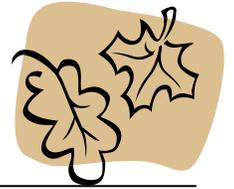


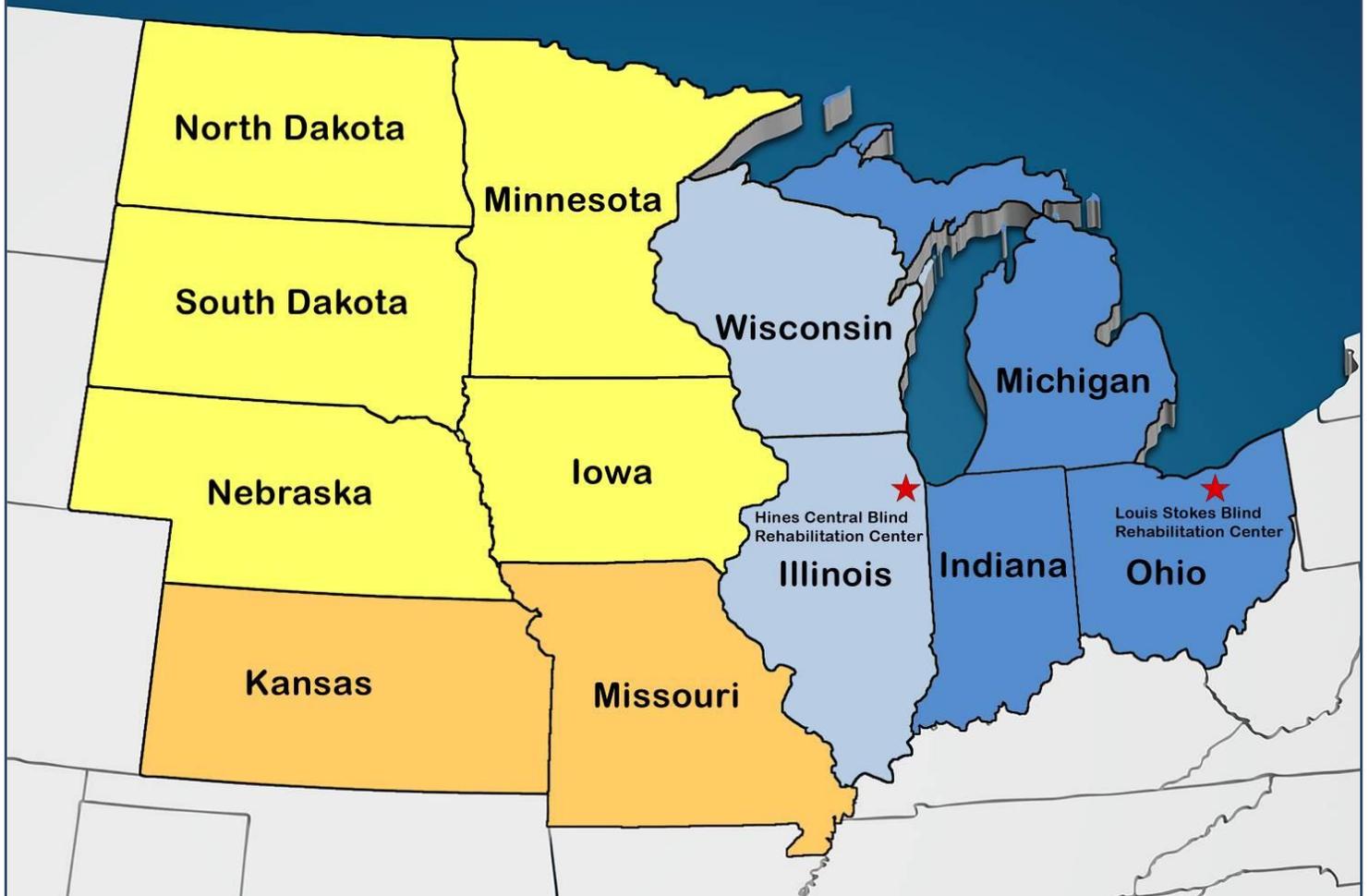


C.B.R.C. TORCH
A publication of the
Central Blind Rehabilitation Center
Edward Hines Jr. VA Hospital

Fall 2016



CENTRAL AREA REGION



"Let it light the pathways of the blind, that their dignity may be restored."

CBRC TORCH NEWSLETTER TEAM

The following Blind Center Staff members are responsible for bringing you the TORCH Newsletter:

Sarah Appler
Visual Skills

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Manual Skills

Susan Knauff
Visual Skills

Jamie Ogarek
Manual Skills

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Communications Specialist
Blind Rehab Center Administration

Melissa Winter
Recreation Therapy

Denise Van Koevering
Chief, Blind Rehabilitation Service

Our Mission

The mission of the Hines Blind Rehabilitation Center is to provide high quality Blind Rehabilitation services through the provision of a broad range of rehabilitation programs.

Table of Contents

In our efforts to improve the accessibility of the TORCH newsletter, the Table of Contents below allows e-readers to float the cursor over the list of articles and use the commands ‘control and click’ to quickly link to the article of choice within the publication.

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Chief's Message

Get your football on; it's Fall in Chicago! (But, I must confess, I am partial to baseball, especially with the excitement of the Chicago CUBS this year).



Along with Fall Baseball and Sunday football, we welcome cooler and shorter days. Fall also brings White Cane Safety Day. White Cane Safety Day is a national observance in the United States, celebrated on October 15th of each year since 1964. The date is set aside to celebrate the achievements of people who are blind or visually impaired as well as the important symbol of blindness and tool of independence, the **white cane**, which was developed by Hines Central Blind Rehab pioneers.

In October 1964, a joint resolution of the U.S. congress was signed into law that authorized the President of the United States to proclaim October 15 of each year as "White Cane Safety Day." In 2011, White Cane Safety Day was also named Blind Americans Equality Day by President Obama. Visual Impairment Service Coordinators (VIST) often host events at local VA facilities on this day to raise awareness of white cane safety and also to increase awareness of the Blind Rehabilitation Services available through VA Sources. Check out the article on page 16 that highlights the Central area activities for White Cane Day this year.

On the local side of things, Hines VA welcomed a new Director and Assistant Director this past September.

We are very happy to introduce Col. Steven E. Braverman, M.D., who comes to us from Baltimore, MD. Col. Braverman comes to us very accomplished in a wide range of areas, including a variety of healthcare staff positions in the Military, including Medical Corps, US Army Medical Command, and the Army Surgeon General's office, as well as healthcare leadership assignments at Walter Reed Army Institute of Research, and Army Medical Center, Fort Hood, TX, to name a few. He began his medical career at Fort Gordon, GA, in 1987, and is board certified by the American Board of Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation.

As the Hines VA Pentad re-establishes after several vacancies, we also welcome a new Assistant Director. Ms. Michelle Schlup. Ms. Schlup is an RN, who comes to us from the VA Northern Indiana Health Care System. She has held a variety of clinical and administrative positions throughout her tenure and brings a host of experience to the table. Welcome Ms. Schlup!

We are looking forward to working with both of these individuals in our efforts to serve the Veterans who come to Hines VA for their medical and rehabilitation care.

This, the Fall issue of the TORCH, holds lots of good information and resources for you. In particular, we have a message from the Hines Blind Center Alumni (HBCA) that includes a list of contact people and a “save the date” for the 2017 HBCA Reunion. Start planning. Some great resources are listed in the **Reliable Resources** column on Creative Arts, followed by some great recipes for fall in the **CHOW CALL** column. Finally, an early Happy Veteran’s Day to all our Veterans and Service Members. As always, thank you for your Service. It is an honor and privilege to serve you.

www.Wikipedia.org was referenced for the history on White Cane Day.

Performance Improvement

Every year the Blind Center departments work to develop a few projects to positively affect their skill area. This allows staff an opportunity to improve their class programs to better serve our Veterans. Check out our progress this year!



Living Skills has always focused on activities of daily life such as cooking, cleaning, telling time, and technology. This year the Living Skills Department worked on reorganizing their teaching area and removed outdated materials

and devices. Some of this included removing cassette tapes and cassette players. In addition, Living Skills updated the iPad and iPhone lesson plans to reflect recent changes in the operating systems. They have also begun creating tutorial videos to supplement training and provide a resource to Veterans and their family members upon the return home. These videos will eventually be offered from each department.

The **Visual Skills** Department works with our veterans to utilize any remaining vision through the use of vision training and optical aids. Staff spent time updating lesson plans and creating lessons for pre-existing and new equipment. They have also been monitoring and analyzing the progress of scanning training. This involved tracking Veteran’s reaction times on the Dyna Vision Scanning Board. Every veteran that was tracked thus far showed improvement.

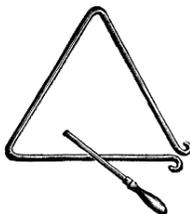
The **Computer Access Technology** Department trains our veterans to operate technology through the use of access software with magnification and speech output software. The department chose to track resolutions for technical support calls and worked on developing methods to share these resolutions with all staff to alleviate troubleshooting time. Simultaneously, the department has begun creating and improving lesson plans for access software.

Manual Skills is where veterans can focus on their non-visual skills to increase dexterity, hand strength and organization. This year they have been working on three projects. The first project used a systematic process to reorganize several classrooms to help improve accessibility and efficiency for both veterans and staff. The department has also been experimenting with potential ways of fabricating new copper tooling templates since they are increasingly difficult to find for purchase. Lastly, the staff has been researching the accessibility potential of the Universal Laser Systems and evaluating how it can be utilized more in classes.

Orientation and Mobility, teaches independent travel using the white cane in different kinds of environments. Staff created a new intake form for pre-evaluations which will allow staff to obtain more information before a veteran is admitted. The Orientation and Mobility Department is also evaluating the length of the outdoor mobility program. To do this, they have been comparing hours of instruction from veterans who participated in the program in 2011 and 2016 veterans. Their hope is to establish a more accurate estimate of training hours.

CHOW CALL

The following recipes will help you welcome autumn with seasonal pumpkin and apples.



Pumpkin Chili

½ lb. ground beef or turkey
½ medium onion chopped
1 14.5 oz. can diced tomatoes
1 15.25 oz. can black beans
1 8 oz. can tomato sauce
1 cup pumpkin
1 tsp. each cumin and chili powder
½ tsp. cinnamon
Dash hot sauce, salt & pepper

1. Brown meat
2. Add onions/pepper, cook until translucent
3. Combine all ingredients
4. Cook 6-8 hours on low or 4 hours on high in crock pot.

Recipe comes to you compliments of the BRC Cookbook.

Baked Apples with Oatmeal Filling

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Rinse, core, and slightly hollow 4 large apples, leaving the bottom of the apple intact to create a well for the filling. Place apples in a pie pan. In a bowl, combine 1 cup rolled oats, ½ cup unsweetened applesauce, 2 Tbsp honey, 1 tsp vanilla extract, ½ tsp ground cinnamon, ½ tsp pumpkin pie spice and 1 tsp fresh lemon zest (optional). If desired, add 2 Tbsp each raisins and/or chopped walnuts. Fill and top each apple with the oat mixture. Bake for 40 minutes, or until the sides of the apples are soft and easily pierced with a knife.

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OEF/OIF/OND Technology Week 2016

This year, the Central Blind Rehabilitation Center (CBRC) teamed up with the Blinded



Veterans Association (BVA), through the British program, Project Gemini, to host the Hines OEF/OIF/OND Technology Week, June 19th-26th. Eleven inpatient OEF/OIF/OND Veterans and 6 British Veterans from the Blinded Veterans United Kingdom (UK), spent the week learning about new adaptive technology for the visually impaired and building relationships with one another through group classes, activities and recreational outings.

The Hines OEF/OIF/OND group consisted of Veterans that previously participated in a regular program at the Blind Center, as well as Veterans that had never experienced an inpatient blind rehabilitation program. First timers to our Blind Rehabilitation program arrived a few weeks ahead of time to get acclimated to the program and get a core foundation of blind rehabilitation training before participating in Technology Week. The mix of Veterans created a great environment for learning and networking.

During Technology Week, our British friends were able to participate in a full day of classes at the Blind Center including all the skill areas to experience what Blind Rehabilitation is like for a U.S.

Veteran. They were also able to share what blind rehabilitation is like in the (UK) and a little history about their blind center.

The Blind Veterans (UK) is a charity organization fully funded through donations. They offer free Blind Rehabilitation services to visually impaired (UK) service members and Veterans. The Blind Veterans (UK) headquarters is located in London. There are three centers located throughout England and Wales to provide training and support to Veterans with vision loss.

While here in Chicago, the group was able to participate in an architectural boat tour through downtown on the Chicago River, eat Chicago style deep dish pizza from Giordano's and attend a Cubs baseball game.

Technology week was a great opportunity for the U.S. and (UK) visually impaired Veterans to establish friendships, network with each other and increase awareness for the visually impaired Veteran population.

Meet the Staff

A red rounded rectangular graphic with the text "Hello my name is" in white. The word "Hello" is in a larger, bold font, and "my name is" is in a smaller font below it.

Hello
my name is

This issue of the TORCH features our Supervisory Staff of the Blind Rehabilitation Center. They offer guidance and support as well as keep us all in line in day to day tasks.

Allow us to introduce...

Anthony Cleveland, who attended Western Michigan University for both Undergraduate and Graduate School. Tony earned his BA Degree in Travel Instruction for individuals with disabilities other than blindness. He earned his Graduate degree in Orientation & Mobility training. Tony has worked for the VA in Blind Rehabilitation for 12 years. He also worked at the West Palm Beach VA Medical Center as an Orientation and Mobility instructor initially, then taught O&M at the Hines BRC and is currently the Living Skills Supervisor.

Maggie Elgersma attended Western Michigan University for both Undergraduate and Graduate School. Maggie's Undergraduate Degree is in Speech Pathology, her Graduate Degree is in Vision Rehabilitation. Maggie has worked at the Hines BRC for seven years. She started in the Computer Access Training department for five years and is now the Polytrauma Blind Rehabilitation Outpatient Specialist (BROS) and

oversees the Visual Skills Department.

Rita Hutton attended Undergraduate education at Lawson State Community College in Birmingham, Alabama, and then transferred to the University of Alabama, Birmingham, where she received a Masters degree in Early Childhood Development. She also received an MS degree with one year advanced Masters studies in Guidance and Counseling. Rita has many years of government service at both the Department of Veterans Affairs and Social Security Administration. She began her VA career at the Birmingham BRC for the first eight years and then transferred to Hines. Rita is the current National Program Consultant for the Central Area Region and oversees our Rural Health Blind Rehabilitation Outpatient Specialist (BROS).

Jennifer Molodecki attended the University of Arizona for her BA in Psychology and Special Education and also for her Masters degree in Orientation & Mobility. Jennifer has worked at the Hines BRC for 14 years in Manual Skills and is the Supervisor of Manual Skills currently. Prior to working at the Hines BRC, she completed an O&M internship at the Southwestern BRC (SWBRC) in Tucson, AZ. Jennifer also worked for the Arizona School for the Deaf and Blind before coming to Hines.

Dan Smith attended Western Michigan University where he obtained a BA in Psychology and a Master's Degree in Blind Rehabilitation. Dan has 33 years of Blind Rehabilitation service, all at the Hines BRC. Dan has worked in O&M and is currently the Supervisor of Computer Access Training.

Scott Smith attended Western Michigan University where he obtained a BA in Fine Arts and a Master's Degree in Blind Rehabilitation. Scott completed his O&M internship at the Birmingham BRC and then worked for a year at the Tennessee Rehabilitation Center for young adults. He has now been at the Hines BRC for 31 years working in O&M, Visual Skills and is the current Supervisor of O&M.



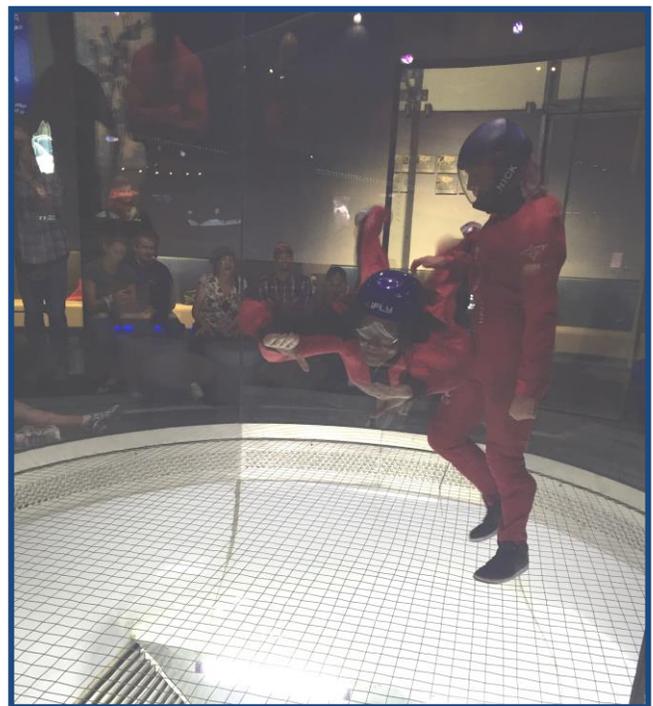
Department Supervisory Staff-From Top Left, Maggie Elgersma, Tony Cleveland, Rita Hutton, Dan Smith; from bottom left, Jennifer Molodecki, Scott Smith

Recreation at the BRC



Vets take to the Air!

Veterans attended an event with Dare2Tri at iFly Chicago on August 16th to do indoor sky diving in honor of National Air Borne Day. Veterans were given instructions on how to position their bodies while in the flight chamber and geared up with official skydiving gear. Each Veteran then was given the opportunity to complete 2 dives inside the chamber with the assistance of a trained instructor. All Veterans had a great time and are looking forward to attending again in the future with their families.



2016 TEE (Training- Exposure- Experience) Tournament



This National event provides legally blind and eligible disabled Veterans an opportunity to develop new skills and strengthen their self-esteem through adaptive golf and other activities. The TEE Tournament uses a therapeutic format to promote rehabilitation, fellowship, and camaraderie among participants. It provides Veterans with an opportunity to participate in therapeutic adaptive sporting activities, which demonstrate that having a visual or physical disability need not be an obstacle to an active life.

This year's National Veterans TEE Tournament occurred in Iowa City, IA. About 190 participants attended. Not only did the TEE offer golf, but also offered some new options, such as playing cards, ping pong, dancing, disc golf, and bike riding with familiar volunteers from [Adaptive Adventures](#). Veterans came from all over the country to meet with old and new friends and plan to meet again next year in Iowa to see who can get the longest drive, longest putt at the TEE.



Eye Conditions; Glaucoma

The Importance of using prescribed eye drops for glaucoma treatment.



If your eye doctor has prescribed eye drops to help with controlling your glaucoma, it is essential to use the eye drops as prescribed to help prevent loss or further loss of vision. Because risk factors for glaucoma include factors that are uncontrollable, such as your age or a family history, it is important to try to control a factor that can be controlled with medications, the intraocular pressure (pressure within the eye). It is also essential to follow the eye doctor's orders on how often to use the eye drops. The effect of each dosage lasts for a certain period of time. If you consistently miss a dose, then your pressure can steadily increase without you realizing it. Some people may believe that because their vision has not returned or they cannot feel the eye drops doing anything, then the drops do not work. However, the eye drops are a medication. For example, if you take medication for your blood pressure, you do not feel the medication working right when you take your pills, but you may see the results from blood work and see that the medication is working. The same goes with the prescribed eye drops. You may not feel them making a

difference, but you see the results when you get your pressures checked at the eye doctor. It is also important to not overuse the eye drops in the hopes of “using more must be better”, as this could be problematic.

To search on-line for additional information, the following sources were used for this article:

Glaucoma NZ www.glaucoma.org.nz
Glaucoma Specialists
www.glaucomaexpert.com

What is MyHealthVet?

Using the Prescription Tracker in MyHealthVet

Most prescriptions you get from the VA will be sent to your home by the VA Mail Order Pharmacy. The Track Delivery feature in the Pharmacy section of **MyHealthVet** provides information about the delivery of prescriptions sent from the VA Mail Order Pharmacy Track in the past 45 days. This includes:

- VA Medicine that was refilled or renewed
- Wound care ,diabetic and other supplies processed by VA Mail Order Pharmacy

You are able to see when your prescription was shipped and the delivery service (UPS, Post Office)

used. There is no limit to the number of prescriptions you can track.

How to Use the Prescription Tracker

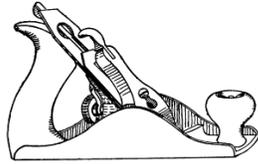
- Select the Pharmacy Tab
- Select the Prescription Refill History option
- If the VA Mail Order Pharmacy has sent you a prescription in the last 45 days, the Prescription Tracking column will display a **red** Track Delivery button on the same row as the mailed prescription. Selecting the Track Delivery button takes you to the View Prescription Tracking Information Detail page.
- The View Prescription Tracking Information Detail displays information about that specific prescription. It also shows a list of prescriptions or supplies that may be included in the package.
- The Tracking Number link will take you to the Delivery Service website for more detailed information.

An Advanced or Premium **MyHealthVet** account is needed to use the prescription tracking. For more information about the different types of accounts or to register for **MyHealthVet**, talk to your health care team or the **MyHealthVet** coordinator at your facility.

The preceding information was provided by; Levi Laroco, RN, MSN, **MyHealthVet** Coordinator, Jesse Brown VAMC through the Great Lakes VA Health Views Newsletter www.visn12.va.gov



Shop Talk With Sean



The Manual Skills

Department is thrilled to announce the addition of three new pieces of equipment to our woodshop! To those of you who have an interest in woodworking, or may be interested in trying it out while at the Blind Rehabilitation Center (BRC), you will have the privilege of helping us break in a brand new jointer, band saw, and sliding compound miter saw. These items have been on our wish list for quite some time, and due to the generosity of AMVETS Post 99 in Brookfield, Illinois, our wish has come true!

These pieces of equipment are replacing old and outdated equipment that no longer met the Veteran's safety or learning needs in our woodshop. For those unfamiliar with what these pieces of equipment do, the jointer allows the user to create a flat surface along a board's edge. This is necessary for the process of preparing lumber for a woodworking project. The band saw is a very versatile saw that allows the user to make irregular or curved cuts necessary for different projects. The sliding compound miter saw is used to make cross cuts, as well as cuts at specific angles. These pieces of equipment will allow our Veterans to continue to learn adaptive woodworking skills in a safe manner.

The AMVETS Post 99 has a long-standing relationship with the Hines BRC, as they have been hosting bingo nights for the Veterans for many years. A surplus of Post funds led them to the generous donation to the Hines Blind Rehabilitation Center.

Commander Harlan Keppel, Head of the Brookfield AMVETS, coordinated the donation of these pieces of equipment, along with a braille embosser that will serve our Veterans. We regretfully report that Mr. Keppel passed away in August of 2016. He wanted to make sure that this act of generosity was completed, and left the project in the hands of his daughter Sandra Pederson, wife Delores, and Post 99 Vice-Commander Bruce Troyer. This project came to fruition in September as these pieces of equipment were purchased and delivered to the Blind Rehabilitation Center.

The generosity expressed by AMVETS Post 99 will continue to enrich the lives of Blinded Veterans for years to come as they exercise their independence through woodworking.

Reliable Resources;

*Be Inspired
and Inspire
Others
through
Creative Arts*



Creative arts have long been viewed as outlets for individuals to express themselves through an art form. Adaptive Arts evolved and have been used as therapy and found to be helpful in treating a number of conditions, including PTSD, depression, and bipolar disorder to name a few. The products of art therapy can offer valuable information for care providers in developing a plan of care for a Veteran. Participating Veterans report, 'It calms me and keeps me at peace with myself, life, and society. It gets me to intermingle with people again.' For some, art therapy might be to find solace from physical pain; for others, it might be to gain control over traumatic material by expressing it in art. The ultimate goal of art therapy is not to develop the next Picasso, but, Veterans do create some exceptional art. As a result, a new found hobby or talent opens new doors to improved quality of life. It becomes an inspiration to them and in turn they inspire others.

Creative arts or adaptive arts, consists of many things, including a number of mediums that are taught at the blind rehab center in the Manual Skills area. Here we use these applications to teach hand-eye

coordination and spatial awareness in assisting Veterans with visual impairments to gain control of their surroundings and function better in their environment. Some of the mediums we use include leather working, copper tooling, ceramics, loom work, adaptive sewing, and wood-working. However, creative and adaptive arts don't stop there. Other mediums include painting, music, creative writing, metal work, and more, all of which can be done in an adaptive fashion.

Veterans that have come through our program have been successful in this creative area. Shelton Ponder, a recent Veteran who participated in the Hines Blind Rehab Program, began writing for pleasure which evolved into a career, mentoring, and play writing. He began his writing career by publishing a book of poetry called **Sand Script**, which was very successful. He has traveled across the country to different venues, schools and colleges, conducted television and radio interviews for different speaking engagements. From writing, he has branched out to entertaining audiences. Currently, he is actively traveling to different states to perform his play called "**Mr. Gantt Modified**". This is a true story of an African-American educator's experiences from the early 1930's which included topics of segregated schools, Great Depression, and World War II.

The VA Creative Arts Festival provides an excellent opportunity for budding artists (whatever the medium) to feature their works on display. The Creative Arts show can be an inspiration to Veterans to explore an art form that they may enjoy and inspire them to pursue it even with a disability. The VA Creative Arts Festival is only one of many opportunities to showcase your creation. Veterans can research local area art festivals and shows in which they can participate. You might even get an offer from someone to buy one of your pieces! The Hines VA Veterans Creative Arts Festival is the **local level** art show, scheduled for February 28th, 2017. Winners go on to the National Competition.

National Veterans Creative Arts Festival Winners from 2016 are available at the following link:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/veteransaffairs/sets/72157656322477510>

National Veterans Creative Arts Festival Website:

<http://www1.va.gov/opa/speceven/cf/index.asp>

So, time to start preparing your Art, Music or Creative Writing submissions. For more information call Recreation Therapy at your local VA facility or check with your VIST Coordinator. Below are some links featuring non-VA sponsored adaptive art resources you might find helpful. Once you find a medium that you

enjoy, the sky is the limit in what you want to create.

http://education.kennedy-center.org/education/vsa/resources/adaptive_resources.cfm

<http://www.artworkindiana.org/?pageId=52>

<http://www.abilities.com/chicago/artist.html>

References for this article were taken from the September/October 2007 Vanguard.

Veteran Success



We are always encouraged to hear when one of our Veterans surpass expectations (their own as well as the expectations of others) despite whatever barriers life may put in their path. Below is one such Veteran.

Val Chavez came to the Hines Blind Rehab Center for the first time in 2011 where he participated in the regular program, learning the basics on how to live more independently with vision loss. From 1983-2010, Val had been a nurse working at a local Chicagoland hospital in the ICU and in the Emergency Room. One day, in 2004, Val flipped through the TV channels and landed on a BBQ competition show featuring famous Food Network star, Emeril Lagasse.

The show made mention of the Kansas City BBQ Society and competitions that are held for BBQ Pit Masters. After the show, Val told his family that he felt they could do BBQ competitions too. He contacted the Kansas City BBQ Society and learned there was going to be an event in Illinois. His family attended the event and he talked with the competitors to learn their craft. The next year, his family started competing themselves. They proudly took home 2nd to last place at that competition and met their goal-to have fun! He did learn some valuable lessons during his first event. He learned about timing, when to put your meat in the smoker, temperature and to pay attention to it, and not to depend on your temperature gauge because it could be faulty.

Val has done competitions across the Midwest in Iowa, Illinois, and Wisconsin. He has competed against some well-known BBQ greats and is pleased of his highest achievement-taking home 8th place for his pork shoulder.

Val stopped competing in 2011 when he became legally blind. Prior to attending the BRC, his family became overprotective and Val developed a learned helplessness from everyone doing everything they could for him. From selecting the meat to carving, his family's fear that he would injure himself was very great. Val, however, learned he could still pick out his own meat because he knew how the meat should feel. His family

compromised with him bought him finger protective guides and special gloves so he couldn't cut himself anymore. He has large print labels on his spices and also has special measuring spoons he uses to measure out his ingredients to his homemade rubs. Val did mention the biggest thing his family can do for him is "to leave stuff where it is at and not to move it from one spot to another where he won't know where it is."

While Val doesn't compete anymore, he does BBQ for family, charity events and also BBQs for the Veterans at Hines Blind Rehabilitation Center twice during the year. Val has cooked for the veterans on the 4th of July and Veterans Day as a way to give back to the Veterans and the Blind Center.



Tales from Andy

Brought to you by our virtual guide dog, "Andy."

Hope you find the following

"Jokes and Quotes" humorous and entertaining. Enjoy!



Jokes

Frank and Tom were walking their dogs on a hot summer day and passed a bar that didn't allow pets. Tom said, "I sure wish we could go have a beer." Frank thought for a minute and said, "Do what I do, and follow my lead." He put on his sunglasses and followed his German Shepherd into the bar as if he were blind. Tom waited a minute. Frank didn't come back out, so Tom put his sunglasses on and followed his dog into the bar.

The bartender looked at them and said, "You can't bring that dog in here." Tom protested, "But he's my seeing-eye dog." The bartender scoffed and said, "Schnauzers aren't seeing-eye dogs."

Tom paused for a moment and said, "Wait a minute—they gave me a schnauzer??"

 There was an elderly couple who in their old age noticed that they were getting a lot more forgetful, so they decided to go to the doctor. The doctor told them

that they should start writing things down so they don't forget. They went home and the old lady told her husband to get her a bowl of ice cream. "You might want to write it down," she said. The husband said, "No, I can remember that you want a bowl of ice cream." She then told her husband she wanted a bowl of ice cream with whipped cream. "Write it down," she told him, and again he said, "No, no, I can remember: you want a bowl of ice cream with whipped cream." Then the old lady said she wants a bowl of ice cream with whipped cream and a cherry on top. "Write it down," she told her husband and again he said, "No, I got it. You want a bowl of ice cream with whipped cream and a cherry on top." So he goes to get the ice cream and spends an unusually long time in the kitchen, over 30 minutes. He comes out to his wife and hands her a plate of eggs and bacon. The old wife stares at the plate for a moment, then looks at her husband and asks, "Where's the toast?"

Quotes

"Far and away the best prize that life offers is the chance to work hard at work worth doing." – Theodore Roosevelt

"What lies behind us, and what lies before us, are tiny compared to what lies within us." –Unknown

White Cane Day



Many of your VIST Coordinators in the Central Area Region organize events to highlight White Cane Day every year. This is a great opportunity to increase awareness of the VIST Program, Services available by VA Blind Rehabilitation Programs, and blindness and vision impairment in general. Below are some of the activities Central Area VIST Coordinators have planned this year.

Sioux Falls, South Dakota supports a very strong White Cane Day program and organizes a “White Cane March” every year. This March includes reading of the Mayor’s White Cane Law Day Proclamation, and an open discussion of White Cane Laws at a local area restaurant where refreshments are served. This year the March is scheduled for Saturday October 22, 2016. In addition, Sioux Falls VIST also post White Cane awareness flyers in local area drivers licensing offices, and produced a short video about white cane laws to show in driver’s education classes. The video is available on YouTube at the following link;

<https://youtu.be/t6lmkxcGdVs>

St. Cloud, Minnesota has taken to the radio waves to speak about White Cane Safety and VA VIST and Blind Rehabilitation Services. Spreading the word in their employee newsletter is also part of their action plan.

Battle Creek, Michigan is planning an open house inviting colleagues from state agency blind services offices, Western Michigan University Blind Rehabilitation Masters Degree Program, Lion’s club members and other stakeholders. They also host a White Cane Awareness Walk scheduled for Wednesday, October 12th at the Battle Creek VA Medical Center from 12:00-1:00pm followed by refreshments.

Jesse Brown VAMC in Chicago, Illinois take to the streets of Chicago where VIST Support Group Veterans travel independently by mass transit to a public venue using their White Cane’s and travel techniques taught by our Central Blind Rehab Orientation & Mobility instructors. They meet at a designated local area restaurant, are seated in a group, where they often interact with other patrons and members of the community to raise awareness of White Cane use and safety. A positive exhibit of blind folks being independent!

Other sites within the Central Area, (including **Hines VA**) host Information Tables within their facility, represented by VIST and legally blind veterans (VIST Support Group Veterans) who showcase information about white cane law, white canes, and other blind prosthetic devices as well as blind independence. Whatever you choose to do on this day, have a safe and pleasant White Cane Day!

Message from Hines Blind Center Alumni (HBCA)



Hello Hines Alumni! The mission of Hines Blind Center Alumni is to promote continuing fellowship among alumni through a program of social activities, and keep alumni informed of programs, aids, benefits and developments affecting blind veterans. To join, you need only complete and submit a registration form. To do this, contact any of the board members listed here. This will ensure you are a member with voting rights, eligible to serve on the Governing Board.

We no longer require paid dues with membership, but rely on donations to continue our support of blinded veterans attending the Central Blind Rehabilitation Center (Hines). Our "Get Up and Go, with Melody" fundraiser recognizes the co-founder of HBCA, Melody Angelini. Melody volunteered many hours with Vets at Hines, supporting outings, providing a home cooked meal, or giving a needed hug. Your donations can be made by check via US mail or by using Pay Pal on our website (www.hinesalumni.org).

Governing Board members include:

- Terry Keibel, President
terrykeibel@gmail.com
- Daniel Johnson, Vice President
halisidan@gmail.com

- Keith Heltsley, Secretary
keith@heltsley.net
- Johnny Williams, Treasurer
wms.johnny@comcast.net
- Rick Olson, Ex-Officio President
rwoverna2@gmail.com
- Kevin Jackson, Honorary Member
kmjacksonsr@att.net
- *Vacant, Director s (X3) TBD*

As we continue to use the computer skills learned at Hines, we are moving away from print media and toward virtual communication. Our goal is to create a central hub for communications. Our website, www.hinesalumni.org is where you will find all of the most important HBCA news, events, and information about the latest breakthroughs in vision. Notifications of news and events will be sent to members as e-alerts, so be sure that we have your current email address. Our website will also be a clearinghouse for information and member posts. Our members can create posts, comment, and read from forums within our virtual community. These changes will create opportunities for sharing and developing friendships with our comrades (fellow blinded veterans). NOTE: individual posts must be submitted to the Secretary for his review. You do not need to be a graduate of Hines to receive e-alerts.

Save the Date! HBCA Reunion is June 14 -16, 2017; details coming soon.

Know your VIST (Visual Impairment Services Team Coordinators)

The Visual Impairment Services Team Coordinators, better known as (VIST) are your case managers for Blind Rehabilitation care and services and your first contact when you need to enroll or apply for a program. Whether it be your first admission to the Blind Center, a special program to meet unique needs, or a refresher program, these representatives are key. The following is a current updated list for the Central area Region who refer Veterans to the Hines Central Blind Rehabilitation Center.

<u>VIST Coordinator</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>PHONE</u>
Gregory Manuel	Lexington, KY	(859) 281-3916
Julie Kennedy	Louisville, KY	(502) 287-4000 x5898
Brian Joos	Cincinnati, OH	(513) 475-6397
Karla Riste	Dayton, OH	(937) 268-6511 X3514
Julie Wenger	Chillicothe, OH	(740) 773-1141 X6135
Matthew Page	Columbus OPC	(614) 257-5325
Beth Levine	Youngstown OPC	(330) 740-9200 X1580
Marianne Ryan	Cleveland, OH	(216) 791-3800 X4240
Jennifer Troyer	Detroit, MI	(313) 576-4888
Bill Bernhard	Battle Creek, MI	(269) 223-6607
Richard Alden	Ann Arbor, MI	(734) 845-3064
Deanna Austin	Indianapolis, IN	(317) 988-2576
Jeff Stroud	Danville, IL	(217) 554-5406
Jeff Stroud	Peoria, IL	(309) 497-0790
NovaLea Welch	FT Wayne, IN	(260) 426-5431 x72650
Leland Lewis	Saginaw, MI	(989) 497-2500 X11852
VACANT	North Chicago, IL	
Pat Zeinstra	Hines, IL	(708) 202-2351
Melinda Dunlap	Jesse Brown (Chicago, IL)	(312) 569-7531
Leon Haith	Milwaukee, WI	(414) 384-2000 X41832
Kurt Brunner	Madison, WI	(608) 256-1901
Patricia Staller	Iron Mountain, MI	(906) 774-3300 X34515
Gina Chmelka	Tomah, WI	608-372-3971 x66440
Kevin Jacques	ST. Louis, MO	(314) 652-4100 X54121
Paul Clary-Archuleta	Kansas City, MO	(816) 861-4700 x56924

Erin Shaw	Poplar Bluff, MO	573-686-4151X52151
Dawn M. Clouse	Leavenworth, KS	(913) 682-2000 x52657
Betty Howerton	Marion, IL	(618) 997-5311 X54815
Bob Hamilton	Wichita, KS	(316) 651-3682
Lauren Swift	Columbia, MO	(573) 814-6458
Anna Perry	Sioux Falls, MI	(605) 336-3230 X7860
Jennifer Points	Minneapolis, MN	(612) 467-1814
Lois Thesing	St Cloud, MN	(320) 255-6480 X6192
Wesley Hodgson	Des Moines, IA	(515) 699-4762
Jean Butler	Omaha, NE	(402) 995-3188
Keith Queen	Iowa City, IA	(319) 338-0581 x6889
Jody Schommer	Fargo, ND	(701) 232-3241 X3056
Galen Britain	Black Hills, SD	(605) 745-2000 X92558

Contact Us:

For comments, questions, address updates, or readers who wish to be added to the e-mail distribution of this publication, please contact us at the address, phone, or e-mail below:

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CBRC TORCH Produced By:

The Central Blind Rehabilitation Center, Edward Hines Jr. VA Hospital. You can view online at the following link:

http://www.hines.va.gov/services/blind_rehab.asp

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