

THE RALLY POINT BUGLE

Veterans Haven North
New Jersey Department of Military and Veteran Affairs

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1

July-September 2014



Superintendent's Corner Sean P. Van Lew Sr.

This quarterly publication will hopefully be the first of many more to come. The Rally Point Bugle is a collaboration of many people, staff and veterans alike. I would however, be remiss in my duties if I didn't thank my secretary Laura Blaine for getting it done in spite of my constant production delays, changes and last minute corrections to copy and layout. I also want to thank Mrs. Bebe Sellers for her commitment and dedication to the veterans of our facility. Her volunteerism and computer training for our veterans has helped bring this to fruition.

The Rally Point is aptly named. In the infantry, a rally point is "a place designated by the leader where the unit moves to reassemble and re-organize."-U.S. Army CTT manual. In simple terms, when it all goes to hell in a hand basket, the rally point is where everyone meets to get it back together. This is what we do. The New Jersey Department of Military and Veteran's Affairs has a proven track record, a proven plan, and a history of selfless service in ensuring that our brothers and sisters are provided that opportunity. We have assembled an amazing staff of professionals who have one goal in mind, and that is to provide all necessary resources to assist those we have come together to help. Through those efforts, and the efforts of many individuals and organizations (some listed in this issue), the Rally Point, in its infancy, is quickly becoming a model facility, rife with best practices and procedures in how to empower, encourage, train and rehabilitate veterans that want our assistance. We insist and reiterate to our vets that we are not here to do for them. We are here to assist them in doing for themselves. The tough love methodology that we employ ensures that the veterans we work with are here for the right reasons, and are committed to the future, and their place in it. Our mission is to surround our veterans with other likeminded residents that are here to support and lift each other up.

In the last 3 months, Veteran's Haven North has had 27 residents return to permanent housing in the community and regain the self-sufficiency they once had. Hooah!

Ne Desit Virtus



From the Desk of Corinne Balaskas Director of Clinical Operations

This month the treatment team and VHN facility welcomes three interns, each with an expressed desire to work with veterans. In the order in which they start:



Mr. Joseph Doughty will be working with us two days a week. Joe is a veteran of the United States Marine Corps now working to complete his Bachelor's degree in Social Work at Centenary College. He will be working directly with VHN case manager, Terese Acocella, MS, NCC.

Ms. Lisa Noe joins us three days a week. Lisa is in her final year of Rutgers University's Master's of Social Work degree program. She will be working directly with VHN case manager, Jimara Mendoza, MSW.



Ms. Laura Broad joins us two days a week. Laura is in her first year of Rutgers University's Master's of Social Work degree program. She will be working with VHN case manager, Matthew Wolfskehl, LSW.

It is anticipated another intern, Ms. Jaclyn Savino, will start in the coming months. Ms. Savino is a Monmouth University student, enrolled in the Master's of Science in Mental Health Counseling degree program.

As each of them completes orientation, they will be working with the VHN case workers and available to you. We anticipate their collective time and effort to greatly complement the services we provide. They will be facilitating groups, coordinating linkage to resources and services, providing individual supportive counseling thru case work, and assisting with task completion as it relates to your individual goals and plans.

Just as you schedule appointments to see your case worker, if you begin working with one of them you should schedule appointments with them, particularly in light of their part time status' here until May 2015. Of course, the facility continues to have a case manager on duty across 7 days a week regardless of the case manager or intern you work primarily with.

Please welcome them!

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

| DATE | EVENT |
|-----------------|---|
| Every T, W, Th. | Computer Skills |
| 8/16/14 | BBQ Cookout- Sponsored by Military Order of the Cootie |
| 9/3/14 | VHN Gettysburg Trip |
| 9/13/14 | Day of Renewal (Off Campus) |
| 9/14/14 | Karaoke with Rolling Thunder- Chapter 3 |
| 9/17/2014 | Kula for Karma- Every Wed. Signup & Waiver needed (1900-2000 hrs.) |
| 9/17/14 | Voices of Valor- Every Wed. Signup required. |
| 9/19/14 | Patriots Baseball Game (Off Campus) |
| 9/30/14 | Pet Therapy |
| 10/9/14 | House Meeting |
| 10/14/14 | Pet Therapy |
| 10/28/14 | Gem Vac Vets Social |
| 10/28/14 | Pet Therapy |
| October 2014 | Statue of Liberty Trip (TBA) |

Please check the **Monthly Board** located in the Atrium along with **Unit Bulletin Boards** for the most up to date activities and groups.

OUR GENEROUS SEPTEMBER DONORS

The residents and staff acknowledge and thank the many donors for their generosity of time, gifts, events, and activities to Veterans Haven North during the quarter.

Adam W. Mackown – Milford, NJ
 American Legion Post #258 - Blairstown, NJ
 American Legion Riders Post #113 - Frenchtown, NJ
 Anonymous Volunteer - Clinton, NJ
 Belvidere Public Library - Belvidere, NJ
 Berdardine May Legion - Phillipsburg, NJ
 Bill Nixon - Phillipsburg, NJ
 BNP Paribas Bank- New York, NY
 Cadette Troop #326 – Byram Township, NJ
 Da Dimmick – Toms River, NJ
 Daryll P. Selp – Frenchtown, NJ
 Dot Del Campo- Washington, NJ
 Fred Haffner & Cecelia Illing- Port Murray, NJ
 Gary Milkowski – Glen Gardner, NJ
 Help for Homeless Veterans – Flemington, NJ
 James Conroy – High Bridge, NJ
 James Nielsen – Newfoundland, NJ
 Janet Dudar - Flemington, NJ
 Jim Amos , Commander – American Legion Post – Phillipsburg, NJ
 Jim Ovady – Glen Gardner, NJ
 Joyce Bolger – Flemington, NJ
 Judy and Ron May – Belvidere, NJ
 Ken and Barbara Ryan – High Bridge, NJ
 Ladies Auxiliary to VFW – Hawthorne, NJ
 Lawrence Shendock – Whitehouse Station, NJ
 Mr. Bill Dobbins - Phillipsburg, NJ
 Pequest Memorial Post #5195 – Belvidere, NJ
 Robert Young – Califon, NJ
 Ronald Cipolloni – Ewing, NJ
 Sandi Silvestri – Reading, PA
 Terri Lee – Phillipsburg, NJ
 The Home Depot - Phillipsburg, NJ
 Veterans of Foreign Wars - Nutley , NJ
 Veterans of Foreign Wars – Ridgewood, NJ
 Wayne Elks Lodge - Wayne, NJ

Resident Liaison Perspective By David G.

Thank you for electing me as your Resident Liaison. It is a great honor. As the Resident Liaison I promise to represent my fellow veterans with dignity and respect.

The Resident Liaison is responsible to keep communication for establishing and maintaining mutual understanding and cooperation with Veteran’s Haven North Administration. That being said, I will be able to meet with anyone during the following hours.



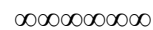
M-F- 1000 - 1330 hrs.
 M-F- 2130 - 2230 hrs.

I will always keep an open ear to any issues that need to be addressed.

My goal is to help, listen, and be supportive. Please remember that we are here for a reason; to better ourselves.

Always remember to set positive goals for yourself and stick to it! Being productive and having a positive attitude can be a great asset in life.

Thank you!



VHN GETS NEW FURNITURE

Many thanks to the NJ American Legion family, which raised \$200K+ to purchase 100 sets of captain beds, dressers, desks, chairs and nightstands for Veterans Haven North. The funds were raised with the help of the Sons of the American Legion, the Ladies Auxiliary and friends. Over 100 volunteers, staff, and residents of Veteran’s Haven North participated in the delivery and assembly of the furniture on June 30, 2014.



WRESTLING AT LONG HILL

By Anthony C.

The Sterling Elks donated tickets for Veteran's Haven North residents to attend a professional wrestling match at the Long Hill Community Center on June 7, 2014. Transportation to the event was provided by Veteran's Haven North.

The show started on a somber note when it was announced that Greg "The Hammer Valentine" would not appear due to the death of his daughter. Out of respect for the family, a moment of silence was held. Then the match began.



The tag-team match started with high flying moves and a great show of strength. This was followed by the woman's match. The women demonstrated more strength and cunning ability. After the women, there was a "twenty-man battle royal." The "Disciplinarian" won the match. Jimmy "Super Fly Snuka" proved that wisdom, age and talent were better than the avidity of youth and arrogance. Needless to say, he won.

The finale was a show in itself featuring "Scotty Too Hotty", the master of "the worm." He delighted the crowd with his antics. He taught some children how to do "the worm," which they did with great skill.



Everyone enjoyed this wonderful display of skill and strength.

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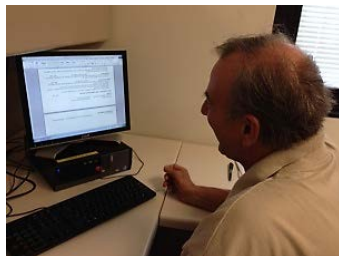
BASIC COMPUTER SKILLS

The first class in a series of computer classes was successfully completed by the following residents:

Jose, Kenneth, Dan, Ray, Frank, John, Anthony, Philip, Steven, Clifford, Weeda, and Derilyn.

A special acknowledgement goes to Frank, Kenneth and Weeda who served as Instructional Assistants.

The second class of computer skills began in August and included: Basic computer skills, advanced Microsoft Word, and Creative Writing (*The Rally Point Bugle*). This session was completed by: Frank, Weeda, Tony, Jessie, Russell, Ernest and Leon. Stephen and Allison began developing their typing skills.



Sign up now for the third session which will be held October through December.

COMBAT VETS MOTORCYCLE ASSOC. NJ38-1 SPONSORED EVENT

By Jess B.

On June 8, 2014, this kind group of bikers and their families visited Veterans Haven North. The residents were greeted with donations of bicycles, toiletries and clothes. The visitors also provided a Domino's Pizza party for lunch.

The veterans of the Combat Vets Motorcycle Association, NJ38-1, visited VHN to share their combat experiences and offer thoughts about post-war recovery. In addition to war stories, they also shared their knowledge of returning to post-war living. Residents were encouraged to take full advantage of all of the support programs offered by the VA and other groups.

Events of this type, boosts the morale of the residents. The VHN vets look forward to their return visit. The lucky winners of the bicycle raffle are: Leon R., Daniel C., Tim J. and Jessie S.



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"A Good Heart"

By Frank I

On Monday, August 11, 2014 VHN lost one of its residents. It was a very sad and sorrowful experience for those who knew him well. Ken was a generous friend to everyone. He enjoyed sharing his movies and music. Ken loved helping people deal with life.



As a philosopher he would often say, "Things are not always as they seem." Another saying was, "Don't worry about what people say about you because they don't know what you have been through, so don't let them get into your head and wear you out." Ken would talk to you about anything that was on your mind. He would listen to problems and try to offer the best solution he could to help. Ken had a good heart.

Ken was quite knowledgeable about computers. He assisted with instruction in the VHN computer classes. Many VHN residents, benefited from Ken's computer skills. He was a very kind and patient teacher.

Ken was very animated and he had a funny laugh. He always had a positive attitude about everything and everybody. True to the end, his courage was obvious. He did not want anyone to feel sorry for him. That was the way Ken was.

A TRIP TO GETTYSBURG, PA
By Tony, Jessie, Weeda, and Derilyn



September 3rd. began as a cool and misty morning as the veterans of VHN boarded the USA coach bus at 05:30. Two and a half hours into the trip, they stopped at a rest stop where they were joined by veterans from Veterans Haven South. At the rest stop they greeted and shared a time of camaraderie and snacks before continuing to Gettysburg.

Upon arriving at Gettysburg Military Park, the group saw the display of weapons and gear used by soldiers of a divided United States of America. The knowledgeable tour guide ushered them through the memories of the three day battle fought in 1863.

The first stop was an Artillery Battery manned by the North. The second stop at Little Round Top. There stands a bust of General “Shiny Nose” Sickles who abandoned his post and ordered his men into the Valley of Death. At the last stop was a statue of Chief Tammany, the mascot of one of the famous Irish brigades that fought in the war. Few people know that the Civil War is known by thirty different names, including “The Lost Cause War.”

Before returning to VHN, the veterans had a wonderful buffet-style meal at General Pickett’s Buffet. The vets from both havens enjoyed the adventure back into military history.



ANNUAL WASHINGTON D.C. TRIP

On June 11 of this year, Veteran Haven North traveled to Washington, D.C.



The group visited many historical sites including Arlington National Cemetery, The Washington Monument, The Lincoln Memorial and the War Memorials.



LIFE ON THE HILL
By Frank I.

Many residents come to “The Rally Point” with a negative outlook about life. The overall program at VHN gives them hope for change. The natural beauty that surrounds the Rally Point is therapy in itself. Residents are able to get their lives back on track with family and friends and move away from the negative influences of the past. They are able to gain employment, secure homes, and regain social and economic connections.

The activities, trips, concerts, classes and picnics all help to give residents a sense of accomplishment and belonging.

Life on the hill is about rediscovery and renewal of faith.



SOMERSET PATRIOTS/SUGAR LAND SKEETERS BASEBALL GAME

By Derilyn and Leslie

On a beautiful Saturday evening, July 12, 2014, ten residents were taken to see the *Somerset Patriots* play the *Sugar Land Skeeters*. Excitement filled the air as the crowd roared at the baseball field. It was a good day to be away from “the mountain.”

The game tickets were donated by the Knights of Columbus. In addition to the tickets, softdrinks and hotdogs were provided. During the game there was a money raffle and Tee shirts and lottery tickets were given away.

The Sugar Land Skeeters beat the Somerset Patriots in the ninth inning 7 to 0. The Sugar Land Skeeters were dominated throughout game. The Patriots were sluggish. After the game the team mascots signed baseballs.

It was an enjoyable, exciting event, but everyone was glad to return to the peace of “the mountain.”



VOICES OF VALOR

By Frank I.

Music For All Seasons - Voices of Valor

Voices of Valor gives veterans a sense of belonging. It teaches them to write and sing songs from their experiences and emotions; it helps them to understand and to listen to each other's feelings. These feelings are then put into song phrases that make up the music. Each veteran makes a commitment to the music, and to the group. That commitment helps prepare them for future life choices. The group is entertained and has fun as it creates music from individual points of view. No musical experience is necessary to join the group.



Voices of Valor is a way to experience the rewarding result of writing a song. The experience brings peace and a sense of accomplishment to each veteran. You can hear **"Call of Duty"** online at: Music for all Seasons – Voices of Valor 1, and clicking on the VHN, Glen Gardner veteran's song. **"Trust"** by Soul Patrol is available on CD from the Admin Office.



PET THERAPY

By Weeda T.



One of man's closest relationships with animals, namely the dog, has lasted hundreds of years. Dogs help with everyday tasks as household pets, companions for the handicapped, security for protected spaces, and even as airport and border patrols.

Dogs are called upon for many helpful things. They are loyal, non-judgmental, and friendly and offer unconditional love.

It is with this spirit that three little visitors have come to bring extra happiness and cheer to our residents. Three dogs come on alternating Tuesday afternoons: Lucky - a black Labrador/Border Collie mix, Molly, a lively little Jack Russell terrier and Cookie; a sweet-faced French Bulldog, who comes in uniform. These dogs have brought so much fun and laughs to VHN courtesy of **Creature Comforts**.

If you haven't seen them be sure to come by the water fountain on Tuesday! You can play tug of War with Lucky, toss the rubber ball down the halls with Molly or just sit and rub Cookie's belly. Come out and participate in this heartwarming experience. Dogs are truly man's (and woman's) best friend.



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The NJ Department of Military and Veteran Affairs Veterans Haven North Glen Gardner, New Jersey

The Rally Point Bugle is published quarterly and distributed electronically by the staff and residents of Veterans Haven North. Contributing residents include: David G., Frank I., Weeda T., Derilyn W., Anthony C., and Jessie B.



PLEASE VISIT US ON THE WEB!!

<http://www.nj.gov/military/veteranshavennorth>