Captain James A. Lovell Federal Health Care Center

The APOLLO

Readying Warriors and Caring for Heroes

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FHCC, Veterans Court help Vets chart new path

Lake County, Ill. Veterans Treatment Assistance Court (VTAC) graduates third class with help of Lovell FHCC

By Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Darren M. Moore
Lovell FHCC Public Affairs

The 19th Judicial Circuit of Lake County, Ill., Veterans Treatment Assistance Court (VTAC) program graduated three enrollees at a ceremony in February, with assistance from the Lovell Federal Health Care Center (FHCC).

Navy Master-at-Arms 1st Class Cisco Rivera, Army Veteran Mullen Buries and Navy Veteran Stefon Pawlowski graduated in front of family, friends and many local dignitaries at the Lake County Courthouse after successfully meeting a strict schedule of conditions. Conditions include completing treatment and meeting regularly with mentors and probation officers.

Lake County Court officials partnered with Lovell FHCC, Veterans Service Organizations and other community groups to start VTAC in 2011, with the intent of never leaving a Veteran behind, much like the code on the battlefield. VTAC provides an opportunity for "justice-involved" Active Duty military members and Veterans to address their needs through treatment interventions, instead of incarceration.

"Our program is a collaborative effort that gives those who have served their country honorably the second chance and the help that they very much deserve," said 19th Judicial Circuit Chief Judge John Phillips, who has presided over VTAC since its inception. "It is energizing for all of us on the Veterans Court team to be a part of this project."

Licensed Clinical Social Worker Jessica Pinder, Lovell FHCC Veterans justice outreach specialist, said the relationship between the Lake County Court and Lovell FHCC – the nation's first federal health care center integrating Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Department of Defense health care – provides a unique opportunity for enrollees.

"(They get to) participate in treatment for mental health, addictions, and/or physical health, in an environment that is supportive, while following court requirements," Pinder said. "With the VA and the county courts working together, it provides a lot more support than if they were working independently of one another."

Pinder works with all VTAC program enrollees who are eligible for VA benefits.

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Army Veteran Mullen Buries speaks at his graduation from Veterans Treatment Assistance Court. The program, with the help of Lovell FHCC, assists justice-involved Veterans with treatment and mentoring. (Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Darren M. Moore)

FHCC Breast Clinic staff offer services, support and comfort

Clinic Coordinator Kathy Masella praised for her care

By Stephanie McCrobie
Lovell FHCC Public Affairs

According to Aviation Structural Mechanic 2nd Class Victoria Baranowski, "Kathy Masella is the best."

Baranowski, a staff member and patient at Lovell Federal Health Care Center, speaks very highly about the care she received at Lovell FHCC's breast clinic, where Masella serves as the breast clinic coordinator.

Baranowski, a breast cancer survivor, said that Masella "did everything for me. From counseling me on procedures, offering me advice, recommending doctors and answering questions from me and my family, she did so much."

Baranowski is just one patient of many who have appreciated Masella's knowledge and comfort during a traumatic time in their lives.

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Dr. Jared Bernard, a surgeon at Lovell Federal Health Care Center, and Kathy Masella, breast clinic coordinator, meet with a patient at the clinic. Masella has received many compliments for her caring, compassionate care of cancer patients during very stressful times in their lives. (Photo by Stephanie McCrobie)

TRICARE Walk-In Center Closing

Starting April 1st

the walk-in center for TRICARE will be closed.

TRICARE beneficiaries can visit: www.tricare.mil OR call 1-877-TRICARE

Leadership Commentary

Lovell FHCC is a beacon for federal health care in the nation

'I want to recognize all of you for your unique and crucial roles in making history ... you made it possible'

By Patrick L. Sullivan
Lovell FHCC Director

This is my last Director's column before I retire, and I want to say THANK YOU!

Thank you to our staff and volunteers for providing patient care and support to patient care that is second to none. When we serve our patients, it is from the heart and with a connection to our mission that exists in very few organizations. Thank you to our patients for your loyalty and always supporting us and for telling us how we can improve.

I also want to recognize all of our staff and volunteers for your unique and crucial roles in making history. You made the successful creation of the nation's first federal health care center possible, and you did it while continuing to provide compassionate and expert care to our patients, day-in and day-out, despite the many, many changes and uncertainties we faced.

We can be a beacon, in the nation, for what is attainable in federal health care. Not a day goes by that someone, or some organization, outside the Lovell FHCC does not gain from our experience, and the hard-fought knowledge we acquired during this demonstration project between the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Defense.

We get repeated calls, receive visitors on a regular basis, and host countless meetings and events that highlight and educate others about our integration. And every time we are asked a question, everyone here is willing to share their insights and lessons-learned and to share our successes. I sincerely thank you all for your ongoing support for the Lovell FHCC and our patients.

I welcome my retirement and this next chapter in my career and in my life, and at the same time, I will greatly miss the people of the Lovell FHCC.

I know that whatever I do next, it will not replace the loss of being part of the Lovell FHCC, and of belonging to a group of people who are so passionate about providing health care for our nation's warriors and heroes and ensuring they get the patient-centered care they deserve.

Thank you all once again, for all your support and well wishes, and I wish you all continued success as you carry on the Lovell FHCC *promise kept* of "Readying Warriors and Caring for Heroes."

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>
> ***Patrick L. Sullivan***
> ***Director, Lovell FHCC***

Homeless Veterans Summit 2014 a success

Community groups, Lovell FHCC, county and state government collaborate to end homelessness

By Jayna Legg
Lovell FHCC Public Affairs

The Homeless Veterans Summit at Lovell Federal Health Care Center featured a well-attended resource fair. Here, on the left, Jameson Hild, case manager for Supportive Services for Veterans and Families, talks to Cristofer Mishler, from Thresholds. (Photo by Jayna Legg)

Navy Veteran Joseph Yadron, dressed smartly in a suit and tie, hesitantly approached the podium, looked out at the supportive crowd of more than 150 people in Bourke Hall at Lovell Federal Health Care Center, and began telling his compelling story of homelessness and recovery.

"I became homeless due to a long, long fight with un-medicated mental illness," he said. "I felt alone and on the brink of suicide."

If not for the extensive help he received from Lovell FHCC and its community partners and local homeless advocates, "I would have been dead in September of 2007," he said. "I am now a self-sustaining, clear-thinking individual living on my own … I thank everyone here."

After he shared his story, Yadron said, "so as the day moves on, we don't forget why we are here … we are here for the homeless Veterans who believe they can be more than what they are."

The audience of Veterans, Lovell FHCC employees, and representatives from dozens of community, county and state organizations and agencies dedicated to ending Veteran homelessness, enthusiastically applauded as Yadron thanked them, "from the bottom of my heart."

Lovell FHCC's annual Homeless Veterans Summit Feb. 26 served as a stage for collaboration to continue the effort to end homelessness among Veterans, a goal set by Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Secretary Eric Shinseki, with a deadline of the end of 2015.

"Lovell FHCC is committed to ending Veteran homelessness," said Navy Capt. José Acosta, deputy director and commanding officer of Lovell FHCC, in his opening remarks. "It's part of our core business here, helping Veterans … We've adopted the VA's 'no wrong door' policy."

"No wrong door" means that all Veterans seeking to prevent or exit homelessness must have easy access to programs and services. The afternoon's events included a panel discussion with Lovell FHCC representatives and other community advocates involved in helping homeless Veterans. A resource fair the last hour served to connect social workers, advocates, health care professionals, and others who provide services to Veterans, with each other - and with Veterans.

"This summit is a blessing," said Christopher LaFayette, a homeless advocate from Veterans Housing and Employment Assistance. "I see highly motivated servant-leaders uniting to share referrals and references to end Veteran homelessness."

For a more in-depth look at the summit, go to the Lovell FHCC website at http://www.lovell.fhcc.va.gov/features/index.asp.

The Apollo

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Mentorship key part of VTAC *(cont.)*

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From left, Master-at-Arms 1st Class Cisco Rivera, Mullen Buries and Stefon Pawlowski say the Pledge of Allegiance at graduation from the Veterans Treatment Assistance Court at the 19th Judicial Circuit of Lake County. Lovell FHCC partners with the county to offer VTAC, which helps Veterans in the court system. (Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Darren M. Moore)

"Once the Vet is referred to the Veterans court, I meet with them and do a full assessment, and we come up with a treatment plan for them by determining what their mental or physical health needs may be, and the court supports that treatment plan," Pinder said.

In order to graduate, enrollees must complete all the steps, such as performing community service, paying any court fees and attending treatment appointments. The court process ends when they graduate, but the treatment continues as needed, Pinder said.

Roxann Garza, 19th Judicial Circuit Division of Adult Probation Services probation officer and VTAC coordinator for Lake County, said the program accomplishes more than just helping Veterans get their lives back on track. In some cases, it also helps them address underlying issues.

When Veterans or service members begin the court process, Garza's office is notified and then informs Veterans of the VTAC option.

"It's extremely rewarding to see them graduate," said Garza, an Army Veteran. "I see them when they first join, and I am the one who is able to see the progress they make on a daily, weekly and monthly basis. Some of our Vets, when they begin the program, are addicted to drugs or alcohol and are somewhat resistant to change. So we provide them with the tools they need to succeed, structure and guidance every step of the way."

Garza said one of the aspects that makes the program successful is the Veterans constantly interact with probation and VA officials, treatment providers and the judges. Each Veteran is assigned a VTAC mentor, as well. "Our mentors are Veterans who volunteer their time to provide additional assistance and guidance for our Vets," Garza said.

The graduation included remarks from Judge Mark Levitt; Lovell FHCC Deputy Director and Commanding Officer Capt. José Acosta, Lovell FHCC Chief Medical Executive Dr. Tariq Hassan, Rush University Medical Center Department of Psychiatry Professor Dr. Mark Pollack, Garza and keynote speaker Bruce Johnson. Johnson is the chief executive officer of Nicasa and a retired Marine.

The graduates expressed their gratitude for the persistence and dedication of VTAC program staff to help them take positive steps forward in their lives. "They lift you up and let you know that you're better than what you did," Buries said.

Rivera said he was so thankful for the help he received that he hopes to become a mentor in the future, either within the program or to active duty and Veterans elsewhere.

"It gave me a second chance to continue my career," Rivera said. "If you're given an opportunity, you have to put in the work so you can succeed and move forward. Now that I have the experience, I can go and give help to others."

For information on VTAC, call Suzanne Willett at 847-377-3077 or Roxann Garza at 847-377-3644. For mentorship information, call Rudy Martin at 847-377-3964.

Clinic strives to offer advanced diagnosis, treatment *(cont.)*

Continued from page 1

"It's a really stressful time and you have a lot of different thoughts, but Kathy was so great; she really was a strong anchor for me," Baranowski said.

As the breast clinic coordinator, Masella works with female patients of the clinic, which offers care for a wide range of breast diseases and disorders. Patients, including Active Duty members, Veterans, military retirees and Department of Defense (DoD) beneficiaries, are offered a menu of services, from consultation to imaging, to outpatient surgical procedures and education.

"We are pleased to have state-of-the-art breast imaging available, including digital mammography and stereotactic biopsy capability," said Dr. Mary Barr, radiologist in the women's health clinic.

The clinic keeps busy with the services offered. Mammography technicians, Mary Howard and Debra Moroney-Clark, performed more than 2,500 mammograms and 40 biopsies last year. Next year, they hope to offer even more.

Barr noted that the clinic is also working to add more imaging and diagnostic services in the next year. "We constantly work to bring the latest, most advanced diagnostic and treatment services to our patients."

Offering the latest advances in diagnostic and treatment services, however, is only one part of what Breast Clinic staff offer.

According to Kathy Serbin, section chief of Lovell FHCC's women's health department, "The breast clinic coordinator's main goal is to serve as a consistent care coordinator, a support person and a facilitator of available community resources and a personal advocate. Our focus is to offer specialized care within a supportive environment, hopefully reassuring the patient and giving her peace of mind."

> *"Cancer changes your life. It was great to have such an awesome team to work with."*
>
> ***Aviation Structural Mechanic 2nd Class Victoria Baranowski, cancer survivor***

In her position, Masella is responsible for overseeing the patient's total care, from diagnosis to their post-treatment plans. "I coordinate the patient's care; I make sure they are meeting with the right doctors, whether it's a Lovell FHCC doctor or a community doctor," Masella said. "I also make sure they receive additional services, when necessary, like, arranging for counseling sessions or meeting with a nutritionist."

The rest of the breast clinic team also uses the same approach.

"This clinic really puts the woman at the center of her care," said Lt. Cmdr. Jared Bernard, a surgeon in Lovell FHCC's general surgery department, who consults with Masella on breast clinic cases. "Kathy and I are a great team. We work together to help chart the patient's best course of treatment. Beyond patient care, she also helps keep me up-to-date on the latest research in breast cancer treatments."

The clinic's approach has proven successful. Of the 400 patients served in the last year for breast pain, 98 percent saw their pain decrease or discontinue within a month of making a treatment plan at the breast clinic. Masella, Serbin and the breast clinic staff are very happy with the high success rate and care offered for all patients - in particular the Veterans - who have not always had access to high quality breast care services at other Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical centers.

"What sets the Lovell FHCC Breast Clinic apart is its interdisciplinary approach to breast health, in which physicians with different medical specialties, nurses and other allied health professionals collaborate on patient care," Serbin said.

Masella noted, "Before the integration of the Navy and VA, the Navy really offered more breast health services than the VA. Since the integration, Lovell FHCC has been able to offer female Vets more comprehensive in-house care than they could receive before."

Comprehensive care is great news for all breast clinic patients, regardless of whether they are a young female Sailor or the wife of a retired combat Veteran. Breast clinic staff said they are proud to offer high-quality care to women for all their breast health needs.

Baranowski attested to clinic staff's compassionate care. "Cancer changes your life. It was great to have such an awesome team to work with."

Put healthy living back in the front seat

FHCC Fitness Specialist Kim Moritz: 'Best way to get back into good habits is setting and achieving small goals'

By Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Darren M. Moore
Lovell FHCC Public Affairs

Health and physical fitness are parts of life very familiar to Sailors and employees at Lovell FHCC; however, sometimes life has a way of placing healthy living in the backseat.

Getting back into good habits can be a challenge, but when done properly and with dedication, it can be achieved. Kim Moritz, a fitness specialist at the Lovell FHCC, said that the best way to get back into good habits is to start by setting and achieving small goals.

"Start off slow, and in good form to prevent injury," she said. "What you're doing is letting your body and your muscles adapt, and once they adapt, those are strength gains. So then you add on, and you keep adding on."

For those who want to lose weight, Moritz advocates the use of journals to stay on track. She added that although 30 minutes of cardio is great for the heart, it typically takes 45 minutes to start shedding pounds. Moritz said each workout should begin with a proper warm-up and end with static hold stretching.

"If you know what type of workout you're going to be doing – squats, lunges, and push-ups and things like that – do those types of movements in your warm-up at 50 percent," Moritz said. "At the end of every workout, when you've contracted all those muscles, lengthen them with the static holds for 15 seconds or so. The best thing you can do for your self is lengthen those muscles."

Moritz said to see the best results, it is important to modify each workout, such as alternating between the treadmill, stationary bike and elliptical.

"Switch up your cardio, because once your muscles learn all the answers, you've got to switch the questions, otherwise you're not going to see the changes again," Moritz said. "The body adapts, and that's what you're doing, you're letting it adapt each time you do something. Once it adapts and learns, you have to change it, otherwise you stop seeing those results."

Moritz said other key elements of a good exercise program are maintaining flexibility, working opposing muscle groups such as biceps and triceps, or abs and lower back, and to have an accountability partner. She also recommended instead of dinner out as a reward, celebrate success with a massage or a new pair of smaller pants.

"If you take care of yourself, your self will take care of you," Moritz said.

To help maintain a healthy workforce, Lovell FHCC has a Civil Service Physical Activity Program policy that authorizes supervisors to allow employees to engage in physical activity during work hours up to three hours per week, no more than an hour a day.

David Reid, health promotion coordinator for Lovell FHCC, said the policy has a public health focus. "This policy is based upon higher level directives, including the National Prevention Strategy, which emphasizes active living as a priority to reduce disease and disability in Americans. The most valuable asset to any organization is its workforce, and a fundamental part of a capable workforce is personal health."

Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class Pouwedeo Faranda lowers himself for a push-up during Lovell FHCC's command physical training (PT) at Naval Station Great Lakes Building 440. The PT session, every Friday morning, helps bolster the fitness and camaraderie of the command. (Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Darren M. Moore)

Reid said an active lifestyle spans work time, and the policy enables staff to increase physical activity levels at work. "Each year, our increased technology is reducing our ability to be active," he said. "The Civil Service Physical Activity Program helps restore the much needed activity into the workday and is a wonderful indication of support by the command leadership."

Lovell FHCC offers numerous resources and fitness classes. Some include command physical training, an abdomen- focused class each Wednesday, Spin classes held each weekday, and Fitness Enhancement Program (FEP) classes throughout the week.

The Navy Operational Fitness and Fueling Series (NOFFS) program also is available for improving health and working out in small spaces. Call 224-610-5927.

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Lovell FHCC holds Creative Arts Festival

McHenry CBOC nurse makes the news

- African-American Quiz Bowl
- Magnet Champions lead Jeoparry
- *... and many more stories and photos!*

Or Visit Our Website @ lovell.fhcc.va.gov

Healing: *Recovery in their own words ...*

(Editor's Note: "Healing is a series written in first-person by Veterans and service members who have experienced significant medical recovery in their lives and are willing to share their stories.)

Name: Patrick Kerrigan
Branch of service: U.S. Army
Dates of service: 1959-1962

I couldn't really find a job so I joined the Army because it was a three-year stint.

I started drinking when I was 7 or 8 years old. My father always had a few quarts of beer every Saturday. I was allowed a few shot glasses full. Of course, at the end of the day, they added up. He also had a bottle of whiskey hidden. It didn't take me long to get into that. Growing up in Chicago in the '50s, it was not a problem to go into a bar and get a few six packs of beer.

In 1963, I worked for a major corporation, and I received a big promotion and got a big raise. It took me about six months to drink my way out of that job.

I believe what kept me alive (even as a bartender) was that I didn't drink on the job. I spent almost my entire life as an alcoholic. Of course, I didn't think so. After all, I went to work every day and had a wife and children. Every day, I'd get off at 5 p.m., be at the bar by 6, then go home and drink more, pass out, sleep it off, and go back to work the next day. I guess I was what you call a "functional alcoholic."

I really had no direction. I believe I didn't really know how to quit drinking. I often quit for two or three weeks and thought I was doing well, so well that I always fell into the trap … "Oh well, one won't hurt," and, of course, I always resumed my old habits. Over the years, I knew many people who went to AA (Alcoholics Anonymous), and they didn't last very long. It was always the same old story – "one won't hurt."

How I came to Lovell FHCC:
At age 67, I came to the VA (Department of Veterans Affairs) to save on prescriptions and receive medical care. My family members told me I was drinking too much, and I was told I needed to "dry out." Instead of drinking six beers, I was having 12 beers. It seemed I just couldn't get enough, and I had to find an end. My primary care physician suggested I needed treatment. He told me, "whenever you are ready to quit, let me know."

Until then, I wasn't even aware there was an addiction program. Finally, eight years ago, I gave it a try, and I'm still sober.

My recovery:
I first went through Building 11, (the Addiction Treatment Program). I was pretty insecure. Then I received the advice from my daughter that this is, "something you have to face for the rest of your life." I then went through the Dom (Building 66), and learned there was an after-care program that I could attend. I've been attending that after-care program for the past eight years now, and it has helped to keep me sober.

Thank God for the VA. I really believe that is why I'm still alive today. My advice to others: Quitting is something you have to do for yourself. If you don't want to do it, it will never happen or it becomes a temporary fix.

Treatment won't work if you only go because someone tells you that you have to do it.