Boise VA Medical Center staff, and veterans Dr. Jean Anderson and Erin Martin were both featured in a Veterans Day story the Idaho Statesman published. The story focused on the service of women veterans in our community, and we were proud to have each of them featured. Thank you both for your service!

Halloween Costume Contest WINNERS

MOST CREATIVE
Dr. Alan Hines

FUNNIEST
Maritza Lorenzana

Halloween Costume Contest WINNERS
Halloween Costume Contest WINNERS

BEST GROUP
Education Dept.
The Boise VAMC would like to welcome our new employees who came aboard:

Craig Wood/HAS
Joseph Gallegos /HAS
Jose Lamas/HAS
Jerusha Balbas /HAS
Sandra Caveney, /Nursing
Chelsie Ashman/ Nursing
Evelyn Vitagliano / Nursing
Mandie Phillips/ Nursing
Bobo, Benjamin/Pharmacy
Christina Herrera /Telehealth
Angel Aguilera/EMS
Anthony Duchai/EMS

Aaron Alvarado/HAS
John Greene/MIS
Magni Hamso/MSO
Bretta Perry/Nursing
Sarah Forney/Nursing
Jennifer Tobin /Nursing
Colleen Dibble /Dietitian
Todd Rydalch /Nutrition and Food
Monty Wynn / Nutrition and Food
Sherena Boyer/Telehealth
Linda Olson / Nutrition and Food
The Boise VAMC would like to say goodbye to the employees who left us:

James Waters, EMS
Adam Kipp, MSO
Christopher Sours, Surgery
Kamerin Engstrom, Nursing
Vicki Wallace, Pharmacy
Thomas LeMaster, Logistics
Selah Worley, Nursing
Esther Dennis, HAS
Travis Masmeyer, EMS
Retail Extended Holiday Hours!

Starting Saturday November 18th, the retail store will open from 7AM until 1PM!

Come see us for ALL your snacks, drinks & holiday gift giving needs!
Employee Engagement – Wave 2 Sprints and follow-up on other ideas

Boise’s Employee Engagement Pilot Program is moving strong into its second Wave. Criteria were established to ensure appropriate Sprint project selection beginning with the second wave. Selection criteria include:

1. Project does not conflict with any accreditation or other regulatory requirements, or VA/VHA rules or policies.
2. Project can be completed within 12 weeks or less.
3. Cost of project is under $500.
4. If minor construction is needed, it will require 8 hours or less to complete.
5. Sprint projects should not involve a request for furniture or equipment. These types of requests must be submitted through our standard equipment/furniture approval process, which are typically handled by the Service Chief. Please feel free to submit this type of idea to your Service Chief.

Working hard to be the “BEST PLACE TO WORK”
Because the national support will be moving to other locations, and Boise will begin managing projects without their support – it was decided that we would select 4 projects to support during Wave 2. All ideas that had been submitted between June 1 and Oct. 1, including those that had not been selected during Wave 1, were considered for Wave 2 Sprint projects. The following Sprints were selected by the Board of Champions and vetted through the Tetrad.

Pharmacy phone triage to assist nurses with medication/ pharmacy concerns
Brandon Griffith (Leader), Kathleen O’Dell, Jeanette McMillan, Kalei Sandercock

Clinics and specialties contact information
Terrence Booker (Leader), Jennifer James, Amber Turba, Erlinda Villegas

Twin Falls new patient orientation packet
Karen Jennings (Leader), Jana Juker

Annual Veteran Release of Information
Buffy Stewart (Leader), Lori Akers

Team members that were available participated in the Oct. 26 Employee Engagement event, receiving initial Just-In-Time training and started work on their project charters. They were provided support by their Board of Champions representative; Lori Prantner, the national Point of Contact assigned to Boise; and Renee Johnson, who will act as their mentor.

Renee is also working to follow-up on all the other ideas that have been submitted for Wave 1 and Wave 2, but that not selected as a Sprint project. Some of the ideas are “just-do-its” that are forwarded on to other individuals or committees for their consideration. Ideas that are not so simple to implement are also forwarded to appropriate points of contact for consideration and response. Because Boise’s employees submitted so many ideas it will take Renee well into Jan of 2018 to follow-up on all previously submitted ideas. However, some of the ideas submitted in June did not have a name associated with the idea, so no follow-up is possible. If you submitted an idea and have not received a response from Renee, please send an e-mail to BOIEmployeeEngagementideas@va.gov. She will follow-up with you as her time permits.
Beth Pierce and Jana Iverson drove ‘Rosie’ and represented us well in the Boise Veterans Day Parade!
FIGHT FLU
OUR TURN TO
PROTECT +
DEFEND

New! VHA Directive 1192 requires all health care personnel to participate in the seasonal influenza prevention program.

- Get a flu shot or wear a mask
- Submit the Health Care Personnel Vaccination Form (Appendix B) to Employee Occupational Health by Nov. 30 if you receive the shot outside VA or decline vaccination.
On Thursday, November 16th a local Marine veteran and his family were presented with a new car by the Recycled Rides Program, in conjunction with Larry H. Miller auto dealership and GEICO insurance. Recycled Rides is a program that brings together insurers, collision repair experts, auto dealerships and parts vendors to refurbish and donate vehicles to deserving individuals in the community.

Chauncey Harris and his family were chosen as recipients of this award after being selected from several other nominees. He and his family of 6 were recently homeless for over a year. Thankfully through the help of the Healthcare for Homeless Veterans Program, his family has been able to secure housing, however, Chauncey and his family have been without transportation for some time. Currently, when the children become ill at school, they stay in the office for the rest of the day. It has been a struggle to get to doctor’s appointments, teachers conferences, school activities, birthday parties, and even VA appointments on time. During the winter months it has been epically difficult depending on what the weather brings that day. Traveling by foot with 5 small children has been a huge challenge for this family.

Chauncey began his military career December of 2005 in the Marine Corps. He was stationed for over 3 years at camp Pendleton as a diesel mechanic. Chauncey injured his right shoulder serving our country. Unfortunately physical therapy would not be enough for him to stay in the military. He was honorably discharged due to his injury. He is on his way to completing his GED this year and on task to start college this January and is excited of the new opportunities his education will provide.
I am nominating both Alyssa Asdell and Margaret Bareither. Both volunteered to be VS GUI super users and were responsible for training most users of the application at our facility. I attended one of their VS GUI training classes and was impressed with their “Can-do” attitude, professionalism, and teaching ability. At times during training sessions, there was resistance to the new software, but Margaret and Alyssa kept focused on the product’s positive attributes without letting the class get sidetracked.

Their support of the VS GUI did not stop once the classes ended. Both have helped users with questions and defect issues since use of the program has become used by all schedulers. I appreciate their expertise in the VS GUI and willingness to answer questions and help users understand the VS GUI better.
Dr. Weiland and Jana Iverson presented a photo of the Women’s Clinic staff in their ‘Wonder Woman’ scrubs to the Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 1025 on 11/7/17 as a thank you for their generous donations.
Allicia has done a remarkable job since she has taken over administrative duties for the Suicide Prevention Program. She has reorganized and created many excel and word documents to replace our old way of doing business. These changes have resulted in better access and efficiency in reviewing and evaluating our High Risk Veteran's and providers compliance with the High Risk List Protocol. She has gone above and beyond to help me with any matter related to suicide prevention, including assistance with monitoring HR veterans appointment attendance, if they have the required Suicide Safety Plans, mailing books to survivors of suicides, materials all over the state for outreach, she recently spend many hours during Suicide Prevention Week staffing the outreach table and her approach and genuine interest in helping veterans was infectious. Allicia has volunteered to staff suicide prevention tables at community events on the weekends. Her regular duties are always done before the deadline and her work is exceptional!
LEAD Program

Congratulations to the following individuals for their selection to participate in the 2018 Boise LEAD: Leadership Fundamentals program:

Asdell, Alyssa  Medical Support Assistant
Bareither, Margaret  Medical Support Assistant
Hall, Christina F.  Diagnostic Radiology Technician, Ultrasound
Helland, Kelly  MSA Supervisor, CBOC’s & Mental Health
Johnson, Teresa  Health Technician, Ophthalmology
King, Jason  Purchasing Agent
Marconi, Lisa  Home Based Primary Care Program Manager
Morris, George  RNOD
Taylor, Wendy  Inpatient Psychiatric Social Worker
Thompson, Julie  Program Support Assistant
Turba, Amber  Advanced Medical Support Assistant
Willard, Allen  Community Employment Coordinator (CEC)
Willhite, Brandi  Registered Nurse
Wingo, Travis  Clinical Nurse Educator

The course officially kicks off in January, but the participants have a lot of work to do between now and then just to get ready.

In the coming weeks, they will submit information to the National Center for Organizational Development (NCOD) that will initiate the process to have a 360 Degree Assessment completed by their peers and supervisors (several of the participants will actually complete a 360 degree assessment that involves their direct reports also). In early December, they will complete a “DiSC” self-assessment of their leadership styles. This assessment identifies leadership traits they tend to use when pressed into stressful situations. When combined, the results of the 360 Degree and DiSC assessments help to give the participants a much better understanding of their current leadership style preferences. This creates a starting point from which the participants will base their leadership development for the duration of the program and beyond.

In a few weeks they will meet with their mentors and begin working on that relationship. The mentor/mentee relationship component of LEAD is a crucial piece to the success of the program. The mentor helps to make sense of much of the course and put it all into perspective. The mentor will also serve as a sounding board for career guidance and professional development.

The actual classroom sessions will start in early January and continue through the end of June. Classroom topics will include System Redesign, LEAN Process Improvement techniques, Project Management, Leadership Foundations, Time Management, Presentations, Work/Life Balance, Conflict Management, Writing, Space Allocations, Fiscal, Performance Measures, Oversight, and much, much more.

If you see these folks, please congratulate them and wish them well in their leadership development.

Look for more LEAD program updates in the coming months!
Continuous Bladder Infusions require multiple IV bags per case. Without a recycling container readily available, these bags were being disposed of in the trash. Jeremy Jhimle, one of 2M/S staff who administers these infusions, requested that a recycling container be attached to the IV supply cart to make recycling easier. This solution worked very well. We have been recycling these IV bags for 6 months now. It is estimated that over 1500 IV bags that would have gone to the landfill are now being recycled.
The Surprising Power of Gratitude: Strategies for Promoting Service Members’ Psychological Health Through Thankfulness

By Alexandra Kelly, Ph.D.

“Gratitude is not only the greatest of the virtues,” wrote the Roman statesman Cicero, “but the parent of all of the others.” Indeed, the qualities of thankfulness and appreciation are well-established spiritual and social values. In recent years, however, gratitude has also emerged as a focus of intervention in medical and mental health treatment.

Researchers in the area of positive psychology – the study of factors that lead to human flourishing and fulfillment – have found that cultivating gratitude in one’s day-to-day life is associated with a number of physical and mental health benefits. Making an effort to tune into and express gratitude has been found to improve sleep quality, reduce stress, mitigate depression symptoms, support coping with chronic pain, and enhance subjective well-being and self-rated health.

Interventions that promote gratitude may have particular relevance for service members. Military life is often stressful, and can require considerable hardship and sacrifice. Purposeful efforts to acknowledge the good things in one’s life may serve as a protective factor against mental health impacts of unavoidable life and military stressors. While there is limited research into the influence of gratitude on active-duty service members, studies focusing on military veterans support this notion. For example, a recent national study found that among military veterans with high levels of lifetime trauma exposure, dispositional gratitude was one of several factors associated with resilience to symptoms of post-traumatic stress, depression, and anxiety.
Providers who want to incorporate gratitude into treatment might start with one of these interventions:

**Gratitude Journaling:** This is the practice of recording day-to-day events, interactions, and experiences for which one is grateful – typically on a daily or weekly basis. This writing exercise can encompass happenings from the present day, as well as past events that the service member may not have appreciated fully in the moment. You might encourage service members to reflect on positive personal developments, such as encouraging words from a commander or assignment to one’s first-choice duty station, as well as larger national or world events, like new legislation that benefits veterans (or other causes or communities to which the service member feels connected). The key is for service members to journal regularly to support the development of a gratitude practice, with effects that build over time as gratitude becomes a positive habit (link is external).

**Gratitude Letter Writing:** This intervention emphasizes the expression of gratitude to someone who has had a positive influence on the service member. The service member might select someone who is currently an important source of support, like a spouse or senior enlisted leader, or someone from the past who might not be aware of their impact on the service member, like a former teacher or coach. You might then encourage the service member to write a brief letter (a page or less, 15-30 minutes is typical) explaining in detail why they are grateful to the recipient, how the person’s actions affected them, and how often they think about the recipient and their actions. Gratitude letter writing can be done as a one-time activity, or as a letter-writing campaign to multiple recipients; again, research suggests that additional letters yield an incremental benefit (link is external).

**Stop-Look-Go:** This gratitude-inflected mindfulness exercise may be a good option for service members who are open to gratitude activities but aren’t keen on writing. This activity calls on the participant to: Stop whatever you are doing and become aware of your surroundings and the present moment, Look at what life is offering you right now (What can I be grateful for in this moment? What opportunity is life presenting me?), and then Go do something with it, whether it’s simply enjoying the moment or – when life is challenging – embracing the opportunity to learn or grow from those circumstances. Of course, simply remembering to be mindful is half the battle, so it may also be helpful to encourage service members to create reminders (or “stop signs”) to practice this technique one to two times per day, perhaps by setting a phone alarm or placing a sticker next to a mirror or light switch.

Each of the above exercises can be completed in session, assigned as homework between appointments, or simply recommended to service members who you’re seeing for a one-time visit.

Thinking about trying some of these strategies yourself? You might reap some professional as well as personal benefit: health care providers who maintain a gratitude practice have been found to experience reduced stress and burnout related to their work.
More than 100 family, friends and other supporters of veterans met in Mountain Cove gymnasium to remember their loved ones during the Boise VAMC’s annual Veterans Day memorial service.

Hosted by Voluntary and Chaplain Service, and supported by community volunteers and VA employees, the service honored the 76 veterans who died in the medical center during the past 12 months.

The program featured a roll call of the deceased, read by members of the Daughters of the American Revolution. Family members and friends rose to their feet upon hearing the name of their loved ones. Afterwards, many shared stories about their veterans and expressed gratitude to medical center staff for the care they provided.

Featured speaker Chaplain Dave Tish reflected on the significance of how the American flag is folded at a veteran’s funeral. Each of the 13 folds carries a special meaning, said Tish, who provides spiritual care to vets at the medical center.

In welcoming remarks, Boise VA associate director Nate Stewart noted several qualities of America’s veterans: “Their bravery, resourcefulness and patriotism mark them as our finest citizens: Americans who stepped out of the crowd and swore an oath to support and defend the Constitution and laws of the United States of America against all enemies,” he said.

The program also included music by Common Ground Community Chorus and a piper from the Boise Highlanders bagpipe band. At the beginning and end of the service, the Colors were posted and retrieved by Boy Scout Troop 49, sponsored by Whitney United Methodist Church.

- Chaplain David Reid
Congratulations to the Knights of Columbus, Volunteer Organization of The Month! Mentioned here are some of the ways the knights make a difference in the lives of the Veteran patients as they volunteer in the Community Living Center. With Bingo once a month comes delectable refreshments, cash prizes and other gifts. For the knights it is an afternoon of visiting Veterans in need. They look out for those patients who are far from home and have few if any visitors. A visit may include taking the Veteran to the Canteen in their wheel chair, or maybe an outing around the grounds. Other games besides Bingo are brought in to play for the patient’s pleasure. Some Knights transport patients to and from physical therapy and other hospital appointments via wheel chair or gurney. While visiting patients, they provide care and support by being a good listener and providing a sympathetic ear, and pray with them if the patient requests it. Knights of Columbus supports the annual inpatients’ Christmas gifts and cards, parties, caroling, All Veterans Welcome Home, Arts & Crafts Kits for one-on-one, Outdoor Recreation, Ice Cream Social, Patient Carnival, and the VA National Golden Age Games. The Knights volunteer at the Idaho State Veterans Home as well as other volunteer commitments in the community. Thank you, Knights of Columbus, for your dedication, devotion, and love shown to our Veteran patients.

The photo from left – right is Mike, Pat, Jack, Chuck, Jim, Keith, Ed, Harry, Ron, Rob and Randy
ADORABLE PET CONTEST

The winner of the adorable pet contest is:

BRIAN LAMBRECHT and his pooch SADIE ROSE

the rest of us didn't even come close in votes.

As promised, Brian is entitled to any and all bragging rights associated with being number one. Please do not forget to congratulate him and put with any gloating on his part. Thanks for playing!