



CDCE

VA Center for
Development & Civic
Engagement

VA

U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health
Administration

SALUTING
Volunteer Impact

2024 ANNUAL REPORT

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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 to America's Veterans, their families and caregivers.

VA Center for Development and Civic Engagement (CDCE) is one of the largest volunteer programs in the Federal government and has provided 78 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.

VAVS 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

As this marks the conclusion of my tenure as Director of the VA Center for Development & Civic Engagement (CDCE), I am filled with a profound sense of gratitude for the opportunity to have served alongside such a dedicated and impactful team.

This past year has witnessed remarkable growth and achievement for CDCE. While we celebrate the significant increase in volunteer participation, service hours, and donations – translating to over \$30 million in value to VA, a 16% rise from the previous year—I firmly believe and have shared over the years that the true measure of our success lies beyond mere figures.

Each volunteer, every hour of service, and each community partnership holds immeasurable value. Over 3,800 volunteers, for instance, dedicated an astounding 586,000 hours and drove 9 million miles within our Volunteer Transportation Network. The numbers are remarkable, but the story to be told is that they ensured vital access to care for Veterans across the country.

Furthermore, our partnerships have made a profound difference in many ways: providing food and clothing to homeless Veterans, essential supplies like diapers and strollers to Veteran parents, and fostering increased engagement and meaningful activities for Veterans in rural communities.

These successes are a testament to the unwavering commitment and hard work of our CDCE staff, the dedication of our VA leadership and employees who help facilitate the service of volunteers, and the generous support of communities across the nation that have not forgotten the service and sacrifice of its Veterans.

It has been an immense privilege to witness the transformative impact of our programs on the lives of Veterans. From within our VA facilities to communities across the nation, from their participation in our national adaptive sports events to the enriching experiences of our arts and humanities partnerships, I am consistently reminded of what makes VA care “the best care anywhere.”

As I embark on a new chapter in my VA career, I leave CDCE inspired by the strength, determination, and resilience of our staff from VACO to the field, and with the utmost confidence in its continued success. I encourage you to embrace the challenges ahead with the same passion and dedication that has fueled our accomplishments for almost 80 years. Remember that the journey of service is a continuous one, and the positive impact we make on the lives of Veterans, families, caregivers, and their survivors will forever endure.

With sincere appreciation,

Sabrina C. Clark

Sabrina C. Clark, Ph.D.

Director, VA Center for Development & Civic Engagement

The Compassionate Contact Corps

Since inception in 2020, Compassionate Contact Corps (CCC) has been implemented at 117 sites. This fiscal year, 30 additional sites joined the CCC network. This year, CCC and VHA Innovation Diffusion of Excellence held Community of Practice calls with all networks and met with numerous sites individually offering mentorship for program implementation. The CCC program conducted outreach to promote awareness of the program through a variety of mediums such as Social Prescribing Day, hosting a virtual VA Social Connection Workshop series, and presenting at several internal and external conferences.

Across VA, 74 medical centers had 472 volunteers providing calls. Those volunteers placed 10,830 hours of calls to approximately 600 Veterans this year.

Data collection for the clinical evaluation started in January. This two-year research study led by researchers at the Rocky Mountain Mental Illness Research Education and Clinical Centers will look at the impact of CCC on Veteran loneliness, isolation, and VA utilization.



Food Security

Local CDCE offices across the country continued to support mobile food banks and food pantries by requesting donations to combat Veteran food insecurity and providing volunteers to hand out food. During these events, food is offered to Veterans and their families free of charge.

In addition to hosting food banks, CDCE facilitated the annual Feds Feed Families partnership with the United States Department of Agriculture and other federal agencies. During this year’s campaign, VA was able to record 213,823 pounds in food donations with most of the food benefiting a local VA to help combat food insecurity that many Veterans experience.



Volunteer Transportation Network

CDCE, in concert with the Disabled American Veterans, manages the Volunteer Transportation Network, whose sole purpose is to provide transportation to Veterans who have no other way to attend their medical appointments. Through the commitment and resilience of 3,860 volunteers, 586,067 hours were given to ensure Veterans had access to reliable transportation. Last fiscal year, 238,102 Veterans were provided rides which totaled 9,337,177 miles.

To further add to the growing number of volunteer drivers, CDCE conducted a national radio media tour reaching over three million listeners to educate Veterans about the program and to seek volunteer drivers.



Rural WAVE

CDCE, Office of Rural Health, Durham VA Health Services Research & Development Center to Accelerate Discovery and Practice Transformation, and National Center for Healthcare Advancement and Partnership continue to collaborate on the Rural WAVE (Wellness and Veteran Engagement) Initiative to expand volunteer activities to locations where opportunities for service are often limited.

This year the Rural WAVE Initiative added six additional sites bringing the total to nine VAs participating. These sites focused on partnerships with various community and Veteran organizations to provide rural volunteer opportunities for Veterans. Outcomes included 732 rural Veteran contacts, 62 regular volunteers participating, and 540 volunteer hours served. Rural WAVE projects included fly fishing, scuba diving and pet therapy.



Centenarian Recognition Program

This year, CDCE coordinated the Centenarian Recognition Program. The program recognizes Veterans who reach the milestone of 100 years old. With every CDCE office marketing and honoring these exceptional Veterans, 519 centenarians were honored with individual or group presentations. During these recognition ceremonies, Veterans are awarded a coin and letter from the VA Secretary. The program ensures every centenarian is celebrated and appreciated for their sacrifices and contributions to the nation.

The annual James H. Parke Memorial scholarship, was awarded to **Zach Gardner** for his 1,100 hours of service to Veterans. The \$20,000 scholarship aids an exemplary youth volunteer with higher education.

National Advisory Committee

The 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 informs the officers and members of participating organizations of volunteers' needs and accomplishments.

The 78th Annual NAC meeting and conference was held in St. Louis, Missouri on April 14-16, 2024. In addition to normal business, the conference offered a robust agenda for staff and volunteers to include award presentations, poster sessions, and educational offerings. **Christopher Leonardini**, VA Northern California Health Care System, was recognized as the Male Volunteer of the Year and **Diane Erickson**, VA Eastern Colorado Health Care System, was honored as the Female Volunteer of the Year.





Customer Experience (CX) Symposium

The third annual Customer Experience (CX) Symposium was held September 16-18, 2024 in Washington, D.C. During the event, three volunteers were honored for their steadfast commitment to Veterans. VA Deputy Secretary Tanya Bradsher presented the 2024 Customer Experience Volunteer of the Year award to **Jack Ford**, North Las Vegas VA Medical Center; the VHA Red Coat Ambassador of the Year Award to **Jena “Jingles” Copher**, Marion VA Medical Center, and the Vet Center Red Coat Ambassador of the Year Award to **Jeff Chambers**, Houston West Vet Center.



YEAR IN REVIEW

FY 2024

October 1, 2023 thru September 30, 2024

Total Donations

\$96,420,956



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
43,975



OCCASIONAL VOLUNTEERS
80,721



NUMBER OF DONATIONS
97,571



OCCASIONAL VOLUNTEER HOURS
333,229



REGULAR SCHEDULED VOLUNTEERS
27,951



TOTAL REGULAR/OCCASIONAL VOLUNTEER HOURS
3,839,298



REGULAR SCHEDULED VOLUNTEER HOURS
3,506,069



TOTAL VOLUNTEER HOUR VALUE
from Independent Sector (\$33.49 hr)
\$128,578,090

Total Resource Impact

\$224,999,046



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**U.S. Department of
Veterans Affairs**

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Washington, DC 20420

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THANK YOU
VOLUNTEERS, DONORS &
COMMUNITY PARTNERS!

VA



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