



# Voice Of The Northwoods



*Focused on Excellence—Putting Veterans First*

A PUBLICATION OF THE  
OSCAR G. JOHNSON VA MEDICAL CENTER  
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## Health Tip Of The Day!



70% of smokers say they want to quit. Are you one of them? VA has a new smoking quitline, Quit VET, for tips and encouragement. Call 1-855-QUIT-VET (1-855-784-8838) for live help. Let VA help you become a smoke free Veteran. Learn more at <http://www.publichealth.va.gov/smoking/index.asp>

## Priestap Drive Honors Former VA Employee

OGJVAMC dedicated the James D. Priestap Dr. on Saturday, May 25, 2013, in a 9 a.m. ceremony attended by over 100 people.

The circle drive in front of the main medical center was named in honor of Sergeant First Class James Priestap, who was a VA Police Officer at the medical center when he deployed to Iraq with the 46<sup>th</sup> Military Police Company in July 2006. He was killed by a sniper's bullet on Thanksgiving Day 2006 while on duty at a checkpoint in Baghdad.

"Oscar Johnson and Jim are both buried in Foster City Cemetery, and now it is neat to see James D. Priestap Dr. at the Oscar G. Johnson VA Medical Center," said Connie Priestap-Murray, widow of Sergeant Priestap.

***"Oscar Johnson and Jim are both buried in Foster City Cemetery, and now it is neat to see James D. Priestap Dr. at the Oscar G. Johnson VA Medical Center"***

The ceremony was attended by Priestap-Murray, their children Brody and Franchesca, Jim's mother, Denise Forstrom, and sister, Janet Anderson, and many extended family, VA staff,



local dignitaries, and members of the Michigan National Guard. American Legion Post 50 provided the Color

Guard and the Patriot Guard Riders arrived on their motorcycles and provided a flag line.

On April 5, 2013, Secretary Eric Shinseki approved the request to name our circle drive in front of Oscar G. Johnson VA Medical Center, James D. Priestap Dr," said Rice in his opening remarks.

"Brody and Franchesca, this is for you, as someday you will be able to bring your kids and show them that sign and tell them that your dad was a hero," said Jeff Aalto, in his remarks as a friend and co-worker of Sergeant Priestap.

Participating in the dedication ceremony were Congressman Dan Benishke, MD (keynote speaker), Medical Center Director Jim Rice, VA Chaplain Robert Mueller, Connie Gudowicz, RN (special music), VAP Officer Jeff Aalto, American Legion Post 50 (Color Guard), and the Patriot Guard Riders. ♦

# Service Spotlight: Dental Service

Cleanings, fillings, crowns, bridges, dentures, oral surgery, restoration of dental implants, doctor exams, oral cancer screenings and dental education are all apart of the services provided by our VA's Dental Department!

- Dental receives approximately 30 new patients a month.
- Dental has recently moved from its former 2nd floor location to a newly constructed space on the 3rd floor.
- Renovation has increased patient treatment areas, allowing treatment with state of the art equipment in a fresh and comfortable setting.

Only a limited number of Veterans qualify for dental services (Approximately 10% of all Veterans)

[Click Here](#) for more eligibility factors ♦



*Dental Service staff (front row l to r): Chris Lammi and Nancy Nelson. (Back row from l to r) Dr. Angela Hall, Dr. Kim Relca, Sharene Drexler, Marian Johnson and Greg Bradley. Not pictured: Dr. Chad Susott*

## Nutrition Tip Of The Day!



**Stay hydrated this summer!** Staying hydrated during the hot summer months is an important part of a healthy lifestyle. Heat, activity level, high protein intakes, caffeine and/or alcohol will increase your fluids needs. The average adult loses about 2 ½ quarts of water each day, thus drinking 8-12 8oz cups of fluids throughout the day is usually sufficient. Water is the best choice to keep you hydrated, in extreme cases sports drinks can help replace fluid and electrolytes lost in sweat. **Individuals diagnosed with health conditions such as Congestive Heart Failure, Renal or Liver disease may have their fluid intakes restricted and monitored by their health care team.**

**Warning signs of dehydration include:** Nausea, Vomiting, Headaches, Dry Skin/Lips/Tongue, Muscle/Joint Soreness, Constipation, Restlessness, Muscle Cramps, Infrequent & Dark Urine, Elevated Body Temp, and Light-headedness.

## 2013 Adopt-a-Garden Has Begun

The second annual Adopt-a-Garden has begun. This years OGJVAMC services, departments and individuals adopted 13 garden areas/planters around the medical center, planted flowers and vegetation, and will tend them for the summer. Judging will take place late summer and the winners announced at the annual Employee Appreciation Picnic in September .

Check out the startup gardens at our Facebook photo album [here](#) (note: not all gardens have started so check out our Facebook page in the future for updates). ♦



# HELPING VETS GET JOBS

## OGJVAMC's Vocational Rehab Program

Unemployed Veterans who are searching for a job may take the first step by utilizing VHA's Vocational Rehabilitation Program offered by the Oscar G. Johnson VA Medical Center. Two of the VA's goals are to rid Veteran Homelessness and make sure Veterans are provided an employment opportunity. The benefits of this program help to reach these goals by assisting Veterans in finding a job or career during their time of need, and Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors work with Veterans to make this happen.

The Vocational Rehabilitation Program operates under VHA's Behavioral Health Service, and helps in the training and placement of Veterans for employment. The program is made up of two primary components: *Compensated Work Therapy* and *Supported Employment*.

Veterans with extensive legal histories, financial debt, or poor work and interpersonal skills are guided through Compensated Work Therapy by their counselor in order to build self-image and work skills, which will ultimately improve their chances of getting a job.

The Supported Employment Program offers vocational counseling, which encourages motivation and seeks out a job suitable to the Veteran's needs.

David Ulrey has 33 years of experience in the field. He supervises the Vocational Rehabilitation Program



OGJVAMC Voc Rehab Counselors David Ulrey (left) and Dave Baker (right). Not pictured: Bill Irving.

at the Iron Mountain based VA Medical Center but works from the Marquette area. Ulrey has worked with many clients, including a previously homeless Veteran who now has a job at a muffler shop five days a week. Some of his Veteran clients may also have had legal troubles.

"We work through the judge with Veterans who have outstanding warrants," said Ulrey. "We take them into our services, and help make them more employable for future jobs."

Like Ulrey, Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist David Baker has seen great results from the program.

"As a former recipient of these services and a graduate of the Battle Creek VA Medical Center Compensated Work Therapy and the Transitional Residence program, I know firsthand that the Vocational Rehabilitation program offered by the VA does work," said Baker, who now works at the Oscar G. Johnson VA Medical Center. "If a Veteran is willing to put forth the effort and work hard, amazing things can happen for him or her."

Other Vocational Rehabilitation services include Homeless Veterans Supported Employment, Case Management, and Job Placement. These programs work hand in hand to help put Veterans first. To learn more about the Vocational Rehabilitation Program, contact David Baker at [david.baker8@va.gov](mailto:david.baker8@va.gov) or call (906) - 774 - 3300 Ext. 32550 or David Ulrey at [david.urley@va.gov](mailto:david.urley@va.gov). ♦



Veteran Toby Millwood participated in the Voc Rehab Program in Marquette, MI, and got a job at Goodwill Industries.

**"If a Veteran is willing to put forth the effort and work hard, amazing things can happen..."**

# Summer Interns at OGJVAMC



There are currently 20 student interns working at the Oscar G. Johnson VA Medical Center this summer. Each student has been assigned to an area that best suits their field of study. VA provides interns with hands-on experience that allows them to test-drive a career. These students have either been accepted into the Pathways Internship Program, or the National Diversity Internship Program, both of which provide an opportunity to become a VA employee upon completion of their degree.

“Our internship program is getting stronger every year. Students gain knowledge every step of the way – application, interview, orientation, service department experience and then finally the exit interview,” said Equal Opportunity Employment Specialist MaryAnne Gibler.

The majority of interns fall under the [Pathways Internship Program](#), which emphasizes long-term training and development. This program is open to

current students in a qualifying educational institution that pursue a degree or certificate which may be applied at a VA healthcare facility.

The VA’s National Diversity Internship Program (NDIP) recruits from various organizations that conduct targeted outreach to diverse student populations. This year’s interns that are a part of this program were recruited by the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU).

“Our medical center is part of a very large organization, i.e. the VA, for which students can spread their wings. Our goal is to show them what it is like to serve our nation’s Veterans, which is incredibly rewarding in itself,” said Gibler.

Many individuals do not realize that the VA offers multiple internship programs for students. Students and employees wishing to advance are encouraged to visit <http://mycareeratva.va.gov/Careerpath/Internships/Pages/default.aspx>. ♦

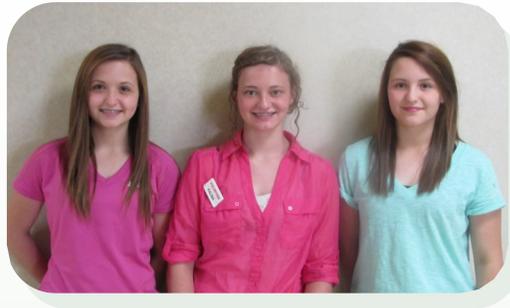


OGJVAMC Summer Interns (front row, l to r): Sadie Palomaki, Amanda Flitton, Mary Casey, Julia Weiss, Ashley Burkman, Ciera Bianchi. (back row, l to r): Kaylin Olson, Kelly Derwinski, Jennifer Recla, Chris Siegler, Michael Baumgartner, Maximiliano Velez Mejia, Aaron Sussman. Not pictured: Amanda Kltizke, Ellen Thom, Jessica Hagen, Gabriel Mapps and Richard Green.

## Caught on Camera



**300 plus motorcycles** rumbled into OGJVAMC at 10:15 am May 25th to say thank you to our Veterans residing in our Community Living Center. This was the first stop on their annual Memorial Day Tribute Ride.



**Summer Youth Volunteers** join OGJVAMC's volunteer workforce. (l to r): Kaitlyn Henderson, Kalina Nichols and Amber Henderson.



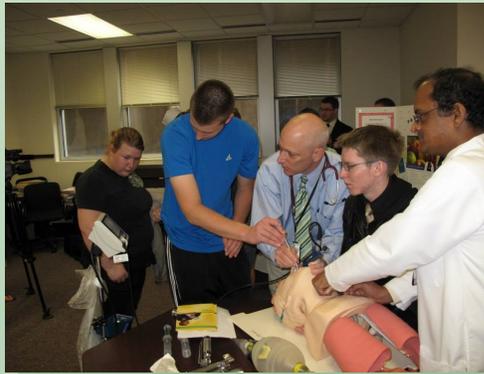
June 13th brought in a great crowd for the first annual **bring your child to work day!**



Staff and family who participated in the **4th of July parade** are (l to r) Dave Baker, Mitzi Metzler– Baker, Mary Gagala, Linda Anderson, Ailie Schoenboom, Candy Schoenboom, Nada Surface, Courtney Ehlert, Marilou Cazzola (kneeling), Larry Larsen, Faith Sexton, Grace Rice, Jim Rice, Luke Rice, Andrew Strickler, Linda Haleen, Ada and Jaylynn Haleen, Rex Sweet, and Patrick Palmquist.



Thanks to Tiger's star pitcher Justin Verlander and his charity program **Verlander's Victory for Veterans**, 15 of our OEF/OIF/OND Combat Veterans were treated to a Detroit Tiger's game on May 11th; traveled via OGJVAMC bus.



Dr. Curland and Dr. Choragudi showing Kingsford HS students how to put in an air tube during **OGJVAMC's student career fair** on May 22. 180 students participated in the career fair May 21-22.

## Vantage Point Blogs of Interest

“Last month's [jobs report](#) for Veterans was encouraging for those of us closely tracking Veteran unemployment. The rate was down for Veterans of all eras, and the post-9/11 rate, while slightly up in May, is showing signs of a long-term recovery.”

So begins one blog on VA's Vantage Point blog site.

See how VA is working to increase Veteran employment rate at: [www.blogs.va.gov/](http://www.blogs.va.gov/)



[Vantage/9279/counseling-services-deploy-for-boston-area-vets/](http://Vantage/9279/counseling-services-deploy-for-boston-area-vets/)

The other blog commemorates the battle of Gettysburg while reminding us how costly the Civil War was. The blog can be found at:

[www.blogs.va.gov/Vantage/9173/veterans-military-families-among-first-responders-in-boston/](http://www.blogs.va.gov/Vantage/9173/veterans-military-families-among-first-responders-in-boston/)



For all Vantage Point blogs, go to:

[www.blogs.va.gov/Vantage/](http://www.blogs.va.gov/Vantage/)

# 2013 VA2K Walk & Health Fair

May 15 was a beautiful day for OGJVAMC to hold the annual VA2K Walk & Health Fair to promote employee health and wellness as well as support homeless Veterans by donating new household items, hygiene products and clothing. **290 people participated** in the walk and health fair, including employees, families, Veterans, and 82 children from 3 area schools. There were a total of **297 items donated (\$687 in donations)** The health fair included the Coast Guard Auxiliary and the VA's Mobile Vet Center based in Es-canaba. Thank you to everyone who participated! ♦



*A team effort in finishing the 2K Walk: Michelle Borkowski, Tania Fuller-Hautamaki, Jan Irish, Connie Gudowicz, and MaryKay Campbell.*



*Left: Audiologists Krista Frick and Shannon Powell finishing their walk. Right: Nurse Managers Kit Demuri, Kim Mitchell, Tanya Edwards and Lisa Esqueda.*



WJNR 101.5 FM did a live broadcast onsite for the event. From left to right: Aaron Harper (radio host), Darlene Johnson (VA2K Coordinator) and Nicole Foster-Holdwick (Homeless Veteran Program Coordinator).



*Left: The Coast Guard Auxiliary telling kids from the Iron Mountain schools the importance of boating safely. Right: Nurses Katie Uren, Kathy Wahoviak and Mary Beth Bezotte.*



*The VA2K Health Fair inside the main entrance.*

To see more photos of the VA2K event, [click here](#).

# Kudos!

## Employees of the Month

April



**Brent Freeman**, Biomedical Department in the Engineering Service. The equipment for the Tele-audiology Clinic unexpectedly went down and wiped out all the specialty software apps and setting, creating an emergent situation. Brent worked diligently to obtain all the software, configure the device and return it to service saving the clinic's entire daily patient load. Brent has been employed with the OGJVAMC since 1991.

May



**Kim Nelson, RN**, Primary Care Service. Kim is recognized for her exceptional care and compassion for the Veterans. This was demonstrated when a Veteran who lives alone was discharged from a community nursing home and was in need of medications. Kim went above and beyond in coordinating and ensuring delivery of the medication at the Veterans home that very day. Kim has been employed at OGJVAMC since 2008.

June



**Lisa Patterson**, Home & Community Based Care. Lisa is recognized for working diligently over two months to successfully place a Veteran with a home care agency, in an area where it was difficult to find one that could provide the level of care needed for the Veteran. Lisa has been employed with the OGJVAMC since 2008.

## 2013 Nursing Excellence Awards



During National Nurses Week OGJVAMC presented the 2013 Administrator's Award for Excellence in Nursing to (l to r) Mark Noskey, RN, (Surgery, RN Award), Barbara Hill, RN, (Minimum Data Sheets (MDS) Coordinator, Administrative Nurse Award), and Nicole Janczy, CNA, (CLC, Nursing Assistant Award).

Please notify OGJVAMC Public Affairs of any employees receiving professional certificates, awards or recognition.

# Kudos / Employee Spotlight!

## Service Pins



Jim Rice (Medical Center Director, 4th from right) presented service pins to (left to right): Mary Gagala (Performance Improvement, 35 years), Larry Heers (Director's Office, 30 years), and Roongrote "Gar" Bennett (Respiratory Therapy, 20 years). Not pictured: Debra Carr (NESS, 20 years) and Barbara Baird (NESS, 15 years).

## RCA Cornerstone Gold Award



OGJVAMC received the 2012 RCA (Root Cause Analysis) Cornerstone Gold Award from the VA National Center for Patient Safety. OGJVAMC completed 9 RCAs and all safety alerts/advisories on time 100% of the time. Receiving the award on behalf of OGJVAMC is Paula Ebli, RN, Patient Safety Manager.



Jim Rice (Medical Center Director, right) presented service pins to (left to right): MaryAnne Gibler (EEO/Patient Advocate, 30 years), Michael Johnson (PAS, 30 years), Ernie Luri (Physical Therapy, 30 years), Christopher Nichols (Engineering, 25 years), Brad Tomassucci (Pathology & Lab, 25 years), Carol Banos (Pharmacy, 20 years), Deb Ruohomaki (Primary Care, 15 years), and Alex Graham (Pharmacy, 15 years). Not pictured: Cindy Anderson (Surgery, 10 years).

# Employee Spotlight!

## Welcome To OGVAMC! (\* Student Interns)

### **Associate Director's Office**

Bruce Winchell

### **Behavioral Health**

Kari Clendenning

John Jamison

Maxmiliano Velez Mejia\*

Richard Bauer-Green\*

Joseph Green\*

### **Engineering**

Zackary Hardwick

Aaron Sussman\*

Jake Stuck\*

### **Director's Officer**

Julia Weiss\*

### **Imaging**

Traci Murray

### **Logistics**

Jennifer Recla

### **NESS**

Daniel Dahlgren

Timothy Ellison

Randy Grailer

Amanda Klitzke\*

Richard LeBeau

Jaclyn Vedin

### **Nursing & Patient Care**

Roxanne Applewhite-Ackley

Michael Baumgartner\*

Ashley Burkman\*

Kelly Derwinski\*

Amanda Flitton\*

Jessica Hagen\*

Katy Kiser

Danica Noskey\*

Deborah Uren

Ellen Thom\*

### **Patient Admin Service**

Mary Casey\*

Sadie Palomaki\*

### **Pharmacy**

Ashley Aderman\*

### **Primary Care**

Mary Fornetti, NP

Dr. Kristi King

Kaylin Olson\*

### **Surgery**

Karen Nandory

Michael Pizzolatto

### **VA Police**

Gabriel Maps\*

Joseph Wickman

## Farewell Wishes! (\*retired)

### **Engineering**

Romea Dupuis

### **Nursing & Patient Care**

Lynda Hartman (Mantistique)

Debra Pate

Melanie Roell

### **OIT**

Richard Clark\* (50 years)

### **Patient Admin Service**

Daryll Kyllonen

David Pearson

### **Pharmacy**

Gina Hakamaki

### **Primary Care**

Dr. Cynthia Lack (MQT)\* (15 years)

Dr. Denise Steiner

Ann Frankini, NP (Manistique)

### **Surgery**

Robert Green\* (25 years)

## New OGJVAMC Primary Care Providers



**Left: Kristi King, MD**

**Right: Mary Fornetti, PA**



# Upcoming Events & Observances

## July:

- \* Bioterrorism/Disaster Awareness Month
- \* UV Safety Month
- \* Eye Injury Prevention Month
- \* Herbal/Prescription Interaction Awareness Month

2 US Constitution Takes Effect (1788)  
Army Air Corps Established (1926)

4 **Independence Day**  
**OGJVAMC in the Parade (9:15 a.m.)**

7-13 Nat'l Therapeutic Recreation Week

9 Ramadan Begins (July 9– August 7)

13-18 Nat'l Veterans Wheelchair Games  
(Tampa, FL)

21 Veterans Administration Created  
(1930)

26 Dept of Defense Created (1947)

27 Korean War Armistice (1953)

28 World War I Begins (1914)

## August:

- \* Cataract Awareness Month
- \* National Immunization Awareness Month
- \* Spinal Muscular Atrophy Awareness Month
- \* Neurosurgery Outreach Month

4 US Coast Guard Day (1790)

5-9 National Health Center Week

6 Atomic Bomb on Hiroshima (1945)

7 Purple Heart Day (1782)  
Operation Desert Shield Begins (1990)

9 Atomic Bomb on Nagasaki (1945)

22 Vietnam Conflict Begins (1945)

24 **Veterans Recovery Festival**  
**Pine Mountain**

26 Women's Equality Day

28 50th Anniversary of "I Have a Dream"  
Speech (1963)

Visit us online at [www.ironmountain.va.gov](http://www.ironmountain.va.gov) and follow us on:



Comments? [Email bradley.nelson@va.gov](mailto:bradley.nelson@va.gov)