

# McGuire

Serving Our  
Nation's Heroes

# Monthly



# THIS ISSUE

Veterans Day

HealthHacks

LTG Nadja West

# UPCOMING

Human Rights Week

Holiday Festivities

Pearl Harbor  
Remembrance Day

## MEET THE TEAM



### Chaplain Service

*Meet a group who does not consider their profession a job, but rather a calling from a higher power. McGuire's Chaplain Service is made up of 19 members including full time staff, residents, interns and educators. They all believe it's their duty to bring light into a dark place and bring compassion to all humans without judgment.*

*Over the years, Chaplain Service has grown by leaps and bounds. The program began with just two chaplains. The employees work with all different religions and practices, welcoming everyone with open arms.*

*Care and service are two words that embody the department. Chaplains at McGuire stand on the fact that spiritual health keeps us moving and is important for healing. A huge thank you goes out to this dedicated team who works to share and grow a spiritual connection to good health.*

*Standing, from left: Michael Thomas, Larry Winningham, Brad Bradley, Julie Marshall, Mark Flores, Linda Collins, Sean LaBat, Unique McKibbens, Brenda Phillips, James Johnson. Sitting, from left: Kenneth Linder, Luetrana Mackey, Dewane Stone*

*Cover photo: Alphonso Washington, an Air Force Veteran who served in World War II, turned 105 on Oct. 18. VA employees at the outpatient clinic in Fredericksburg celebrated with Mr. Washington and threw a party for him. "I have not come across many patients of his age," said Dr. Kathryn Trolenberg, an audiologist at the Fredericksburg clinic. "He is amazing and does not look anywhere near 105. We just wanted a way to show him that taking care of him is a joy and celebrating his birthday was important to us."*

*Back photo: Army Veteran J.P. McGuire lifts weights at the gym at McGuire VA Medical Center. He was featured in a video filmed recently at the facility. The video encourages Veterans to "Keep Moving" beyond challenges and hurdles they face in everyday life.*

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*All content within McGuire Monthly was written and compiled by the editorial staff unless otherwise noted.*



# NEW FOOD SERVICE FOR INPATIENTS IMPROVES CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

In October, Nutrition and Food Service at McGuire VA Medical Center began a new approach to feeding hundreds of inpatients breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Before this change, meals were prepared in advance in part at a VA facility in Hampton, Virginia. Now, the food is prepared onsite and served fresh at the same time.



Nutrition and Food Service at McGuire VA Medical Center recently began cooking food for inpatients onsite, and this change has brought positive feedback from Veterans. Pictured are the dishes and eating utensils which will be used once the implementation of room service begins.



“We made pancakes from scratch for breakfast the other day,” said Karin Shealey-Hill, chief of Nutrition and Food Service.

This change is the first step in a two-phase process to enhance Veterans’ eating experience and deliver the best product possible, Shealey-Hill said.

The new system has both Veterans and her staff of about 60 people excited with the early results.

“The food looks better and tastes better,” said Lealice Davis, a cook at McGuire. “The patients really enjoy meals now, and we enjoy preparing it for them.”

The facility has been working diligently toward this goal for many months and within weeks, the move is beginning to pay off, said Shealey-Hill.

“Our patient satisfaction scores have been trending positively and Nutrition staff have been happy because they know they’re part of this improved experience for Veterans,” Shealey-Hill explained.

After a few weeks, the data has shown Veterans have not given any “Poor” or “Very Poor” ratings to the meals, which is exciting news, Shealey-Hill said.

Navy Veteran John Schutrumpf was admitted to the hospital unexpectedly in October during what he thought would be a routine outpatient appointment.

For dinner the following day, Schutrumpf received a filet of flounder served with mashed potatoes.

“The fish had chives on it,” Schutrumpf recalled. “I’d have paid \$15 for that plate. Easy.”

Of course, Schutrumpf stated, people in the hospital tend to be in a foul mood, but sometimes the only thing a patient has to look forward to is the next meal.

“The inpatient food has greatly improved,” he added. “This experience is better than my last experience.”

For the special menu on Veterans Day this year, Shealey-Hill said her dedicated staff cooked up broiled sirloin steak, baked potato with all the fixings and a delectable tiramisu cake.

The second phase will introduce the implementation of room service dining where Veterans will use their bedside phone to call in meal orders. This is expected to be in place in early 2019. •

# VA, VCU COLLABORATE TO HELP VETERANS

**F**or McGuire VA Medical Center, collaborating with community partners is a way to improve healthcare opportunities and quality of life for the Veterans they serve. One such partner is the Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) School of Engineering, who hosted their annual HealthHacks event Nov. 3 and 4, with assistance from McGuire employees and Veteran patients.

Alan Lombardo, acting director at McGuire, believes this partnership with VCU is crucial to delivering healthcare to Veterans.

“One of the great things about this partnership with the VCU School of Medicine and the School of Engineering is that it brings these future thought leaders together to solve problems for our Veterans that, quite honestly, traditional healthcare doesn’t have solutions for,” he said. “I really think innovation, assistive technology and the partnership with VCU is really the future of medicine for our Veterans.”

During the two-day event, HealthHacks brought together more than 130 students from the fields of engineering and

health services to create solutions specifically for Veterans with unique healthcare challenges. This year’s theme was assistive technology; members of McGuire’s Assistive Technology team were on hand serving as mentors.

Veteran Russ Mohny is a quadriplegic who controls his motorized wheelchair with a joystick he moves with his mouth. He is unable to push elevator buttons or activate automatic doors so someone must escort him to appointments. At HealthHacks, he expressed a desire for independence and the ability to



McGuire employees attended VCU’s HealthHacks event to serve as mentors. These employees included, from left: Melissa Oliver, program coordinator, Assistive Technology; Young Seo, polytrauma fellow; Brian Burkhardt, rehabilitation engineer; Seth Hills, rehabilitation engineer; Nicole Shuman, recreation therapist; Suzanne Shirley, innovation specialist; and Dr. Sheyne Martin, research director, neurosurgery.



travel to appointments without assistance. This would require a way for him to push elevator buttons as well as the buttons to open automatic doors.

VCU engineering students Sarah Moore and Jackie Chavez worked with VCU occupational therapy students Aaron Calderon and Sarah Tierney on Mohney's challenge for their HealthHacks project.

After researching and designing prototypes for the first day of the event, the team presented their design on the second day to a group of judges with experience in engineering and healthcare-related fields, including senior staff members from McGuire.

The device featured a linear actuator connected to the left side of Mohney's wheelchair. The actuator has an arm that can extend up to 12 inches. When finalized, Mohney will be able to extend the arm via the joystick he already uses for his wheelchair and use it to push elevator and door buttons.

Moore, who also works as an intern with McGuire's Assistive Technology program, is working to make the idea a reality. The possibility of seeing their design come to fruition was one driving force behind the team's efforts.

"If we don't win, it's ok because our design is practical and realistic and it's going to be used," said Chavez. "It's really going to help him a lot."

Chavez and Moore have worked together on other projects in the

past, but said that it was helpful to have Calderon and Tierney's perspective as occupational therapy students.

Melissa Oliver, McGuire's assistive technology program coordinator, mentored students during the event. To her, the event was valuable not only for the students, but for the McGuire employees in attendance as well.

"We're always innovating and creating but having the students and their energy and excitement

around it helps to spark us to get excited and maybe think about things a little differently," she said.

McGuire is currently working with one of VCU's biomedical engineering professors to assist with finalizing at least three of the projects from HealthHacks. Another professor is working directly with a McGuire Veteran. McGuire staff looks forward to participating in next year's event. •



McGuire employees also served as judges for the HealthHacks event. Jim Dudley, acting associate director and chief of Engineering and Dr. Timothy Lavis, chief of Spinal Cord Injury and Disorder, were among the judges for the event.



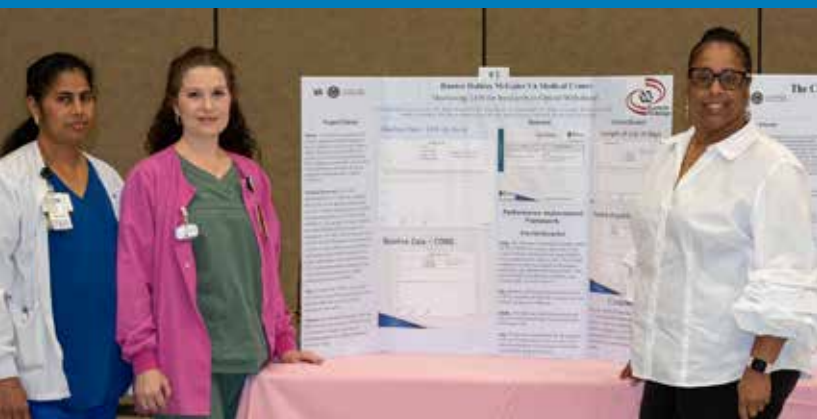


Lt. Gen. Nadja West, the current Army Surgeon General, visited the McGuire VA Medical Center to meet with leadership and tour the facility. During the visit, West toured the polytrauma unit, prosthetics department and cardiac surgery.



Left: Maj. Gen. Rodney Fogg, commanding general of the Combined Arms Support Command at Fort Lee, delivered the keynote address at McGuire's annual Veterans Day program. Center: The Fort Lee Color Guard participated in the program, presenting and retiring the colors. Right: Following the Veterans Day program, a celebration was held to honor the 243rd birthday of the United States Marine Corps.

McGuire's annual Quality on Parade event was held Oct. 23. The People's Choice award was given to the Decreasing Length of Stay for Inpatients in Opioid Withdrawal presentation, shown on left. The Judges' Choice award was presented to Emergency Department to Inpatient Handoff.



# CLC MAKES VETERANS FEEL AT HOME

By Sydney Dudley

The Community Living Center (CLC) is a critical part of the McGuire VA Medical Center. Made up of three distinct living areas, or neighborhoods, the CLC fosters an enjoyable and caring environment for both short- and long-term residents.

Residents come from a variety of backgrounds and age groups and stay at the CLC for various lengths of time. No matter how long their stay, the medical center keeps things active for them.

The staff utilizes a jam-packed activity calendar to provide entertainment and enrichment. From weekly music therapy sessions to trips to bowling outings, there is always something to do.

Rhonda Toms, chief nurse of Geriatrics and Extended Care, oversees the nurses in the CLC. She elaborated on the fantastic selection of activities offered by different therapists on the units.

“The Cultural Transformation Committee works to maintain a homelike environment through multi-generational activities,” Toms said. “The committee hosts events with kids such as Easter egg hunts on hospital grounds.”

The CLC staff plans to expand their current programs and create new ones. For example, they

are working to implement a snoezelen room for dementia patients.

Snoezelen rooms are therapeutic areas designed to provide highly stimulating elements to patients with dementia, brain injuries, and autism and other developmental disabilities. The rooms use a combination of lighting, colors, scents, sounds and textures to create the desired high-sensory experience for patients.

Toms hopes the creation of a snoezelen room, along with the construction of a ten-bed dementia care unit, will help improve the lives of dementia patients at McGuire.

Of course, many of the current and future endeavors in the CLC are only possible thanks to its dedicated, hard-working staff.

“The staff at the Richmond CLC is amazing at developing close relationships with residents,” Toms explained. “Staff members get to know residents well enough to list their likes and dislikes with ease.”

Toms said she and the other staff members strive to make a home away from home for our nation's heroes. •



CLC staff is working to implement a snoezelen room for dementia patients. Snoezelen rooms are therapeutic areas designed to provide highly stimulating elements like lights, colors, scents, sounds and textures. Halloween celebrations and Easter egg hunts with local children are some of the many activities planned for Veterans at the CLC.





VA



U.S. Department  
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