to encourage you to embrace this process and understand that the SOARS Mission is to provide assessment and educational consultation to volunteer facilities using a systematic method for on-going self-improvement. SOARS supports a continuous readiness culture where each person understands the value of their contribution to the VHA mission.

Committed to continual process improvement the SOARS Vision is to; Help provide quality health services to eligible veterans; assist medical centers with meeting standards of care and remain continually ready for review and identify strong practices, sharing this information with other networks and medical centers.

Please take a minute to visit the SOARS website at <http://soars.vssc.med.va.gov/default.aspx>. While there you can review the in-depth approach SOARS takes in:

- Mental Health Unit Tour
- Credentialing & Privileging
- Patient Safety
- Long Term Care
- MCCF Management
- Organizational Improvement
- Oxygen Management
- Purchase Card Management
- Police and Security
- GEMS Program
- Operating Room Tour
- Part Time Physicians
- Pharmacy Tour
- Resident Supervision
- Seamless Transition
- SPD Tour

We're particularly fortunate here at CAVHCS, because we have a number of SOARS Consultants on staff. In the past few weeks they have been providing insight to the assessment processes. As anyone that has been visited by our Pre-SOARS Team, they've been very thorough. Our collective commitment to this process will undoubtedly bode well for the actually assessment in October.



I'd like to also encourage you all to take an additional moment to take the ongoing Integrated Ethics Survey <https://survey.sirota.com/va/ethics08/>. This survey allows everyone to provide guidance and input regarding CAVHCS' current environment and culture when it comes to ethics. You've seen information about the survey and the CAVHCS Integrated Ethics leadership Team, but we need your input to get an accurate picture of where we stand.

Finally, you'll have another opportunity to provide feedback late in September when CAVHCS conducts two Employee Town Hall meetings. The first of these meetings will be held in the Tuskegee Staff Training Room on Monday, September 29th from 1-2 pm. The second meeting will be held in the Montgomery Multi-purpose Room the following day Tuesday, September 30th from 11 am - noon.

CUSTOMER SERVICE



INDIVIDUALS RUN THE RACE,
BUT TEAMWORK WINS
CHAMPIONSHIPS

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The CAVHCS Salute

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Employees of the Month



Tuskegee Campus
Ms. Rhonda Lewis

Ms. Rhonda Lewis, Recreation Therapist currently works in New Horizon Community Living Center (CLC), Unit 129-GB.

She is a very dedicated and dependable employee who shows consistency and empathetic concern for residents, families and volunteers. Currently, she is also the CAVHCS spokesperson and Chairperson for Cultural Transformation.

She is the Cultural Transformation Coordinator, Project Leader for Cultural Transformation in the CLC and Eden Alternative Associate for CAVHCS. She is the leader in the CLC during daily activities, interdisciplinary team meetings, rounds and station-wide events. She has an excellent relationship with Volunteer Service Organizations and Stakeholders who provide valued volunteer-sponsored activities and programs. Ms. Lewis co-chaired our annual Senior Prom for CLC units, which gave families, visitors, and staff the opportunity to see the highest level of quality services we provide to our nation's heroes. She also serves as co-chair of the Clinical Training Program for Therapeutic Recreation Student interns.



Montgomery Campus
Ms. Jennifer Smith

Ms. Jennifer Smith, Diagnostic Radiologic Technologist in Imaging Service has proven over the years to be a very high quality technologist. She possesses good

liaison with staff and patients. During the past few months she has continually stepped forward whenever needed during staff shortages. She is deserving of this recognition due to her continual personal development coupled with and increased awareness of the needs of our veterans.

Ms. Smith takes extra time with patients and resolves patient complaints without requiring direction from anyone in management. She makes sure all supplies are ordered and stocked in her assigned room at the end of every day.

She always has a smile on her face and is eager to help in any way she can. Without Ms. Smith's continuous contributions, Imaging Service would not complete their daily procedures. She exhibits excellent customer service skills, and her team spirit serves as an inspiration to others.

CAVHCS All-Stars

I want to inform you that I am totally impressed with Social Worker – Cynthia Davis. She is very professional and proficient in what she does. She is a Model Employee! Thank you very much. – John H. Avondale, AL

I want to thank you for all you and the group in the clinic (Columbus, CBOC) have done for me. I think you all are the only ones that have my best interests at heart. - Floyd M. Carrollton, GA

I would like to express my heartfelt thanks and appreciation for the excellent reception extended to me during my registration period at the hospital (Tuskegee). I can say with confidence the Tuskegee hospital is not the same institution my father visited. ...Your honesty and acceptance made me feel important while at the same time I was comforted by the efforts of all of you as an "A Team Staff Member." Your kindness will always be remembered and passed on to others that may feel uncomfortable before their travel to visit each of you. Thank you and God bless you all. - George G. Columbus, GA

We wish to commend Dr. Salvador on his excellent medical professionalism. He is very personable, patient, and thorough and his medical recommendations and prescriptions always improve my health condition. He treats me with such kindness and respect. ...Thank you for having such superior doctors on staff working with our service-men and women. – George B. Jr. Montgomery, AL

I would like to say that Mary Young, Ann Holman, Carla Johnson and Deloise Jones are a great staff of nurses that have gone far and beyond to ensure that my same day surgery was as comfortable as possible. I would like to commend these ladies of their hospitality. They were very knowledgeable about their duties and job. I just want to say THANK YOU! - Shalawn R. Enterprise, AL

Images of CAVHCS

Family Council



Inpatient Family Day



Integrated Ethics Program

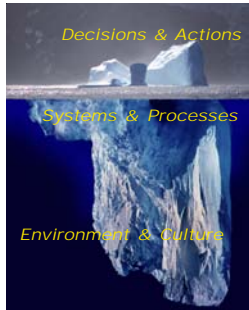
Do you have an Ethical Issue?

Improving Ethics Quality: Looking Beneath the Surface

Only about 10 percent of an iceberg is actually visible above the waterline—the greatest part of its mass lies hidden below the ocean surface. Mariners ignore that submerged mass at their peril.

Ethics quality in health care can be described in much the same way: Some ethical practices are readily visible; others become apparent only when we make an effort to see them. But what is usually unseen is often the most important determinant of ethical practice overall. At the surface of health care ethics, we can easily observe decisions and actions, and the events that follow from them, in the day-to-day practices of clinicians and administrators. Beneath this, however, organizational systems and processes as well as the underlying culture of the organization, drive decision making.

So where can you go and who can you call if faced with an ethical issue, decision or dilemma?



INTEGRATED ETHICS PROGRAM COUNCIL (IEPC)

Andrea Menyhart, Integrated Ethics Program Officer, Ext. 3296

Shirley Bealer, Leadership Ethics Coordinator, Ext. 4405
(To foster an ethical environment and culture)

LaDonna Golden, Consultation Ethics Coordinator, Ext. 4421
(Consultation about specific ethical concerns)

Sherman Burford, Preventive Ethics Coordinator, Ext. 2586
(Proactively identify and address ethics quality)

Ethics Quality and Healthcare Quality
go Hand-in-Hand



Complete the Upcoming Integrated Ethics Staff Survey!

Short and easy to complete, the Integrated Ethics Staff Survey starts August 4 and is available until September 5.

Take the survey on line at: <https://survey.sirota.com/va/ethics08/> or call toll free 1-800-705-4941.

This is your opportunity to give your views about ethics in your work environment.

New Privacy and Cyber Security Training Deadline – September 5,

Both the Privacy Awareness Training and the Cyber Security Awareness Training must be completed by September 5, 2008. Note that this is a change from the original September 30, 2008 deadline. Supervisors are responsible for reiterating the vital importance of this training to their staffs. Employees who do not complete the training may be subject to managerial sanctions within their organization in accordance with VA Directive and Handbook 6500.

If you still need to take the training you can logon to the LMS system at <https://www.lms.va.gov/plateau/user/login.jsp>. If you have any questions, contact your Supervisor, Privacy Officer or Information Security Officer.

Senior Management Conference: Power of Performance

More than 1,000 Veterans Health Administration' (VHA) leaders from throughout the nation will meet in Washington, DC, Aug. 26-28 for the 2008 VHA Senior Management Conference.

The theme for this year's bi-annual conference of VHA leaders nationwide will be: "Power of the Promise: Orchestrating a New Tomorrow."

"The 2008 VHA Senior Management conference provides an educational opportunity for leaders to address current and emerging challenges the Department of Veterans Affairs faces," said Dr. Kussman, underscoring the conference's purpose.

The conference is designed for VISN Directors; VHA Chief Officers; VA Medical Center Directors; Associate, Assistant, and Deputy Directors; Chiefs of Staff; Nurse Executives; Clinical Managers; Quality Management Officers and other emerging or current senior leaders.

The conference will highlight examples of Dr. Kussman's four areas of concentration: Practicing Progressive Leadership; Putting Patient Care First; Improving the Quality of VHA's Business Processes; and Maintaining Meaningful Measures of Performance.

The objectives of the Conference are to: identify and describe examples of VHA "Excellence" related to each of the VHA Under Secretary for Health's four focus areas; understand the role and importance of Diversity in VHA Leadership; recognize interdependencies between various components of VHA and the impact on teamwork and communication; and articulate the priority focus areas as defined by VA and VA's top leaders.

Appearing at the conference will be Elliott Masie, an internationally recognized futurist, analysis researcher and organizer on the critical topics of learning, technology business and workplace productivity. He is the editor of Learning TRENDS, an Internet newsletter read by more than 50,000 business executive worldwide, and has authored several dozen books.

The session on diversity will be presented by Luke Visconti, a partner and cofounder of DiversityInc Media LLC magazine and an accompanying web site. He is a recognized leader in this field and has appeared on major network television programs. He is often quoted on diversity issues in major newspapers including The New York Times.



'Youth'

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"It was the least we could do considering the success of this year's program," said Petty. "After all, we wanted to be sure they knew how much we appreciated their support and show them we felt they were on the right path."



Several disabled veterans prepare to jump on snowmobiles during the 22nd National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic held at the Snowmass Village, Colo., April 2. Participation is open to service veterans with traumatic brain injuries, spinal cord injuries, orthopedic amputations, visual impairments, certain neurological problems and other disabilities.

The annual disabled learn-to-ski clinic helps motivate and rehabilitate disabled Department of Defense veterans. It is the largest of its kind in the world. The clinic instructs veterans on Alpine and Nordic skiing, rock climbing, snowmobiling, sled hockey, and more. (U.S. Air Force photo/Tech. Sgt. Cecilio Ricardo)



August

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Cataract Awareness Month - www.aao.org National Immunization Awareness Month - www.cdc.gov/nip/events/niam Neurosurgery Outreach Month - www.aans.org Psoriasis Awareness Month - www.psoriasis.org Spinal Muscular Atrophy Awareness Month - www.curesma.com					1	2
3	4 Coast Guard Day (1790)	5	6	7 Purple Heart 225th Anniversary (1782)	8	9
National Health Center Week - www.healthcenterweek.org						
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23 22nd National Veterans Golden Age Games (Indianapolis, Ind.)
24	25	26 Women's Equality Day (1920)	27	28	29 Hurricane Katrina hits Central Gulf Coast (2005)	30
31		PLEASE COMPLETE THE INTEGRATED ETHICS STAFF SURVEY! The Integrated Ethics Staff Survey will be available online https://survey.sirota.com/va/ethics08/ and via phone 1-800-705-4941 from August 4 through September 5. This is your opportunity to give your views about ethics in your work environment.				

The CAVHCS Community Calendar is not intended to be an all-inclusive, official calendar. It is intended rather to provide a medium for CAVHCS Salute to share upcoming events.

If you would like to add a CAVHCS event please email details directly to alan.bloom@va.gov. Submissions are not guaranteed to be published. Considerations will be made for propriety, promptness and print space.