



# The EAGLE

For the employees of the Coatesville VA Medical Center ~ September 2008

## A Message From the Director

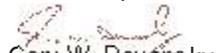


Dear Fellow Employees:

On August 16th, we hosted the Second Annual Welcome Home Celebration. It was, from all standpoints, a major success. More than 400 people attended, many of them GWOT veterans. Everyone had a great time and went home with information about the services we offer. This was our last big summer event. Thank you to everyone who helped with this celebration.

During the fall season, we look forward to upcoming, big events like the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC). "Be a Star in Someone's Life" is the CFC theme, this year. Our campaign kicks off on October 1st and will last through December 15th. The CFC program is a wonderful opportunity to give back and make a difference in the lives of people who are less fortunate. During our Veterans Week Celebration, November 5th through the 11th, we conduct many events to honor our veterans in recognition of Veterans Day. For many years, we have proudly held a week long celebration, not just one single ceremony or activity, to pay tribute to those who have served in our Nation's armed forces. During Veterans Week, we focus on thanking veterans for their service to our country.

Each year, I hope that increasing numbers of employees will assist with and participate in our CFC program and Veterans Week Celebration. Please help me with making both of these fall events a resounding success.

  
Gary W. Devansky  
Director

### Tony Wolfgang, Chief Financial Officer



Tony started his career as an operating accountant at the Coatesville VAMC in 1991, and has held various managerial positions in the meantime. His proven abilities and leadership skills will serve him well in CVAMC's top fiscal position.

Through his new position, Tony will seek to improve CVAMC's funding levels as well as reporting practices related to billing and collections. In doing so, he will emphasize the importance of accurate data collection and workload reporting.

Tony is an accomplished golfer. Each year he helps with the American Legion Veterans Freedom Golf Tournament which raised more than \$2,000 this year. He enjoys spending time with his wife, Debbie, and daughters, Sara, 12, and Erica, 8 - one of their favorite activities is tennis. Congratulations on your new position, Tony!

### Cynthia Sundahl, Business Manager, Mental Health



Cynthia is a California native, hailing from the San Francisco area where she worked for the State of California as a policy analyst and later as an economist. While there, she also earned her masters degree in public administration. Cynthia is very excited to be working at CVAMC and especially with

the Advanced Clinical Access team to improve the quality and efficiency of patient care services.

In her free time, Cynthia enjoys online gaming, and is a self-described "book worm" - her current favorite author is Nicholas Sparks. Welcome to the Coatesville VAMC, Cynthia!

### Jennifer Sewilam, Business Manager, Primary Care Services

Jennifer joined the Coatesville VAMC staff late in May of 2008. Jennifer began her career working for the Department of Defense, and then worked for Temple University for four years. She moved on from there to work on Federal Workers Compensation at the Department of Labor in Philadelphia for the last three years. Jennifer finds it interesting to work with veterans, who she says are amazing historians, on top of everything else. She holds masters degrees in public administration and political science.

In Jennifer's free time, she likes to take walks and enjoy the nice weather with her son, Alexander Adham Sewilam, who was born March 20th, 2008. Congratulations, Jennifer!



### Kathleen Pomorski, Public Affairs Officer

I am Kathleen Pomorski, the new public affairs officer at CVAMC. I began working here in July and have enjoyed meeting many of you and look forward to meeting many more! As part of my responsibilities, I will take over creating The EAGLE each quarter from Dawn Martz-Porter, who has done a terrific job. I also hope to continue the work that Earl Johnson has done in spreading the word about the great things that we do here at CVAMC. So, if you ever have ideas for The EAGLE or are doing something really terrific, please don't hesitate to let me know.

Prior to this position, I worked as an account executive at a public relations agency in Maryland. I was raised in Coatesville and was very happy to move back to the area to be close to my family. In my free time, I enjoy exercising, reading, and spending time with my family and friends.



## Welcome Home Celebration at the Coatesville VA Medical Center was a hit!

Coatesville Veterans Affairs Medical Center hosted the Second Annual Welcome Home Celebration on Saturday, August 16th to honor our returning Global War on Terror (GWOT) veterans and inform them of the programs and services available to them through the VA. The weather was gorgeous and an estimated 400 veterans and their family members came out for the celebration.

The event kicked off with some jazz music from the Voodoo Deville Blues Band and the Porkroll Project. Congressmen Joe Pitts, Jim Gerlach and Joe Sestak spoke in appreciation of the sacrifices our veterans have made for this country. Jamie Garcia, a Purple Heart recipient, delivered a touching speech which emphasized how crucial our veterans' service is to the quality of life we all enjoy and, unfortunately, often take for granted.

After the opening ceremony, veterans and their families feasted on delicious picnic food. There were hamburgers, hot dogs, potato and macaroni salads, chips and soda. After this, most journeyed across the street to take down VA employees in the dunk tank, swim in the pool, and toss around basketballs on the court. Youngsters enjoyed romping on the Moon Walk and having their faces painted. Many also perused the exhibits area, where valuable information about VA's programs and services was available. Also present were representatives from organizations like The American Legion, Vietnam Veterans of America and Disabled American Veterans, among other non-profit organizations that help veterans.

A special highlight of the day occurred in the pool. A demonstration was held by Team River Runner, which is a program that enables veterans to experience the joy and therapeutic benefits of kayaking. The all-volunteer, non-profit program originated at the Walter Reed Army Medical Center (WRAMC) in 2004, and has found its way to many VAMCs across the country, including Coatesville. Joe Mornini, Director of the national Team River Runner program trekked up from DC to conduct the demonstration.

Coatesville VAMC had plenty of much-appreciated help from many volunteers and sponsors throughout the community, including Smedley Butler Detachment, Marine Corps League, Giant Foods, Rolling Thunder Chapter 1 PA, American Legion Auxiliary #185, American Legion Post #93, Tents & Events, Chris Cianciulli, and Mr. John Company.

All in all, the Second Annual Welcome Home Celebration was a big hit - tasty food, fun activities and live entertainment.

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## We miss you, Kirk!

Pictured to the right is Lieutenant General David H. Petreaus and Kirk Femitz, a popular CVAMC employee. Kirk is stationed overseas and sends a hello and well wishes to all of his friends at CVAMC!



All Employee Picnic Enjoyed by, well...All!

CVAMC's All Employee Appreciation Picnic was held

on June 10th. Attendees enjoyed a sunny, lazy afternoon along with lots of great food including hot dogs, hamburgers, BBQ chicken, macaroni salad, cole slaw, baked beans, drinks and desserts. Many door prizes were given out, among them a big screen television and gift certificates to the Canteen. The picnic was funded by the Veterans Canteen Service out of proceeds from the national profit-sharing program. Kudos to Picnic Committee Members: Peter Wetterlin, Bob Marshall, Steve Dizel, Judi Graziano, Lewis McCullough, Steve Blanchard, Earl Johnson and Cecilia Dean for a job well done.

## Coatesville Staff Gets Their Feet Wet Literally!

Team River Runner is a program that enables veterans to experience the joy and therapeutic benefit of kayaking. The all-volunteer, non-profit program originated at the Walter Reed Army Medical Center (WRAMC) in 2004, and has found its way to many VAMCs across the country, including Coatesville.

The program aims to provide Afghanistan and Iraq veterans as well as all other Global War on Terror veterans suffering with post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), traumatic brain injuries (TBI), and other mental and physical conditions a challenging, highly interactive and exhilarating therapeutic activity involving whitewater boating.



Under the direction of our very own Lewis McCullough, and in a joint effort with Recreation Therapy, Team River Runner Coatesville is off to a great start! Currently, the program is in its early phases, where volunteer staff members are being trained to become kayak instructors themselves. Recently, several veterans from 8B began to take part in the training as well and are really enjoying the experience!

It is not too late to get involved with this truly inspiring program. To do so, please contact Lewis McCullough at X3400. Team River Runner is an approved recipient of United Way funds that we campaign for as part of the Federal Government's Combined Federal Campaign (CFC). More specific information will follow.

## Keeping it Real

The third SCRATCH Team "Keeping it Real" forum took place on July 29th and the next is scheduled for October. The forum is a peer support program that links domiciliary alumni with current residents to help them work through addiction issues. Charles Wilcox, a former domiciliary resident and current food and nutrition service employee, with the help of others, organized the event. If you have questions or would like to become involved, please contact Dr. Steven Chambers at X5610.

## Brand New State of the Art Call Center Opened In July!

You may have heard already, but now when veterans call to make, change, or cancel an appointment, their call goes directly to our brand new call center, where eager customer service representatives are waiting to help!



The Center, which opened in July, centralizes and streamlines the scheduling process, making it much easier for CVAMC to meet the performance measure goal of appointments taking place within 30 days of the veteran's initial call. This also creates an opportunity for clinical staff to maintain their focus on helping veterans who are physically present and takes away the distraction of phones ringing off the hook.

The call center operates daily from 7am through 8pm and is overseen by Cynthia Walker and Ann Sepe in Health Administration Services. Other services involved in getting the call center up and running include Facilities Engineering Services, Environmental Management Services and the Chief Information Office.

## Achievements

CVAMC's FES Team was selected as the North-Eastern Administrative Services Systems Redesign Winner. Congratulations to: Stephen Blanchard, Kimberly Sekiya, Pete Duca, Steve Gray, Bill Gulliver, Sandra Mohr and the rest of the FES staff.

Congratulations to Richard Gamble, who was recently elected as First Vice Chair, to PA's Secretary of Labor and Industry's, Governor's Committee for The Employment of People With Disabilities.

Congratulations to Frank Angelini, Lindsay Phillips, and Ronald Pekala who each made presentations on their own research findings to their peers at the 116th Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association in Boston, MA from August 14th through August 17th.

Congratulations to the recent Coin of Excellence recipients: Cheryl Young, Terri Sampson, Cheryl Rhone and Steven Chambers.

## Employee Moves

Peter Lamb worked at the Coatesville VAMC for 13 years and has left us to work at the VA Health Care System, Prescott, AZ. Peter is happy to be near family now, but extends his thanks to the CVAMC staff and friends he has made for making his time at Coatesville so enjoyable! We wish you the best of luck in Arizona, Peter!

On Mother's Day, Sunday, May 11th, VA Employees Pam Parker,

### CVAMC Fields Team for Susan G. Komen "Race for the Cure"

Marie Sedlak, Beth Kennel, and her husband, Jim Kennel, took to the streets of Philadelphia to raise money for the Susan G. Komen Foundation. Together, along with donations from employees, they raised more than \$500!



Race Participants embarked on the 2008 season with the rallying cry of "Race. Embrace. Empower." An estimated 120,000 people swarmed Philadelphia's Eakins Oval for the race and raised a whopping \$3.7 million!

A team will form again for the 2009 "Race for the Cure" and in the meantime, anyone wishing to contribute can do so through a 2009 CFC donation.

## Culture Change

# CORNER

The goal of cultural transformation in long term care is to create a homelike environment honoring individual resident preferences. Nutrition and Food Service, in collaboration with the Culture Change Committee, has been working to transform the dining experience for residents in our community living centers (CLCs). A new snack program was initiated in March providing CLC residents with access to popular, personal sized snacks 24-hours a day. In July, a selective menu process, in which residents use a menu to select what they would like to eat at each meal, was developed and piloted for residents of building 138.

Providing residents with more autonomy in their meal selections will greatly improve their level of satisfaction as well as enhance a homelike environment in support of cultural transformation. Opportunities for improvement resulting from the pilot were identified and the program is expected to be fully implemented this fall.

This summer, an interdisciplinary team was assembled to plan for a comprehensive project which will transform our food delivery system into a more homelike kitchen serving fresh cooked meals in our largest CLC, Bldg. 138. The plan also includes a new interior design of the resident dining area. Aside from a facelift to the area, the plan allows for the creation of a small sitting area, a private dining space for special occasions, and the development of a small kitchenette for use by family members, residents, and staff led groups. The project is expected to be completed in 2009.



## Baby News



Sabrina Matukaitis, Occupational Therapist, celebrated the birth of her daughter, Myra Suzanne Matukaitis, on April 5th.

Ami Hilton, Physical Therapist, celebrated the birth of her daughter, Hannah Elizabeth Hilton, on June 9th.

Donna Regener, Chief of Health Benefits Administration, became a proud grandmother with the birth of Hailey Grace Regener on June 23rd.

Heather Dotsey, Physical Therapist, celebrated the birth of her son, Austin Wesley Dotsey, on July 31st.

Christine Fillhart, Occupational Therapist, celebrated the birth of her daughter, Madison Lynn Fillhart, on August 19th.

## Suicide Prevention Awareness Week

This initiative runs from September 8th through September 12th to raise awareness and advocacy about suicide prevention. On Monday and Friday of this week there will be a suicide prevention information center at Times Square. And, there will be an Operation SAVE suicide prevention training on Thursday for employees. The deadline to complete this training was September 1st. If you have not yet completed it, please make every effort to get to this session. Any questions can be directed to Tim Sessions at X6841.

## September 11th

In honor of Americans who lost their lives or whose lives were changed on September 11th, 2001, we will hold a brief ceremony which will feature an American Flag hot air balloon called *America One* being launched from our grounds. The launch will take place at 6:00pm, but specific details on exactly where will not be available until that day due to daily weather conditions. The first choice launch site is inside Oval 2. Rain dates are September 10th and 12th.

## National Preparedness Month and Get Ready Day

The month of September is National Preparedness Month and September 16th is Get Ready Day. The month serves as a reminder for Americans to prepare themselves for all hazards they may face including pandemic flu and other emerging infectious diseases. Check out [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov) and [www.citizen corps.gov](http://www.citizen corps.gov) for more information.

## National POW/MIA Recognition Day

September 19th is a day to honor the valiant service of our former POWs and MIAs. There will be a prayer service held in the All Faith Chapel on this day at 1:30pm. If you have any questions or would like to get involved, please contact James Simmons at X2930.

## 2008 Start! Lancaster Heart Walk

This event to support the American Heart Association will take place on October 4th at the Clipper Magazine Stadium in Lancaster. Jack Enco will be taking part to support the cause. Any employees who are interested in walking with Jack can call him at X5109.

## Mental Health Awareness Week

This event will take place October 6th through October 10th, in various locations throughout Chester County. If you are knowledgeable about mental health issues and processes and are interested in being a part of this educational activity, please contact Matt Legas at X6110.

## Abilities Fair

The Abilities Fair, taking place on October 22nd from 10pm to 3pm, will be a forum where individuals can learn more about many topics including chronic illness, mental illness and multiple disabilities. Additionally, many community-based agencies will be on hand to answer questions. The fair will take place in the Great Hall. If you'd like more information, please call Terri Warden-Fioravanti at X2110.

## Veterans Advocacy Council

This group meets on the third Wednesday of each month. The next meetings are September 17th, October 15th, and November 19th from 3pm to 5pm in Bldg. 5, First Floor, in Room 3. It is a mental health veteran advocacy council which assists the recovery efforts of veterans with severe mental illness or mental illness and substance abuse. The group welcomes veterans, veterans' family members or advocates, representatives from veterans service organizations, and community mental health agencies/advocacy groups. Anyone interested in learning more or participating can contact Audrey Hall at X2820.

# Calendar of Events

## SERVICE AWARDS

Congratulations to the following employees who have been recognized for 20 or more years of service between June and September.

### 20 years:

Angela Castro  
Cleavonne Stratton  
Mark Bauer  
Christine Jones  
Linda Metzler  
Monique Artis  
Lori Kutcher  
Jose Rodriguez-Lopez  
E E Von Zemenszky  
Elton Artis  
Cathryn Boyd  
Michael Cammer  
Delma Grau Belbru  
Walter Heizenroth  
James Leonard

### 25 years:

Mary Keesey  
John Keenan  
Cheryl Killinger  
Matthew Alfonso  
Michael Avery  
Pushpa Thakrar  
Catherine Beery

### 30 years:

Timothy Johnson  
Richard Sama  
Barbara Parker  
Rudolph Creekmur  
Debora Babich  
Carol Silveri

### 35 years:

Catherine Darrenkamp  
Gregory Lewis  
Jeanne Varrase  
Harry Prange  
Michael Majors

### 40 years:

William Rank

## Good Bye & Good Luck to our Retirees

Employee Name:	Years of Service:
Thomas Bily	36
Richard Moscow	34
Johnnie Mathis	29
Bernard Blaustein	27
Carol May	24
Thomas Robinson	24
Marcia Kurman	20
Virginia Czetti	19
Willie Howard	15
Andrea Watto	15
Ann King	13

## Veterans Week Celebration Schedule

**Wednesday, November 5th**  
Women Veterans Luncheon  
Interfaith Service

**Thursday, November 6th**  
Day of Beauty Program  
Banquet

**Friday, November 7th**  
Parade  
Flag Ceremony  
VFW Auxiliary Karaoke Party

**Saturday, November 8th**  
Veterans 5K Freedom  
Run/Walk

**Monday, November 10th**  
Variety Show

**Tuesday, November 11th**  
Salute

## Employee of the Month

June:  
David O'Leary

July:  
Mary Ann McCunney

## Supervisor of the Month

June:  
Dr. Indraneel Elanchenney

July:  
Amanda Gaul

The Eagle is published quarterly for the employees of the Coatesville VA Medical Center. Please address suggestions, comments, or story ideas to: Kathleen Pomorski X4203 or [kathleen.pomorski@va.gov](mailto:kathleen.pomorski@va.gov). The editor reserves the right to make changes and/or edits to any submission chosen for publication. Layout/design/photography completed by CVAMC Medical Media Department.