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# **VOLUNTARY SERVICES BULLETIN**

**April 2013**

## **NATIONAL VOLUNTEER MONTH**

April is National Volunteer Month, and we want to celebrate the generous individuals who give their time, talent and energy to their communities.

We want to extend our sincere appreciation to our volunteers and celebrate their more than generous contributions. Last year, our volunteers donated 2,007,479 hours of service to veterans at VA hospitals, clinics and nursing homes through the VA Voluntary Service Program. Meanwhile, a corps of DAV Transportation Network volunteers contributed 1,904,723 hours and drove 27,540,071 miles providing transportation to over 782,000 ill or injured veterans to and from their VA medical appointments. In addition, volunteers provided hundreds of hours of “freelance” assistance within their communities using their specialized skills and training through the Local Veterans Assistance Program. Again, words cannot express the gratitude that we feel toward our volunteers and the work that they do.

Volunteering starts with you and what you like to do. Are you passionate about working with people? Do you want to give back to your community? Are you excited about new and meaningful experiences? Do you wish to give more but can't figure out how to do it? If any of these questions capture your attention, then the VA Voluntary Service Program or the Local Veterans Assistance Program are for you! It is vitally important that everyone knows that DAV is there to provide even more opportunities for members of the public and the veterans we serve. If you know someone who is interested in volunteering, please have them contact our Voluntary Services Department at (toll free) 877-426-2838, or electronically at [VAVS@davmail.org](mailto:VAVS@davmail.org).

The generous individuals who selflessly give of themselves and go above and beyond the call of duty to honor our injured veterans and their families deserve our utmost respect, and this month, we're honored to recognize all they do on behalf of our nation and our organization.

## CELEBRITY ENTERTAINMENT PROGRAM

### Major League Baseball Umpire Visits VA Medical Centers

Major League Baseball Umpire Jerry Layne visited the following VA medical centers in April: Jesse Brown and Hines, Illinois; Detroit, Michigan; Pittsburgh (Aspinwall and Oakland), Pennsylvania; Miami and West Palm Beach, Florida; Brockton and West Roxbury, Massachusetts and San Diego, California.

### 27th NATIONAL DISABLED VETERANS WINTER SPORTS CLINIC

We want to thank the following sponsors of the 2013 National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic for their generous support. A special note of thanks to DAV Departments, Chapters, and Associations that sponsored the Clinic, who are also referenced below.

#### SPONSORS

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**DAV Freedom Award**

In 1992, we instituted the DAV Freedom Award at the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic. This award is given to a veteran whose outstanding courage and achievement is an example to all injured veteran athletes.

The award's inscription reads: "Your accomplishments during the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic have proved to the world that a physical injury does not bar the doors to freedom. We salute your desire to excel so that others may follow." Every year, one participant is chosen for the DAV Freedom Award for Outstanding Courage and Achievement.

The 2013 DAV Freedom Award is presented to a soldier whose tenacity, fighting spirit, and drive to succeed have inspired all those around him.

On July 18, 2012, our Freedom Award recipient was on death's door. Already a veteran of the War in Iraq, he was on patrol in Afghanistan when he took a direct strike by an improvised explosive device. Several days later, he awoke to discover a laundry list of injuries: he lost his right leg below the knee; suffered muscle and artery loss in his left thigh; broke his hands and six fingers; broke his nose; dislocated his jaw; shattered several teeth; and severely damaged his left eye.

Our Freedom Award recipient – who had already mastered the use of his prosthetic leg – became intent on tackling that mountain. After just one day of coaching, the avid snowboarder was not only back on his feet, but was far surpassing everyone’s expectations.

Despite the physical and emotional challenges he has endured, this brave veteran has embodied the warrior spirit both in recovery and on the slopes. He is a an amazing example to his fellow veterans and to his fellow soldiers, as our Freedom Award winner is still on active duty with his unit at Fort Stewart, Georgia – from: Third I-D; First Battalion; Sixty-Fourth Armored Division; Bravo Company; Third Platoon.

The 2013 DAV Freedom Award was presented to Sergeant Kristian “Deno” Cedeno, a soldier whose energy, enthusiasm and spirit have been inspirational to coaches, volunteers and – most importantly – fellow participants.

### Clinic Statistics

#### Veteran Participants:

Total veterans: 343	New veterans: 110	New OIF veterans: 22
Male veterans: 291	Women veterans: 52	
Youngest participant: 21	Oldest participant: 87	

#### Branch of Service:

Army: 164	Air Force: 62	
Navy: 68	Marines: 47	Coast Guard: 4

#### Periods of War:

World War II: 0	Gulf War: 49
Korean War: 7	Operation Iraqi Freedom: 65
Vietnam War: 60	Operation Enduring Freedom: 22

#### Locations:

State Represented: 45	VA Medical Centers represented: 89
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Please do not hesitate to contact me if you should have any questions about the information in this bulletin.



RON MINTER

National Director of Voluntary Services

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