

2023

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health
Administration

ANNUAL REPORT

Fulfilling VA's Mission:

THE CRITICAL
ROLE OF
VOLUNTEERS,
DONORS &
COMMUNITY
PARTNERS

volunteer.va.gov



CDCE
VA Center for
Development & Civic
Engagement



CDCE

VA Center for
Development & Civic
Engagement

Mission

To strategically integrate volunteers, donations, and community partners into VA operations so that they may supplement and sustain the care and services provided America's Veterans, their families and caregivers.

VA Center for Development & Civic Engagement (CDCE), formerly Voluntary Service, is one of the largest volunteer programs in the Federal government and has provided 77 years of service to America's Veterans seeking care in VA health care facilities. Since 1946, over six million CDCE volunteers have donated close to seven and a half million hours. CDCE is advised by a National Advisory Committee (NAC), composed of 55 major Veteran, civic, and service organizations.

CDCE volunteers and their organizations contribute in-kind gifts and donations, which supplement VA appropriations to medical centers, clinics, and community living centers. These significant contributions allow the Department of Veterans Affairs to assist direct patient care programs, as well as support services and activities that may not be fiscal priorities from year to year.

As VA has expanded its care of Veteran patients into the community, volunteer roles have also expanded. They assist Veteran patients by augmenting staff in medical care foster homes and respite programs, as well as hospital units, community living centers, outpatient clinics, community-based activities, and palliative care programs. Volunteers also aid at our VA national cemeteries, Veteran outreach centers, and VA regional offices.



A Letter From The Director

Prince Taylor
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

William Ball
FIELD ADVISOR

Mitra Gobin-Wade
ADMINISTRATIVE
OFFICER

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VOLUNTARY SERVICE
SPECIALIST

Virginia Hoover
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Sanitria McKenzie
PROGRAM SPECIALIST

CarolAnn Midaglazole
SENIOR ADVISOR

Kevin Stanford
PROGRAM SPECIALIST

Wesley Walls
COMMUNICATIONS
SPECIALIST

Nathan Witt
VOLUNTARY SERVICE
SPECIALIST

The Department of Veterans Affairs VA Center for Development & Civic Engagement's (CDCE) mission remains to strategically integrate volunteers, donations, and community partners into VA operations to supplement and sustain the care and services provided to America's Veterans, their families, caregivers, and survivors.

This year's annual report highlights programs and activities embodying the six priorities of the Veterans Health Administration (VHA). CDCE would like to recognize and acknowledge the critical role that volunteers, donors, and community partners play in fulfilling VA's mission and accomplishing its core goals and objectives.

CDCE is maximizing VHA's capacity to deliver the "best care anywhere" because of its potential to identify, build, develop and strategically utilize the unlimited resources available through communities and organizations across the country. Our vast network of partners ensures transportation to VA facilities from locations near and far, food and move-in essentials for Veterans experiencing homelessness, a warm hand off to our dedicated providers for Veterans new to our facilities, as well as support and supplies for female Veterans who are becoming new mothers. These are but a few of the ways that CDCE is tapping into the goodness of individuals, communities, businesses and organizations to facilitate whole health for Veterans.

As you will see in the annual report, CDCE continues to leverage collaborations and strengthen community partnerships to find new ways to increase access for Veterans, prevent suicide, and accelerate VA's journey to becoming a High Reliability Organization. We see the fruits of our labor through having over 900 positive media stories this year. None of these stories could have been realized without the dedication and commitment to service to our Veterans through the support of our volunteers, donors, and community partners.

Thank you for your ongoing advocacy and support that allows us to continue providing worldclass healthcare to our Veterans.

Sabrina C. Clark

Sabrina C. Clark, Ph.D.

Strategic Alignment

VHA's six priorities will be the roadmap for the CDCE strategy going forward. Check out the chart below to see some ways we are already moving along this path, lining programs and activities to these priorities that CDCE can optimize its impact on VHA operations now and in the future.

1

Hire Faster and More Competitively

VHA Health Care Talent Academy

Student Volunteer and Civic Engagement Challenges

Tech School Shark Tank Exercises

2

Connect Veterans to Soonest and Best Care

Maximize and monitor VTN program

Expand remote services (mobile food pantries, etc.)

Telehealth Test Calls/Digital Cafes

3

Serve Veterans with Toxic Exposure

Leverage volunteers to supplement staffing for outreach events

Utilize General Post Funds for giveaways

Leverage partnerships for entertainment/concerts

4

Accelerate Our Journey to High Reliability

Gather HRO stories from CDCE

Maximize donated funds for allowable expenses

Gather data from volunteer impact in areas of staffing shortages/overwork

5

Support Veteran's Whole Health, Their Caregivers, and Survivors

Leverage alternative health professional associations (i.e. National Yoga Alliance)

Create professional development opportunity for community volunteers

6

Prevent Veteran Suicide

Launch Compassionate Contact Corps

Celebrate and encourage Veteran volunteer participation (VetServe)

Maximize use of Veteran/Volunteer Ambassador Programs

Programs:

CDCE continues to have multiple assignments for volunteers to showcase their talents. These roles may be at a local VA medical center, national cemetery, VBA regional office, Vet Center, or accomplished through virtual or remote assignments.

COMPASSIONATE CONTACT CORPS



The Compassionate Contact Corps is a virtual social prescription program where trained volunteers are matched with Veterans experiencing loneliness or social isolation. The volunteer connects with the Veteran to offer socialization and companionship via phone or video calls. This year, **516 volunteers working virtually in support of 68 VHA facilities provided more than 11,500 hours of service.**

Food Security Efforts

CDCE offices across the country facilitated or support various mobile food banks, food pantries and other avenues to address food insecurity among Veterans. CDCE staff across the country worked with a multitude of community agencies to provide food to Veterans at no charge. Veterans from all over the country benefited from the generous donation of food from various individuals and organizations. In addition to hosting local food banks, CDCE coordinated the annual **Feds Feed Families** in partnership with the U.S.

Department of Agriculture and other federal agencies, allowing government employees to contribute to the national crisis of food insecurities within communities across the country. During this year's campaign, VA employees contributed 148,439 pounds of food donations, with most of these donations going directly to a VA facility for the benefit of Veterans in their local community.



Volunteer Transportation Network

CDCE, in concert with the Disabled American Veterans, manages the Volunteer Transportation Network, established to provide transportation to Veterans who may have no other means of access to care. Through the commitment and resilience of 3,784 volunteers, 374,869 hours were given to ensure Veterans had safe and reliable transportation to VA. Last fiscal year, 222,064 Veterans were provided rides totaling 8,380,761 miles.



374,869
Volunteer Hours



3,784
Volunteers



222,064
Veterans Served



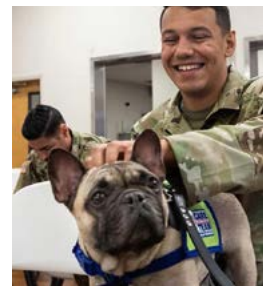
8,380,761
Miles Driven



Rural WAVE

Studies show when Veterans return to their communities after the military, up to 70% have difficulty reintegrating and/or experience mental health challenges. Civic engagement/volunteerism have proven effective in helping Veterans connect to their communities, improve mental health, and decrease suicidal ideations. CDCE, Office of Rural Health, Durham VA Health Services Research & Development Center to Accelerate Discovery and Practice Transformation, and the National Center for Healthcare Advancement and Partnership collaborated on the **Rural WAVE** (Wellness and Veteran Engagement) initiative to expand volunteer activities to locations where opportunities for service are limited. This initiative leverages relationships with non-profit organizations to strengthen personal connections, renew a sense of purpose, aid reintegration, and improve the overall quality of life for rural Veterans, their families, and other invested civilians.

Last year the **Rural WAVE** initiative worked with the Tomah VAMC, Poplar Bluff VAMC, and the Central Alabama HCS as they built partnerships with Project Healing Waters, Pet Partners, Undersea Warriors, and Feeding American. **Outcomes included 1,520 Veteran contacts, 16 new regular volunteers, 74 new occasional volunteers, and 1,095 volunteer hours.** Future plans for the **Rural WAVE** initiative are to expand to additional VA facilities, with the opportunity to include more community partners to realize these important clinical outcomes for even more Veterans going forward.



Recognition:



In addition to local CDCE offices recognizing volunteer efforts through annual awards ceremonies, CDCE recognizes those volunteers who go above and beyond the call to service during the annual National Advisory Committee Meeting and Conference and the Customer Experience Symposium hosted by the Veteran Experience Office. The volunteers who receive the awards are among the shining stars who truly embody VA's ICARE values.

VA Voluntary Service National Advisory Committee (NAC)

(of the Department of Veterans Affairs) was established by VA Circular No. 117, May 17, 1947, and became a federally chartered advisory committee on February 5, 1975. The Committee advises the Under Secretary for Health on matters pertaining to the participation of volunteers in VA medical facilities, assists in recruitment and orientation of volunteers and keeps the officers and members of participating organizations informed of volunteers needs and accomplishments.

The 77th Annual NAC meeting and conference was held in Denver, Colorado on April 26-28, 2023. The conference offered educational sessions for staff and volunteers, and presented ten awards including the Male and Female Volunteer of the Year Award. Additionally, the annual James H. Parke Memorial youth scholarship award was presented to Ms. Kyla Griffin, who received a \$20,000 scholarship to aid in her higher education goals.

Top To Bottom : Brian Kinney, Cynthia Davis, Kyla Griffin.



The 2nd Annual Customer Experience Symposium Award Ceremony

was held September 13-14, 2023 in Washington, D.C. During the event, three volunteers were honored for their steadfast commitment to Veterans. Dr. Steven Lieberman, Deputy Under Secretary for Health and Dr. Sabrina Clark, Director, CDCE presented the 2023 Customer Experience Volunteer of the Year award to Barbara Brown, Louis A. Johnson VA Medical Center Hospital Service Coordinator; the VHA Red Coat Ambassador of the Year Award to Stephen Hood of the Martinsburg VA Medical Center, and the Vet Center Red Coat Ambassador of the Year Award to Leslie "Witt" Cook.

Left To Right: Barbara Brown, Leslie Cook, Stephen Hood.



National Campaigns:

Nationally, CDCE coordinates these national observances to honor the commitment to support Veterans through volunteerism and philanthropic engagement.



National Salute to Veteran Patients Week

As in years past, facilities across the country recognized Veterans during the week of Valentine's Day. For the second consecutive year, senior VA leaders personally reached out to Veterans and offered gratitude for their service to our country. Duplicate efforts were also made for employees during Public Service Recognition Week. The phone calls were received with excitement and tears as some Veterans were overwhelmed by the gesture.



Giving Tuesday

Giving Tuesday, recognized on the Tuesday after Thanksgiving, is a national movement to celebrate and inspire acts of generosity. Last year, the campaign garnered thousands of dollars towards vital programs at local VA facilities and spotlighted ways that community members could stay engaged in service to Veterans.



National Volunteer Week

During National Volunteer Week, April 16-22, 2023, CDCE spearheaded VetServe 2023 in concert with the Veteran Experience Office. VetServe program focuses on Veterans giving back to their fellow brothers and sisters by volunteering their time and talent to assist in their community or at their local VA. VA senior leaders contacted volunteers to acknowledge their many contributions while many CDCE offices hosted volunteer award ceremonies to reinforce VA's gratitude for their efforts.

National Days of Service

CDCE had many opportunities for the community to provide financial, in-kind, and volunteer support to VA through the promotion of two National Days of Service, September 11th and Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.



Collaborations:

These programs showcase CDCE coordinated efforts to highlight motivational and inspirational leaders in VA, recognize Veteran Centenarians, expand access to voting, and provide meaningful experiences to upcoming medical professionals.



TEDx Veterans Affairs

An annual assembly of the most dynamic and innovative speakers from across the VA. Short powerful videos provide insight on topics such as Veteran's homelessness; the power of digital connection; leadership and keeping Veterans as our primary focus. Each speaker eloquently embraced their topic and provided inspiration to the hearts of each listener. This year's theme was Changemakers, with a wide range of speakers from medical center directors, cutting edge thinkers, storytellers, along with special guests which included Puerto Rico's Secretary of Transportation and the Lieutenant Governor of Virginia.



Centenarian Recognition Program

This year, CDCE embraced the opportunity to honor our nation's heroes through the Centenarian Recognition Program. Recognizing the incredible milestone of reaching 100 years old, CDCE initiated this special program, creating a process obtain a coin and personalized letter from VA Secretary McDonough, and to facilitate delivery to the recipient. In its first month, ten remarkable Veterans received this well-deserved recognition as a testament to their lifelong dedication and service. CDCE remains committed to expand the program in 2024, ensuring every Centenarian hero is celebrated and appreciated for their contributions to our nation.



Access to Voting

CDCE led the effort to fulfill Executive Order 14019, Promoting Access to Voting, a government-wide effort to make voting more accessible to all Americans. On the 2023 National Voter Registration Day, VA announced a partnership with the State of Michigan to create a pilot voter registration program that provides voter registration information and assistance to Veterans, eligible dependents, and caregivers at select VA facilities across Michigan.

CDCE and community partners will continue efforts to enlist volunteers who will assist our inpatients and other Veterans to engage in a fundamental principle of our American democracy, and provide the opportunity to vote.



Health Care Talent Academy



The Johnny Isakson and David P. Roe, M.D. Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020 introduced the Health Care Talent Academy (HCTA) pilot program which is designed to increase the awareness, knowledge, and empathy of future health professionals toward the health conditions common to Veterans. The goal of the HCTA is to create a diverse workforce across the health care industry by partnering with Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) to introduce clinical observation opportunities, and encourage undergraduate students of all backgrounds/majors to consider a career in health care.

Five sites participated in the pilot from May 2022 to May 2023: Atlanta VA Health Care System, Columbus VA Health Care System, Harry S. Truman Memorial Veterans' Hospital, VA Central Texas Health Care System, and the Washington DC VA Medical Center. Over 20 students from Clark Atlanta University, Benedict College, South Carolina Stated University Lincoln University, Texas A&M, and Howard University were selected for the pilot program.

Participating students engaged in observation sessions at VA Medical Centers one day a week, for a total of 16 weeks, and attended weekly virtual learning sessions. Students transitioned between different service lines ranging from engineering, chaplain services, and executive level shadowing to anesthesia, radiology, nursing, social work, pharmacy, and primary care.

The HCTA received extraordinarily positive responses from students, faculty, and VHA staff. The impact of the program awakened an ongoing commitment for volunteer service opportunities from students following completion of the pilot.

Year in Review

FY 2023

October 1, 2022 thru
September 30, 2023

Total Donations

\$81,102,650



Are you interested in volunteering your time to help a Veteran?

To learn about volunteer
opportunities near you visit:

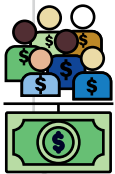
www.volunteer.va.gov



Unique Donors
44,847



Occasional Volunteers
59,954



Number of Donations
85,829



Occasional Volunteer Hours
280,083



Regular Scheduled Volunteers
25,403



**Total Regular/
Occasional
Volunteer Hours**
3,534,690



**Regular Scheduled
Volunteer Hours**
3,254,607



**Total Volunteer
Hour Value**
from Independent Sector (\$31.80 hr)
\$112,403,142

Total Resource Impact
\$193,505,792



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Thank You Volunteers, Donors & Community Partners



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**Department of
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