



Volume VIII Issue I  
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# The Eagle

Voluntary Service Central Office Newsletter  
*Leaders in Volunteer Management*

Happy New Year to One and ALL!

I trust each of you had a wonderful and safe holiday season!

I had the distinct pleasure of participating in the holiday gift distribution in my old stomping grounds at the DC VAMC. It was great to see old friends (both volunteers and employees) and of course it was tremendous to be able to distribute gifts to some of the hospitalized patients. One patient said to me as I passed his room again, there truly is a Santa Clause. I thank the volunteers for making the veteran patients feel special, not only during the holiday season, but year round.

As I was coming back from Des Moines Iowa, where the National Commander of American Legion and the National President of American Legion Auxiliary signed up as volunteers, I sat next to a lady who had just participated in the American Legion Auxiliary gift shop at her local VA Medical Center, and had for years. This is the only activity she participates in as a volunteer, but it is meaningful to her and to the veteran patient. She told me that she picks up goodies for the gift shop all year long and puts little notes on the gifts, "For VA Hospital", in case something happens to her, her family will know to ensure the veterans get their gift options.

VA Volunteers are wonderful, compassionate and hard working individuals, whether it is a regularly scheduled volunteer or an occasional volunteer. Their thoughts are with the men and women who have given so much to maintain our country's freedom, our veterans. We could not provide the outstanding service without outstanding volunteers!

I sincerely thank you for your hard work and dedication throughout 2008 and I know you will keep the same dedication in 2009.

*Laura B. Belen*





## 2009 VA Voluntary Service National Advisory Committee Meeting—Make Plans NOW!

This year's National Advisory Committee (NAC) meeting will be held in Houston, Texas, at the Houston Westchase Marriott from May 20 through 22. Lodging at the hotel is \$102 per night plus 17% tax. To make reservations call 1-800-452-5110 and ask for the Voluntary Service National VAVS Meeting room block.

This will be the 63rd meeting of the NAC and Houston is ready to host!

Come join your co-workers, fellow volunteers, and national organization representatives in an educational extravaganza. Learn about volunteer programs involving OEF/OIF veterans, VA's Suicide Prevention program, recruiting volunteers for creative, non-traditional assignments.

You'll also be able to sit in on the NAC's business sessions and learn how you and your organizations play a major role in the management of the VA Voluntary Service program.

For additional information or to request a registration packet, contact your local VA Voluntary Service office.

Houston, here we come!



Lita Natividad (L) and Mrs. Hicks with blankets.

### Blankets Donated for Veterans

*VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System*

Mrs. Hicks of Burbank, California dropped off fifteen hand made afghan blankets to the hospitalized residents of the Sepulveda Nursing Home Care Unit to start the 2008 Christmas Holiday. Accepting the blankets on behalf of the veterans is Lita Natividad, Nursing Assistant at the Nursing Home.

### Top 10 New Year's Resolutions

1. More time with family & friends
2. Get fit
3. Tame the bulge
4. Quit smoking
5. Enjoy life more
6. Quit drinking
7. Get out of debt
8. Learn something new
9. **Help others** (volunteer!)
10. Get organized



## Wreaths Across America

The *Wreaths Across America* story began over 15 years ago when Worcester Wreath Company (a for-profit commercial business from Harrington, Maine) began a tradition of placing wreaths on the headstones of our Nation's fallen heroes at Arlington National Cemetery during the holidays.



Over that period of time, Worcester Wreath has donated 90,000 wreaths which were placed by volunteers in a wreath-laying ceremony each December. But as word spread, the

mission to *Remember; Honor; and Teach* about the sacrifices made by our veterans has captured the hearts and minds of many communities across the Country.

In December 2007, 286 participating locations hosted Wreaths Across America ceremonies overseeing the placement of 32,553 wreaths on the headstones of those who served and sacrificed for our freedoms. In 2008 that number exceeded 350 locations and 100,000 wreaths placed in honor!





# JANUARY

				1 New Year's Day	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19 Martin Luther King Jr's Birthday (Observed)	20 Presidential Inauguration	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31



*May your new year be filled with good works and deeds and your eyes sparkle with the joy of serving America's veterans.*

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