

INDY INSIGHT

Victories, Visions & Views

Thomas Mattice, Director

Richard L. Roudebush VA Medical Center, Indianapolis, Indiana

February 2013

PEOPLE • SERVICE • QUALITY • STEWARDSHIP

Patient's Wish Is Realized Thanks to Teamwork

In late January, a 66-year-old retired Marine was nearing the end of his life as a patient of the Roudebush VA Medical Center. The normally tough-as-nails Vietnam Veteran expressed to his caregivers a compelling wish to see his mother one last time. The challenge was that his 88-year-old mother was in a nursing facility half a continent away in California. Logistically, this was one last wish which looked like it would probably go unfulfilled.

But thanks to the determination, resourcefulness and caring spirit of several employees of the medical center, a dying man was able to begin his final transition with some closure and the comforting tenderness that only a mother can offer.

When first hearing of his last desire, the patient's social workers, Emily Chrysler and Yvonne Wennen-Aluko, discussed between themselves how they could possibly fulfill this wish. They both felt very passionately that this was something to which they really wanted to give every effort to get satisfied.



Yvonne Wennen-Aluko, Palliative Care social worker; Dr. Erin Newton, Palliative Care; and nurse Jacque Brumley

"His mother was very determined to come here to see her dying son, but her other sons and daughter who all live nearby here were just as concerned about her traveling because of the cold weather and other factors," said Yvonne.

"From talking with him soon after his unfortunate diagnosis, our patient described himself as a very 'hard' type

who didn't have any children, no family here whatsoever and several failed relationships from the past. So he was very much alone," she added.

The patient was told last October by his doctor here that he had only a very limited time left and he had been receiving palliative care at the medical center for his last few weeks. Palliative care is the term used to describe the clinical approach to a patient with a progressive life-threatening disease. Palliative focuses on preserving the quality of life and ensures that death occurs with comfort and dignity, in a manner consistent with the desires and values of the patient and the family.

The determined social workers contacted the medical center's Telehealth coordinator David Yanez to see if he could think of a way to connect mother and son. "I got an electronic page from

(Continued on page 3)

VA Indy Hosts Healing Arts Exhibit



The Roudebush VA Medical Center is hosting a traveling healing arts photography exhibit designed to provide a measure of healing the wounds of war through artistic messages.

The 73-piece exhibit is co-sponsored by the Indianapolis VA Healing Arts Exhibits and the Dr. Worthington Indiana Chapter #3 of the Disabled American Veterans (DAV). Support also comes from the Italian American Veterans Museum, the Independence Fund and Free on Board Healing Arts, Inc.

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VA HEALTH CARE Defining EXCELLENCE in the 21st Century

Email from the Executive Management Team

Standard of the Month - February: *Commitment to Co-Workers: Teamwork*



Debra Thayer
Acting Assistant Director

The Business Dictionary defines teamwork as “the process of working collaboratively with a group of people in order to achieve a goal.” When thinking about teamwork, what probably comes to mind for many of us is the team of people

who we work directly with each day.

But if you really stop to think about it, teamwork really starts as soon as you get out of bed in the morning.

It takes teamwork to coordinate starting the day at home with our families; getting everyone dressed, serving breakfast, and getting all off to wherever they are going for the rest of their day.

It takes a different kind of teamwork to maneuver through traffic without an accident. That is definitely a group of people working together in unison in order to achieve a common goal; getting to work safely.

Then we walk into our place of work and are confronted with collaborating with people of different skills in order to provide world class health care to our

patients.

Here at the Indianapolis VA Medical Center, we are very fortunate to be able to work together as a team to serve one of the greatest populations of people: our Veterans. Whether you are doing direct patient care or processing claims, each of you has a very important role in the services that our Veterans receive.

Working together as a team to deliver these services will only make our medical center stronger. Throughout this month at least, take a few minutes and thank those with whom you are working. Let them know how important they are to your team; our team.

Remember this from the great professional basketball coach Phil Jackson: “Good teams become great ones when the members trust each other enough to surrender the ‘me’ for the ‘we’.”

Radiation Oncology: Roudebush VA’s Newest Service

Radiation Oncology has separated from the Radiology Service and is now the newest service at the Richard L. Roudebush VA Medical Center.

Radiation Oncology deals with the treatment of cancer patients with radiation therapy. Approximately half our patients have potentially curable cancer; the other patients may be incurable, but radiation can be used to successfully relieve or reduce pain and other symptoms.

Radiation can be given as a curative treatment, either alone or in combination with surgery and/or chemotherapy. Radiation Oncologists work closely with other physicians such as surgical oncologists, other surgeons, internal medicine subspecialists, and medical oncologists, as part of the multi-disciplinary cancer team. Currently, Radiation Oncology is the most competitive specialty for medical students applying to residency.

Traditionally, radiation oncologists practice radiology, specializing in the



New Radiation Oncology Service working team.

use of radiation for cancer treatment. The two fields started to separate from each other in the 1950’s. Now it is rare to see mixed departments containing both radiation oncology and radiology. The formal separation of radiation oncology and radiology here at the Roudebush VA Medical Center represents an improvement in strategic alignment of

the two specialties.

Radiation Oncology is located in the basement of the B wing. The leadership of the service consists of the Service Chief, Dr. Helen Fosmire; Administrative Officer, Nicole Salvi; and the Supervisory Therapist, Joseph Holliday. You can reach the service at 988-3011.

HERITAGE CORNER

Who was Richard L. Roudebush?



Richard Lowell Roudebush was born on a farm in Hamilton County, near Noblesville, Indiana Jan. 18, 1918 and passed away Jan. 28, 1995.

Roudebush attended Hamilton County schools and graduated from Butler University in 1941.

He served in the U. S. Army from Nov. 1941, to Aug. 1944, as a demolition specialist for the Ordnance Department in Middle Eastern, North African, and Italian Campaigns.

After the war he was a farmer and partner in a livestock commission company.

He served as National Commander of the Veterans of Foreign Wars from 1957 to 1958. He served as chairman of the Indiana Veterans Commission from 1954 to 1960.

Roudebush was elected to Congress as an Indiana Representative and served in that capacity from 1961 until 1971.

He later served as the Administrator of Veterans Affairs, Veterans Administration from 1974 to 1977.

Richard L. Roudebush VA Medical Center is named in honor of this great Indiana Hoosier and decorated Veteran.

Patient's Wish Is Realized Thanks to Teamwork *(Continued from page 1)*

a Palliative Care social worker because of my work with Telehealth,” David said. “After hearing of their situation, normally I would have suggested having his mother go to a VA clinic nearby her that had Telehealth capabilities and then having our patient get wheeled to one of our Telehealth stations here in the medical facility. (VA’s Telehealth provides greater access to health care through the use of telecommunications and videoconferencing. VA patients find Telehealth to be just what they need to receive personalized care from their VA medical center while remaining in their communities. The Veterans Health Administration is the nation’s leader in Telehealth technologies, which means doctors and patients can meet for health services without physically being in the same place.)

But that option was not realistic in this case. Neither patient nor mother was up to being moved or to travel. David then suggested they could try the Internet service Skype (used for video calls between computers and smartphones). The patient’s sister, who lives near their mother, had a laptop in her home and stated that she could bring her mother there. David enlisted help from the facility Office of Information and Technology (OI&T) Service to rig a “hotspot” for his facility iPad.

“I then created a Skype account and did a couple of test calls with the sister until things all came together,” recalled David.

Added Emily Chrysler, “I had been involved in this type of video call with patients at the Richmond, Virginia VA medical center. This particular patient expressed to me early in his treatment that when the end of his life neared he would like to be with his family. He had not seen his family for many years and was afraid how they’d judge him.”

David continued the heart tugging story: “When mother and son finally connected after many years apart, it was a very nice experience. It was very emotional. The mother expressed numerous times her gratitude to her son’s health team

for organizing the call. We did it again the following day. At the second call, she brought along family photos and they both shared a lot of memories. There were a lot of tears on both sides of the video call.”

“One nice aspect of the visual side of this event,” said David, “was that the patient’s whole caregiving team was present on the calls and his mother got to meet all of them and say hi and get acquainted.”

“At first, the mother expressed guilt because she was unable to see her son in person one last time,” David explained. “But because of those video calls, she said she felt much better.”

Having the experience and training to lead and direct the medical facility’s robust Telehealth program, David appreciates the value of the visual element in patient and caregiver relationships. “It really enhances the human connection. Body language adds another dimension to the process. It’s the same with our Telehealth.”

“It was a magical experience with the visual element as opposed to just a phone call,” he added. “The technology to do something like this isn’t real new. But I hope that it enhanced the quality of the patient’s remaining time.”

The patient agreed with this writer that the opportunity meant a lot to him and to his mother as well.

“He really perked up after the first Skype call,” Yvonne said. “He was the type who always “drove his own train” so to speak. Not real emotionally expressive. But his mood definitely picked up after the first video call! He spoke more afterwards to his nurses than I had heard him talk in days.”

David summed up the experience nicely: “To be able to provide one of our Veterans with this ability is a priceless experience. Sometimes the stuff that we do for our patients is not written in policy or measured for performance metrics. But it is just as important. A lot of the things that get done in our medical center are not measurable. But they matter immensely to the patient.”

Education Corner

DiSC Tool By Rita Thomas,
Coordinator, Nursing Education,
Learning Resource Service

Individuals and groups have unique styles or cultures. A tool titled DiSC (dominance, influence, steadiness, conscientiousness) describes culture as an informal combination of behaviors, values, and attitudes that most people in the group take for granted—culture is the way we do things. The DiSC is designed to help you understand some of the challenges and frustrations your group members might face.

The DiSC tool is most frequently used to help individuals and groups

- Understand preferences, strengths and growth areas
- Appreciate Diversity
- Provide a common language to discuss individual and group styles
- Create a respectful dialogue
- Relate to each other in a better way

A team of people within the medical center has attended educational events offered by the Department of Organizational Development to facilitate the DiSC tool discussion.

If you are interested in learning more about individual styles within your group and the group culture, please contact Rita Thomas at Rita.Thomas2@va.gov or Penny Watts at Penny.Watts@va.gov.

Rita and Penny will connect you with available DiSC facilitators.

VA Indy Hosts Healing Arts Exhibit (Cont. from page 1)

The exhibit located on the atrium balcony, is free and open to the public through March 31. It includes digital reproductions of artworks and images representing World Wars I and II, the Korean Conflict, Vietnam, the Persian Gulf War, as well as Operations Enduring Freedom, Iraqi Freedom and New Dawn.

An official ribbon cutting ceremony is scheduled for February 15 on the atrium balcony.

Indy Mayor Honors Roudebush Volunteer/Vietnam Veteran, Jesus Quintana, Jr.



Mayor Greg Ballard recently hosted the 12th Annual Mayor's Celebration of Diversity Awards honoring businesses and organizations for their contributions to diversity. The Mayor's Celebration of Diversity Awards recognizes local businesses that encourage, embrace, and celebrate differences that foster a culture of diversity and inclusiveness.

"Over the past five years, the City of Indianapolis has made unprecedented

strides at building a culture of inclusiveness and opportunity for women and minorities, as well as for Veterans and individuals with disabilities," said Mayor Ballard. "Every day, our city celebrates diversity – diversity of race, gender, ability, heritage and culture. More than that, we celebrate the opportunity that comes from diversity, and that from our differences come strength, creativity and growth."

Recognition for the Mayor's Celebration of Diversity Awards is based on stellar performance in one or all of the following areas: Workforce Diversity, Development, Community Relations, and Leadership. Below is a list of the award recipients and a brief description of their accomplishments.

The Distinguished Veteran Service Award honors and celebrates an individual who has been actively engaged in serving his country. This award is given in honor of a distinguished Veteran who has continually served our country selflessly and continues to inspire others to a life of service.

This year's award recipient was Jesus Quintana, Jr. who served in the U.S. Marine Corps from 1967-69. In 1968, Quintana lost both his legs after walking into a booby trap during a combat mission. Even though the loss of both of his legs impacted his life dramatically, Quintana says it's not what he lost but what he found that gave him a sense of fulfillment and belonging. Fueled by that sense of fulfillment, Quintana continues to connect and assist Veterans groups and causes across Indianapolis and our nation. Quintana helped launch the nation's first American Legion-sanctioned group for Vietnam-era Veterans and also joined the Marine Corps League. Since 1987, he has been a volunteer at the Richard L. Roudebush VA Medical Center in Indianapolis assisting Veterans with questions on benefits and services. He also helps with activities, such as picnics and archery programs for disabled Veterans and simply to be there as a friend and someone to listen. Quintana has earned three Purple Hearts and a Bronze Star.

Town Hall Meeting - February 6

with Medical Center Director Tom Mattice

7:30 a.m., 12 p.m. and 3:30 p.m.

Auditorium

All are encouraged to attend one of these sessions

Former Soldier/VA Director Inspires at MLK Event



A special program to celebrate and honor the life and achievements of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was held here January 15.

The event took place in the medical center auditorium and was sponsored by the Black Emphasis Committee and featured guest speaker Michael E. Hamilton. Mr. Hamilton is a retired U.S. Army Lieutenant Colonel who served in Vietnam and who earned a Bronze Star for his service.

He also is a former director of the VA Illiana Health Care System, a position from which he retired in 2011 following 29 years of federal service.

Gwen Johnson, event organizer, commented that “The Black Emphasis Committee was very grateful that Michael E. Hamilton, who has a very honorable and prestigious background, accepted our invitation as guest speaker at our MLK program. His words were rich with history, and were both inspiring and uplifting. As both a Veteran and former medical center director, his message carried a lot of credibility to those in the audience.”

February is Black History Month

*At the Crossroads of Freedom and Equality:
The Emancipation Proclamation and the March on Washington*

Every year there’s a different theme for February’s celebration of Black History Month. This year focuses on two historic events, separated by a century of struggle: “At the Crossroads of Freedom and Equality: The Emancipation Proclamation and the March on Washington.”

This year’s theme addresses two events of huge importance in the struggle for equality and respect:

- In 1863, President Abraham Lincoln’s deeply controversial Emancipation Proclamation was enacted, freeing 3.1 million slaves in the United States.
- A full century later, 1963, marked a tipping-point in the civil rights movement: the March on Washington, an event that remains in living memory of many older Americans today.

Another historic American Black History milestone that occurred in 1963 was when James Hood and Vivian Malone were among the first black students to integrate the University of Alabama. On June 11, 1963, Hood, and his classmate Vivian Malone, were physically blocked from walking inside the school. Getting an education as the first black student at the University of Alabama had significant racial challenges for Hood. The students had been admitted that day to the University of Alabama despite



James Hood and Vivian Malone, 1963

attempts to deter them. One week later, President Kennedy introduced new civil rights legislation.

Hood served as deputy police chief in Detroit and was the chairman of the police science program at the Madison Area Technical College in Wisconsin.

Hood unfortunately passed away recently in his hometown of Gadsen, Alabama.

Roudebush Employees Honored for Being Big Brothers/Sisters

In celebration of National Mentoring Month, Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) of Central Indiana recognized 25 corporate partners from across Central Indiana for their commitment to youth mentoring in 2012. Among those elite 25 is the Roudebush VA Medical Center.

Each company was acknowledged for creating work environments that encourage employees to dedicate 4-6 hours a month for an entire year to mentor youth, whether on company time or on employees' time.

"It says a lot about these companies that their employees give back to the community in such a meaningful way," said Darcey Palmer-Shultz, CEO, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Indiana. "Our mentors change kids' lives for the better, forever improving academic achievement, helping them avoid risky behaviors, and building their self-confidence and vision for their own positive futures. We're thrilled and grateful for the support of the Central Indiana corporate community."

"Being a Big Sister is such a worthwhile experience. By including my Little Sister in simple activities, she's become a part of my family. I've been able to see her grow and mature and it makes me so proud of her," claimed Erica Evans who is a research student-trainee here at the medical center. "My favorite moment happened when we made Christmas ornaments last year; she wrote on the ornament 'I can be myself around you,' and that was the best Christmas present I could have received."



Medical Center Director Tom Mattice supports employee participation in the local chapter of Big Brothers Big Sisters by helping recognize two of our "Bigs," Erica Evans (left) and Amethyst Green. Also pictured is Todd Ryden who is the board chairman of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Indiana. Other medical center employees participating in the program but not pictured are Jerri Green, Chijoke Kalu and Ashley Rager.

Similar thoughts were voiced by Amethyst Green, a program assistant here. "Big Brothers Big Sisters is an extraordinary organization and I am honored to be a Big Sister. I joined to make a difference in a child's life but my Little Sister, her family, and the staff of BBBS have made a bigger difference in mine through their kindness and warmth."

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Indiana is committed to recruiting more corporate partners and youth mentors. Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Indiana currently has a list of "Littles" waiting to be matched with a mentor. The majority on the waiting list are boys. If you are interested in

becoming a Big Brother, Big Sister or Big Couple, or if your company is interested in partnering, please contact Laura Halt at lhalt@bbbsci.org or (317) 472-3730.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Indiana is a non-profit organization that provides children facing adversity with strong and enduring, professional supported 1-to-1 relationships that change their lives for the better, forever. An affiliate of Big Brothers Big Sisters of America and a United Way partner, BBBSCI has been creating and supporting mentoring relationships in central Indiana for over 40 years. Visit www.bebigforkids.org for more information.

Roudebush VA Medical Center is partnering with the Indiana Blood Center to help reach Indiana hospital needs of 191,163 donors in 2013!

Roudebush VA Medical Center's goal is 100 donors for this year's six blood drives.

You can help in February!

VA Medical Center's Blood Drive

Friday, February 15

9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

C-1202

Heart Month - February

Be Heart Smart!

Heart Disease - the #1 cause of death for women in the United States

Here are some tips to help you make a difference today!

- **Get more exercise:**
 - o Take the stairs instead of the elevator.
 - o Park farther away and walk briskly into work or to the grocery store.
 - o At your home computer, adopt a 50:10 policy; stand after every 50 minutes of computing and take a 10-minute stretch/walk break.
- **Eat right:**
 - o Eat at least 4-5 cups of vegetables and fruits a day.
 - o Reduce your sodium intake by using more herbs and spices.
 - o Calcium isn't just for your bones! Include more low fat dairy products.
- **Manage Stress:**
 - o Sleep better by practicing a healthy sleep routine (see link below for more details).
 - o Learn to say "No" to extra responsibilities that may pile up and make you feel anxious.
 - o Practice deep-breathing often throughout the day.

You only get one heart, so take good care of it!



For more information, check out these Websites:

http://www.psychologytools.org/assets/files/Worksheets/Guidelines_For_Better_Sleep.pdf

<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/tutorials/managingstress/htm/index.htm>

www.heart.org

W2s Available

All 2012 employee W2s have been mailed to the address provided in their MyPay record. If your employee address has changed, your MyPay record should be updated. If you do not receive your W2, or wish to get a copy immediately, MyPay can provide a reprint at the employee's convenience. In addition, employees making changes or printing information from MyPay should also make sure you have your LES (Leave & Earnings Statement) forwarded to you electronically. To make sure your LES is mailed electronically, after you log into the DFAS MyPay site (<https://mypay.dfas.mil/mypay.aspx>), in the opening box select the second line listed "Turn on/off Hard Copy of LES", and when the next screen opens, just click the YES button to receive your LES electronically.

Indy VA Goes Pink for the Cure



On behalf of the Nursing Retention and Recruitment Committee, all employees are invited to join the Indy VA Goes Pink team for the Race for the Cure.

This race helps raise funds and awareness for breast cancer research. The race is Saturday, April 20 in Indianapolis. The link below will take you to the registration site where you can join our Indy VA Goes Pink team. The cost is \$28 to register. To do so, click here. Or cut and paste the following into your address bar: http://indy.info/komen.org/site/TR/RacefortheCure/IND_CentralIndianaAffiliate?fr_id=2750&pg=entry.

In addition to joining the "Indy VA Goes Pink" team, you can show your support to our Veterans fighting breast cancer by purchasing a baseball cap for a nominal contribution of just \$20. All proceeds go to the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure, which takes place April 20.

The caps can be purchased by contacting Jacque Brumley on 8North. The cap must be paid for at the time the order is made. The final order will be placed on March 15 with delivery of the hats mid-April, prior to the April 20 Race. You can buy a hat even if you don't wish to participate in the Race on April 20. Show your support and join us!

Veterans' Voices

Letters & emails from our Veteran patients and their families
The following was recently received by a friend of a medical center patient.

The below letter to the editor appeared in the Jan/Feb issue of the Disabled American Veterans magazine and is reprinted with the magazine's permission.

Above & Beyond

"I just want to thank the Roudebush VA Medical Center in Indianapolis for its services and staff. I also would like to thank my Gold Team doctor for saving my life. I have never had a doctor like him who came to my room on his lunch break to see me and give me support. I am moving to Boston and only hope I find another doctor like him."

James Carter, Indianapolis, Ind.

Welcome New Employees

Alexander, Tammy	Klasnick, Sheryl
Bowling, Sarah	Oliver, Marcus
Corum, Christine	Ouellette, Gary
Cunningham, Ebony	Parker, Susan
Edwards, Lisa	Parrish, Monte
Fahner, Stephanie	Readus, Marcus
Fecher, Alison	Schmidt, Simeon
Fitzgerald, Rhonda	Schnur, Kristoffer
Hamby-Jones, Ashley	Simons, Clark
Hayward, Thomas	Streib, Erik
Holbrook, Tonya	Willington, Miranda
Jones, Rachel	

INDY INSIGHT is a monthly newsletter for employees, volunteers, patients and friends of Richard L. Roudebush VA Medical Center. It is produced by the Office of Communications and Medical Media. Richard L. Roudebush VA Medical Center is not responsible for the content or accuracy of third party posting, nor assumes any legal obligation or liability associated with such posting. Views expressed do not necessarily reflect the official policy of the medical center. While INDY INSIGHT encourages submissions for future editions, we cannot guarantee publication, and reserve the right to edit all copy so it conforms to editorial policy and guidelines. Send announcements and information via e-mail to INDPR@va.gov. INDY INSIGHT is posted at <http://go.va.gov/ge3x>.

INDY EXCELLENCE STANDARD OF THE MONTH

FEBRUARY

Commitment to Co-Workers: Teamwork

We are linked to one another by a common purpose: serving our Veterans and our community. This commitment must be reflected in our respect for each other.



Everyone wants a great work environment and one way to do this is by being committed to your co-workers. Your co-workers depend on you to come to work healthy and as scheduled; have a positive attitude; pitch in to improve things every day; and complete assignments, timely. Commitment to these principles makes job #1, serving our Veterans, better for everyone.

Roudebush VA Medical Center Social Media

 www.facebook.com/VAIndianapolis
 www.twitter.com/VAIndianapolis
 www.indianapolis.va.gov