

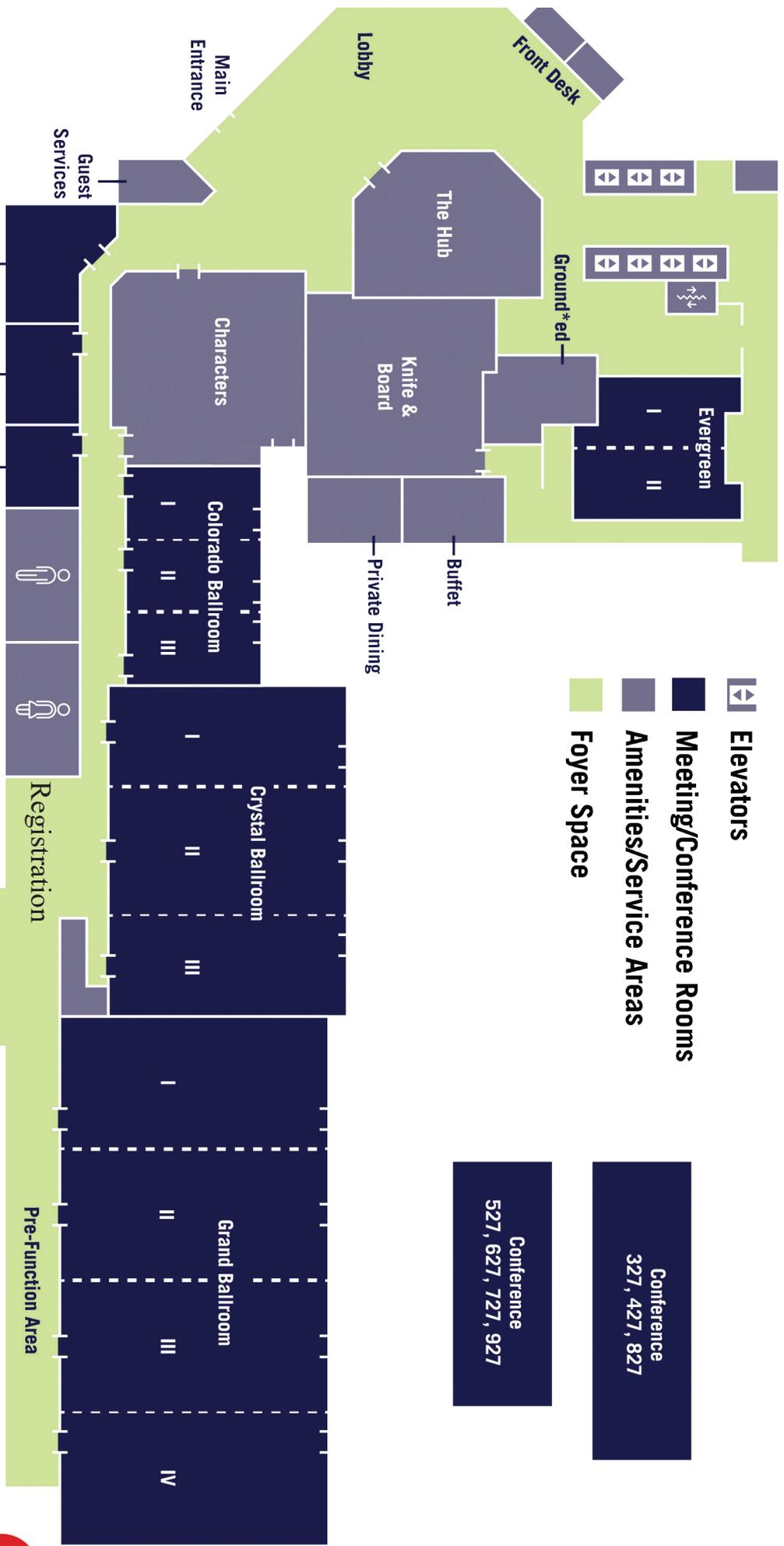
**77th Annual VA Voluntary Service**



**National Advisory Committee  
Meeting and Conference**

April 26-28, 2023  
Denver, Colorado

# Hotel Map



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**DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS  
VA Rocky Mountain Network (VISN 19)  
4100 East Mississippi Avenue, Suite 1100  
Glendale, CO 80246**

VAVS National Advisory Committee members & CDCE staff,

Welcome to the 77<sup>th</sup> Annual VA Voluntary Service National Advisory Committee meeting! VA Rocky Mountain Network (Veterans Integrated Service Network [VISN] 19) is proud to host everyone this week in “Colorful Colorado.” We are honored that you, some of VA’s most important mission partners, selected our state to host this prestigious event. Thank you to the leadership team here at the VA Eastern Colorado Health Care System for stepping up again this year to host everyone in their territory.



VISN 19 is thankful to have many wonderful volunteers and Veteran Service Organizations who support us as we provide quality health care for our Nation’s heroes. We depend on you to help us create a comfortable health care experience for patients, family members, and caregivers. Your engagement is crucial.

I certainly hope this week will be an inspiring setting for learning, networking, and collaborating with partners from across the country. Last month, VISN 19 hosted the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic and once again created “Miracles on a Mountainside.” Similar to our Veterans skiing down the slopes with courage and excitement, you are poised to find new inspiration (and ideas) to take home to your local facilities.

Finally, thank you for participating and bringing your passion to our gathering!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sunaina Kumar-Giebel".

Sunaina Kumar-Giebel  
Interim Director, VA Rocky Mountain Network



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration  
Eastern Colorado Health Care System

1700 N. Wheeling St.  
Aurora, CO 80045  
303-399-8020

Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service National Advisory Committee members and Center for Development & Civic Engagement staff,

Welcome back to the Mile High City! On behalf of VA Eastern Colorado Health Care System (VA ECHCS), we are proud to host the 77<sup>th</sup> Annual Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS) National Advisory Committee (NAC). Last's years NAC was a wonderful experience, and we hope to accomplish even more this year. I know the event has a busy schedule, but I hope you get a chance to experience some of what Denver has to offer this week. Between our sports, nature, nightlife and art scene, we have something for everyone to enjoy while you are here in Denver.



We're proud of the strong military and Veteran culture here in Eastern Colorado – our VA ECHCS service area is home to Buckley Air Force Base, Peterson Space Force Base, the United States Air Force Academy, and Ft. Carson Army Base. At VA ECHCS, we rely heavily on our partner Veteran Service Organizations (VSOs) to help us meet our mission. When Veterans come home, they come home to a community and it's important for VA to be a part of that community. Our partners through VSOs and VAVS help us to connect in our communities and build relationships that are of immeasurable value to the success of VA.

I hope this week's activities and meetings help you to grow, connect and plan to make the future of VA's voluntary service even brighter. The work that you do is important and powerful in improving the lives and wellness of Veterans and their families. Thank you for supporting VA in meeting our mission to care for those "who shall have borne the battle." Have a great week!

Sincerely,

Michael T. Kilmer  
Director

# 2023 VAVS National Advisory Committee

Chair and Designated Federal Officer:  
Prince Taylor, Acting Director, VA Center for Development & Civic Engagement

## 2023 VAVS NAC Executive Committee

Chairperson: Mary Morgan, Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks  
Vice-Chairperson: Joseph Dooley, United Veterans Services

American Gold Star Mothers

American Legion

American Legion Auxiliary

AMVETS Auxiliary

Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks

Disabled American Veterans

Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary

Forty and Eight

Improved and Benevolent Protective  
Order of Elks of the World, Inc.

Knights of Columbus

Military Women Across the Nation

National Society Daughters of the American  
Revolution

Paralyzed Veterans of America

Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing, Inc.

Soldiers' Angels

Sons of the American Legion

United Veterans Services

Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary

Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S.

Marine Corps League Auxiliary

### **Subcommittees**

#### Recommendations

Amy Palmer, Chair  
Ron Rolfes, Jr.  
Katie Bowen

#### Recruitment

John Kleindienst, Chair  
Larry Kelly  
James Moss

#### Volunteer of the Year

Mary Morgan, Chair  
John Kleindienst  
Joseph Dooley

#### Membership

Sandra Kriebel, Chair  
Vicki Sarracino  
Kathy Balkman

#### Partnership

Ron Rolfes, Jr., Co-Chair  
Karen O'Neal, Co-Chair  
Mary Morgan  
Charles Gallina  
John Kleindienst  
Nathan Witt

# 2023 NAC Meeting and Conference Host:

## VA Eastern Colorado Health Care System Denver, Colorado

### 2023 NAC Meeting Planners:

Mitra Gobin  
Administrative Officer  
VA Central Office

Nathan Witt  
Voluntary Service Specialist  
VA Central Office

Elizabeth Cazares  
Assistant Chief, Center for Development &  
Civic Engagement  
South Texas Veterans Health Care System  
San Antonio, Texas

Marcena C. Gunter  
Chief, Public Affairs & Center for Development &  
Civic Engagement  
VA St. Louis Health Care System  
St. Louis, Missouri

Joyce Kuwae  
Voluntary Service Specialist  
VA Maryland Health Care System  
Perry Point, Maryland

Eva M. Gergely  
Chief, Center for Development & Civic  
Engagement  
VA Eastern Colorado Health Care System  
Aurora, Colorado

### VA Center for Development & Civic Engagement Staff:

Prince Taylor, Acting Director  
Wesley Walls, Acting Deputy Director  
Carolann Miragliuolo, Senior Advisor  
Mitra Gobin, Administrative Officer  
Tyrone Green, Voluntary Service Specialist  
Ginny Hoover, Voluntary Service Specialist  
Sanitria McKenzie, Program Specialist  
Kevin Stanford, Program Specialist  
Nathan Witt, Voluntary Service Specialist

### Registration Staff:

Vicki Eatmon - Coordinator  
Voluntary Service Specialist  
Western North Carolina  
VA Health Care System  
Asheville, North Carolina

Tabitha Ingram  
Chief, Voluntary Service  
Center for Development & Civic Engagement  
Richard L. Roudebush VA Medical Center  
Indianapolis, Indiana

Larry Kelly  
Treasurer  
VAVS Partners, Inc.

### Conference Photographer:

Lorraine Mendoza  
VISN 19 Communications Service  
Creative Consolidated Unit  
Eastern Colorado Healthcare System



**CDCE**

VA Center for  
Development & Civic  
Engagement



# NAC Member Organizations (as of April 11, 2023)

## Service Member Organizations

Organization Name	Position	Name
American Gold Star Mothers	R	Delores Thompson
	D	Mona T. Gunn
	D	Pam Stemple
American Legion	R	Tiffany Ellett
	D	Marie Black
	D	Melvin J. Brown
American Legion Auxiliary	R	Donna Ray
	D	Pat Kranzow
	D	Vickie Koutz
American Red Cross	R	Betty Temple
	D	Cynthia Wilson
	D	Julie Myers
AMVETS	R	John P. Brown, III
	D	Sarah Langley
	D	Dana Dillon
	D	Alyce Knaflich
AMVETS Auxiliary	R	Marie Rorrio
	D	Karin Simmons
	D	Laurie Shea
Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks	R	Mary Morgan
	D	Dennis McAleese
	D	Hannah Graber
	D	Stewart Israel
Blinded Veterans Association	R	Tracy Ferro
	D	Elizabeth Holmes
	D	Wanda Grover
Blue Star Mothers of America, Inc.	R	Anne Parker
	D	Carol Sanchez
	D	Doreen Berggren
Disabled American Veterans	R	John H. Kleindienst
	D	Oscar Olguin
	D	Ron Minter
Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary	R	Patricia Davis
	D	Ann Glende
Forty and Eight	R	Ron Rolfes, Jr.
	D	Terry Sims

# NAC Member Organizations

Jewish War Veterans of the USA	R	Howard Goldstein
	D	Kenneth Ashworth
Knights of Columbus	R	Charles H. Gallina
Korean War Veterans Association	R	Roger Gulbransen
Marine Corps League	R	Michael W. Miller
	D	Jack Prosoh
	D	Rex Hopper
Marine Corps League Auxiliary	R	Evelyn B. Joppa
	D	Susan Douglas
Masonic Service Association of North America	R	Craig Davis
	D	Darrell G. Fremont
	D	James Kendall
	D	Richard Tirocke
Military Order of the Cootie	R	Alan Perkins
	D	Walter Smith
Military Order of the Cootie Auxiliary	R	Sandra McKinley
	D	Rebecca Wischmeyer
Military Order of the Purple Heart Auxiliary	R	Linda Varejcka
	D	Barbara Hale-Ray
Military Order of the Purple Heart of the U.S.A., Inc	R	Greg Lutes
	D	Sydney Staton
Military Women Across the Nation	R	Mickey Kibler
National Society Daughters of the American Revolution	R	Kathy Balkman
	D	Donna Sayre
National Society Sons of the American Revolution	R	Scott Giltner
	D	Richard E. Friberg
Paralyzed Veterans of America	R	Christi Hillman
	D	Kelly Sanders
Polish Legion of American Veterans, U.S.A.	R	Ferdinand R. Thomas, Jr.
	D	Jose Garcia
Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing, Inc.	R	Lawrence Kelly
	D	Amy Milne
	D	Becky Ammar
	D	Katherine Kuark
Salvation Army	R	David Davis
	D	Jacki Blanchard
	D	Debbie Lum
	D	Jo Langham
	D	Sujung Na



# NAC Member Organizations

Soldiers' Angels	R	Vicki Sarracino
	D	Amy Palmer
Sons of the American Legion	R	Gabriel Cinquegrana
	D	Seth Rippe
	D	Nick Arceo
	D	Robert Manzo
	D	Edgar Seegers
	D	William Sutterlin
	D	Richard Pond
United Daughters of the Confederacy	R	Jewel Wellborn
	D	Janet W. Grams
	D	Sherry Davis
	D	Charlotte Clinger
United Veterans Services	R	Joseph Dooley
	D	Erma Harris
Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary	R	Sandra Kriebel
	D	Amanda Cook
Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S.	R	James W. Moss
Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc.	R	Kenneth Rose

## Associate Service Member Organizations

AmeriCorps	R	Joanne Newsome
	D	Erin Dahlin
Daughters of Union Veterans of the Civil War, (1861 – 1865)	R	MaryAnn Herbsleb
Fleet Reserve Association	R	Christopher Slawinski
	D	Noelle Freeland-Huffer
	D	Theo Lawson
Gold Star Wives of America, Inc.	R	Katherine Donoven
	D	Audrey Easterling
	D	Augustine Chapman
	D	Carolyn Edwards
I.B.P.O.E. of the World, Inc.	R	Shalanda Weems
	D	Deborah Flemming
	D	Robert Brown
Ladies Auxiliary, Polish Legion of American Veterans, U.S.A.	R	Denise Holda
	D	Candy Ostrom

# NAC Member Organizations

National Society of US Daughters 1812	R	Sheila J. Beatty
	D	Davena Liepman
	D	Janisue Rigel
	D	Rita McSorley
	D	Victoria Panzer
Women's Army Corps Veterans' Association	R	Angela Huth

## Donor Member Organizations

Bowlers to Veterans Link (BVL), Inc.	R	Mary Harrar
Help Heal Veterans	R	Joseph McClain
	D	Rosanne Schmidt
Veterans Voices Writing Project, Inc.	R	Sheryl Liddle
	D	Ted Iliff
	D	Priscilla Chansky

## Strategic Engagement Members

Home of the Brave	R	Katie Bowen
Student Veterans of America	R	Abby Kinch
	D	Lauren Augustine
Warrior Rising	R	Jason Van Camp
	D	Ken Vennera
YMCA of the USA	R	Neal Denton
	D	Kelly K. Grunig

## Honorary Members

Ladies Auxiliary of the Fleet Reserve Association	R	Dorothy Smiley
	D	Christina Murray
	D	Nadine Fulton
National Ladies Auxiliary, Jewish War Veterans of the U.S.A., Inc.	R	Petra Kaatz
	D	Freda H. Rosenskein
Sons of AMVETS	R	William Gerry
	D	Joe Kirkpatrick
	D	Daniel Briggs
	D	Leo Lowe Jr.
The Silver Star Families of America	R	Diana Creed-Newton
	D	Kathleen Landess
Women Marines Association	R	Kay Croll
	D	Mitzi Manning

# Goals and Objectives

The following are goals and objectives for the 77th Annual VAVS NAC Meeting and Conference:

1. Provide the VAVS NAC an opportunity to conduct its business in a manner that assures achievement of all responsibilities mandated by its charter.
2. Provide NAC orientation to local and national VAVS Representatives and Deputies and CDCE staff.
3. Present to all member organization representatives an overview of current and pending VAVS/CDCE policies and procedures.
4. Foster full and open communication among the member organizations, their representatives, and the VA Center for Development & Civic Engagement staff at VA Central Office and CDCE staff in the field.
5. Provide the NAC member organizations with educational and training programs designed to share information geared towards improving volunteer programs with special emphasis on methods to recruit, retain, motivate, and recognize volunteers.
6. Furnish the NAC member organizations the opportunity to hear from VA leadership concerning key issues within the Department of Veterans Affairs.
7. Arrange for the NAC review of, and action on, recommendations.
8. Honor the recipient of the James H. Parke Memorial Youth Scholarship Award.
9. Recognize the NAC Female Volunteer of the Year & NAC Male Volunteer of the Year.
10. Recognize the recipients of the American Spirit Awards.
11. Recognize the recipients of the VA Center for Development & Civic Engagement Awards.

## Opening Ceremony & Reception

Wednesday, April 26th - 6:00 - 7:45 p.m.

Grand Ballroom II & III, Reception: Grand I - 7:45 - 8:30 p.m.

Presentation of VA Center for Development & Civic Engagement Awards

Keynote: Robin "Phoenix" Johnson, Lieutenant Colonel (Retired)

CEO, Best Medicine Brigade; Executive Director, HEAL ★ ARIOUS

Refreshments Sponsored by: Paralyzed Veterans of America

# Health & Information Exhibit Fair



Wednesday, April 26th  
9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.  
Colorado Ballroom

Learn about some of the innovative programs and services that support Veterans. This is a great opportunity for networking with your fellow NAC attendees, Veterans, colleagues, and exhibitors. The following exhibitors are scheduled to participate.

- America's Blood Center
- American Heart Association
- American Red Cross
- Comeback Yoga
- Freedom Sings USA
- Freedom Quilters
- LLC K-9 Comfort Dogs Ministry
- Pickens Technical College LPN Program
- Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing, Inc.
- VA Caregiver Peer Support Mentoring Program
- VA Whole Health
- Veterans Canteen Service
- Veterans Voices Writing Project
- Virtual Reality: New Path to Partnerships

## Closing Reception

Friday, April 28th - 5:00 - 7:00 p.m.

Characters

Refreshments Sponsored by: VAVS Partners, Inc., PVA Mountain States Chapter,  
and American Gold Star Mothers

# Daily Schedule

## Tuesday, April 25, 2023 (Pre-Meeting Activities)

Noon - 4:00 p.m.	Registration	Crystal Foyer
3:00 - 6:00 p.m.	CDCE Staff Meeting	Grand Ballroom II, III

## Wednesday, April 26, 2023

7:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.	Registration	Crystal Foyer
7:30 - 8:00 a.m.	Yoga Session	Hospitality Room 427
9:00 - 11:30 a.m.	Executive Committee Meeting Break - Sponsored by: Paralyzed Veterans of America	Grand Ballroom IV
9:00 - 11:00 a.m.	Facilitated Networking	Crystal Ballroom I, II, III
9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.	Health and Information Exhibit Fair	Colorado Ballroom
11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.	Lunch on Your Own	
	Workshops:	
1:00 - 3:00 p.m.	1. VA Customer Experience	Grand Ballroom II
	2. Veterans History Project	Grand Ballroom III
3:00 - 3:15 p.m.	Break - Sponsored by: AMVETS Charities, Veterans of Foreign Wars, and VFW Auxiliary	
3:15 - 5:15 p.m.	Workshop: Creative Arts: Adapting, Adopting, and Succeeding	Grand Ballroom II, III
5:15 - 6:00 p.m.	Dinner on Your Own	
	Opening Ceremony:	
6:00 - 7:45 p.m.	Presentation of CDCE Awards  Keynote: Robin "Phoenix" Johnson	Grand Ballroom II, III
7:45 - 8:30 p.m.	Opening Ceremony Reception	Grand Ballroom I

## Thursday, April 27, 2023

8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.	Registration	Crystal Foyer
8:30 - 11:50 a.m.	Business Meeting	Grand Ballroom I, II, III, IV
Noon - 1:30 p.m.	Parke Award Luncheon - Honoring Kyla Griffin Music by Susie Spangler, Harpist	Crystal Ballroom I, II, III

# Daily Schedule

## Educational Workshops - Session 1

1:45 - 3:00 p.m.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. VAVS Rep, Dep, and CDCE Staff Training</li><li>2. Create a Caregiver Friendly Volunteer Opportunity</li><li>3. Safe Volunteer Reintegration</li><li>4. Suicide Prevention and S.A.V.E. Training</li></ol>	Grand Ballroom I Grand Ballroom II Grand Ballroom III Grand Ballroom IV
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3:00 - 3:15 p.m. Break - Sponsored by: National Society Daughters of the American Revolution

## Educational Workshops - Session 2

3:15 - 4:30 p.m.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. VAVS Rep, Dep, and CDCE Staff Training</li><li>2. Create a Caregiver Friendly Volunteer Opportunity</li><li>3. Safe Volunteer Reintegration</li><li>4. Suicide Prevention and S.A.V.E. Training</li></ol>	Grand Ballroom I Grand Ballroom II Grand Ballroom III Grand Ballroom IV
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Dinner on Your Own

## Friday, April 28, 2023

7:30 - 8:00 a.m. Yoga Session Hospitality Room 427

8:00 a.m. - Noon Information Desk Crystal Foyer

## Educational Workshops - Session 3

9:00 - 10:15 a.m.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. VAVS Rep, Dep, and CDCE Staff Training</li><li>2. Create a Caregiver Friendly Volunteer Opportunity</li><li>3. Safe Volunteer Reintegration</li><li>4. Suicide Prevention and S.A.V.E. Training</li></ol>	Grand Ballroom I Grand Ballroom II Grand Ballroom III Grand Ballroom IV
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10:15 - 10:30 a.m. Break - Sponsored by: PVA Mountain States Chapter and VAVS Partners, Inc.

## Educational Workshops - Session 4

10:30 - 11:45 a.m.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. VAVS Rep, Dep, and CDCE Staff Training</li><li>2. Create a Caregiver Friendly Volunteer Opportunity</li><li>3. Safe Volunteer Reintegration</li><li>4. Suicide Prevention and S.A.V.E. Training</li></ol>	Grand Ballroom I Grand Ballroom II Grand Ballroom III Grand Ballroom IV
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11:45 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Lunch on Your Own

1:00 - 5:00 p.m. Business Meeting Grand Ballroom I, II, III, IV

5:00 - 7:00 p.m. Closing Reception Characters

# NAC Business Meeting Agenda

**Thursday, April 27, 2023**

8:30 - 11:30 a.m.

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Call to Order *Mary Morgan, NAC Executive Committee Chair  
Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks*

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Presentation of Colors *Mountain View Young Marines*

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Pledge of Allegiance *Leonard Huffman, Colorado Elks Association*

---

Invocation *Judy Sadler, American Legion Auxiliary*

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Welcome *Michael T. Kilmer, Director  
VA Eastern Colorado Health Care System*

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Roll Call *Mary Morgan, Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks*

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Opening Remarks and Meeting Objectives *Mary Morgan, Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks*

## **Sub-Committee Reports**

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Recommendations *Amy Palmer, Soldiers' Angels*

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NAC Volunteer of the Year *Mary Morgan, Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks*

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Recruitment *John Kleindienst, Disabled American Veterans*

---

Membership *Sandra Kriebel, Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary*

---

Partnership Committee *Ron Rolfes, Co-Chair, Forty and Eight  
Karen O'Neal, Co-Chair, Erie VA Medical Center*

---

Standard Operating Procedures Committee *Patricia Kranzow, American Legion Auxiliary*

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### **BREAK**

*Sponsored by: Knights of Columbus and Soldiers' Angels*

# NAC Business Meeting Agenda

Federal Advisory  
Committee Act 101

Jelessa Burney  
*Program Specialist*  
*VA Advisory Committee Management Office*

VHA Operations Update

Michelle Dorsey, MD, MPH, FACR, FACHE  
*Deputy Assistant Under Secretary of Health for Operations -  
Redesign, Veterans Health Administration*

I-DEA (Inclusion, Diversity,  
Equity, Access)

Victor LaGroon  
*Chief Diversity Officer*  
*Office of the Secretary*

Advancing Veteran Care  
Together – An Update from  
VHA Leadership

Mark Upton  
*Deputy to the Deputy Under Secretary for Health*  
*Veterans Health Administration*

**Friday, April 28, 2023**

1:00 - 3:30 p.m.

Call to Order

Mary Morgan, *Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks*

2023 CDCE Update

Prince Taylor  
*Acting Director, VA Center for Development & Civic Engagement*

Compassionate Contact  
Corps

Lori Murphy  
*Senior Social Worker, Chalmers P. Wylie VA Medical Center*

Office of the Secretary of  
VA (OSVA) VSO Liaison  
Update

Kimberly Mitchell  
*Senior Advisor, VSO Liaison, Office of the Secretary*

Leadership Panel  
Discussion  
*Led by Mary Morgan*

Michael T. Kilmer, *Director,*  
*VA Eastern Colorado Health Care System*

Mark Murdock, *Director, Dayton VA Medical Center*

Ginny Creasman, *Director, VA Ann Arbor Healthcare System*

Sunaina Kumar-Giebel, *Interim Network Director, VA Rocky  
Mountain Network (VISN 19)*

# NAC Business Meeting Agenda

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## **BREAK**

*Sponsored by: American Red Cross and Jewish War Veterans*

Whole Health Update  
Benjamin Kligler  
*Executive Director, Office of Patient Centered Care  
and Cultural Transformation*

## **Award Presentations - Mary Morgan & Prince Taylor**

NAC Female and Male  
Volunteer of the Year  
Cynthia Davis, *Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary  
Baltimore VA Medical Center*

Brian Kinney, *Benevolent & Protective Order of Elks  
Lexington VA Medical Center*

### **Student Recruitment:**

General Medicine Clinic Hypertension Program  
*VA Palo Alto Health Care System*

American Spirit Awards  
**Community Organization Recruitment:**  
Freedom Ride  
*James E. Van Zandt VA Medical Center*

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CDCE Executive Leadership  
Award  
Mark Murdock  
*Dayton VA Medical Center*

---

78th Annual NAC Host Site  
Presentation  
Tammy Finney  
*Chief, Community Relations and Engagement  
Columbia VA Health Care System*

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Closing Remarks  
Mary Morgan, *Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks*

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## VA Customer Experience

(1 Session: Wednesday, April 26, 1:00 - 3:00 p.m.)

Faculty: *John Boerstler, Chief Veterans Experience Officer, Veterans Experience Office; Matt Campbell, BSM, MBA, ACHE – Senior Partnerships Analyst, Veterans Experience Office*

By deeply understanding our Veterans and their families, VA's Veterans Experience Office (VEO) designs with - and for - our community to enable VA to deliver exceptional products and services that our customers trust. VEO leads and supports VA's customer experience (CX) program. VA measures customer experience through three core principles - Ease, Effectiveness, and Emotion - all of which impact overall trust customers have in the organization.



## Veterans History Project

(1 Session: Wednesday, April 26, 1:00 - 3:00 p.m.)

Faculty: *Monica Mohindra, Director, Veterans History Project, Library of Congress; Travis Bickford*

The Veterans History Project at the Library of Congress collects, preserves and makes accessible the firsthand recollections of U.S. military veterans who served from World War I through more recent conflicts and peacekeeping missions, so that future generations may hear directly from veterans and better understand what they saw, did and felt during their service.



## Creative Arts: Adapting, Adopting, and Succeeding

(Only 1 session: Wednesday, April 26, 3:15 - 5:15 p.m.)

Faculty: *Amy Kimbler, Director, National Veteran Creative Arts Festival*

VA offers Veterans comprehensive creative arts therapies utilizing different modalities and evidence-based clinical treatment interventions to promote recovery, rehabilitation and wellness. During this session attendees will experience first-hand how creative arts therapists may adapt and adopt methods to promote the highest success for Veterans.



## Morning Yoga

(2 sessions: Wednesday, April 26, 7:30 - 8:00 a.m. & Friday, April 28 7:30 - 8:00 a.m.)

Facilitator: *Cole Schlam, Yoga from the Heart*

Yoga is one of the evidence-based complementary and integrative health (CIH) approaches within the VHA Whole Health System of care. These sessions will provide an introduction to yoga and allow you to experience one of the components of care for our Veteran population. Used to treat conditions such as chronic low back pain, depressive disorders, anxiety, and insomnia; these classes will get you started on a practice of your own.



# Workshops

## New VAVS Representative, Deputy Representative and CDCE Staff Training

Faculty: Jennifer Lilly, Chief, Center for Development & Civic Engagement, Coatesville VAMC

This session gives clarification on the roles and responsibilities of VAVS Representatives and Deputy Representatives as they navigate and interact with local VA sites. Participants will learn how their organization contributes to the healthcare of our Veterans and the unique relationship they will have with local VA sites. Participants will take with them creative ideas to support their local Veterans, better understanding of their responsibility, and ways to challenge their group to greater involvement with VA.



## How to Create a Caregiver Friendly Volunteer Opportunity

Faculty: Melissa Comeau, Director, Military and Veteran Caregiver Network, American Red Cross

This workshop covers creating a caregiver friendly volunteer opportunity, partnering with organizations on caregiver support, core competencies of caregiver peer support training, and the difference between in person and virtual caregiver volunteers, and why all this matters. The workshop also includes a demonstration of the Red Cross Military and Veteran Caregiver Network, an exercise to discover if you are a caregiver, and a guided whole health practice.



## Safe Volunteer Reintegration, Onboarding, Recognition, and Recruiting Strategies

Faculty: Michael Dobbs, Chief, Center for Development & Civic Engagement, Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System; John Kleindienst, VAVS National Representative, Disabled American Veterans; Kathy Balkman VAVS National Representative, National Society Daughters of the American Revolution

Collaborative sharing in a group setting to demonstrate successful partnerships between Disabled American Veterans, National Society Daughters of the American Revolution and Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System which promote safe reintegration, timely onboarding, and creative recognition of Volunteers. Collaborative partnerships support the retention of Volunteers, fulfillment of community partner goals, and assists Veterans, their families and caregivers in a safe manner.



## Suicide Prevention and S.A.V.E. Training

Faculty: Catherine Dubicki, *Health Systems Specialist, Suicide Prevention Program, VHA Office of Mental Health & Suicide Prevention*

Developed by PsychArmor, in collaboration with the Department of Veterans Affairs, this workshop presents a general understanding of the problem of suicide in the United States. It addresses how to identify a Veteran who may be at risk and teaches what to do to help. Using the simple steps of S.A.V.E., we can all make a difference.



# CDCE Educational Competencies

<p><b>Accountability</b> - Holds self and others accountable for measurable high-quality, and timely results. Determines objectives, sets priorities, and delegates work. Accepts responsibility for mistakes. Complies with established control systems and rules.</p>	
<p><b>Creativity and Innovation</b> - Develops new insights into situations; questions conventional approaches; encourages new ideas and innovations; designs and implements new or cutting edge programs/processes.</p>	
<p><b>Customer Service</b> - Anticipates and meets the needs of both internal and external customers. Delivers high-quality products and services; is committed to continuous improvement.</p>	
<p><b>Financial Management</b> - Understands the organization's financial processes. Prepares, justifies and administers the program budget and General Post Funds (GPF). Understands required procurement and contracting for VAVS programs. Monitors expenditures and uses cost-benefit thinking for appropriated and donated and in-kind funds and services.</p>	
<p><b>Honesty and Integrity</b> - Behaves in an honest, fair, and ethical manner. Shows consistency in words and actions. Models high standards of ethics.</p>	
<p><b>Human Resources Management</b> - Builds and manages a volunteer workforce based on organizational goals, budget considerations, volunteer supervisors, and the needs of Veterans and their families. Ensures that volunteers are appropriately recruited, selected, evaluated, and rewarded; takes action to address any concerns that may arise. Manages a multi-sector blended volunteer workforce and a variety of work settings and situations.</p>	
<p><b>Interpersonal Skills</b> - Treats others with courtesy, sensitivity, and respect. Considers and responds appropriately to the needs and feelings of different people in different situations.</p>	
<p><b>Partnering</b> - Develops networks and builds alliances; collaborates across boundaries to build strategic relationships and achieve common goals.</p>	
<p><b>Political Savvy</b> - Identifies the internal and external politics that impact the work of the organization. Perceives organizational and political reality and acts accordingly.</p>	
<p><b>Strategic Thinking</b> - Formulates objectives and priorities, and implements plans consistent with the long-term interests and needs of the organization. Capitalizes on opportunities and manages risks.</p>	

# VA Strategic Plan - 2022 to 2028

**Our Mission:** To fulfill President Lincoln's promise to care for those who have served in our nation's military and for their families, caregivers, and survivors.

**Values:** Integrity, Commitment, Advocacy, Respect, Excellence: VA Core Values (I-CARE) define who we are and our culture. They serve as a guide in providing care and services to Veterans, their families, and beneficiaries.

The Strategic Plan incorporates the VA Secretary's four fundamental principles to lead and manage VA in alignment with VA's ICARE Core Values, Characteristics, and Customer Experience Principles:

## **Advocacy -- Access -- Outcomes -- Excellence**

**GOAL 1:** VA consistently communicates with its customers and partners to assess and maximize performance, evaluate needs and build long-term relationships and trust.

**1.1: (Consistent and Easy to Understand Information)** VA and partners use multiple channels and methods to ensure information about benefits, care and services is clear and easy to understand and access.

**1.2: (Lifelong Relationships and Trust)** VA listens to Veterans, their families, caregivers, survivors, Service members, employees and other stakeholders to project future trends, anticipate needs and deliver effective and agile solutions that improve their outcomes, access and experiences.

**GOAL 2:** VA delivers timely, accessible, high-quality benefits, care and services to meet the unique needs of Veterans and all eligible beneficiaries.

**2.1: (Underserved, Marginalized and At-Risk Veterans)** VA emphasizes the delivery of benefits, care and services to underserved, marginalized and at-risk Veterans to prevent suicide and homelessness, improve their economic security, health, resiliency and quality of life and achieve equity.

**2.2: (Tailored Delivery of Benefits, Care and Services Ensure Equity and Access)** VA and partners will tailor the delivery of benefits and customize whole health care and services for the recipient at each phase of their life journey.

**2.3: (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Accessibility (I-DEA))** VA will enhance understanding of Veteran needs and eliminate disparities and barriers to health, improve service delivery and opportunities to enhance Veterans' outcomes, experiences and quality of life.

**2.4: (Innovative Care)** VA will improve understanding of Veteran specific illnesses and injuries to develop and adopt innovative new treatments that prevent future illness and enhance Veteran outcomes.

# VA Strategic Plan - 2022 to 2028

**2.5: (Value and Sustainability)** VA, with community partners, will deliver integrated care and services, balancing resources to ensure sustainability while continuing to deliver value and improve health and well-being outcomes of Veterans.

**GOAL 3.** VA builds and maintains trust with Stakeholders through proven stewardship, transparency and accountability.

**3.1: (VA is Transparent and Trusted)** VA will be the trusted agent for service and advocacy for our Nation's heroes, caregivers, families, survivors and Service members to improve their quality of life and ensure end of life dignity.

**3.2: (Internal and External Accountability)** VA will continue to promote and improve organizational and individual accountability and ensure a just culture.

**GOAL 4.** VA ensures governance, systems, data and management best practices improve experiences, satisfaction, accountability and security.

**4.1: (Our Employees Are Our Greatest Asset)** VA will transform its human capital management capabilities to empower a collaborative culture that promotes information sharing, diversity, equity and inclusion and a competent, high-performing workforce to best serve Veterans and their families.

**4.2: (Data is a Strategic Asset)** VA will securely manage data as a strategic asset to improve VA's understanding of customers and partners, drive evidence-based decision-making and deliver more effective and efficient solutions.

**4.3: (Easy Access and Secure Systems)** VA will deliver integrated, interoperable, secure and state-of-the-art systems to ensure convenient and secure access and improve the delivery of benefits, care and services.

**4.4: (Evidence Based Decisions)** VA will improve governance, management practices and make evidence-based decisions to ensure quality outcomes and experiences and efficient use of resources.

Read the full Strategic Plan:



# Leadership Panel



## Sunaina Kumar-Giebel, Interim Network Director VA Rocky Mountain Network (VISN 19)

Ms. Sunaina Kumar-Giebel was appointed as the Interim Network Director of Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) 19 on December 31, 2022. She is responsible for the direction and management of all operations, finances, and clinical programs of eight health care systems and 100+ additional sites of care serving 1,000,000 eligible Veterans. She previously served as the VISN 19 Deputy Network Director (DND) and Chief Operating Officer (COO) since July 2014.

Prior to her role as DND/COO, she served in the VHA Office of the Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Operations and Management in Washington, DC, at the West Palm Beach VA Medical Center, and at the VA New York Harbor Healthcare System. Each of these management positions provided her with excellent knowledge of VA's mission, organization, programs, and systems.

Ms. Kumar-Giebel completed the Graduate Healthcare Administrative Training Program (GHATP) and multiple federal leadership programs. She is an active member in the American College of Healthcare Executives (ACHE) and a member of the VHA Regents Advisory Committee. She has also been serving as the Chair of the GHATP Board since 2014.



## Ginny Creasman Pharm.D., FACHE Director, VA Ann Arbor Healthcare System

Over the course of her career, Dr. Creasman has served in many leadership roles at the national, VISN and medical center levels, focusing on the promotion of Veteran-centered services and improving Veteran health care. She was a member of the Detroit leadership team for the 2012 National Veterans Conference and received a VA Secretary Commendation for enhancing services to Veterans through this effort. As a Medical Center Director, Dr. Creasman continues her efforts in creating and sustaining highly reliable organizations.

Dr. Creasman's areas of interest include performance improvement, systems redesign, staff development and succession planning, governance and organizational realignment, and the integration of technology to improve direct patient care. Dr. Creasman is a passionate leader in engaging employees through leadership development and frontline problem solving; ultimately resulting in a positive Veteran experience.

Dr. Creasman is the recipient of the Federal Service Excellence Supervisory Award and the VA Secretary's Hero Award for service to Veterans following Hurricane Katrina.

## Michael T. Kilmer

### Director, VA Eastern Colorado Health Care System



Mr. Kilmer has held many vital roles in Veterans Health Administration and most recently served more than two years as the director for Western Colorado VA Health Care System.

With his commitment to serving Veterans, Mr. Kilmer has nearly 20 years of VA experience, including various roles in leadership, organizational improvement and multi-facility operations. He has also served VA as care management and social work chief consultant, Central Texas Health Care System interim director, Amarillo VA Health Care System interim director; and VA Desert Pacific Health Care System patient-centered care and care management program director.

Mr. Kilmer earned his bachelor's degree in interdisciplinary arts and sciences from University of Washington, Tacoma, and master's in social work from University of Washington, Seattle. He's also a 15-year Veteran of the U.S. Coast Guard.

## Mark Murdock MHA, FACHE

### Director, Dayton VA Medical Center



Before coming to the VA, following retirement from active duty, he worked for private sector companies and government contractors in the healthcare industry. Mr. Murdock retired as a Medical Service Corp (MSC) Officer from the United States Air Force in 1999. During his Air Force career, Mr. Murdock was assigned to Wright-Patterson AFB, Dayton OH, Charleston AFB, SC, Misawa AB, Japan, and Aviano AB, Italy.

Mr. Murdock is board certified in healthcare administration by the American College of Healthcare Executives (ACHE) in which he holds membership as a Fellow (FACHE), and is a member of the Greater Ohio Healthcare Leaders Forum (GOHLF). Mr. Murdock is also a graduate of the

2012 VHA Healthcare Leadership Institute (HCLI).

Mr. Murdock is a native of Sackets Harbor, New York. Mr. Murdock is a graduate of Park University with a B.S. in Healthcare Management and holds a Master's Degree in Health Service Administration from Xavier University (OH).

# Speaker Biographies



## Dr. Mark Upton, MD, FACP Deputy to the Deputy Under Secretary for Health

Dr. Upton is the Deputy to the Deputy Under Secretary for Health (DUSH) in the Veterans Health Administration as well as a practicing VA physician. He is board-certified in internal medicine and has additional expertise in patient safety, risk management, and healthcare quality improvement. He received his bachelor's degree from Gannon University, obtained his medical degree from The University of Toledo College of Medicine, and completed his residency training at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania where he graduated from the University of Pennsylvania's Healthcare Quality & Leadership residency track.

He is also a graduate of the VA Chief Resident in Quality and Patient Safety (CRQS) program.

Prior to his current role, Dr. Upton performed the duties of Acting DUSH and later Acting Deputy to the DUSH. In those roles, he served as an integral member of Veterans Health Administration's senior leadership team and was responsible for the integration of programs and policies across VA's National health care system and providing innovative and forward-looking fiscal investment planning, programming, and budget execution oversight throughout VHA.

Prior to serving as Acting DUSH, Dr. Upton served in escalating leadership roles in VHA's Office of Community Care, culminating in serving as Acting Assistant Under Secretary for Health for Community Care, where he helped lead VA's efforts to develop and operate a high-performing network of community providers that meets the needs of our nation's Veterans. He oversaw provider network development, VA's contracts with third-party administrators, VA's processing of community medical claims, revenue collection, and monitoring of quality and patient safety in VA's community care programs.

Prior to joining VHA Central Office, Dr. Upton served as a Patient Safety Officer at the Corporal Michael J. Crescenz VA Medical Center in Philadelphia, PA where he led patient safety and quality improvement efforts across the hospital. While in Philadelphia, Dr. Upton was also faculty at the Perelman School of Medicine (University of Pennsylvania) where he taught and mentored internal medicine residents, medical students, and fellows.

Dr. Upton is a fellow of the American College of Physicians as well as a member of the Society of Hospital Medicine and the American College of Healthcare Executives. He is also an active member of the National Academy of Medicine's Action Collaborative on Clinician Well-being and Resilience and co-chairs VHA's Reduce Employee Burnout and Optimizing Organizational Thriving (REBOOT) taskforce.



## Michelle Dorsey MD, MPH, FACR, FACHE

Deputy Assistant Under Secretary for Health for  
Operations for Redesign  
Veterans Health Administration

Dr. Dorsey joins us from her prior role as the Chief Medical Officer for Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) 22 where she oversaw medical operations in the Desert Pacific Healthcare Network which operates a \$6.3B budget, employs 33K individuals and serves the 1.5M Veterans that live in Arizona, New Mexico and Southern California. She also recently served as an Executive Sponsor of the national Universal Access Deployment (UAD). Reporting to the Deputy Undersecretary

of Health, she co-led the UAD effort responsible for enhancing VHAs ability to align needed resources and support to provide all Veterans with quality, timely access to care, regardless of location or modality of care.

Dr. Dorsey began her VA career in 2010 at the Phoenix VA Healthcare System. Earlier in her career, she served as the Chief of Radiology for the Phoenix VA and fulfilled various details including as the Acting Associate Director of the VA National Teleradiology Program, and Acting Deputy and Associate Director of the Phoenix VA. Prior to COVID-19, Dr. Dorsey served as Senior Clinical Advisor for the VHA Chief of Staff's office, as a liaison to the Office of Patient Centered Care and Cultural Transformation, working to better address the social determinants of Veterans health. More recently, she served as interim Chief of Staff and Deputy Chief of Staff at the Phoenix VA and was instrumental in the COVID-19 response for which she was recognized with a COVID-19 Hero Award for Innovation.

Dr. Dorsey is fellowship trained and board certified in both diagnostic radiology and public health. She earned her MD at the University of Wisconsin, completed her residency at the Mallinckrodt Institute of Radiology at Washington University and her fellowship at the Mayo Clinic Arizona. Her MPH in Health Services Administration was completed at the University of Arizona. In 2018, she was selected as the first physician to represent the Department of Veterans Affairs as a White House Leadership Fellow. In her placement at the Office of Management and Budget she was responsible for co-leading the Federal Government's Customer Experience Cross-Agency Priority Goal, for which her team won a 2019 Service to the Citizen award.

Dr. Dorsey has a passion for providing care to underserved communities, both in the United States and abroad, with a focus on women's health and breast imaging. She has extensive experience in international affairs, having been a delegate to multiple high-level meetings at the United Nations and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. Author of multiple publications and speaker at national and international events, Dr. Dorsey has been an active volunteer contributor to the American College of Radiology, American College of Healthcare Executives and American Board of Radiology. She has received many honors including being named a Fellow in the American College of Radiology and the American College of Healthcare Executives.

# Speaker Biographies



## Kimberly Mitchell Senior Advisor, VSO Liaison Office of the Secretary

Kim Mitchell is a Senior Advisor, VSO Liaison for the Secretary of Veterans Affairs. She is a nationally recognized leading vocal advocate for our service members, veterans, military families and Gold Star Families and frequently speaks at non-profit, community, and corporate conferences in communities across the country. Prior to her appointment at the Department of Veterans Affairs Kim held the positions of Senior Vice President for Military and Government Affairs at National University and President and CEO of Veterans Village of San Diego, and President of Dixon Center. She is a 17-year veteran of the U.S. Navy.



## Lori Murphy Senior Social Worker Chalmers P. Wylie VA Medical Center

Lori Murphy is a Senior Social Worker with the Central Ohio VA Caregiver Support Program. At the start of the COVID pandemic, she helped to develop and implement VA's Compassionate Contact Corps social prescription program with a goal to reduce Veteran loneliness. She and the other program developers earned the VA Secretary's Honor Award for this work in 2020, and Lori was a VA Diffusion of Excellence Shark Tank Winner in 2021. Lori has been a champion for replicating the program across VA and increasing education about loneliness, its impact on health, and social prescribing as a solution.

# Speaker Biographies



## Victor LaGroon Chief Diversity Officer Office of the Secretary

Victor LaGroon is a U.S. Army Veteran who served with the 10th Mountain Division as an intelligence analysis prior to being medically separated in 2006. Most recently, he served as the director of strategic partnerships and alliances for the Division of Health Equity, Department of Population Sciences at City of Hope from 2018-2022.

As the first Chief Diversity Officer at VA, LaGroon is charged with the development of VA's Inclusive, Diversity, Equity and

Access strategy and governance. He leads the development, adoption and implementation of VA-wide I-DEA programs and policies in support of the department's strategic priorities, enabling accountability and transparency of data, driving results, ensuring the most effective initiatives are in-place and communicating and amplifying the I-DEA message.



## Jelessa Burney Program Specialist, VA Advisory Committee Management Office Office of the Secretary

Prior to her role in the Advisory Committee Management Office, Mrs. Burney held various positions in the Department such as the Program Analyst and certified Contracting Officer Representative in the Leading EDGE Program Management Office, Human Resources Specialist in the Corporate Senior Executive Management Office, Management and Program Analyst in the Executive and Employee Recruitment Office for Office of Information and Technology, Human Resources Specialist and Veterans Service Representative in the Veterans Benefits Administration. Ms. Burney has proven leadership in designing

and overseeing the implementation of a self-paced training course; epitomizes excellent customer service: effective / strategic planner, motivator, and operator; and is a results-oriented collaborator whose concise and fluid communications are a colossal means for consistent approaches in cultivating productive relationships with key leaders and stakeholders. She has a Master's degree in Public Administration from the University of New Orleans; and undergraduate degree in Political Science from Dillard University. Also, she's a 2021 Leadership VA graduate. Mrs. Burney is also an active member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.

# Speaker Biographies

## Robin "Phoenix" Johnson

Lieutenant Colonel (Retired), HEAL★ARIOUS, Speaker, Comedian



Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) Robin Johnson served over twenty years in the United States Army before making her transition into the entertainment industry. During her time in service, she deployed five times to Afghanistan and Iraq and earned the Airborne, Air Assault and Pathfinder badges, three Bronze Stars, and the Defense Meritorious Service Medal. Her career highlights include serving as the Special Assistant to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and commanding a battalion in Iraq where she was charged with leading 960 Soldiers, maintaining over \$50M in equipment, and acting in the capacity of a mayor for a coalition base responsible for a \$300M budget and over \$3B in construction projects and contracts.

After retiring from the Army, Robin discovered her new mission was to heal people, organizations and communities with humor. She founded Best Medicine Brigade, a company that produces comedy showcases featuring veteran and military spouse comedians and facilitates humor therapy for mental health. The program, HEAL★ARIOUS, focuses on incorporating humor into whole health wellness strategies for veterans with mental health diagnoses such as PTSD, depression, and anxiety. She is a Level II Certified Humor Professional through the Association for the Applied & Therapeutic Use of Humor and a Comedy Bootcamp Instructor for Armed Services Arts Partnership.

Robin is also a stand-up comedian and motivational speaker with performances at venues such as Carolines on Broadway, Atlanta Comedy Theater, Charlotte Comedy Zone, Bricktown Comedy Club, Louisville Comedy Club, and corporate venues all over the country. Voted Charleston's Best Comic 2022 and featured on USA Today, Fox, and ABC, Robin continues to use her voice to advocate for more representation of veterans in comedy. She graduated with a Bachelor of Arts from The Ohio State University and Summa Cum Laude with a MBA from Webster University. Despite having a distinguished military career, her proudest achievement is her family. Robin has been married to retired Army Apache pilot, Cayton, for 20 years and they have two wonderful children that give her an abundance of comedy material!



## 2023 James H. Parke Memorial Scholarships

\$20,000	Kyla Griffin	W.G. (Bill) Hefner Salisbury VA Medical Center Salisbury, North Carolina
\$5,000	Somoto Henry Okoye	William Jennings Bryan Dorn VA Medical Center Columbia, South Carolina
\$2,000	Ethan Leonard	James H. Quillen VA Medical Center Mountain Home, Tennessee
\$2,000	Katelyn Mitchell	James H. Quillen VA Medical Center Mountain Home, Tennessee
\$2,000	Sophia Plaza	West Palm Beach VA Medical Center Wet Palm Beach, Florida

## James H. Parke Summer Scholarships

\$500	Alejandro Gonzales	West Palm Beach VA Medical Center Wet Palm Beach, Florida
\$500	Mahitha Anumola	Washington DC VA Medical Center Washington, District of Columbia
\$500	Luna Cuevas	Jerry L. Pettis Memorial Veterans' Hospital Loma Linda, California
\$500	Gariel Doebert	Dayton VA Medical Center Dayton, Ohio
\$500	Ayva Kacir	Bob Stump VA Medical Center Prescott, Arizona
\$500	Tony Kim	Fresno VA Medical Center Fresno, California
\$500	Akosua Mensah	W.G. (Bill) Hefner Salisbury VA Medical Center Salisbury, North Carolina
\$500	Alex O'Connor	Robley Rex VA Medical Center Louisville, Kentucky

# James H. Parke Memorial Scholarship

## \$20,000 Scholarship Recipient



### Kyla Griffin

W.G. (Bill) Hefner Salisbury VA Medical Center  
Salisbury, North Carolina

Ms. Kyla Griffin is a volunteer who truly believes in “Service before Self!” She was born in Augusta, Georgia but now calls Concord, North Carolina home where she attends Cox Mill High School (Class of 2023). She has been a Salisbury VA Youth Volunteer since the summer of 2019 and has over 750 volunteer hours. She is passionate about helping Veterans and considers it a “Privilege” and “Honor” to volunteer to serve Veterans. Because of her character and compassion for Veterans, she was selected to represent North Carolina as a member of the VA’s National Student Leadership Council (SLC).

Being an SLC member and avid reader, allowed her to combine her passion for reading and her passion for Veterans. She loves to read and has read over 1000 books. She launched the first Veteran focused book club. Before starting the Veterans Book Club, Kyla researched and found reading helps to slow the onset of dementia and can be used as a method to cope with PTSD or other addictions.

Ms. Griffin’s passion for volunteering extends into other activities. She volunteers at her church and spends time teaching kids how to code. She helped plan and organize the first Girls in STEM Conference in Concord, NC for over 200 attendees and is in the planning stage of the second conference.

Ms. Griffin plans to major in Computer Science. Among her various honors and achievements, she holds certifications in Adobe Photoshop, InDesign, Dreamweaver, and Illustrator. She is a member of the Girls Who Code Club, Phi Theta Kappa at Rowan Cabarrus Community College, National Technical Honor Society, National Honor Society and is a College Board African American Recognition Scholar.

Ms. Griffin has volunteered in several areas at the VA and helped organize a blood drive with the SLC. She participated in numerous recreational activities to increase Veterans well-being.

Ms. Griffin is a world-changing, compassionate volunteer with a servant heart. It’s no surprise that one of her favorite quotes is “Service to others is the rent you pay for your room here on Earth.” Muhammad Ali.

Ms. Griffin says volunteering at the VA has meant, “Making the lives of Veterans and others better, finding a community, and working hard to change the world just like my favorite book characters did ultimately has meant finding who I am and being able to thrive in that identity. I am a leader. I am a changemaker. I am a volunteer and I plan to continue volunteering throughout the rest of my life. I plan to continue to make an impact on the lives of Veterans.”

# National Advisory Committee Female Volunteer of the Year



## Cynthia Davis

Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary  
Baltimore VA Medical Center  
Baltimore, Maryland

Cynthia Davis is a rare and remarkably dedicated volunteer at the Baltimore VA Medical Center. Her spirit lifts and sparks energy with everyone around her. Her commitment to Veterans and specifically Veteran patients can be observed by her daily interactions within the facility. Ms. Davis exuberates our motto, "Volunteers, Serving Those who have Served." Cynthia has been a volunteer for over five years and has accumulated over 1,500 hours within escort service as a dispatcher and fills in for other assignments when called upon. Her fine customer service skills allow this important volunteer program to run smoothly through her attention

to detail and excellent interactions with others. Please don't think that Cynthia exclusively helps at Baltimore VA Medical Center. As VA Maryland is an integrated health care system, Cynthia also campaigns to fill needs at the Loch Raven and Perry Point locations.

In addition to her weekly, Ms. Davis is a Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Auxiliary VAVS Representative. In this role she actively listens to needs of patients, programs, and rallies other VFWA units to rise to the occasion supporting Veterans. This helps CDCE to enjoy an excellent relationship with VFWA at the unit, district, and Department of Maryland level. When CDCE puts out the call for donations, Cynthia works hard to answer within the VFWA.

Ms. Davis was instrumental in bringing online a VAVS Representative resource page for the VFW Auxiliary Department of Maryland's website, which she uses to promote and communicate the needs of Veterans, not only at the Baltimore VAMC, but at all of Maryland's VA Medical Centers, Community Based Outpatient Clinics and Homeless Veteran Shelters. This site is meaningful to the VFW Auxiliary members and has proven to be productive in serving the needs of Veterans. Cynthia has held numerous positions in her local unit, district, and at the Department level, serving as the President from 2019 – 2020.

If you do not know Cynthia, her smile alone and her words of "Good Morning" are all Veterans need to start their day positively. According to the VFW Auxiliary, Ms. Davis shows a never-ending dedication of service to Veterans. She has a large heart, strong spirit, and her purpose to serve Veterans takes her above and beyond anything they have seen. Ms. Davis dedicates her service to Veterans to her family members who served in the armed forces.

Cynthia is a shining example of how an exceptional VA volunteer should look, act, and be.

# National Advisory Committee Male Volunteer of the Year



**Brian Kinney**

Benevolent & Protective Order of Elks  
Lexington VA Medical Center  
Lexington, Kentucky

Mr. Brian Kinney has given over 5,493 hours as a Lexington VA Health Care System volunteer. Mr. Kinney volunteers in numerous areas to include answering Veteran special need requests in the Community Living Center and Mental Health Residential Rehabilitative Treatment Programs, supporting the Fisher House, assisting with the Camp Nelson National Cemetery's Wreaths Across America Program, coordinating baby showers and raising funds for the facility miniature golf course.

In addition to those hours of service, Mr. Kinney's devotion to supporting the Veteran's programs through service organization donations such as The Kiwanis Club, The Kentucky Veterans Hall of Fame, and other entities, has garnered between \$20,000 - \$30,000.00 in donations annually.

Mr. Kinney partners with the Chief of Center for Development & Civic Engagement to enhance the facility presence on social media and to show the community what the Benevolent & Protective Order of the Elks does for Veterans. Through his work, their local membership even increased. When the Cynthiana Elks lodge burned down, Mr. Kinney, with the devotion of his fellow Elks, continued to support the programs at the Lexington VA Health Care System.

In recognition of his unwavering efforts to serve community Veterans, Mr. Kinney received the "Heartbeat" award from the Harrison County Chamber of Commerce in January 2022. In 2019, Mr. Kinney received the Kentucky Elks Association Veteran Volunteer of the Year Award.

In addition to being the first volunteer to return to duty by supporting the volunteer office with coordinating donations, Mr. Kinney promoted volunteer programs and harnessed the energy and fortitude to continue serving his fellow Veterans during the pandemic. Mr. Kinney's devotion continues to be a staple at the Lexington VA Health Care System and is the model of dedication and volunteerism.



## 2023 American Spirit Awards

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VAVS American Spirit Award  
Community Organization Recruitment

Freedom Ride  
James E. Van Zandt VA Medical Center  
Altoona, Pennsylvania

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VAVS American Spirit Award  
Student Recruitment

General Medicine Clinic -  
Hypertension Program  
VA Palo Alto Health Care System  
Palo Alto, California

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VAVS American Spirit Award  
Outstanding Volunteer Supervisor

Dr. Rhonda Hamilton  
VA Palo Alto Health Care System  
Palo Alto, California

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# VA Voluntary Service American Spirit Award Community Organization Recruitment



## Freedom Ride

James E. Van Zandt VA Medical Center  
Altoona, Pennsylvania

The James E. Van Zandt VA Medical Center in Altoona, Pennsylvania, has an amazing community partner in Freedom Ride. This non-profit organization began in 2011 as a community bicycle ride with 33 people who wanted to support local Veterans. Twelve years later, the ride has grown to 500 people, providing crucial support to the local

VA. Also, in 2022, Freedom Ride added a golf tournament to provide additional support to their annual donation. To date, Freedom Ride has raised more than \$250,000 for their local VA.

The Center for Development & Civic Engagement (CDCE) staff work directly with the Freedom Ride board to identify needs of community Veterans and those hospitalized Veterans in the VA Community Living Center (CLC). Freedom Ride projects include renovations to a bus that can transport CLC Veterans to outings and events. They donated computers and scanners to support the VA library. Their support also led to donated computers and scanners to support a photo display of more than 1,200 pictures of local Veterans.

Freedom Ride's Facebook page for the 2022 event features more than 230 photos of the hundreds of participants. Freedom Ride's 40 posts leading up to the ride generated hundreds of instances of community engagement. In addition to the Freedom Ride's engagement, more than 100 local business and family sponsors work together to support the effort and bring the community together for a great cause.

Many of the Freedom Riders and board members are Veterans. They appreciate any opportunity to visit the facility and spend time with CLC Veterans. Freedom Ride will use the power of winning the award to motivate support to grow their service to the VA.

Freedom Ride was initially a way for a group of friends to give back to those who have served. With their devotion over time, it has turned into a significant way for a community to make a difference in the lives of Veterans in need.

The Director of the James E. Van Zandt VA Medical Center, Derek Coughenour, remarked, "The contributions of a generous community organization are measured not in dollars and cents, but in lives impacted. That's a definition Freedom Ride embodies, and for this they are an esteemed community partner and worthy recipient of the CDCE Community Award."

# VA Voluntary Service American Spirit Award Student Organization Recruitment



## General Medicine Clinic Hypertension Program VA Palo Alto Health Care System Palo Alto, California

The VA Center for Development and Civic Engagement (CDCE) and Dr. Rhonda Hamilton worked to develop a General Medicine Clinic (GMC) Asynchronous Prevention Clinic (APC) volunteer program in February 2022, which has had a positive impact on patient health and patient experience. In July 2021, the Palo Alto

Division was failing the diabetic blood pressure metric – a metric for how our VA is measured nationally. The goal of the metric is to increase the number of patients with diabetes and hypertension to have blood pressure readings <140/90. The target for passing the metric was 75% passing and Palo Alto Division was at 48.7%. The vision was to create a student volunteer-run clinic to help patients get connected to Preventive Health care.

Recruitment began with a diverse group of ten students and trained them how to teach Veterans to check their blood pressure at home. Then the students would call the Veterans back in two weeks to get a blood pressure log. If their blood pressure was elevated, they were connected to the Patient Aligned Care Team (PACT) Clinical Pharmacist or Primary Care provider. If their blood pressure was normal, a note was entered in their chart, and they became a “pass” on the metric. By August 2022, the Palo Alto Division blood pressure metric was 75.1% -- the clinic not only increased the Palo Alto Division’s metric but the entire network’s score as well. The metric for non-diabetic patients with hypertension improved as well – from 64.4% to 77.9% (with target of 63%). The VISN 21 SAIL– eQM metrics for blood pressure management and cardiovascular disease risk management for diabetic and non-diabetic patients significantly increased so that as of August 2022, three of the four metrics were above goal – in other words, the increase was so dramatic that it served to elevate the entire VA Palo Alto Health Care System community.

The initial two Stanford medical student volunteers led the way in recruiting almost 20 additional Stanford undergraduate students who are interested in attending medical school. In addition, some of the students who volunteered during the summer assisted in recruitment and training of the incoming students for the fall. They even assisted in creating a survey to give the students from the spring and fall to determine improvements for the subsequent cohorts. Furthermore, the GMC APC creates an environment where high school students are naturally able to be mentored by college students, college students can interact with/work with medical students, medical students are able to work with resident physicians and VA staff, creating a network of support. Some of the students have invited other students in their professional and/or school organizations who they think would be interested in volunteering.

# VA Center for Development & Civic Engagement Outstanding Volunteer Supervisor



Dr. Rhonda Hamilton  
VA Palo Alto Health Care System  
Palo Alto, California

Dr. Hamilton, along with CDCE, initiated a General Medicine Clinic (GMC) volunteer program which has had a positive impact on patient health and patient experience. In July 2021, the Palo Alto Division was failing the diabetic blood pressure metric – a metric for how our VA is measured nationally. The goal of the metric was to increase the number of patients with diabetes and hypertension to have blood pressure readings <140/90. The target for passing the metric was 75% passing and Palo Alto Division was at 48.7%. Dr. Hamilton had a vision of creating a student volunteer-run clinic to help patients get connected to Preventive Health. Recruitment began with a diverse group of ten students training them how to teach Veterans to check

their blood pressure at home. Then the students would call the Veterans back in two weeks to get a blood pressure log. If their blood pressure was elevated, they were connected to the Patient Aligned Care Team (PACT) Clinical Pharmacist or Primary Care Provider. If their blood pressure was normal, a note was entered in their chart, and they became a “pass” on the metric.

Students were excited to make a difference helping Veterans and having the opportunity to develop skills interacting with patients and the Health Care System. They put their training into action by creating a color-coded spreadsheet and processes for mailing FIT tests (a test to screen for Colorectal Cancer) or blood pressure cuffs, as well as a system for calling back the Veterans to get blood pressure logs. Dr. Hamilton, her Nurse Practitioner (Katherine Henkels), and the student volunteers continued to refine the process practicing PDCA – Plan, Do, Check, Act – so that the process can be implemented on a larger scale.

GMC Asynchronous Prevention Clinic (APC) created volunteer shifts several half-days a week including Veteran outreach to assist with connecting Veterans to Preventive Health resources, including vaccines, colorectal cancer screenings, abdominal aortic aneurysm screenings, and blood pressure screenings. Student volunteers precepted by VA clinical staff are given the opportunity to speak directly to Veterans and gain early exposure to the health care field. Additionally, volunteers are given the opportunity to receive mentorship and education from VA clinical staff while also helping the Patient Aligned Care Team (PACT) provide Preventive Health care for Veterans.

By August 2022, the blood pressure metric for Palo Alto Division was 75.1% -- the clinic not only increased the Palo Alto Division's metric but the entire network's score as well. The metric for non-diabetic patients with hypertension improved as well – from 64.4% to 77.9% (with target of 63%). The VISN 21 SAIL– eQM metrics for blood pressure management and cardiovascular disease risk management for diabetic and non-diabetic patients significantly increased so that as of August 2022, three of the four metrics were above goal – in other words, the increase was so dramatic that it served to elevate the entire VA Palo Alto Health Care System community.



# 2023 VA Center for Development & Civic Engagement Awards

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CDCE Unsung Hero Award	Art Ticknor Lt. Colonel Charles S. Kettles VA Medical Center Ann Arbor, Michigan
CDCE Marketing & Communications Award of Excellence	Will McCullough Fresno VA Medical Center Fresno, California
CDCE Strategic Partnership Excellence Award	Office of Veteran Experience and Employee Engagement Lt. Colonel Charles S. Kettles VA Medical Center Ann Arbor, Michigan
CDCE Award for Excellence	Melissa Heinlein-Storti, Ph.D. Corporal Michael J. Crescenz VA Medical Center Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
CDCE Executive Leadership Award	Mark Murdock Dayton VA Medical Center Dayton, Ohio

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# VA Center for Development & Civic Engagement Unsung Hero Award



## Art Ticknor

Lieutenant Colonel Charles S. Kettles VA Medical Center  
Ann Arbor, Michigan

Mr. Art Ticknor has volunteered with the VA Ann Arbor Healthcare System for six years and has logged over 3,264 hours as a Center for Development & Civic Engagement (CDCE) department volunteer.

Mr. Ticknor often does the job of many volunteers. He is dependable and always comes in ready to serve Veterans - whatever the task may be. He strives to stay busy and finds tasks to benefit the department and the services provided to Veterans. Whenever he meets a new employee or volunteer, he takes the initiative to make them feel welcome and shows them the "ropes."

When employees are on leave or are short staffed, Mr. Ticknor goes the extra mile by volunteering extra days and hours to ensure adequate coverage is in place to serve Veterans.

When there is a need for a specific item, the item magically appears the next time he volunteers and is always "anonymously" donated. Very recently, we had to give up a large storage space to another department. It was a stressful time for the entire department, but Mr. Ticknor busied himself with reorganizing the comfort care items, clothing and blanket room to creatively find space saving ideas. He ended up assisting us with finding more plastic bins to maximize the space in each storage area.

As a mechanic by trade, Mr. Ticknor keeps many of our machines working flawlessly. He is the go-to whenever we have an issue. In addition to the equipment in our CDCE department, he takes ownership by learning how to operate various coffee machines throughout the campus. He ensures the coffee supplies remain stocked, coffee is within date, and the machines are cleaned according to schedule.

In October, right at the beginning of our busiest season of the year, a donation of 19 cases of coffee was received. This was very exciting as supplies were running low. Unfortunately, none of the coffee had expiration dates identified. As soon as Mr. Ticknor noticed this, he got to work calling the manufacturer and labeled each coffee canister clearly with the expiration date prior to putting it away. He did this without anyone asking him as he knew the job had to get done. It took him over six hours to obtain the dates, mark the packages, and put the coffee away properly.

Mr. Ticknor is not only a blessing to the CDCE department, but he also networks and supports various departments by providing supplies and is often the subject matter expert for many internal stakeholders. He treats everyone with respect and empathy. He puts the needs of the Veterans above his own and is always creative when it comes to supporting those needs. He is the first person to advocate for a Veteran in need and is resourceful when it comes to finding ways to support them.

# VA Center for Development & Civic Engagement Marketing & Communications Award



**Will McCullough**  
Fresno VA Medical Center  
Fresno, California

Mr. Will McCullough's personal and professional dedication to the Center for Development & Civic Engagement (CDCE) program is second to none. Mr. McCullough listens to concerns about misinterpretations or assumptions the community may have about CDCE programs and quickly addresses them. The relationship between CDCE and Public Affairs is collaborative and Veteran-centric.

Mr. McCullough's artistry is on such a high level, partnered with his communication skills, instincts and organizational knowledge truly makes him exceptional at his trade. One project, "Accessing Telehealth through Local Area Stations" (ATLAS) demonstrates this unique skillset. Communication goals were set to work with the American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars to utilize their facility to improve Veteran access to care, advertise the event, and outreach to several different departments. With Mr. McCullough's dedication, many Veterans attended the open house and continue to utilize the ATLAS program. A testament to his work can be heard by the most skeptical Veterans using the program and expressing their extreme satisfaction. With his work, the ATLAS location is ranked number one in the nation for use.

At the heart of the collaboration, is the relationship between the two Veteran Service Organization commanders and their willingness to partner with VA. Mr. McCullough was vital to this success and continues to engage with the organizations. Through his work, volunteer opportunities have increased and marketing of the program has led to increased Veteran enrollment.

Mr. McCullough supports the mission of CDCE and volunteers by meeting weekly to collaborate on strategic communication, promotion of events, review community events, and provide communication materials requested in a timely and professional manner. Through his continued work, volunteers are highlighted, events are covered by local media outlets, and integration of the VAVS Advisory Committee into decisions has been a priority as well.

Mr. McCullough's dedication to CDCE is paramount and rare. He provides support to CDCE any time he is asked, and the service is impeccable. He keeps the Fresno VA Medical Center Veterans and volunteers at the forefront of everything Public Affairs provides to the community.

# VA Center for Development & Civic Engagement Strategic Partnership Excellence Award



Office of Veteran Experience  
and Employee Engagement  
Lieutenant Colonel Charles S. Kettles  
VA Medical Center  
Ann Arbor, Michigan

The Lieutenant Colonel Charles S. Kettles VA Medical Center Office of Veteran Experience and Employee Engagement (OVE&EE), especially Crist Ambroso, is a big supporter and advocate for the local Center for Development & Civic Engagement (CDCE) program. The

OVE&EE has 40 active volunteers stationed throughout the facility and various Community Based Outpatient Clinics as Red Coat Ambassador volunteers and golf cart drivers.

The Red Coat Ambassador volunteers are critical in providing a warm welcome to each Veteran and donor entering the facility. These volunteers make certain every Veteran, patient, visitor, and donor is greeted and know exactly where they need to go for their health care needs. These volunteers work in concert with the paid Red Coat Ambassadors to work the information desk, transport patients, and manage the coffee program in the various Welcome Centers across the many satellite clinics of our healthcare center. Information Desk volunteers are often the first impression our donors see and having a positive experience from the time they enter our facility to the time they leave has an impact on the donations we receive.

In addition to the Red Coat Ambassador program, the OVE&EE department has a great partnership with University of Michigan student volunteers. There are many students that come to our facility to work directly with the OVE&EE department. One of the most notable assignments is working in the Connected Care Center (CCC). The CCC is a room full of laptops and computers accessible to Veterans to log on and access the internet, email, file claims, and use secure messaging. These students assist Veterans struggling with technology by teaching them how to access essential information for their healthcare. This assignment is beneficial to patients as many of them struggle with technology and college students really shine at these tasks. Other areas the University of Michigan student volunteers participate in are the information desk and transporting Veterans within the facility.

This partnership between OVE&EE and CDCE was further strengthened during the pandemic when these departments had a shared responsibility to oversee facility screening. This was a very challenging task which required constant collaboration and communication with how contentious masking requirements were. OVE&EE and CDCE stood together as a force to handle all concerns that came our way with staffing, mask compliance and the ever-changing Center for Disease Control requirements and facility policies.

CDCE collaborated with OVE&EE on the My Life, My Story program. The facility is one of 60 participating in the program to chronic life story histories in the patient's electronic medical record. With a combined effort between the two programs, there have been a total of 15 stories entered into patient's record this past fiscal year. Since the program's inception in 2019, the total impact of My Life, My Story is 48 stories. In addition, CDCE and OVE&EE collaborate to provide Own the Moment training as an annual customer service requirement for all employees. With these initiatives, OVE&EE is a major CDCE partner.

# VA Center for Development & Civic Engagement Award for Excellence



**Melissa Heinlein-Storti, Ph.D.**  
Corporal Michael J. Crescenz VA Medical Center  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Melissa Heinlein-Storti served as the Chief, Center for Development and Civic Engagement (CDCE), for nearly 18 years at the Corporal Michael J. Crescenz VA Medical Center (CMCVAMC), Philadelphia, PA. During her tenure at the CMCVAMC, Dr. Heinlein-Storti shepherded her team and volunteers through multiple challenges, including the COVID-19 pandemic, that forced them to alter the way they supported Veterans' health care. While she is now a Communications Specialist, VHA Office of Healthcare Transformation, as she puts it, "You can take the girl out of CDCE, but you can't take the CDCE out of the girl." Due to her innovative efforts and collaborative approach as CDCE Chief, the CMCVAMC volunteer program is also highly regarded and considered a model for other VA medical centers' CDCE departments.

Over the years, Dr. Heinlein-Storti revitalized the hospitality and customer service programs at the CMCVAMC, including the comfort cart, the refreshment cart, and pet therapy program. She transformed the summer youth volunteer program to provide more flexibility and meaningful volunteer opportunities that also support various departments throughout the medical center. Her knack for networking also resulted in robust partnerships with Warm Up America, Wissahickon Charter School, and Therapy Dogs International. Dr. Heinlein-Storti's seemingly boundless energy also led her to becoming involved with key CMCVAMC improvement initiatives, co-chairing the Employee Engagement Committee, and serving on the Caregiver Support and Whole Health committees.

COVID-19 forced the CMCVAMC CDCE service to adapt to include virtual volunteer assignments and Dr. Heinlein-Storti rose to the occasion. She created two virtual volunteer programs at the CMCVAMC, "Wellness Checks" (as Compassionate Contact Corps is branded in Philadelphia) callers and "Project Happy Birthday." 50 Wellness volunteers regularly call Veterans and support them in times of social isolation. "Project Happy Birthday" ensures Veterans 75 years old and over receive a special phone call to wish them a happy birthday. These roles afforded volunteers a way to connect with Veterans, and assured Veterans they were not forgotten.

On top of the responsibilities Dr. Heinlein Storti held as a CDCE Chief, she still took the time to share her lessons learned with fellow volunteer management professionals and was a workshop presenter at the Association for Healthcare Volunteer Resource Professionals (AHVRP) conference. She also authored a study on volunteer resource managers and burnout, and contributed to numerous volunteer management content, including the Council for Certification in Volunteer Administration's (CCVA) "Top 20 Ideas in Volunteer Engagement for 2020" book.

Ms. Heinlein Storti's tireless efforts in volunteer programming not only impacted countless Veterans, but also touched volunteers and colleagues at the CMCVAMC, and on the national level at CDCE. Her ability to consistently go above and beyond continue to serve Veterans' multi-faceted needs through the creative programs she initiated, and for this, she is being honored.

# VA Center for Development & Civic Engagement Executive Leadership Award



Mark Murdock MHA, FACHE

Dayton VA Medical Center  
Dayton, Ohio

After retiring from the Air Force in 2007, Mr. Mark Murdock began his VA journey at the Dayton VA Medical Center as the Program Manager, Tele-Nurse Triage Program. While in this position, he also served as a volunteer supervisor and was very supportive of the volunteer program and the impact volunteers can have on Veterans healthcare.

Now serving as the Dayton VA Medical Center Director, Mr. Murdock continues his support by encouraging his team to be servant leaders and lead by example. Mr. Murdock has continually supported the Center for Development & Civic Engagement (CDCE) and participates in many of its programs.

When the pandemic began, many facilities eliminated volunteers. While it was more logistically complex, Dayton volunteers continued to serve during the entire pandemic. Mr. Murdock led innovative ways to utilize volunteers to support the mission of caring for Veterans. Volunteers were included in the plan to make vaccines accessible to Veterans and their loved ones through the SAVE LIVES Act.

During this time, he also tapped into local community contacts to partner with a health insurance corporation. These volunteers were critical in vaccine clinic flow and observation. At the height of the pandemic, he coordinated with the Supply Chain Management Service to set guidelines on personal protective equipment donations. When the food pantry had to relocate outside, Mr. Murdock supported a new plan to have an outside drive-thru pantry. With his approval, each month, CDCE provided the vital food assistance and was fully operational through departmental coordination. Mr. Murdock continually communicates to community partners every program where they can collaborate with CDCE. Through his outreach, monetary donations nearly doubled during the pandemic.

With the creation of volunteer digital yearbook, Mr. Murdock has familiarized himself with every volunteer, allowing him to acknowledge and add personal connection to those who serve. Even at the height of the pandemic, Mr. Murdock hosted an outdoor ceremony for volunteers. He is extremely supportive of using multiple avenues for recognition.

Under Mr. Murdock's leadership, the Public Affairs officer won the first ever National Advisory Committee CDCE Excellence in Marketing & Communications Award in 2022. There is also a non-profit on the campus, American Veterans Heritage Center (AVHC). AVHC has volunteer opportunities throughout the year such as our grotto garden area. The Grotto has been recognized nationally by CDCE for a previous collaboration award.

Preserving and having living history are important to Mr. Murdock. He is a leading force in the process to open the National History Center slated to be located on the Dayton VA campus. In addition to new staff positions, new volunteer assignments are being created. Mr. Murdock is leading the charge to involve the community and the new staff as the project requires community support.

Mr. Murdock's effort to support Veteran care, the community and support volunteers is greatly appreciated by the donors, staff, volunteers, and the Dayton VA Medical Center Veterans.







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