



PHOENIX at a Glance

Issue #4 November 2009

U.S. VETS - Phoenix is a 501 (c)(3) charitable organization serving homeless veterans through a workforce ready environment.



804 E. Jones Ave
Phoenix, AZ 85040

(602) 305-8585
Fax: (602) 305-6844

www.usvetsinc.org

State Director
Brad Bridwell

Site Director
Donna Bleyle

Programs Manager
Devin Hearn

for questions, comments, or to contribute to this newsletter please contact Billy Bridwell at: bibridwell@usvetsinc.org

VETERANS DAY 2009!

Welcome to Phoenix at a Glance! We recently finished celebrating Veterans Day by participating in the 2009 Veterans Day Parade and we had a blast!

US VETS collaborated up with North Pointe Preparatory School to create an outstanding entry. This is the second year we have worked with 'The Prep' and they've once again shown their spirit. The entry consisted of three phases of Military life; Parting, Protecting and Progressing.

Parting represented what it means to be a part of a Military family. The empty chair left behind, the family holds down the home front while the significant other is away.

Protecting demonstrated the side of deployment where the action isn't. Back in the garrison with letters from home and time to reflect.

Progressing brought the soldier back home, and showed that there are available resources that can further the skill-sets learned in the military.



North Pointe Prep created the float entry for this years parade. Over a week and a half, they worked directly on the float in the afternoons on site at the school. Now that this entry is complete, 'The Prep' has let us know that the ideas for next years entry have already begun, and from what they've clued us in on, it's sounding pretty good.



Southwest Truck Driver Training School provided the truck and trailer for this years' entry. We have had a working relationship for several years with the school, sending our residents through their training in order to obtain their CDL license. It was great to work with them again this year and we look forward to future endeavors.

Our entry consisted of North Pointe's Flag Team, followed by their Marching Band, who made way for the outstanding Float, North Pointe's Cheer and STUGO (Student Government) Squads, with US VETS - Phoenix Staff and Residents for the finale. The cap on the number of participants for each entry was 150 people, and between US VETS and North Pointe, we almost exceeded the limit.

All of the parade entries were judged, and there was an awards ceremony in which we won a specialty award for 'Best Band Spirit', which North Pointe certainly deserved. We also took the Second Place Award in the High School Band category.

This day was a chance to say "Thank You", to all of the men and women who have served, and "Thank You" to those who help protect, defend and preserve the freedoms you and I share today. Walking up and down the parade route, there were an astounding number of people there to support this day, and they made it loud and clear that they share in the thanks for the sacrifices our Military personnel have made.



Veterans Day Barbecue



The Phoenix Jaycees came out to celebrate Veterans Day with our residents on November 7th. They cooked up hamburgers and hot dogs and brought all of the fixings.



The Jaycees have been celebrating Veterans Day with us for several years now, barbecuing a feast each time. They fed all of the residents on site that day, and quite a few of our staff showed up for the food too.

It's a great tradition to be apart of and we look forward to next years get together.

Veterans Day Ceremony at North Pointe Prep.

North Pointe Prep held a Veterans Day Ceremony at their school on Tuesday Nov. 10th. It started off with breakfast for the participants, including several of our staff and veteran residents, along with some of the students military families. The oldest participant was a WWII veteran and other veterans on site spanned through most conflicts up to the present. The youngest was a current Marine Corp. recruit. Dressed in uniform, the Marine introduced the group of Veterans to the school via their live morning 'Prep TV' broadcast.



After the breakfast, the school unveiled the float entry for the Veterans Day Parade and escorted everyone into the gymnasium for the actual ceremony. The children sang, read a military poem and the band played their tunes.



Our own Operations Manager, Calvin Jackson spoke, and the entire ceremony ended in time to get all of the kids back to class in time for second period.



Overcoming Homelessness

On October 26th the 16th annual Arizona statewide conference on homelessness was held in Phoenix. While the entire conference was educational and brimming with stories of recovery; one story stood out because it is close to the heart of US VETS.

One of our own residents, Gary Neuse, was honored with the Outstanding Achievement in Overcoming Homelessness Award. Gary's story is one of perseverance and determination, and a true testament to what can be accomplished by a motivated veteran.

Gary served in the United States Navy in 1971 as a diesel mechanic / engineer mate. He served with distinction and was honorably discharged in 1974. Gary Neuse came to U.S. VETS – Phoenix in January of 2005 after living on the streets and in shelters for more than 3 years. He was chronically homeless and came to us with all of the barriers and issues associated with a chronically homeless veteran. He had legal issues, fines, warrants, a past history of substance abuse, credit concerns and financial issues. What Gary also brought was willingness to work and a desire to help.



US VETS resident Gary Neuse receiving his *Outstanding Achievement in Overcoming Homelessness* award

Gary became an AmeriCorps volunteer through U.S. VETS and was assigned to Central Arizona Shelter Services (CASS) as an outreach driver. He graduated from our VIP program in March of 2006 and moved to the US VETS Permanent Housing where he has lived for the past 3 ½ years.

When his AmeriCorps assignment was completed in 2007, CASS hired Gary and he used his AmeriCorps education grant to attend The Refrigeration School, Inc (RSI) where he graduated with honors in Air Conditioning/Refrigeration and Electro-Mechanical Technologies in 2009. Gary currently has a job as a conveyer and refrigeration engineer with Southwest Airlines pending completion of his background check.

While at U.S. Vets Gary was able to gain employment, education and clear his criminal record. We are happy to say, that while we will miss him, the job with Southwest Airlines will put Gary's income well over the income limits that qualified him for residence in U.S. VETS permanent housing. We at U.S. VETS – Phoenix congratulate Gary on his accomplishments; and we are sure that he will continue to be a shining example of what can be accomplished by a determined veteran.

Sunset Harbor Cooking Club

US VETS – Phoenix kitchen coordinator Tanya Chakravarty, facilitated our first cooking class at U.S. VETS Sunset Harbor. Sunset Harbor is the US VETS– Phoenix disabled housing program located off 35th Ave. and Buckeye.

Tanya showed the residents how to prepare a nutritious meal in under ten minutes using zip and seal bags and a microwave. The meal of chicken breast mixed in with a few spices, fresh broccoli and steamed potatoes was a huge success. As one resident commented, "I had no idea that you could cook food like this in a microwave."

The class, part of a life skill development program at Sunset Harbor, is set to meet on the first Thursday of each month supplemented with grocery shopping and nutritional instruction on alternating Thursdays.

Tanya will also be facilitating a similar cooking club for the permanent housing program located at Victory Place. This will be less of a life skill program and more of a recipe cooking club or as Tanya put it, "having fun with food."

November Events

Computer Lab Activities:

Monday - Friday
9:30 am - 12:00 pm

Job Search

Assistance
Mon, Wed, Fri
1pm - 3pm

Job Club: Every Friday at 2pm

New Resident

Weekly
Orientation:
Every Wednesday 1:00 pm

Nov 15th: Dinner by Gloria Dei
Lutheran Church

Nov 21st: Dinner by Matthew
Group 25

House Meeting - All Residents
Nov 24th 7:00 pm
(Last Tuesday of the month)

Nov 25th US VETS
Thanksgiving Celebration

Nov 26th
Thanksgiving Holiday
11:30 VA Turkey Lunch
5:30 Pizza Dinner

next issue...

This month was delayed a bit, but next months issue should be out right on time. We'll be covering the updates on the ARIZONA STANDDOWN and showing how the STANDDOWN volunteers participated at the Arizona State Fair. We will also show what happens at Victory Place and Sunset Harbor during Thanksgiving and what to expect through out the rest of this year. Maybe, we'll even have a special guest column in here as well... See you then!