

Gateway News



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- ◆ Tree Lighting
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- ◆ Letters to Santa
Nov. 17, & Dec. 12th
- ◆ Jefferson Barracks
- ◆ Media Sale
Dec. 3 & 4
- ◆ Tree Lighting
Dec. 5, 2008
- ◆ Inpatient Holiday Party
Dec. 19, 2008

HOW IS IT SPELLED?

You know that November 11 is the day America honors and thanks veterans for their military service. You may know that the holiday began as Armistice Day in recognition of the armistice that ended World War I 1918. You have probably seen the holiday listed as "Veterans Day," "Veteran's Day" and as "Veterans' Day."

So, which is correct?

Veterans Day does not include an apostrophe but does include an "s" at the end of "veterans" because it is not a day that "belongs" to veterans; it is a day for honoring all veterans.

Veterans Day



This new Fisher House gives veterans and military families home-like environment, allowing them to be near their loved ones during their recoveries," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Dr. James B. Peake. "This wonderful new facility will allow patients to focus on their treatment and permit them to receive the full benefit of VA's world-class care."



*St. Louis VA Medical Center
and the
Fisher House in St. Louis Board*

*Announce
The Ground Breaking Ceremony
For the
St. Louis Fisher House*

*Veteran's Day
Tuesday, November 11, 2008 1:00 p.m.
St. Louis VA Medical Center
Jefferson Barracks Division
Adjacent to Building 1*

The new Fisher House will be built on the grounds of the Jefferson Barracks Division of the St. Louis VA Medical Center. The Fisher House will be 100 percent handicapped accessible and will have 20 bedrooms or suites and several common use areas. The home is open to all family members of hospitalized Veterans: spouses, children (of any age) and parents or in-laws. They may stay in the Fisher House...ABSOLUTELY FREE OF CHARGE....and for as long as their loved one is hospitalized in the VA. Military members and their families who are being treated in St Louis are also eligible to stay in this home. Here, the families will provide mutual support to each other as they face the trials of treatment, healing and recuperation.

For information on the Fisher House in St. Louis contact the local Chairperson, James Donahoe at DonahoeJB@hotmail.com or www.FisherHouseInSTL.org

St. Louis Veterans attend New Sports Clinic

Several St. Louis VA veterans participated in the new VA Sports Clinic for injured veterans. This new clinic is one of 5 programs sponsored through the VA National Rehabilitation Games and special events. The sports clinic introduces recently injured veterans to adaptive summer sports. The first National Veterans Summer Sports Clinic was held Sept 28- Oct 3 in San Diego. The clinic is for veterans who have recently suffered traumatic injuries such as amputations, brain injuries and spinal cord injuries. At the weeklong clinic, they received instructions in a variety of adaptive summer sports, including sailing, surfing, kayaking, cycling and track and field events 100 veterans registered for the program with 8 St. Louis area veterans attending the program. The sports clinic is the fifth national rehabilitation event offered by VA to promote the healing of body, mind and spirit. VA's other rehabilitation events are the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic, the National Veterans Wheelchair Games, the National Veterans Golden Age Games and the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival. Eight St. Louis veterans and 4 therapists attended the inaugural sports clinic.



VA Employee And Volunteer Receive Presidential Honors



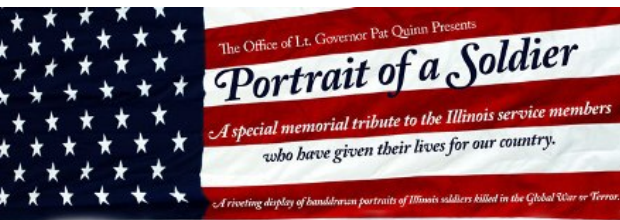
VA employee and volunteer receive honors from President George W. Bush presented the President's Volunteer Service Award to Eric Greitens during his visit to St. Louis Friday, October 3. Greitens a lieutenant in the Navy Reserve and a Navy SEAL started the Center for Citizen Leadership (CCL) after serving in Iraqi and Afghanistan. CCL is based in St. Louis and helps place soldiers pursuing career in public service internships. Timothy Smith completed his internship at St. Louis VA Medical Center and was recently hired by the Recovery Center as a Peer Support Counselor. Also in attendance at the meeting was new CCL Fellow and VA volunteer, Michael Boyd. President Bush met with the group at St. Louis Lambert International Airport before attending a local fundraiser.

SLATE HONOR

St. Louis VA Medical Center was honored by the St. Louis Agency on Training and Employment (SLATE) as the 2008 Outstanding Youth Employer of the Year. The Medical Center hired 34 high school/college students for summer employment. Program coordinators, Elizabeth C. Jenkins, EEO/Diversity Program Manager, and Shirl Smith, Human Resource Specialist echoed their appreciation for the staff members that supervised and mentored the students. They also expressed that this is a wonderful opportunity for the medical center to support the local community. Former SLATE program director, Michelle L. Duvall, Youth Council Coordinator & Special Projects Coordinator stated parents and students were very appreciative she also stated several parents personally contacted her office to let her know how appreciative they were of the work experience provided to the students.



Michael K. Holmes,
SLATE Executive
Director;
Elizabeth Jenkins;
Olivia Stallings;
Shirl Smith



The sketched portraits of more than 180 Illinois soldiers who have lost their lives in the war on global terror filled the glass walkway on the campus of Lewis and Clark College. Illinois Lt. Governor, Pat Quinn, opened the Portrait of a Soldier memorial exhibition the campus of Lewis and Clark on October 15th. The exhibit, which has traveled through more than 40 cities and towns, has been viewed by thousands of people. "The Portrait of a Soldier memorial is a moving tribute to the men and women who have given their last full measure of devotion to our democracy," Quinn said. "I encourage everyone to come see the Portrait of a Soldier tribute and honor the memory of these fallen heroes.

Artist Cameron Schilling, 24, of Mattoon, drew the first portrait in August 2004 after Army Spc. Charles Neeley, also of Mattoon, was killed in Iraq. Schilling gave the sketch to Spc. Neeley's parents to convey his sympathy for their loss. In October 2005, Schilling decided to draw a portrait of every Illinois service member who has fallen during the Global War on Terror. The portraits are copies of the original, which has been given to the fallen soldier's next of kin, and the exhibit travels throughout the state of Illinois. The exhibit features a sketch of Sgt. Steven Mennemeyer, son of Ramona Phillips, St. Louis VAMC IT Specialist. For more information on Portrait of a Soldier, please visit www.operationhomefront.org Below is Ramona Philips and her daughter, Sarah Mennemeyer.



Fast Flu Facts

- The best way to prevent the flu is getting a vaccination each year.
- Influenza vaccines are safe and effective. You CANNOT get the flu from a flu shot. Serious complications of seasonal flu cause an average of 226,000 hospitalizations and 36,000 deaths annually.
- Health care workers who become infected with influenza can shed flu virus for up to 1-2 days before symptoms develop. Thus they are often found at work while infectious where they may spread flu virus to vulnerable patients without knowing it.
- All health care professionals, including those in training, should be vaccinated annually against influenza. Unvaccinated employees and trainees have caused flu outbreaks in health care settings. Influenza vaccine is available for enrolled veterans at the Jefferson Barracks and John Cochran Divisions and all 3 community based clinics. For further information on all St. Louis VA flu shot programs please call our Flu Shot Hot Line at: 314-289-6300 or 1-800-228-5459 Ext. 56300.

Congratulations SAW Graduates.

Graduation ceremony and celebration was held in honor of the students of the Fourth Class of SAW on Thursday, the ninth of October Two thousand and Eight in the Jefferson Barracks Division Auditorium. Family members and co-workers were invited to participate in the celebration and support the graduates. This year, six students participated in the School At Work (SAW) program. SAW is a program developed by Catalyst Learning to provide job advancement, retention and career development for entry level workers. Graduates were encouraged to continue pursuing their educational goals. Since 2004, 40 employee have completed the program with many of the St. Louis VAMC SAW graduates now enrolled in college level courses. Of the current graduating class most have stated they intend to continue higher educational course work.

2008 GRADUATES

Phyllis Bono, Financial Management Service, Teona Crowley, Nutrition & Food Service, Harold Gotsch, Nutrition & Food Service, Ruelette Jackson, Environmental Management Service, Shawn Levi, Nutrition & Food Service, Dargaria Williams, Nutrition & Food Service



Operation Homecoming – Writing the Wartime Experience

The National Endowment for the Arts announces a new series of writing workshops for veterans of past and current conflicts at the Jefferson Barracks Campus of the VA Medical Center (VAMC). Two workshops took place at Jefferson Barracks, one on Thursday evenings from 6:00-8:00 p.m. for veterans of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. A second, four-week writing workshop began on Friday, October 24, 9:30 – 11:30 am and is open to veterans of both current and past conflicts. The 3rd and 4th sessions are tentatively scheduled for November 6 & 7 and November 13 & 14. Guest instructor Andrew Carroll will teach the St. Louis VAMC workshops. Andrew Carroll, considered one of the nation's foremost experts on wartime correspondence, is editor of the *Operation Homecoming* anthology, along with several bestsellers, including *Behind the Lines* and *War Letters*. Carroll is the founder and director of the Legacy Project, an all-volunteer initiative that honors

veterans and active-duty troops by seeking out and preserving their wartime letters and e-mails. *Operation Homecoming* was named one of the "Best of 2006" in nonfiction by *The Washington Post Book World*. The documentary feature *Operation Homecoming*, inspired by the NEA anthology and program, was nominated for an Academy Award® and received two EMMY® Awards. St. Louis VAMC is the first site to provide writing workshops in partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts. To enroll or get additional information contact Rita Reichert, (314) 652-4100 Ext. 63286.



A Reason to Quit

When it comes to cigarette smoking, quitting can be difficult. With an estimated 50,000 deaths from secondhand smoke each year, according to a 2006 U.S. Surgeon General report, giving up the habit can be a decision that protects you and your family.

Smoking can lead to pneumonia, asthma, bronchitis, middle ear infections and can even be a contributing cause to cancer.

November 20 is the 2008 Great American Smoke-out, an annual event sponsored by the American Cancer Society that targets a date for smokers to quit, at least for one day and hopefully forever. If you are a smoker, join others and put down the tobacco for good.

The St. Louis VA Medical Center offers a Stop Smoking Program.

The program consists of a First Steps Class and Stop Smoking Class available at JC and JB.

Studies have shown that the most effective way for most people to stop smoking is a combination of a Stop Smoking class and a pharmacological aid.

The First Step Class, will teach you the best way to stop smoking. After you complete the class or set a quit date at the FIRST STEP CLASS, a staff member will contact you to see how you are doing.

The Stop Smoking Class is designed to help you be successful in quitting your smoking habit. The class is offered once each month. The class meets every Wednesday at 9:00 a.m. for one hour a week for four weeks. Each session will provide you with helpful information to help you quit smoking. You will receive tips on how to get through the early stages of quitting and how to reduce stress. You will learn more about your smoking habits and its effects on your health. You will be given information about healthy lifestyles and diet to make the most of your positive decision to quit smoking. You will receive support from staff and from other veterans.

You will receive calls from our clinic several weeks after the start of treatment, at 6 months, and at 12 months. The nurse will encourage your efforts to remain tobacco free and may encourage you to attend additional classes to address any problems and obtain support.

Elizabeth Beck, PhD. is coordinator of the Smoking Cessation program. Veterans may self enroll in the program by calling 314-289-6371 or any member of the treatment team may refer veterans to the program for service.

First St. Louis Area Hospital To Use ThermoSuit

The St. Louis VA Medical Center is the first area hospital to use the ThermoSuit. Cooling a person following cardiac arrest can mean the difference between life and death. Sudden cardiac arrest is when the heart stops beating. It happens suddenly and with no warning. Many patients do not survive a cardiac arrest. Patients who do survive usually sustain serious injury to the brain, about 60% of the cardiac arrest survivors regain consciousness, but one-third have irreversible cognitive disabilities. Recent studies show that cooling patients when being resuscitated after cardiac arrest increases their chance of survival. It also is thought to reduce the effects of severe brain injuries like dementia and memory loss.



Picture from LtoR Robert Shull, Robert Schock, Alan Maniet, MD, St. Louis VAMC Staff Physician

Doctors at the St. Louis VAMC are using the latest techniques to preserve brain and heart function after cardiac arrest. The ThermoSuit looks like a plastic raft that inflates around a person with ice water pumped onto and under the body. The console monitors the body temperature to keep it within the target range. Cooling via the ThermoSuit method allows you to reach the target temperature in approximately 30 minutes compared to use of cooling blankets that may take up to four hours for the body to reach to target temperature.

Clinical staff at the St. Louis VA Medical Center were trained by the developer of the ThermoSuit, Robert B. Schock, PhD. during the week of September 22. The VA Medical Center is the first St. Louis area hospital and the first VA hospital to purchase and use the ThermoSuit System.

Congratulations to Medical Service staff and Susan Parker, Nursing Service for ensuring our medical center has the most up-to date technology for veterans.

Veterans Serving other Veterans - VA Volunteers give 1000th pair of shoes



Pictured from LtoR: Ron Neal, Harrison Ochs, Victor Stragliatti, Marcena Gunter, Pete McBrady

On October 22, 2008 Harrison Ochs, veteran, VA volunteer and American Legion member took his 1000th veteran on an outing to purchase shoes. Ochs has been coming to the VA medical center at Jefferson Barracks once a month to ensure that veterans that are embarking on new jobs have a "new pair of shoe" to successfully start them on their journey. This innovative program began 12 years ago with the goal of providing every graduate of the domiciliary program with one new pair of shoes.

Ochs presented the idea to the AL Post and members all agreed that it was a lofty goal but they wanted to be a part of the solution The AL has held various fund raisers throughout the years to keep donations coming into the program. The shoes are provided free to veterans enrolled in the VA Domiciliary program as they enter the employment phase of the program. The program is lead and coordinated by Harrison Ochs is American Legion, District #10 Service Officer and Victor Stragliatti American Legion, Commander, State of Missouri. Medical center leadership, domiciliary residents and 30 American Legion members honored Harrison Ochs and Victor Stragliatti for their many years of service and the thousands of veterans that they have assisted through this unique program. Shoes purchased during this month's shoe run were purchased from donations made in honor of Ms. Ochs late wife, Etta. The couple volunteered at the St. Louis VA Medical Center for over 12 years.

November Service Pins

NAME	SERVICE	DIV	YEARS
Kristina K. Marlow	MHS	JB	10
Sumitra D. Vasireddy, M.D.	PCS	JB	10
Desiree A. Barber	NURSING	JB	15
William B. Busby	R.C.S.		15
Joanna Krajewski	NURSING	JC	15
Elliott D. Temmer	FES	JB	15
Keith L. Thomas	HAS	JC	15
Brenda Turner	DIS	JC	15
Daniel Uko	PATH & LAB	JC	15
Joann M. Bisto	PCS	JC	20
Betty J. Anderson	NURSING	JC	25
Beverly B. Arps	SOCIAL WORK	JC	25
George P. Brennan	CHAPLAIN	JC	25
David L. Foote	HAS	JC	25
Lillie P. Harris	FMS	JB	25
Marva L. Johnson	FMS	JB	25
Kenneth M. Olson	PCS	JC	25
Sue N. Reiker	NURSING	JB	25
Norman Roundtree	FES	JC	25
Merdis Henderson	HAS	JC	30
Earle W. Baucum, Jr.	PATH & LAB	JC	35
Donald T. Fancher	FES	JB	35
Mark L. Williams,	P & D	JC	35



Valet Parking available at John Cochran

We are excited to offer veterans visiting the John Cochran division valet parking. Any veteran that is coming to John Cochran VAMC for an appointment may use our FREE valet parking service. To access these service veterans should enter the grounds through the Enright Street entrance and drive to the Ambassadors entrance, adjacent to the emergency department. The valet staff will assist patrons out of their vehicles and provide wheelchairs if needed. Service hours are 6am – 6pm, Monday through Friday.

Veterans may be asked to show their appointment letter or VA identification card.

Retirees

NAME	YRS SVC	SL	DIV
MATTHES, Robert J. Jr.	33	CEOSH	JB
FOSTER, Magdaline R.	22	Nsg-MH	JB
JOS, C. J.	29	MH	JB
WILLIS, Walter L.	18	FE	JC
HUNTER, Geraldine	23	Nsg-SC	JC
JUAREZ, Linda A.	24	Nsg-EC	JB
NYGARD, Mary L.	30	SC	JC
ANDERSEN, Robert S.	37	MH	JB
EDWARDS, Ronald L.	28	N&F	JC
BRAYFIELD, Bob O.	36	FE	JB
TURNBOW, Maria L.	22	HAS	JC

The *Gateway News* is published for the employees, volunteers, patients and friends of St. Louis VA Healthcare System. To submit comments, articles, editorials, letters or story ideas for possible inclusion, please contact Marcena Gunter at 314-289-6393 or send us an e-mail at marcena.gunter@va.gov