

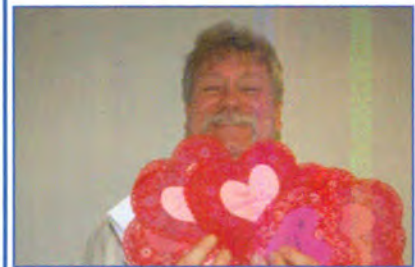
Volunteering- The News

Brockton West Roxbury Jamaica Plain
Worcester Outpatient Clinic

V A B O S T O N H E A L T H C A R E S Y S T E M



From The Chief



I know it has been some time since our last newsletter. We have been very busy with many wonderful programs for inpatients and outpatients alike. Our shooting programs have recently been increased to include West Roxbury. We have had inpatients join us from numerous patient groups in kayaking and Nordic skiing. Our Creative Arts competition and show was lauded as the "best in years". National Salute was not snowed out this year and we had a program at each campus. We have had some very special days of outreach like our Women Veterans Appreciation Ski Day with wonderful stories of healing and connection.

Laura Balun our National Director has said it is about personal relationships. I have to agree as I see the contact and connections between our veterans and volunteers, community groups and organizations there is a spark. Those sparks of warmth which start the healing process and mean so much. It is at that point when there is no need for the words "*Welcome Home*" for the feelings undefined have already registered what we intended to say. It came from and was stated from the heart.

As we head into yet another season and so many more programs and events I want to say thank you to all who have put their heart into our programs. I will have an opportunity to try and reach out at our annual volunteer awards banquet May 1st, but our attempts like this are tokens compared to what you all give our veterans every day.

Thank you and live life,



WOMEN VETERANS SKI APPRECIATION DAY 2011

A vivid blue sky and radiant sun shined over 24 women veterans and 72 women volunteers at the 2nd Annual Women Veterans Ski Appreciation Day at Mount Sunapee, NH on March 8, 2011. This event honors our brave women who serve in the armed forces. It provides a day of sisterhood and a fun care-free experience they will remember forever. All veterans received a complimentary lift ticket, use of equipment, lessons from certified instructors (all whom volunteered their own time), delicious lunch, goodie bags, and home baked goods. Six of the veterans had never skied and by the afternoon, they were off the beginner hill and took the ski lift up the mountain. To make the day even more special, we had a family of three generations ski together....Colleen, Heidi and Natasha. While Heidi was serving in Iraq, Colleen purchased her granddaughter Natasha, 9 years old lessons so when Heidi returned they would be able to ski together as a family. On March 8th at our event mother Heidi and daughter Natasha skied together for the first time and it was a magical moment the veterans and volunteers will never forget. Grandmother and veteran Colleen expressed with tears of joy, "You have no idea how therapeutic and wonderful this day has been for us. I can't thank you enough!" This statement along with other expressions of gratitude and beaming smiles from veterans and volunteers sums up this event perfectly. Many thanks to The VA Boston Healthcare System, New England Handicapped Sports Association, Mount Sunapee Resort, Harvard Pilgrim Healthcare, Lindt Chocolate, and all the amazing volunteers for making this event possible and an experience that will always be dear to our veteran's hearts.

Please remember that you are required to update your TB test information and any other health changes with Employee Health yearly.

It would also be very helpful if, when you change your contact information, such as your address or telephone number, that you notify us.





WELCOME HOME!

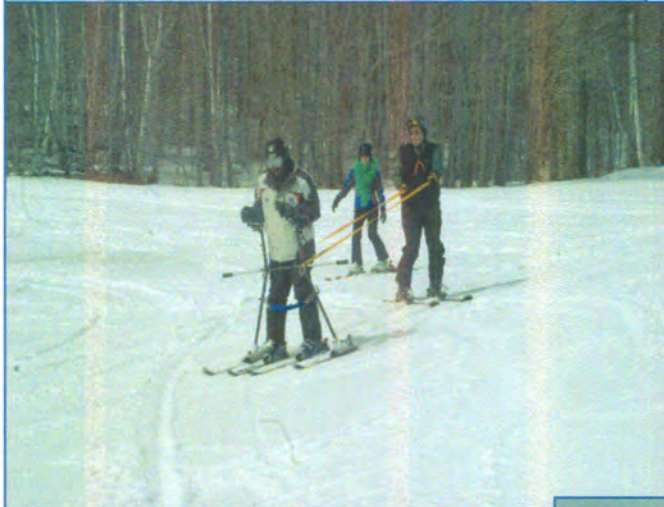
That was the message given to 85 participants and 16 family members by over 60 volunteers (15 of them veterans) at Mount Sunapee on a gorgeous St. Patrick's New England Spring skiing day.

WOW! 100 veterans on the hill from all over New England and having a great time. Mount Sunapee Resort, New England Handicapped Sports Association and the Department of Veterans Affairs provided free lift tickets, rentals, and lessons to give freedom on the slopes to those who have given us our freedoms. We had the Vet Center Bus from White River Junction, My Health-e-Vet, and of course our OEF/OIF coordinator and his team who got the event on the national welcome home web site, all on hand should there be any questions. Lunch was provided by volunteer's pot luck generosity, the Gerard Family and Chris manning the grill. (Did we get you enough Gorillas Chris – at least that's what it sounded like until we realized they were Grillers <veggie burgers>). Thirteen adaptive sit ski lessons, 17 beginner level lessons and 25 veterans who had never skied or snowboarded! The day was filled with joys and sorrows and included our now traditional missing man snowboard formation which was started in honor of CJ, who still rides with us in spirit. The end of the day was filled with tired bodies and smiles.

I really can't thank the volunteers and sponsors who helped make this happen enough for the warmth, kindness and understanding afforded our veterans. The ability to provide a safe atmosphere, without judgment and plenty of laughter seems to be the best route to successful saying, "America does not forget", to our veterans. Enjoy the pictures!

"THANK YOU" VETERANS, WELCOME HOME.



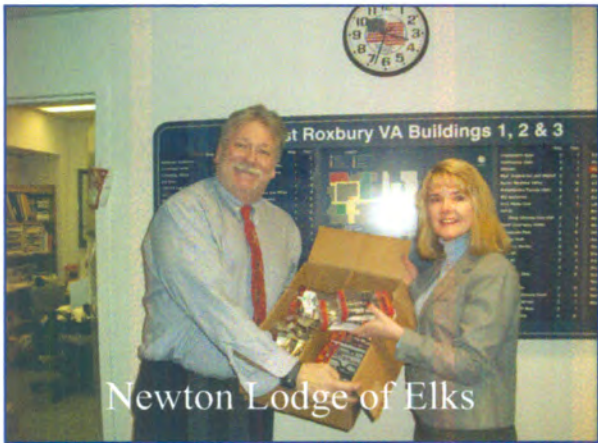




SLED HOCKEY



NORDIC SKIING



Newton Lodge of Elks



Jewish War Veterans Post 302



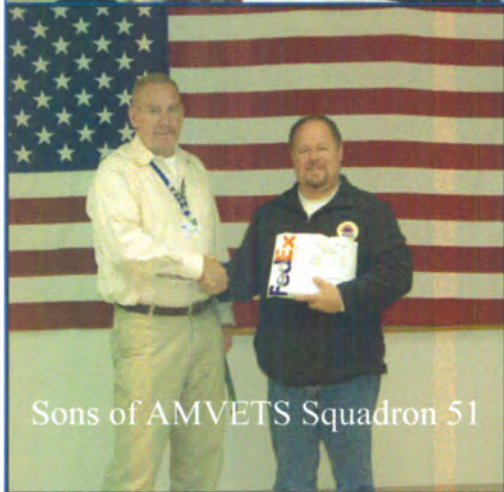
BCBS "Blue Crew"



DAV Natick Post 114



Jimmy Bretto & Irene



Sons of AMVETS Squadron 51



Juke Jive Five



The 2011 Creative Arts Festival kicked off with a bang here in Brockton, with approximately 80 entries in the Local Art Competition held on February 24. In and Outpatient veterans came to see their work displayed and to enjoy the live music courtesy of our Causeway Clinic. Creative Writing entries were also judged locally and the winners have been videotaped for submission along with the Music and Dance entries. The National judges in Fayetteville, Arkansas will name their winners at the end of May. Good luck to all of our veterans who's work went to nationals!

It is not too early to practice for next year's Creative Arts Festival, which will be hosted by VA Boston Healthcare Systems and held in the theater district of Boston! This event will be HUGE and we encourage as many of our hometown vets as possible to enter their talents! Any questions can be directed to Holly Corrente at 774 826 1954.



Questions or comments, Please write or call:

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