



NWV Messenger

For the week of July 26, 2010

OEF/OIF

Welcome Home Event Scheduled

The Operation Enduring Freedom/ Operation Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF) Veterans Welcome Home Event is scheduled for July 31 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. The event is at the Heartland Event Center, Grand Island, at 700 E. Stolley Park Road.

The celebration offers free fun, plus information about Veterans' benefits. Activities will include informational booths, promotional items, and family activities. Lunch will be served from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

VA sponsors Welcome Home events around the country for returning military service members and their families. The events provide important information and guidance on accessing health care and other benefits through VA.

The event will include information booths with representatives from Veteran service agencies including VA Nebraska-Western Iowa Health Care System (VA NWIHCS), Lincoln Regional Office, Nebraska Department of Veterans Affairs, Nebraska Transition Assistance Office, TRICARE, Social Security Administration, Vet Centers and Veteran service organizations.

OEF/OIF Veterans who are not currently enrolled for VA benefits are encouraged to attend and bring their DD Form 214, "Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty," so counselors can assist them with VA enrollment applications.

As a token of thanks for their service and sacrifice, tickets for

the Island Oasis Water Park or the Stuhr Museum of the Prairie Pioneer will be provided free for OEF/OIF Veterans and their immediate families.

A special appearance will be made by the Kool-Aid Man.

In addition, Soldiers from the Nebraska Army National Guard will fly in a CH-47 Chinook helicopter, which guests will be able to tour.

There are approximately 5,500 OEF/OIF Veterans in the VA NWIHCS service area who have served in Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom.

Nationally, there are about 837,000 service members who have been mobilized since 2002, according to the Department of Veterans Affairs Web site. However, only 39 percent have used the Veterans Health Administration services.

For this reason, the Welcome Home event is one of several outreach programs that have been initiated. These events provide the nation's Veterans and their families with vital information about their benefits and about VA health care that they are eligible to receive. For more information about these programs, visit <http://www.oefoif.va.gov>.

Veterans are asked to call **Barbara Vodehnal** at (308) 395-3319 or e-mail Barbara.Vodehnal@va.gov to confirm they are planning to attend and the number of family members who will accompany them.

CALENDAR

July

Ultraviolet (UV) Safety Month

August

Cataract Awareness Month

National Immunization Awareness Month

4 Coast Guard Day

26 Womens Equality Day

September

National Preparedness Month

Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month

Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month

Cholesterol Education Month

Prostate Health Month

6 Labor Day

5-11 Suicide Prevention Week

11 Patriot Day

17 POW/MIA Recognition Day

19-24 National Veterans Summer Sports Clinic

19-25 National Surgical Technologist Week

October

Breast Cancer Awareness Month

Pharmacy Month

Dental Hygiene Month

Hispanic Heritage Month

Physical Therapy Month

Cyber Security Month

6-12 Physician Assistants Week

10-16 Emergency Nurses Week

11 Columbus Day

Expert on Mental Health and Homeless to Speak July 28

Robert Rosenheck, M.D., a nationally known researcher on mental health services and cost-effective studies—particularly regarding homeless people with mental illness—will speak at a noon to 1 p.m. lecture July 28 at Creighton University Medical Center’s Morrison Seminar Room, 601 N. 30 Street.

His talk, titled “Cost-Effectiveness, Policy and Politics: De-Diffusion of Atypical Antipsychotics in the Treatment of Mental Illness,” is free to the public. A 30-minute, question-and-answer session will follow the lecture.

The presentation will be broadcast via pictel to all VA NWHCS community based outpatient clinic sites, Lincoln Site 2, Grand Island site 2, and Omaha Room 3583 from noon to 1 p.m.

Rosenheck, director of the Division of Mental Health Services and Outcomes Research at Yale University School of Medicine, is former director of the VA Northeast Program Evaluation Center. He has 22 years of experience evaluating and monitoring more than 1,000 VA programs for homeless Veterans with mental illness.



Photo Provided by Creighton University

Robert Rosenheck, M.D.

You Spoke: We Listened

More Parking Available for Veterans at VA NWHCS, Omaha

The number of parking opportunities has been increased for patients at VA NWHCS, Omaha.



Parking Lot 1: This lot is adjacent to the main hospital entrance and just north of the front circle. Parking is reserved (unless specifically posted by signage) for patients and guests Monday through Friday between 7 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. (excluding federal holidays).

Service-Connected Lot: This is the lot adjacent to the Emergency Department entrance. The entire lot is reserved for Emergency Department patients and service-connected Veterans who are present for an appointment. The lot is reserved Monday through Friday, excluding federal holidays, during the hours of 7 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. A gold parking placard is used to denote service connection.

Lot Between Bldg 5 (Human Resources) and Bldg 4 (Engineering): This lot has handicapped parking spaces reserved specifically for employees with handicapped parking privileges denoted by a blue placard or a handicapped license plate. Except for two parking spaces marked with specific signage, the entire lot is for employee handicapped parking and reserved Monday through Friday, excluding federal holidays, during the hours of 7 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. There are three additional spaces for lift-equipped vehicles and eight additional handicapped spaces.

Off-site Parking: VA NWHCS leadership is actively looking for off-site parking that will be used for employee overflow parking. There are spaces available at the Center Mall. To assist with pedestrian access, steps were constructed on the hill along Center Street. In addition, two shuttles provide transportation to and from the main parking lot and the Center Mall. Each shuttle driver has a cell telephone. Their numbers are 547-6972 or 547-8018.

The Omaha Parking Committee continues to explore options to ease the difficulties associated with finding a place to park at VA NWHCS, Omaha.

VA and Veteran Agencies to Hold Open House in Harlan, Iowa

A new outreach initiative to provide rural-area Veterans information and counseling about VA and other Veteran-related benefits takes place in Harlan, Iowa, Aug. 6 and Aug. 7.

VA is partnering with the State of Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs, Veteran service agencies, county Veteran service officers and military transition advisors to bring information and services at a Veterans of the Armed Forces Open House at the Veterans Memorial Auditorium, 1104 Morning View Drive, in Harlan.

Veterans and their family members with questions about benefits are encouraged to stop in at the open house between noon to 7 p.m. Aug. 6 or from 8 to 11 a.m. Aug. 7.

The following agencies will be available to provide Veterans assistance and information: VA NWHCS, Veterans Benefit Administration Regional Office, Vet Centers, Iowa State Department of Veterans Affairs, and the Iowa Transition Assistance Advisor. Other Veteran service agencies will also be available.

Veterans who are not currently enrolled for VA benefits are encouraged to bring their DD Form 214, “Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty,” to the open house to assist the agency counselors assess individual eligibility for VA benefits. VA counselors will assist Veterans to complete eligibility and enrollment applications.

The open house is an outreach program that is intended to reach Veterans in rural communities across the VA NWHCS service area, which includes Nebraska, western Iowa, and portions of Kansas and Missouri.

The interagency outreach team’s goal is to increase awareness about VA and other benefits and services available to Veterans, and to assist with applying for these benefits.

The open house is targeted toward Veterans who live in the following counties: Woodbury, Ida, Sac, Monona, Crawford, Carroll, Harrison, Shelby, Audubon, Pottawattamie, Cass, and Adair.

2010 Summer Voice of VA – Integrated Ethics Staff Survey

As VHA strives to continue to deliver the highest quality patient care, it is critical to continually assess employees' perceptions of their work environment.

Now it is time for the 2010 Summer Voice of VA - IntegratedEthics Staff Survey. The purpose of this survey is to collect information on employees' perceptions of ethics in the work place.

This survey is part of an ongoing effort to improve ethical practices throughout VHA. The survey will be administered every other year. This year's survey is from July 26 through August 13. Participation in this survey is completely voluntary.

On the opening day of the survey, employees will receive an email from the National Center for Organization Development. This email contains the web link to the survey. Responses are confidential. They will go directly to an outside vendor.

Farmers Market Offers Healthy Choices

VA NWIHCS is well-known for providing Veterans high-quality health care. The staff also seeks opportunities to help Veterans and their families prevent disease and live healthier lives through initiatives including farmers markets.

The VA NWIHCS, Omaha farmers market will be held in the parking lot in front of Modular Building A every Monday through Sept. 20, with the exception of Labor Day. The market will move to Sept. 7 following Labor Day. The hours are 1 to 5 p.m.

The VA NWIHCS, Lincoln farmers market will be held from 2 to 4 p.m. at the exterior entrance to the outpatient clinic every Wednesday through September.

Veterans and the community are invited to stop by and purchase from a selection of locally grown vegetables and fruits.

WIN Weight Loss Challenge 2010 Winners Announced

Congratulations to **Janice Anderson**, Lincoln, for winning the WIN Weight Loss Challenge 2010 for losing 14.67 percent of her body weight.

"You have to do this for yourself", she said, referring to weight loss. "I hope I can inspire other people to lose weight by seeing what I have accomplished so far."

Anderson said she is getting close to her goal weight but will continue to use the WIN program to achieve her goal. She won a Nintendo Wii donated by the Veterans Canteen Service for being the Challenge winner.

The WIN program also congratulates four other VA NWIHCS employees for losing more than 10 percent of their body weight. The employees are **Anonymous**, lost 13.45 percent; **Barbara Brunton**, Omaha, lost 11.77 percent; **Deb Levander**, Grand Island, lost 10.40 percent and **Lourdes Heuermann**, Grand Island, lost 10.87 percent.

The Weight Loss Challenge ran from Mar. 29 through June 25. Ninety nine VA NWIHCS employees participated

with 32 completing the challenge. The results showed an average of nine pounds lost and the abdominal girth went down over two inches per person. Congratulations to everyone who completed the challenge!

If you are a VA NWIHCS employee who would like to lose weight, contact your WIN coach: **Quin Kelly**, RN, BSN at Lincoln ext. 7902 and Omaha at ext. 5972, and **Laura Mader**, RN, BSN at Grand Island ext. 2081.



Photo by Bruce Thiel

Janice Anderson won a Nintendo Wii for winning the WIN Weight Loss Challenge 2010, by losing 14.67 percent of her body weight.



ADVANCE Provides Employees With Career Development Tools



The VA Office of Human Resources and Administration is leading the Secretary's effort to ADVANCE the VA workforce and transform the Department to better serve Veterans and their families.

The goal is to work with each and every VA employee to help them ADVANCE their careers. Many training opportunities are available through the VA Learning University (VALU). Take advantage of the many innovative and developmental courses VA has to offer.

For more information on these courses and to register, please visit the VALU intranet site at vaww.va.gov/

vaww.va.gov/advance and click on the registration links at the bottom of the page. For more information about ADVANCE, visit the Web Site at <http://vaww.va.gov/advance>.

Upcoming Garden Swap - Omaha

The Employee WIN/Wellness Committee is again sponsoring a garden swap for employees at VA NWIHCS, Omaha. If you have excess produce from your garden, you will be able to bring it to work and make it available to others.

Employees can bring, take or trade produce. The swap will begin in August, so watch for more details and keep weeding that garden. This will be in addition to the farmers market held Monday afternoons in Omaha.

Personnel Notes

VA NWHCS has two new Nurse Educators. Aaron Moore has a strong background in critical care and has been an Intensive Care Unit nurse for VA for about two years. He has previous experience as a traveling nurse across the United States. While at VA, Moore has been instrumental in serving as a preceptor for nursing students as well as performing additional duties as the hospital nursing coordinator.

Ellen Piskac has been with VA for six months assisting with our application for Magnet Status. Piskac has more than 20 years of nursing education experience, functioning as the Program Director and Dean of Nursing at Clarkson College. She also previously was Assistant Professor of Nursing at the College of St. Mary.

Linda Hargens is the new NWHCS Infection Preventionist, based in Omaha. Hargens has had extensive experience at VA NWHCS, Omaha, most recently as team leader in the Medical Evaluation Unit.

Do You Have News or Events to Share?

With eight facilities and more than 2,000 employees, there are lots of good news and events to share. Public Affairs needs your help. If you have a good news or feature story that you think we should share with internal or external audiences, we want to know.

Did your service or an employee in your area recently earn a significant achievement or award? Do you have an event coming up that you want others to know about? We want to know.

There are numerous communication tools in our arsenal to get your message out including digital media boards, *NWI Messenger*, *News Link*, Daily Briefs and the Intranet. We can also pitch story ideas or events to local media, or share with others in the VA through national products including VAnguard and the new social media tools.

There are lots of opportunities that our employees can help us find, please feel free to share your ideas with us.

You can e-mail William.Ackerman@va.gov or Margaret.Oldham@va.gov, or call Omaha ext. 4719 or 5547.

Didn't Make it to Denver? Check these Wheelchair Games Videos

The 2010 National Veterans Wheelchair Games held earlier this month in Denver, Colo., are sweet memory to the more than 600 athletes and thousands of volunteers and spectators who attended, but you can live through the Games online by viewing videos that take you to the heart of the action and celebration of the world's largest wheelchair athletic competition event.

Go to <http://www1.va.gov/opa/speceven/wcg/videos.asp>. The Games head to Pittsburgh, Pa., next year.

Free Access Pass to National Parks and Recreational Lands

The Interagency Pass Program which was created by the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act and authorized by Congress in Dec. 2004 provides a lifetime pass for U.S. citizens or permanent residents with permanent disabilities.

The pass provides access to, and use of, Federal recreation sites that charge an entrance or standard amenity fee. The pass admits the pass holder and passengers in a non-commercial vehicle at per vehicle fee areas and pass holder plus three adults, not to exceed four adults, at per person fee areas (children under 16 are admitted free).

The pass can only be obtained in person at the park. The Access Pass provides a 50 percent discount on some expanded amenity fees charged for facilities and services such as camping, swimming, boat launching, and specialized interpretive services. In some cases where expanded amenity fees are charged, only the pass holder will be given the 50 percent price reduction.

Documentation is required to obtain the pass. Acceptable documentation includes: statement by a licensed physician; document issued by a Federal agency such as VA, Social Security Disability Income or Supplemental Security Income; or document issued

by a State agency such as a vocational rehabilitation agency. For more information, visit http://www.nps.gov/pub_aff/access/access_pass.htm.

Microsoft Office Home Use Program Offers Discount for VA Employees

Employees can purchase Microsoft Office 2010 (Home Use Program) for \$9.95 for download only or \$21.95 with a DVD. The instructions on how to proceed are at <http://vaww.r02.portal.va.gov/sites/VISN%2023/Document%20Library/HomeUse.aspx>.

Although the Web page may still state this purchase is for Office 2007, once you click the link on the page, it will take you to the page listing the purchase for Office 2010. VA has not yet transitioned to Office 2010 and does not currently support Office 2010 applications. Microsoft Office 2010 is only for use at home.

Check Your Listing

Telephone Operations is asking all employees to check their contact information in the intranet phone directory. Employees should visit <http://vaww.visn23.med.va.gov/nwi/Telephone/branch.asp>, select "Employee Extensions" from the drop-down menu, and enter their name to check the listing for errors or omissions. Services should also check their listing. If you need to make a change, send an e-mail to PhoneDirectory.NWHCS@va.gov with the change.

This newsletter is for VA Nebraska-Western Iowa Health Care System (Grand Island, Lincoln, Omaha, Norfolk, Holdrege, North Platte, Bellevue, Nebraska and Shenandoah, Iowa). It is published weekly to provide employees, patients and visitors with information about VA programs and activities. This newsletter may be found on the Intranet at <http://vaww.visn23.med.va.gov/nwi/index.asp>. Submit news items through e-mail to G. POSTINGS in Vista or to VHANWI MESSENGER in Outlook by close of business each Tuesday.

For further information, call Maggie Oldham at (402) 995-5547.