



HUDSON VALLEY VIEW

A newsletter for and by employees
of the VA Hudson Valley Health Care System **VOLUME III**

Diamonds are Forever...

by Gerald F. Culliton, Director

Hudson Valley consistently scores very well in quality and patient satisfaction. We have set the bar high and we need to keep up the pace because the race is ever-changing.

Every veteran who uses our two hospitals and seven clinics is like a precious diamond. It goes without saying that we need to treat veterans with the greatest care. However like a valuable diamond that we would never want to lose – we must also ensure that those veterans who use the VA or come to us for the very first time have a desire to keep right on using us for their care.

If you lost a valuable diamond you'd be heartsick – and that is the same attitude I am asking you to adopt about the veterans who currently use VA or who come to us for the first time. We should passionately want to serve them in a way that keeps them satisfied with their decision to use VA.

If a veteran decides to stop using the VA or not bother with the VA at all because he or she was treated poorly, had to wait too long, was talked to rudely, couldn't find a parking space etc... then it is like we have lost a precious jewel.

We are seeing fewer veterans this year than we saw last year – and fewer last year than the year before. The demographic planners said this would happen – but it is happening faster here in the Northeast and continuing losses over time will significantly change our future.

We continue to focus on outreach and education to new veterans but those who are currently our patients have already made the decision to get all or part of their care at VA – and our job is to ensure they are delighted with their care and stay with VA.

Every interaction with a veteran is crucial to ensure this level of satisfaction. Veterans want what we want from our health care providers – quality, accessibility, convenience, a modern comfortable environment, a kind face and a friendly voice. It begins with the employee who answers the phone or works at the front desk and proceeds right through to all the staff that works with or cares for patients.

Let's not lose any of these precious diamonds – we simply cannot afford the loss.



Daniel Mata, is the new **Energy Manager**. The Energy Manager is a mandated position to look for ways to reduce energy consumption and encourages the use of renewable sources of energy such as: solar energy, wind energy, and others. Currently our facility is researching projects involving solar energy at Montrose

to supply clean energy for our electric vehicles and a Vertical Wind Turbine on Bldg. 15E at Castle Point to reduce power consumption. The federal stimulus funds will help us in reducing energy consumption. The area where the greatest energy savings can be realized is in conserving the electricity and other utilities we currently use. Daniel needs the assistance of all employees to spot and address areas where energy is wasted. There are several projects planned over the next 3 to 5 years to address this effort. Together we are working towards accomplishing the VISN wide and VHA energy goals.

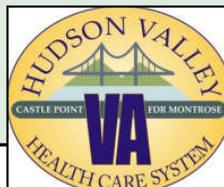
KISSING BOOTH...On March 4th the Nutrition staff at CP took advantage of the old fashioned "Kissing Booth" concept to promote Nutrition Education. Over



150 veterans, patients, visitors, volunteers and employees stopped by for a "free Dark chocolate Hershey's kiss" as well as written information on food sources of and the benefits of eating foods high

in anti-oxidants. Participants also were also treated to a locally grown delicious apple; dietitians encouraged... "an apple a day...as well as the benefits of "buying local." A good time was had by all!

WELCOME



SPRING!

VA Hudson Valley Celebrates Black History Month



Black History Month was celebrated at both campuses during the month of February.

The ceremony at the Montrose campus featured keynote speaker Retired Staff Sergeant Sanders Matthews, a veteran and an original Buffalo Soldier of WWII (*top left photo*). Lillie Foreman (*pictured above*) gave a brilliant rendition of Etta James' "At Last". Additional musical entertainment was provided by Arthur Blake and Brothers in Recovery.



The keynote speaker at the Castle Point campus was Reverend Dr. Tony Hart of the Beulah Baptist Church. This ceremony featured dance and vocal performances by Olivia Brown, the Brothers of Gideon, Da Chosen Ones (*pictured below*) and Evangelist Lynn-Dale McRimmon who touched the soul of the audience when she sang "I'll Take You There".



There was a Display of African American History in Montrose while Castle Point displayed historical storyboards, handed out quizzes and held a Soul Train Board game. Congratulations to the planning committees of both campuses for a job well done.





Staying Fit—Employee Wellness Program

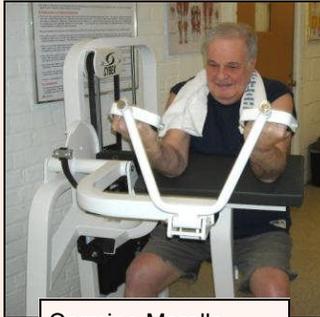
Many of us make New Year's resolutions to get in better shape and take control of our weight. Exercise slows the loss of muscle strength, maintains better heart and respiratory function, increase bone mass, and limits the risk of diabetes. When you're fit you feel better about yourself and this translates to a number of countless of optimistic changes in your life.

Here are some of our fellow employees utilizing the Fitness Centers at Montrose and Castle Point. The centers are open for the employees Monday through Friday, at 6:30 am to 8 am, 11:30 am to 12:30 pm and 4:30 pm to 6:30 pm, except for Holidays and Weekends.

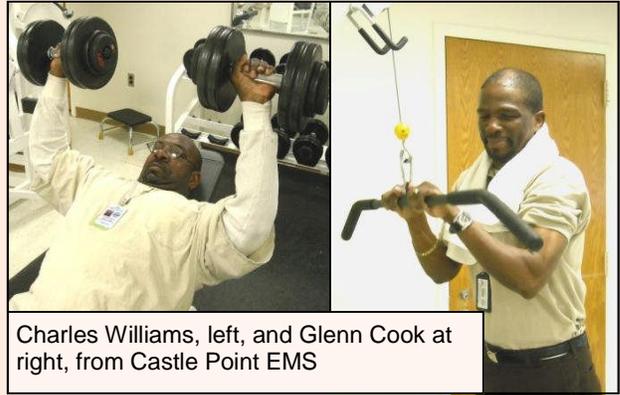
How are you doing with your exercise regime?



Karen Smith, left, and Rosa Cheung, right, from Castle Point Pharmacy



Carmine Marallo, Montrose HAS



Charles Williams, left, and Glenn Cook at right, from Castle Point EMS

CONGRATULATIONS TO...

...the following physicians who are Board Certified in Hospice and Palliative Care:

VINEESH BHATNAGAR, MD (GEC), SUPRIYO DAS, MD (B-1), RAKESH MEHTA, MD (Oncology) and ANNA PLICHTA, MD (B-2)

...the following Nurses and Nurse Practitioner who are Board Certified in Hospice and Palliative Care Nursing:

JEANE BETTI, RN CHPN (B-2), SANDRA DUMENG, RN CHPN (B-2) and JOBY DAVID, ANP, ACHPN (Palliative Care Coordinator)

The HVHCS Palliative Care Program— recognized as an exemplary provider of palliative care services to Veterans. The After Death Bereavement Survey indicates a 93% overall satisfaction rate for care as reported by family members. The Hudson Valley Palliative Care Program continues to strive for excellence and to provide outstanding end-of-life care to our Veterans.

** Congratulations to Hudson valley and to all of the staff certified in Hospice and Palliative Care. You truly have an exemplary program!*

~Carol Luhs, MD



ADDITIONAL ACCOLADES TO...

TERRY VOGT—Newly Certified Healthcare Environmental Service Professional

ROBIN FENNELL, RDH, Dental Hygienist—Recently NYS certified in administration of local anesthesia and nitrous oxide analgesia

FRANCEY OLAVARRIA, RDH, BS, Dental Hygienist—graduated with BS from Bridgeport University

DUANE S. CROWTHER, DMD, Staff Dentist—recognized in November 2008 by Hudson Valley Magazine as one of the top dentists in the Hudson Valley, specializing in prosthodontics, based on a written survey of dentists conducted by the magazine.

2009 CHAMPIONS CHALLENGE



NYS Senator Vincent Liebel with Mr. Culliton, Director and Nancy Winter, Public Affairs Officer.

The Director met with NYS Senator Liebel in his Brewster office to update the Senator on VA Hudson Valley.



Montrose and Castle Point signing in & getting ready for this year's challenge!

Picture Left: Arthur Head, Pamela Barrett, Alan Ellis, Jason Orlowski, Heather Scarpelli and Lori Lawton

Picture Right: Jo Ann Schields, Christine Cutler, Juliana Laurenzi and Sharon Thomas



2009 Service Pins Second Quarter

Joseph J.	Schell	Engineering	35 years
Marc J.	Rosoff	Engineering	30 years
Laura	Van Dorn	Fiscal	25 years
Mary M.	Wieland	Ancillary	25 years
Linda I.	Dahowski	Nursing	20 years
Nydia-Febus	Rodriguez	Nursing	20 years
Carmine	Marallo	HAS	20 years
James	McGougain	HAS	20 years
Sandra J.	McBride	HAS	15 years
Dasdy	Jones	HAS	10 years
Linda R.	Spencer	Hospital	10 years

George	Aftweicz	Engineering	40 years
Clarence	Brown	Fiscal	40 years
Patrick	Brosnan	HAS	35 years
Linda	Spadaro	Nursing	30 years
Linda	Berionato	HAS	25 years
Joseph	Walters	N&FS	25 years
Sue	Antonio	HRMS	20 years
Mary Anne	Hausch	Nursing	20 years
Brigitte	Luceri	HAS	20 years
Jeffrey	Morrison	N&FS	20 years
Karen	Ortiz	Nursing	20 years
Raphael	Swift	Ancillary	20 years
Laura	Williams	HAS	20 years
Lori	Lawton	Hospital	15 years
David	George	Ambulatory	10 years
Taylor	Hallman	G&EL	10 years
Ernest	Powell, Jr.	Engineering	10 years
Craig	Smith	EMS	10 years

Retirement Tip: *Set a Goal*

"I think I can save a piece of my paycheck." It's easy to procrastinate so set up a "painless" payroll deduction for saving. It doesn't matter if the money goes into a 401(k) plan, an IRA or into a plain, old-fashioned savings account, just start saving. You can start with a small amount and increase it whenever your circumstances allow - like when you get a raise, your car payments end or you get a bonus.

EDITORIAL BOARD

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