



Lovell FHCC honors Vietnam Veterans



Vietnam Veterans of America Post 311, Des Plaines, Ill., presents the colors at the FHCC Vietnam Veterans Commemoration. (Photo by Hospitalman James Stewart).

Gen. Mukoyama, Medal of Honor recipient Lynch speak

By Jayna Legg
Lovell FHCC Public Affairs

On the front lines of three wars, Army officer James Mukoyama learned the meaning of life.

In his remarks at the Captain James A. Lovell Federal Health Care Center's Vietnam War Commemoration ceremony March 29, Mukoyama summarized his "words to live by," learned on the battlefields of Korea, Vietnam and the first Gulf War. "I know those

of you who have heard me speak have heard this before, but I'll say it again: Every day is a great day; faith and family, and we live in a great country."

Mukoyama – who earned a Silver Star, received a Purple Heart and retired as a major general – continued, saying, "At a young age, I learned ... There were times I didn't know if I was going to be alive in the next moment or the next day."

The first Asian-American to

command a U.S. Army division, Mukoyama urged the Vietnam Veterans in the audience to be proud of their service. "Today is a time to celebrate the accomplishments and success of our generation," he said. "We have a lot to be proud of."

Nearly 200 Veterans, their families, FHCC staff, patients, volunteers, supporters and community stakeholders gathered in Bourke Hall at Lovell FHCC in North Chicago, Ill., to do something that was a long time in coming – welcome home Vietnam Veterans. Lovell FHCC, along with other Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical centers, the Department of Defense, and thousands of community partners across the country, to include civic and non-profit organizations and Veteran Service Organizations, are taking part in a 50th commemoration of the Vietnam War.

The commemoration is ongoing and has the goal of honoring 7.2 million living Veterans who served during the Vietnam era, in theater and out, from 1955-1975. As part of the commemoration, VA Secretary Robert McDonald designated March 29 – the anniversary of the last day U.S. troops were on the ground in

Vietnam – as a day to honor and thank Vietnam Veterans and their families.

At commemoration events, Vietnam Veterans are presented with commemorative pins and personally thanked. At Lovell FHCC's event, active duty Navy Sailors who work at the hospital and its clinics handed out the pins and shook the hand of every Vietnam Veteran in attendance.

"I want to express my profound thanks to all Veterans, but in particular to Vietnam Veterans," said Dr. Stephen Holt, Lovell FHCC director, during his welcome remarks.

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Retired Army Maj. Gen. James Mukoyama, a Vietnam Veteran, spoke at the commemoration at Lovell FHCC. (Photo by Hospitalman James Stewart)

FHCC hospice volunteer recognized by VA Sec. McDonald

Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Robert McDonald, left, poses with FHCC hospice volunteer Nick Konz. He gave Konz a coin and thanked him for his dedicated service to FHCC patients. (Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Darren M. Moore)



By Stephanie Caccamo
Lovell FHCC Public Affairs

Lovell FHCC hospice volunteer Nick Konz was pleasantly surprised when he showed up for a shift at a Green House home March 16.

The Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs, Robert McDonald, stopped by the home as part of his official visit to Lovell FHCC and singled out Konz for recognition.

McDonald presented Konz with a coin and thanked him for his tremendous service to Veterans over the years.

Konz was recently featured in the *Chicago Tribune* for his work with Lovell FHCC's No Veteran Dies Alone program, which pairs volunteers with Veterans in their final moments, so that all Veterans have a comforting friend with them when they pass. Konz has volunteered with the program since its inception in 2013.

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From the Desk of the Director

Lovell is adapting, adopting MyVA breakthrough priorities



By Dr. Stephen Holt
Lovell FHCC Director

We were honored to have prominent local Vietnam War Veterans James Mukoyama and Allen Lynch speak at our Vietnam War Commemoration March 29, for many reasons, not the least of which is these honorable men co-chair the Lovell FHCC Patient Advisory Council. So we already know the wealth of leadership experience and wisdom they possess.

Retired Army Maj. Gen. Mukoyama served more than 30 years. He volunteered to fight in Vietnam and was instead sent to Korea. Then he went to Vietnam in 1969. In 1986, he became the youngest general in the Army at that time. After being promoted to major general, he took the helm of the 70th Training Division during Desert Storm and was the first Asian-American to command an Army division.

Lynch, a Medal of Honor recipient, has spent his entire working life

helping Veterans, both in the Department of Veterans Affairs and as the chief of the Illinois Attorney General's Veterans Rights Bureau. He is a long-time leader with the Vietnam Veterans of America and runs the Lynch Medal of Honor Veterans Foundation.

These two long-time friends, and other stakeholders in the audience that day – military and civilian staff, patients, family members, volunteers, members of the community who help Veterans – are integral parts of the success Lovell FHCC has already enjoyed as the nation's only federal health care facility. They – you – are the heart of the continuing improvements that will ensure this FHCC remains focused on providing the best patient-centered care possible.

Secretary of the VA Robert McDonald calls this the "MyVA Transformation," which has five objectives: Improving the Veteran Experience, Improving the Employee Experience, Improving Internal Support Services, Establishing a Culture of Continuous Improvement and Enhancing Strategic Partnerships.

In the case of Lovell FHCC, the Patient Advisory Council is a prime example of "enhancing strategic partnerships." The council consolidated the efforts of several important groups, including our Veterans Service Organization meeting and Stakeholder Advisory Council. The diverse membership represents many members of our patient population – including county Veterans assistance commissions, VSOs, Navy

Ombudsmen, colleges, legislative liaisons, municipal leaders, Great Lakes-area military commanders, and Great Lakes Fleet and Family Services. They meet monthly, and FHCC leaders attend – including myself and Deputy Director/Commanding Officer Capt. Robert Buckley – and respond in a timely way to feedback on how the FHCC is meeting its mission and vision.

To develop the MyVA objectives further, McDonald earlier this year identified "12 Breakthrough Priorities" for the VA, which we've adapted for the FHCC. Topping the list is improving Veterans' (as well as military and dependent patients in our case) and employees' experience. Other priorities include increasing access to health care, improving community care, staffing critical positions, transforming the office of information technology (OIT), and several others you'll hear about in coming months.

Under each Breakthrough Priority, we've compiled a long list of fiscal year (FY) 2015 accomplishments and FY 2016 initiatives (already underway). For example, the FHCC completed more than 99 percent of appointments in FY15 within 30 days of clinically indicated or Veteran's preferred date, and 88 percent of appointments were completed within 30 days of the date of creation.

Pharmacy implemented a pain clinic; the Rehabilitation Clinic added 100 visits monthly and six additional evaluation slots allowing appointments to occur within 30 days; the expanded GI Clinic now sees 25 percent more patients;

Telehealth added pharmacy, nephrology and genomics and will soon expand telemental health.

Our new state-of-the-art CT unit will be the platform to launch the Cardiac Imaging Program as well as perform the new VHS lung scan screening process, and a new MRI means we will recapture 99 percent of all currently outsourced magnetic resonance studies this fiscal year.

We have a new Women's Health Department, and 88 percent of women Veterans will receive care from a designated Women's Health provider. Our Press Ganey patient satisfaction scores have increased in areas such as Medical Practice, and we are receiving 20 complimentary Interactive Customer Evaluation (ICE) comments for each complaint. The list includes Lean and other improvements to address staff concerns about recognition, communication and leadership engagement.

The bottom line goal of MyVA and the expansive 12 Breakthrough Priorities is that our employees feel like they are a part of a winning organization and our patients have faith in the FHCC – and the VA. It is truly a win-win scenario.

Nurse heading back to college

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

A FHCC Sailor was recently selected for the Navy's Duty Under Instruction (DUIN) program at the Uniformed Services University of Health Sciences (USUHS) in Bethesda, Md.

Lt. Cmdr. Amy M. Stone was one of four Sailors in the Navy selected for the three-year program, out of nearly 30 who applied. Stone will become a nurse practitioner following the program. She said she had been working hard to achieve this goal and being selected was a "dream come true."

"I love patient care; I can't wait to do more patient care," Stone said. "There are exciting new opportunities for nurse practitioners in the Navy now."

Stone said she wanted to become a

nurse practitioner to allow her to do more than manage patients' care. The nurse practitioners she has worked with have also inspired her to become one, as well as opportunities she has had to be with patients.

"At my duty station prior to coming to this command, I was the division officer of an internal medicine clinic, and I was running the Coumadin clinic and working really closely with patients and kind of managing their care," Stone said.

"The two providers were very busy, and a lot of times I would see the patients in a nurse visit. I decided then I really wanted to expand my role and be able to become a practitioner and see my own patients and manage their care."

Stone will be required to complete five more years of active duty after DUIN, though she said she anticipates continuing her Navy career well beyond that. Stone said she would like to stay involved



Lt. Cmdr. Amy Stone will attend the Uniformed Services University of Health Sciences. (Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Darren M. Moore)

in the Navy's Medical Homeport Program as a nurse practitioner.

"I have stood up the Medical Home Port in Naples, (Italy), and then I refined it here," Stone said. "I will hopefully be a practitioner in a Medical Home Port, seeing patients, managing their care, making sure their HEDIS (Healthcare Effectiveness Data and Information Set) metrics are met; all the things that we did in Medical Home Port, from infants to geriatrics, the whole gamut of a family nurse practitioner."

The Apollo

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From the Desk of the Commanding Officer

Coordinating the care for those entrusted to our care



By Captain Robert G. Buckley
Lovell FHCC Deputy Director/
Commanding Officer

We have a special obligation to all Veterans, Active Duty, retirees and the family members who are formally assigned (empaneled, enrolled) to receive their primary care at the Captain James A. Lovell Federal Health Care Center. From this assigned

primary care site flows the source of the patient-centered approach for all of their health care needs, using the Medical Home model of care – which strives to provide each patient with consistent care in a familiar place.

These primary care sites are anchored throughout Lovell through our (1) Veterans' Primary Assigned Care Teams (PACTs) at our main hospital (West campus) and at our community based outpatient clinics (CBOCs), Home-Based Primary Care, Mental Health and Women's Health; (2) our Active Duty/Tricare Medical Home Ports (MHP) on the West campus, USS Tranquillity and Fisher staff clinics, and (3) Navy recruit and student clinics at Tranquillity (Recruit Training Command) and Fisher Clinic at Naval Station Great Lakes.

While most of our patients' health care needs can be addressed by their primary care medical home provider and support team, there are times they need the expertise

of outpatient specialty care, emergency care or inpatient care. Then, Lovell FHCC emergency services and inpatient medical, surgical and critical care staff, and mental health specialists, are standing by 24/7 to assure our patients get the care they need.

However, there are unique situations when the primary care and specialty services needs of an individual patient go beyond what we can provide at Lovell FHCC. In these situations, we must temporarily transfer the care of our Lovell patients to care in the community at inpatient facilities or outpatient specialty clinics nearby.

But even when our patients receive these specialty services in the community, our primary care medical home teams, with the support of our Managed Care Department and case management specialists pay special attention so we can be confident that our patients get the care they need and that their care can be resumed

back at Lovell FHCC as quickly and safely as possible, in the smoothest, most well-coordinated way possible.

This seamless, smooth transition back and forth between Lovell FHCC primary care medical home teams, specialists, inpatient services and local care provided by our community partners is one of the biggest challenges we face in health care today – at the nation's only federal health care facility and at other Veterans Health Administration (VHA) and Department of Defense medical treatment facilities.

As we continue forward in our sixth year of integrated operations, we will all need to pay special attention to the challenges of coordinating the care for all of those entrusted to our care. It will be hard work, but Lovell FHCC is uniquely blessed with the talented staff and local health care partners who can lead the way.

Gift from Marine's family helps Lovell traumatic brain injury patients

By Stephanie Caccamo
Lovell FHCC Public Affairs

Through the heart of a very special Marine, the Captain James A. Lovell Federal Health Care Center (FHCC) in North Chicago, Ill. is helping many Veterans with this era's signature combat injury – traumatic brain injury (TBI).

The Heart of a Marine Foundation is a Chicagoland-based nonprofit established to provide support, financial assistance and educational resources for active duty military personnel and Veterans of all branches of the Armed Forces. Roy and Georgette Frank started the foundation in November 2005, following the death of their son, Phil, in 2004. Phil Frank was a Marine Corps Lance Corporal who served in Iraq and was killed in action in April 2004.

As Roy Frank recently said, "Following Phil's death, we had this moment where we realized we could let the grief destroy us or we could turn it around and help others. Phil was such a caring person, and we knew he would have wanted us to help others, especially his fellow brothers in uniform."



FHCC Speech Pathologist Megan Ballantine uses special software for traumatic brain injury patients that was donated through The Heart of a Marine Foundation. (File Photo)

The Heart of a Marine Foundation has carried out the generous spirit of Lance Corporal Frank through many programs and services for military personnel and Veterans, including the donation of orthopedic canes to Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical centers, blankets to patients at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, respite trips for Veterans and their families and more.

One particular project of the foundation has greatly benefited patients at Lovell FHCC. The Aphasia Project donates software to VA medical centers to assist in the rehabilitation of communication skills following brain injury. In 2009, the foundation donated computers and software to Lovell FHCC. According to FHCC Chief of Voluntary Affairs Kenneth List, the foundation made a very generous gift by donating both the laptops and the software.

"By giving us both the laptops and software, we could immediately deploy the laptops in areas for the therapists to use with patients," List said. "It's great to see the long-term usefulness of this donation and that so many patients benefit from the program."

According to Megan Ballantine, a speech pathologist at Lovell FHCC, the software is ideal for complementing the treatment of patients with traumatic brain injury (TBI), which she calls a signature injury of Veterans who served in Iraq and Afghanistan. Ballantine works almost exclusively with TBI patients. TBI is an invisible injury, Ballantine said, because there may not be observable wounds despite the dramatic effects of a TBI on movement, speech and more.

While TBI patients participate in multiple therapies at Lovell FHCC – including physical, occupational, speech, mental health and more – Ballantine finds it useful to complement her regular speech therapy with the special software to reinforce the language and cognitive

development from their individual therapy. The software, called Bungalow software, was specially designed for TBI and stroke patients. The software has several activities available for patients, including following simple directions, reading and reasoning and problem-solving. Ballantine noted the program uses compensatory strategies to improve memory. The activities start at the most simple level and become increasingly challenging as the patient achieves success at each level.

Ballantine enjoys having the Bungalow software available to her patients. "It is very easy to use," she said. "It complements the one-on-one therapy I am doing with the patient during their session. We have the computers set-up in such a way that a patient can come during their free time or right after their individual therapy. It's something they can do independently that reinforces everything I am doing with the patient."

She also noted that the design of the program helps ease challenges inherent to other therapies. "The hierarchy that is built in — from very simple to increasing complexity — means that the tasks are challenging but not frustrating for the patient.

"The younger patients are comfortable with computers," she said. "This software is great because it delivers therapy in a way that the patients are comfortable with. They all know how to use a computer, so it makes it natural to have a complementary therapy available to them that they are comfortable with."

The Franks are pleased the foundation's donation can help so many. "Phil wanted us to take care of his fellow brothers in the Marines, and we are happy to carry that out by ensuring active duty personnel and Veterans from all branches of the military have access to supportive programs that ease their transition back to civilian life."

ONE TEAM *Extra*

News Employees Can Use

Breakfast promotes assault awareness

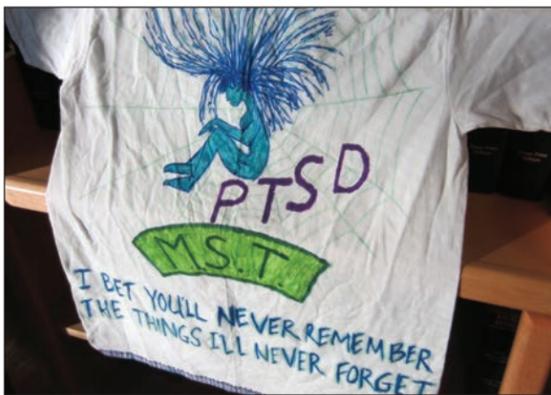
In another circumstance, the boldly painted T-shirt depicting the head of a deer on a brightly colored background could be appreciated for the striking work of art that it is – until the viewer reads the words on the bottom: “People Shouldn’t be easy PREY” is hand-written in bronze fabric paint.

“Yes, he was gang-raped,” said Lovell FHCC Military Sexual Trauma (MST) Coordinator Delia De Avila, standing near the shirt where it was displayed during a Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month (SAAPM) breakfast. “He was preyed on. He felt like prey.”

Several of the approximately 40 shirts De Avila and other FHCC social workers collected as part of the FHCC’s annual participation in “The Clothesline Project” were displayed. The shirts were created by patients who are survivors of sexual trauma and symbolize their suffering and struggle to recover from what was done to them.

The event was hosted by social workers, De Avila and other MST program representatives, and Sexual Assault Forensic Examiner (SAFE) Medical Program Manager Myna Shegog.

“As a community, we must all take steps to change the conversation, increase awareness and prevent sexual violence,” said FHCC Deputy Director/Commanding Officer Navy Capt. Robert Buckley in brief remarks. “The FHCC is proud of the role that the SAFE, SAPR and MST programs have demonstrated in awareness



Shirts made for “The Clothesline Project” were displayed at the breakfast. (Photo by Jayna Legg)

and the efforts put forth by each team member to ensure the safety of our patients, employees, family members and friends.”

April is Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention month. FHCC employees manned educational tables Wednesdays at the main entrance, and many gathered for a “Wear Teal Day” event. According to VA statistics, about one in five women, and one in 100 men have told their provider that they experienced MST. The FHCC treats those who have been sexually assaulted and runs support groups for men and women. Patients do not need to have a VA disability rating, and may be eligible even if they don’t qualify for other VA benefits, whether or not they reported the incident. SAFE program personnel also provide care at the FHCC for patients who are victims of sexual violence.

Buckley thanked staff members on call to respond. “As we all know, these types of calls don’t come in at 9 a.m. after you’ve had your cup of coffee.” For more, call 224-610-5843.

- Jayna Legg

Congratulations!

- **McHenry Community Based Outpatient Clinic** celebrated its one-year anniversary at the new Municipal Drive location.
- Certified Diabetes Educator **RN Lynn Wentz**, BSN MHS, from Endocrinology, was named Diabetes Educator of the Year from the American Association of Diabetes Educators, Chicago.
- Emergency Operations Officer **Willie Ramsey** and Emergency Preparedness Coordinator **Gene Deener** completed training to become certified Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) instructors. They will now conduct Incident Command System (ICS) training at the FHCC and other area government agencies, saving thousands of training dollars annually.
- FHCC continues to exceed all clinical quality indicators for Home Telehealth. Lead of Home Telehealth **Laila Navarro**, RN-BC, VHA-CM, will present Home Telehealth Best Practices this spring to the Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) 12 Virtual Committee and to national home telehealth leads and care coordinators this summer.
- **Dr. V. Chowdary Jampala, MBBS**, head of Mental Health, and **Dr. Chandragupta Vedak**, were recognized by the American Psychiatric Association as attaining “Distinguished Life Fellow” status, described as the “highest honor that your profession can bestow.”
- FHCC **Mammography staff**, for the fifth time, have received a perfect score on the annual FDA Mammogram Compliance Inspection.
- Veteran musicians **Joe Klass** and **Angela Walker** (also a volunteer), along with FHCC Clinical Psychologists **Dr. John Bair** and **Dr. Courtney Barrett**, participated in the “Bridging the Gap” workshop for combat Veterans and their spouses at the Union League Club in Chicago. Klass and Walker testified about the effectiveness of expressive arts therapy.
- **Lt. Ryan Buechele**, a dentist who works at USS Osborne, was named Junior Officer of the Year, 2015. He was selected from 1,100 Navy Dental Corps dentists to serve on the American Dental Association New Dentist Committee.

Rear Admiral Iverson recognizes FHCC staff



HM3 Marcus Huenefeld is outstanding TCCC instructor

On the left, Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class Marcus Huenefeld, Fisher Clinic, was recognized by Navy Medicine East Commander Rear Admiral Kenneth Iverson for his work as a trainer with the Tactical Combat Casualty Care Course (TCCC). His expertise was praised during three off-duty TCCC sessions for local state agencies. He also stepped up in a leadership role when his predecessor was deployed. (Photo by Jayna Legg)



McDaniel led Bldg. 152 dental clinic

On the left, Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Richard McDaniel was recognized by Rear Admiral Iverson for his outstanding leadership of the dental lab for more than a year as the Leading Petty Officer. He led 10 junior Sailors and three civilian employees in the daily operations as well as two satellite labs. Bldg. 152 supported four clinics, providing more than 41,705 composite lab values, during that time. He also had the collateral duty of managing time cards for 15 employees. (Photo by Jayna Legg)



Burton is a champion for access to care

Ms. Rebekah Burton was recognized by Rear Admiral Iverson for her excellent work tracking all pending VA network consults to ensure patients are seen and their care is documented in a timely fashion. She additionally monitors all clinic access, reporting those beyond the 30-day limit. She works closely with directorates to ensure appointments are made according to VA policies. Her work was instrumental to the success of two VA Access Stand Downs. (Photo by Jayna Legg)

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Vietnam Veterans recognized at Evanston Library



FHCC celebrates Women’s History Month with event

- Staff Wear Teal for sex assault awareness
- Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) event honors local mayors at FHCC
- Navy Chief Petty Officers celebrate ... and many more stories and photos!

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

Vietnam Veteran event part of national commemoration (cont.)

Continued from page 1

“You brought us this – that we can never, ever not support our troops again. That was a hard lesson.”

Holt, a retired Air Force officer, thanked the Vietnam Veterans for their sacrifices and noted the far-reaching impact of Vietnam. “What we learned from you, we used to create the greatest land, sea and air fighting forces in the world,” Holt said. “That’s what we owe you.”

Army Veteran Allen Lynch, who received the Medal of Honor for his heroic actions on Dec. 15, 1967 in Vietnam, also spoke. Lynch was a Specialist 4 serving in Company D, 1st Battalion (Airmobile), 12th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) when he rescued three wounded soldiers during a firefight and stayed behind to single-handedly protect them when the rest of the company withdrew. Lynch and Mukoyama, friends from their early days serving in the Army, co-chair the Lovell FHCC Patient Advisory Council.

“I’m torn,” Lynch said at the beginning of his remarks. “This is a double-edged sword. On one hand, I really don’t want to have a commemoration. I don’t want to tear off those scabs. I wanted to put it to bed.”

Lynch spoke of lessons not learned by the U.S. military and mistakes he believes have been repeated. But he also outlined the many positive outcomes he credits to the dogged determination and dedication of Vietnam Veterans.

“We questioned everything,” he said. “We demanded better treatment. Vet Centers exist across the country because of us. PTSD (post-traumatic stress) is being treated and is considered a condition as a result of combat – Vietnam Veterans did that.”

Lynch has spent his entire life working for Veterans, both in state and federal government and with Vietnam Veterans of America. He also formed the Allen Lynch Medal of Honor Foundation to assist Veterans and their families in need.

“We stood up, and today thousands are getting compensation,” Lynch said. “That’s what we did. We worked to make the lives of all Veterans better.”



Left photo, Lovell FHCC Sailors handed Vietnam Veterans in the audience pins commemorating the anniversary of the Vietnam War. In the below photo, Medal of Honor recipient Allen Lynch, an Army Vietnam Veteran, was one of the guest speakers at the Lovell FHCC Vietnam War Commemoration event in March. Lynch co-chairs the Lovell FHCC Patient Advisory Council with Ret. Army Maj. Gen. James Mukoyama. (Photos by Hospitalman James Stewart)

Also during the ceremony, Willard Helander, former Lake County, Ill. clerk, read a proclamation from Lake County designating March 29 as Vietnam Veterans Day. Helander is a member of the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution (NSDAR). In Illinois, 80 chapters of NSDAR are commemorative partners. NSDAR representatives from several chapters including Ft. Dearborn and the North Shore, and the state NSDAR organization, assisted with the Lovell FHCC ceremony.

Virginia Bishop, NSDAR representative to Lovell FHCC from the North Shore Chapter, said a close relative in her family has served in every war and military conflict since the American Revolution.

“It’s wonderful to be a part of this,” she said. “We’ve been working on this for a long time. This is our fourth commemoration event. To have this ceremony here at Lovell FHCC is especially nice for us ... Lovell is the center of the North Shore community. Our Veterans come here for services.”

Vietnam Veteran Elliot Abelson, a member of the Lovell FHCC patient stakeholder committee, was in the audience and received a pin. “The ceremony was very moving,” he said. “Finally, it only took 50 years for this.”

Abelson served in Army military intelligence in Vietnam 1969-70 and receives treatment



for combat-related PTSD. “I’m like Gen. Mukoyama and his hat. I wear mine all the time, too. I want people to know I was there. I’m so proud of my service.”

During his speech, Mukoyama recounted a story about a fellow Vietnam Veteran he met at a convention and welcomed home with a handshake in the elevator.

“He came up to me days later in the parking lot, as my wife and I were loading the car, and said, ‘no one has ever said that to me since I came back,’” Mukoyama said. “That taught me, the best thing you can ever say to a Vietnam Veteran is ‘welcome home.’ I swore to myself then that I wouldn’t let future generations go through what we went through when we returned.”

Evanston clinic volunteer Steve Kraslen is a MOVE! success story

By Steve Kraslen
Lovell FHCC MOVE! Volunteer

(Editor’s Note: This first ran as a MOVE! Success Story online. To celebrate the 10th anniversary of the MOVE! program, we are running an excerpt of his testimonial. For his full story, go to: <http://www.move.va.gov/docs/SuccessStories/SteveKraslenSuccessStory.pdf>.)

Before the MOVE! Program, I tried some fad diets, but they didn’t do much for me. I developed some medical issues and just wanted to start feeling better about myself. When my primary care doctor at the VA told me about MOVE! and encouraged me to try it, I just knew I needed to do it.

When I started MOVE! at the Evanston Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) in December 2010, I was 260 pounds, pre-diabetic, and suffering from high cholesterol and blood pressure. Even though it wasn’t really my style, I completed the six-week course and watched as my weight started gradually going down. By the



Steve Kraslen lost 10 percent of his body weight with MOVE! and now volunteers with MOVE! at the Evanston Community Based Outpatient Clinic (Photo Provided)

time I finished, I was down to 238 pounds - a 10 percent weight loss. I liked that MOVE! wasn’t a ‘diet’ like other programs. The most important thing I learned was moderation. I realized that

I didn’t have to give up certain foods; I just needed to control my portions. Eating pizza was my big thing, so I had to learn to limit how much I ate and eat in a healthier way.

During the program, I had excellent support. FHCC MOVE! Coordinator Erin Thompson really motivated me, as did my fellow Veterans, who contributed lots of great ideas in class that helped me stay on track.

After the program, Erin asked if I was interested in helping out with future classes as a volunteer. I really like volunteering. I help the Veterans on my end, setting up pedometers and showing food models as Erin conducts class on the video screen (we’re in Evanston, and she’s at the Lovell FHCC North Chicago facility). We’ve been doing this for four and a half years. The program is now 16 weeks long, we do a four-week orientation, 12-week MOVing Forward, and ‘Be Active and MOVE!’ with the kinesiotherapists.

To learn about MOVE!, call your primary care provider or Thompson at 224-610-7137.

FHCC Veterans Creative Arts Festival largest to date

By Jayna Legg
Lovell FHCC Public Affairs

GRAYSLAKE, Ill. – “Art washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life,” said Capt. Cynthia Judy, quoting Picasso in her opening remarks at the Lovell FHCC’s 2016 Veterans Creative Arts Festival.

Judy went on to say that she truly appreciates the value of music and other types of art therapy, and was honored to be speaking at the festival. The competition is open to Veteran and military patients of the Lovell FHCC and was held at the College of Lake County, Ill. for the first time.

Air Force Veteran Michael T. Brown, Jr. entered a painting he said God revealed to him during his time in an outpatient post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) program at the FHCC. (Photo by Jayna Legg)



“My oldest child was hit by a truck when he was 10 and suffered a brain injury,” she said. “He was in a wheelchair and had a long recovery. Music therapy was a huge part of his recovery.”

This year’s festival, held in March, had more than 100 art, creative writing and performance entries. Paintings, sculptures, pottery, photography, drawings, mixed media, models, and craft kits were displayed outside the C Wing Auditorium.

Vocalists, musicians and some creative writing entrants performed in front of about 75 people, including CLC students and FHCC inpatients who traveled by bus to Grayslake for the event.

FHCC Art Therapist Tricia Stewart helped organize the festival. She said art therapy helps combat Veterans recover from post-traumatic stress syndrome (PTSD), traumatic brain injuries (TBI) and other mental illnesses. “This

is so invaluable to them, to help them cope with their military experiences or combat experiences.”

The decision to move the event from the FHCC in North Chicago to CLC in Grayslake was a positive one for both sides, Stewart said. Not only did the FHCC get exposure and the opportunity to reach younger combat Veterans enrolled at the college, but the college’s growing Veterans Student Services program did as well.

“We greatly value our Veterans here at CLC,” CLC Provost Dr. Richard Haney said in his welcoming remarks. “We are happy to be here today. It enhances our outreach to Veterans and gains exposure for our Veterans.”

About a dozen volunteers from CLC Veterans Student Services helped during the ceremony. Some helped backstage, assisting contestants with their costumes. Others escorted Veterans. FHCC American Legion Auxiliary volunteers provided refreshments for the contestants.

Air Force Veteran Melvin T. Brown, Jr., heard about the creative arts festival from his counselor in the FHCC’s Psychosocial Rehabilitation and Recovery Center (PRRC) earlier this year. He entered inspirational prose that he performed, and a painting, “The Glory of God Revealed.”

“Lovell FHCC’s PTSD program saved me,” Brown said. “God instructed me to go there ... Michelle saved my life. I came to the walk-in clinic and was having panic attacks and seeing things. She got me help.”

Brown said some of his PTSD symptoms come from being on the ground when a C-5 Galaxy transport plane crashed at Ramstein Air Base in August, 1990. “I saw night turned into day.”

Brown, a minister at Unity Temple, said his



Above, Veteran performers Babette Peyton, Angela Walker, Candy Wasicak, Kathy Serbin and Courtney Pinnick perform. Below, the Naval Station Great Lakes Band also performed during the intermission and at the end. (Photos by Trevor Seela)



painting was revealed to him by God in visions, one section at a time. “Painting is a new talent I received through the PRRC.”

Navy Veteran Mike Smerchek, who attended as the guest of a Lovell FHCC employee, said he was “amazed” by the festival. “A lot of these Vets are dealing with serious issues ... it takes a lot of bravery and guts for them to get up on stage.”

Smerchek said he appreciated seeing the performances of the Navy Band, outfitted in dress uniforms. “We all have that common bond, the camaraderie ... just seeing the Navy band here in their Blues, it’s bringing back great memories.”

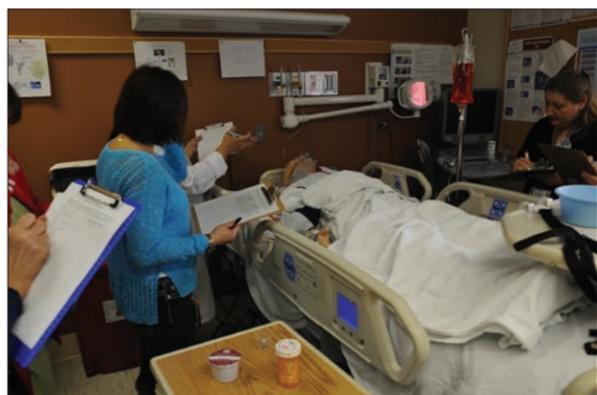
CAF first-place finishers are considered to go to the national festival in October. For a winner’s list, go to: www.facebook.com/lovellfhcc.

‘Patient Room of Discrepancies’ tests clinicians’ knowledge of hazards

By Jayna Legg
Lovell FHCC Public Affairs

FHCC staff members had the chance recently to learn more about patient safety by visiting a “Patient Room of Discrepancies.”

Their job in the room was to ferret out more than 60 safety, environmental, infection control and other hazards to the two simulated patients being treated in the room. They also were asked to figure out how to mitigate the hazards.



FHCC staff were tested on their knowledge of patient safety in a “Patient Room of Discrepancies” during Patient Safety Week. (Photo by Hospitalman James Stewart)

Some people walked out with several pages of detailed notes after spending an hour, said Patient Safety Manager Mary Haik, who was on hand at the entrance to give instructions. On average, most found at least half. The overall result was that dozens of staff members stopped by to learn a thing or two about patient safety and have fun doing it.

“It is fun, and you can engage with your co-workers while you look,” said FHCC Risk Manager Cynthia Gunnarson. Most importantly, she said, “It demonstrates real-life experiences and causes you to think about safety and simple things we can do every day to improve the patient’s experience.”

Gunnarson, a nurse, said it’s been a long time since she’s been directly involved in patient care, so going through the room and discovering the hazards was a good refresher.

From the brownie and coffee cup on the crash cart and leaking tourniquet applied incorrectly next to an IV, to crumpled rubber gloves on the floor and a catheter bag hung too high, the errors were many and varied.

The “Room of Horrors” as it’s unofficially

known, “challenges people to look beyond the obvious and critically evaluate the environment in which care is given,” Haik said. For example, she said, one patient’s oxygen was hooked up to air instead of oxygen.

The room was part of an observance of Patient Safety Week at Lovell FHCC, March 13-19. This year’s theme was “United in fall prevention and patient safety.” The room of discrepancies contained several fall hazards, including a patient bed set too high.

Many staff members worked with the FHCC Office of Performance Improvement to set up the room, including subject matter experts in biomedicine, infection control, oxygen safety, falls safety and environmental safety. Haik said the group studied current literature on how to set up the room and also incorporated recent subjects of patient safety alerts from both the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs (Veterans Health Administration).

Lovell FHCC hasn’t had this type of interactive event for Patient Safety Week since 2011, Haik said, but this year’s room was so successful, it likely will become an annual occurrence.