

# VETERANS CHRONICLE



FRIDAY, January 18, 2019

### Disabled veteran golfers enjoy adaptive tools

By Brent King



PGA professional Christopher A. Runyan plays golf daily. He is also a disabled Marine.

After he saw disabled veterans on the sidelines at the annual Dan Kleckner's Golf Classic tournament, which benefits local veteran organizations, Runyan founded VETS on the Green in 2013.

The adaptive golf program

is designed to help veterans learn to golf and provides access to different local golf courses

In 2018, Chris coordinated with the Spokane VA to assist in identifying severely injured disabled veterans and began a local PGA Helping Our Patriots Everywhere (HOPE) chapter.

The local chapter initially included 11 disabled veterans

whose conditions included amputations, head injuries, strokes, PTSD and paralysis. Adaptive golf carts, modified clubs, tees and other gear are provided at no cost to the disabled veterans.

I went into these PGA HOPE golf lessons thinking that I wouldn't enjoy golf. It's amazing – I now actually love this extremely frustrating sport! My nerve pain just disappears while swinging the club. This was a super introduction to adaptive golf.

At the conclusion of the first round of PGA HOPE sessions, we were invited to participate in the Dan Kleckner's Golf Classic. It was fantastic for all of us adaptive golfers to be included in this fun tournament at Downriver Golf Course the second weekend in August.

For more information on adaptive sports, contact Brett King at Bkinghomes@gmail.com.

### WorkSource provides keys for veteran success



ony S. came to WorkSource I Spokane as a veteran whose injuries prevented him from working in his chosen trade of plumbing. To make matters worse, his injuries and a prior conviction had become barriers to employment as well as housing. Our team at WorkSource not only helped him connect with VA benefits and other resources, but also helped him re-shape his résumé and learn how to introduce his justice involvement history to employers in a positive way. Within 10 days of arriving at WorkSource Spokane, Tony secured employment with a local apartment management company. In a community with a lack of housing availability, Tony's preparation and thorough follow-through, combined with our assistance, led to him obtaining this perfect position that accommodates his injuries, provides housing and pays a living wage.

Provided by WorkSource, an equal opportunity employer/ program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities (Washington Relay 711).

#### DID YOU KNOW

Did you know that certain training and education programs are paid for under the Post-9/11 GI Bill? Approved training includes graduate and undergraduate degrees, vocational or technical training, on-the-job training, flight training and much more. To learn more, contact your Veteran Service officer. In North Idaho, contact Department of Labor Veteran Representative Robert Shoeman at (208) 457-8789. In Eastern Washington, contact WorkSource Spokane at (509) 532-3101.

### Spokane Rotary Club 21



The Spokane Rotary
Club 21 "Support Our
Veterans Committee" has
been helping veterans for
years through donations
and support of several
charities and veteran

assistance programs. Rotary 21 has purchased guitars for the Music as Therapy Program at Mann-Grandstaff VA Medical Center; provided food for the Spokane Vets Forum dinners where they host mentors to work with veterans dealing with the judicial system; hosted a barbecue picnic at the Manito Park; and hosted a pie and ice cream social around Veterans Day for residents of the Spokane Veterans Home.

The club has sponsored veterans for the Spokane Conservation District's Vets on the Farm program

and the Warriors Heart to Art healing retreat. They also made donations to Washington Fallen Heroes Banner Project, Goodwill Industries and Operation Spokane Heroes. In 2018, Rotary 21 donated \$50,000 to the American Red Cross Inland Northwest chapter in Spokane, which purchased recreational equipment for the VA Medical Center.

There are many other veteran support groups and charities that Rotary 21 has supported over the years.

For more information or to submit a request for help or volunteers contact Rotary 21 Kurt Weigel, Co-Chair "Support Our Veterans Committee," at k.weigel@earthlink.net.

# VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES



Volunteer DAV van drivers are needed in Coeur d'Alene, Sandpoint and Spokane. If you can donate a day per or week to drive disabled veterans, contact Jeannie Kyle at (509) 434-7019 for more information.



Newby-ginnings of North Idaho, Inc. provides basic necessities and essential household items to veterans, active military and their families at no cost. For volunteer opportunities, call (208) 619-6996. Hours of operation are Monday-Wednesday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. 570 Clearwater Loop, Unit A, Post Falls, Idaho.





The Spokane Area Veterans Honor Guard (SAVHG) supports military funeral honors throughout the greater Spokane community and is a primary fixture at the Washington State Veterans Cemetery in Medical Lake. SAVHG conducts approximately 300 honors services annually. Volunteers to participate in military funeral honors are always needed. For additional information, contact Tom Christie Sr. at (509) 280-8162, or Tom Christie Jr. at (509) 216-7609.

### YOU KNOW

Hey, Vietnam veterans! Did you know if you develop Diabetes Mellitus (Type II), you are automatically eligible for some VA health care benefits and a monthly disability check? Due to presumed exposure to Agent Orange in Vietnam, there are currently 14 listed diseases that automatically qualify you to receive compensation. Conditions secondary to diabetes are also covered, including neuropathy, chronic kidney failure and heart disease. Contact your Veterans Service officer (VSO) for more information or for assistance in filing a claim. This is a free service and you do not need to belong to a specific organization to receive help.





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### Veteran First **Board: Improving** lives locally

Spokane has a long lineage of supporting veterans. The Associated Garden Clubs of Spokane and the Spokane Floral Society began to showcase area youth in the first Lilac Festival Flower Show and parade in 1938, which extended to the military post-World

The Lilac Festival has celebrated our service members for over 80 years. The local appreciation of our military has extended to nonprofits and businesses that support veteran groups, particularly in the last decade as post-9/11 military operations increase.

In 2018, the Director of the Mann-Grandstaff VA Medical Center reached out to Goodwill Industries of Inland Northwest to sponsor a grassroots community organization in support of local veterans, creating the

Veterans First Board. Chartered in 2018, the Veterans First Board jumped into action to help where the needs were greatest. Consisting of 15 volunteers from local businesses, nonprofits, county government, the Veterans Affairs and other interested parties, the group meets bi-monthly to brainstorm, discuss and extend a hand to veteran

With a robust veteran network already in place locally, the board, led by Michele Harris of Goodwill Industries and Brian Newberry of Girl Scouts of Eastern Washington and Northern Idaho, decided to champion small efforts to make consistent progress.

In the early months, the board applied for and received a grant for a van from Spokane Transit Authority. The vehicle was transferred to the Inland Northwest **Disabled Veterans Sports** Association to transport veterans.

Another recent success was a series of educational trainings for the 2-1-1 network, so local operators will be better informed when assisting veteran callers.

In our world view, veterans are champions for our nation, so if we champion any efforts which help them, no matter how small, our mission is realized for the VA and for our red, white and blue lilac community!

Provided by Veteran First Board



#### **DID YOU** KNOW

The WorkSource Hiring Heroes Job Fair is coming up. Approximately 80 employers and agencies will attend to promote their jobs to Guardsmen, Reservists, and military spouses and families. The job fair is Thursday, Feb. 21, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. at Washington National Guard Readiness Center, 1629 N. Rebecca St., Spokane. It's free for employers. Contact WorkSource Spokane at (509) 532-3101 for more information.



#### VA loan leads to dream home

By Chad Thomas **Prime Lending** 

veteran found a Ahome that he loved and planned to use his VA benefit to purchase it. Although he loved the house, he discovered during the home inspection that the furnace was about to fail.

He considered backing out repairs into his loan. of the transaction because he knew that he could not afford the \$8,000 or so that it would take to replace the furnace. The seller was also in a situation where they could not pay to fix the furnace.

Using a VA Renovation Loan, I was able to help the veteran finance a new furnace. We added the



\$8,000 to the loan amount and had a professional install the new furnace after the loan closed.

The veteran was still able to purchase the home without a down payment and finance the additional

In a market where it can often be difficult to get a seller to accept a VA offer, sellers should know that if a problem is discovered during a home inspection, a veteran may be able to finance the repairs with a VA Renovation Loan and fix the problem after the loan is funded.



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peace for each individual and family. My job as a chaplain is the sacred privilege of accompanying people on a part of their journey."

- Dennis, spiritual care



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**VETERANS CHRONICLE** is published in *The Spokesman-Review* on the third Friday of the month. If you would like to share a veteran story or a "Did You Know" fact, contact Don@vethelpnet.com. For advertising information, contact (509) 459-5095 or advertising@spokesman.com.



Every county and state has a Veteran Affairs office to answer questions about benefits or provide assistance. There are also other useful resources for veterans in the Inland Northwest.

#### **EASTERN** WASHINGTON

**Health Care for Homeless** Veterans 504 E. Second Ave., **Spokane** (509) 462-2500

Spokane County Regional **Veteran Services** 1117 N. Evergreen Rd., **Spokane Valley** (509) 477-3690 Provides: Emergency services, 3 Veteran Service officers

Spokane Veteran Center 13109 E. Mirabeau Pkwy., **Spokane Valley** (509) 444-8387 www.vetcenter.va.gov

Provides: Readjustment counseling

WorkSource Spokane 130 S. Arthur St., **Spokane** (509) 532-3000 Provides: Job services, placement and training

#### **NORTH IDAHO**

**DAV Chapter 9** 2536 W. Falling Star Loop, **Post Falls** (208) 773-1074 www.Dav9.com

**North Idaho Community Based Outpatient Clinic** 915 W. Emma Ave., Coeur d'Alene (208) 665-1700

**Idaho Department of Labor Veteran Services** 600 N. Thornton St., **Post Falls** (208) 457-8789 ext 3993

North Idaho Veteran Services and Benefits Office 120 E. Railroad Ave., **Post Falls** (208) 446-1092

Provides: Job services, placement, training

St. Vincent de Paul 201 E. Harrison Ave., Coeur d'Alene (208) 664-3095 Veteran representative:

Eric Swanbeck

Provides: Social services support

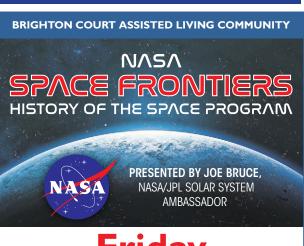
#### REGIONAL AND NATIONAL RESOURCES

**Goodwill Supportive** Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) with Volunteers of **America** 130 E. Third Ave., Spokane (509) 828-2449 Provides: Housing assistance

Mann-Grandstaff VA **Medical Center** 4815 N. Assembly St., Spokane (509) 434-7000

**Veterans Crisis Line** 1 (800) 273-8255, press 1 www.veteranscrisisline.net

Washington 2-1-1 An easy-to-remember number for Health and Human Service information, referrals and other assistance. www.211.org



## **Friday** January 25

2:30 - 3:30 p.m.

Please join us for this video and slide presentation featuring artifacts from the NASA space program, some flown some not flown.

Items showcased: space suit, small rocket engine, glove from the space shuttle, a piece of the Hubble Space Telescope, a piece of Mars, plus other items.

For more information or to reserve a seat please call (509) 926-4533.

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### Veteran and family grateful for VA's Caregiver Support program



**Bv** Bret Bowers Mann-Grandstaff VAMC

 $\mathbf{S}$  ocial workers at Mann-Grandstaff VAMC want more veterans to learn about Veterans Affairs programs that can get veterans the care they need, even at home. The Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC) provides family caregivers of eligible veterans benefits that can improve the life and outlook of their veteran and their entire family.

The VA Mission Act of 2018 expands eligibility beyond the original program, which previously only authorized support for veterans injured since Sept. 11, 2001. The VA is currently reviewing options related to extending the eligibility period.

"VA values the knowledge, skill, and perspectives of all caregivers," said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie in a Nov. 28, 2018, press release seeking public comment on PCAFC, and demonstrates a "desire to create a program that best serves the participating caregivers and veterans."

VA recognized PCAFC in November by promoting awareness and benefits of the program, including caregiver training, respite care, counseling, technical support, a monthly stipend, beneficiary travel and caregivers' access to health care (if qualified) through the Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs (CHAMPVA).

Sandpoint, Idaho, native Mark Hepinstall, a U.S. Army veteran, and his Ashleigh and Mark Hepinstall

wife Ashleigh say they're more than grateful for VA's Caregiver Support program.

Their VA journey began with weekly visits to the VAMC in 2008.

"It just took us a while to figure out a routine that works for us," explained Ashleigh, who gets a brief respite once a week, but is otherwise the main caregiver for her veteran husband, after they applied for VA Caregiver Support program in 2012. They say it changed their life together.

"It was a huge shift in our relationship," she smiled.

The severity of Mark's health conditions used to require a 90-minute drive to Spokane three times each week. But now, with case management support from VA's Social Work Service, Mark and Ashleigh can utilize VA's Rural Health Clinic in Sandpoint, the Caregiver Support program and the Veterans Choice program (now Care in the Community, or CITC) to receive medical care in their local community.

A 100 percent service-connected disabled veteran, Mark was given a bleak diagnosis following seizures that were only the beginning of multiple cancer issues. Now, he can stay at home and receive the care he needs from Ashleigh, whom he trusts and loves the most. He can't drive anymore, but he can still tinker on his

favorite Subaru and enjoys taking a ride with his wife into the mountains. He still enjoys sitting and hunting in the woods, and overlooking Sandpoint and scenic Lake Pend Oreille during the drive back to town from.

Mark served in the Army from 1980-1987, but after Sept. 11, 2001, he "asked to see if there's anything I could do to help my country again."

Idaho's Army National Guard immediately accepted him back because of his prior service and expertise with weapons. He maintained, repaired and issued military handguns, carbines and machine guns, and refurbished turrets and tank barrels.

"We've learned a great deal through all of this," Ashleigh said. "First and foremost, though, I had to realize and remind myself, he is my husband, and has earned respect as a man and a veteran who served our country."

She explained the difficulties because Mark can no longer do most things on his

"It's not about waiting on him hand and foot. It's about keeping him safe, because there have been times when he has been a danger to himself, at no fault of his own," she said.

Sitting side-by-side, joking and laughing about how far they've come since their friendship became a marriage, tested by debilitating illness and therapy; they are a proud and happy couple.

Mark has lost more than 50 pounds and can walk with a cane, but still needs assistance for bathing; showers are too dangerous because his balance isn't the best anymore.

"At this stage," he said, "we have fun in the little things," as simple as using a pool noodle to prevent head bumps on the ventilation hood over the stove.

They happily share pictures, before and after the cancer diagnosis, including Mark's bout through chemotherapy and steroids to battle cancerous tumors and seizures.

Ashleigh recommends VA Caregiver Support for anyone who wants to know more about caring for their veteran and loved one. She suggests creating a special binder for their veteran that holds important financial and health documents, including lists of medications and doctors, and a chronological order of all appointments. The whole thing is easy to reference when needed.

As a new year begins, this couple admits they have found a quality of life they can enjoy all year, thanks in part to

sticking with it and putting in the effort to understand how to access and use benefits available to veterans through VA.

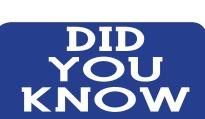
Programs like Caregiver Support are available for veterans through VA's Rural Health Clinic in Sandpoint and the North Idaho Community Based Outpatient Clinic in Coeur d'Alene. VA Social Work Service can also be contacted through the Mann-Grandstaff VA Medical Center in Spokane at (509) 434-7765.

To begin the Caregiver Program application process (VA Form 10-10CG), visit www.caregiver.va.gov.



Mark Hepinstall's Army basic training photo





Hey, vets! Did you know that a spouse caregiver of a disabled veteran can be paid as a caregiver under the VA Aid and Attendance Benefit? This benefit for eligible veterans, veteran spouses or surviving spouses is paid in addition to a veteran's basic pension. The benefit may not be paid without eligibility to a VA basic pension. If you know a disabled veteran that this might help, contact a Veteran Service Officer or resource center for information.

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