



# The Eagle

Voluntary Service Central Office Newsletter  
*Leaders in Voluntary Management*



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From the Director

♥ The National Salute to Veteran Patients Week is fast approaching and I know everyone is extremely busy with planning events and activities for your facility's Salute program.

This year fourteen facilities will host Valentines for Veterans Concerts that tens of thousands of Veterans, families, and community citizens will attend. These concerts are made possible by the generous support of many organizations, businesses, and volunteers and I extend my personal thanks to all of them for their support. The concerts and other local Salute events are a great way to take the Salute program into the community and helps focus public attention on the program's purpose, which is to pay tribute and express appreciation to Veteran patients; to increase awareness of VA's role in providing comprehensive medical care to the Nation's Veterans; and to encourage citizens to visit hospitalized Veterans and become involved as VA volunteers.

I wish you all great success with your National Salute programs. I know the tremendous amount of creativity, hard work, and dedication it takes to make these events successful.

Thank you for the effort you give to support this important program and for everything you do every day to support Veterans and their families!

*Laura B. Belen*

♥ "Not all of us can do great things, but we can do small things with great love." ~ Mother Teresa ♥





## VAVS Partners with the American Legion for National Day of Service Event



The American Legion was given a premier spot in the tent, surrounded by other Veterans Service Organizations, giving prominence to the cause of helping Veterans during the National Day of Service.

On January 19, 2013 people from all across the country gathered here in Washington, DC to kick off the 57th Presidential Inauguration by participating in the National Day of Service Summit on the National Mall. The event, which started as a tribute to the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., featured over 100 organizations and opportunities to serve in the areas of health, education, community resilience, economic development, Veterans and military families, faith, and environment. The American Legion was chosen as the premier organization for the Veterans & Military Families booth and invited VAVS to join them.

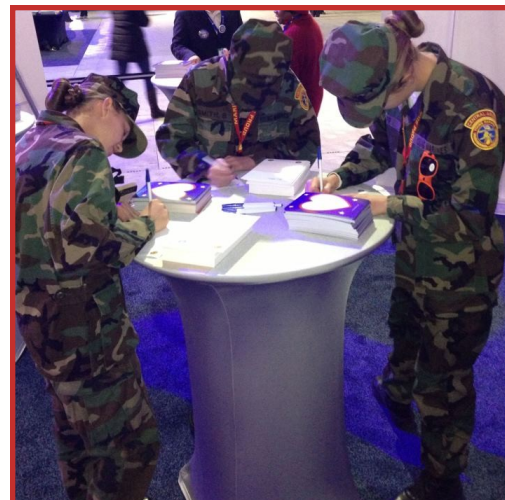
An estimated 15,000 - 25,000 people filled the tent throughout the day and visitors to the American Legion booth were given information about the organization and had the opportunity to write a Thank You letter or create a Valentine for Veterans and military service members. In addition, VAVS Director Laura Balun and Stephanie Burns, Chief of Voluntary Service in Washington, DC were on hand to provide information about volunteer opportunities and initiate volunteer sign-ups for VAVS programs both locally and nationwide. The American Legion National Commander, James E. Koutz, also signed up to

volunteer for the VA in his home state of Indiana. More than 70 applicants took the first step toward becoming part of the VAVS family!



Director of Voluntary Service, Laura Balun, helps American Legion National Commander, James E. Koutz, sign up as a VA Volunteer.

The cards and letters from visitors, including Commander Koutz and Miss America, were collected and will be distributed to service members currently serving as well as to hospitalized Veterans, just in time for National Salute to Veteran Patients Week, February 10-16.



Members of the Central Arizona Young Marines, a youth organization supported by the Marine Corps League, write Thank You letters to Veterans at the American Legion booth during their visit to DC from Prescott, AZ.



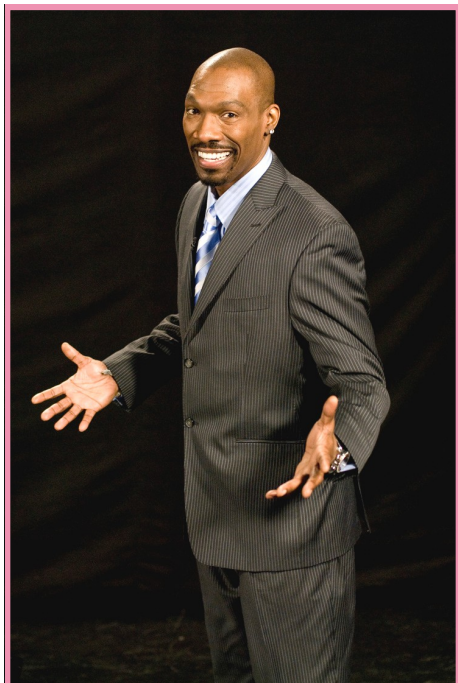
Miss America 2013 Mallory Hagan writes a personal message to an American hero.

Photos courtesy of The American Legion





## 2013 National Salute Chairman



We are extremely delighted and honored to have actor/comedian Charlie Murphy, a Navy Veteran, serve as the Chairman of this year's National Salute to Veteran Patients.

Charlie Murphy evolved from a cast member on "Chappelle's Show" to top-billed international comedian, performing in venues to sold-out audiences around the globe. He has spent nearly a decade dedicated to stand-up comedy and in Hollywood is considered a true acting, writing and producing talent. Among his many feature films are Spike Lee's *Jungle Fever* and *Mo' Betta Blues*, *Unearthed*, *Roll Bounce*, *Night at the Museum*, and *Harlem Nights*.

## Northern Indiana Veterans are Lovin' this Generous Donation

What began as a simple project for Randy Davis, leader of the Veteran's Gift Card Project, quickly grew into a campaign reaching as many Veterans as possible. For the second year Mr. Davis delivered 2,450 five-dollar McDonald's Gift Cards to hospitalized Veterans and outpatients at the Marion VA facility.

When Mr. Davis met and visited with the Voluntary Service Specialist at the medical center and was given a donation "needs list" he noticed one of the items listed were gift cards to fast food restaurants. He started with a goal to raise money to buy 150 five-dollar McDonald's gift cards. Last year he had received monies and/or cards which surpassed his goal and donated 2000 McDonald's gift cards. This year, Mr. Davis continued with his project, which is now called the Veterans Gift Card Project. He has delivered 2,450 cards to the Marion facility with scheduled visits to VANIHCS Community Based Outpatient Clinics and the Fort Wayne facility. He will distribute additional cards as the Veterans Gift Card Project has funded over 9,000 cards to be distributed to local Indiana VA facilities.



We are grateful and appreciative of Mr. Davis and the Veterans Gift Card Project. Through his donation, Voluntary Services has provided "McDonald's Day" to our inpatient Veterans, recreational outings to a McDonald's restaurant, meals to homeless Veterans, and special McDonald's flurries and smoothies to the Veterans of our Palliative Care unit. The gift cards will also be distributed to Veterans during upcoming special recognition days i.e. National Salute Week, Armed Forces Day, and Military birthdays, etc. The Veterans and families have expressed their gratitude and enjoyment of the special treats from Mr. Davis and the gift card project. It's a pure delight to witness the smiles brought to our Veterans by thoughtfulness of our donors and volunteers.

**Submitted By:** Dacia Overbey, Voluntary Service Specialist, VANIHCS, Marion, IN



# February

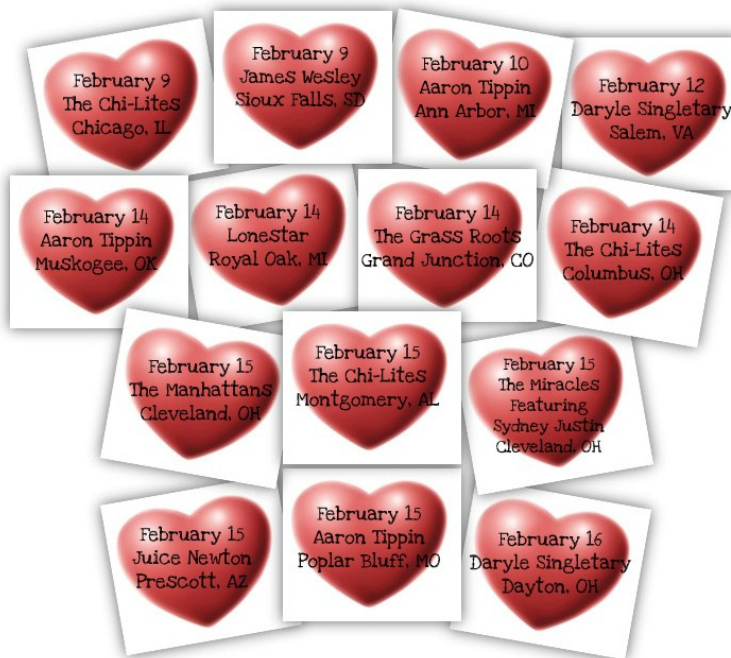


Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2  Groundhog Day
3 	4	5	6	7	8	9
10 National Salute to Veteran	11	12	13 Valentines Day	14	15 Patients Week	16
17 	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28		

## Valentines for Veterans Concert Series

Hosting a Valentines for Veterans Concert affords VAVS the opportunity to honor and welcome home those who have sacrificed for our country both at home and abroad, and to unite the community in this effort. These concerts serve not only as a celebration of these brave men and women, but also as a means to reach those in the community who have not accessed the services offered to Veterans by the VA. VA Voluntary Service is also able to invite community members to "serve those who served" by becoming volunteers at their local VA Medical Center.

This year 14 concerts will be held from coast to coast during VA's National Salute to Veteran Patients Week, February 10-16, 2013. For more information contact Voluntary Service at any one of the Valentines for Veterans Concert host sites listed here.



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