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RSVP Station Spotlight – James E. Van Zandt VA Medical Center



The Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) partners with a variety of organizations in Blair and Huntingdon Counties to help support the volunteers that serve at those organizations. One of those partner organizations is the James E. Van Zandt VA Medical Center which has been an RSVP station since 2014. James E. Van Zandt VA Medical Center covers 13 different counties and RSVP supports their locations in Blair and Huntingdon Counties. In Blair County, the VA Medical Center is located at 2907 Pleasant Valley Blvd, Altoona, PA 16602. In Huntingdon County, the VA Medical Center is located at 13903 William Penn Highway, Mapleton Depot, PA 17052.

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James E. Van Zandt VA Medical Center provides a multitude of services for veterans. John Clay, RSVP Station Supervisor and Voluntary Services Supervisor, expands on what the VA Medical Center does, “There’s a whole range of both physical and mental services that we provide to about 30,000 veterans in our 13-county catchment area. We help veterans that have urgent issues, provide rides for veterans to get to their medical appointments, and we have the ability to give assistance to veterans who are near homeless or are in need of food.”

James E. Van Zandt VA Medical Center has four AmeriCorps Senior Volunteers who work at the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) department, “The Disabled American Veterans department is a service organization across the nation, and we have two different aspects here within the VA. One is a Veteran Service Officer, Lory Morgan-Liebeggott, and she assists veterans that need assistance with any kind of benefits that they are looking for,” says John, who continues, “The other area that the DAV has here is the Hospital Service Coordinator, Chad Williams, who coordinates rides that the veterans need for their medical appointments. The VA Medical Center provides vehicles that are VA owned and operated to our volunteer drivers who would pick up veterans and bring them in for their appointment and then bring them home after their appointment.”



John Clay, RSVP Station Supervisor and Voluntary Services Supervisor

The activities that the AmeriCorps Seniors do at the DAV department are either driving veterans to their medical appointments or escorting veterans when they arrive at James E. Van Zandt VA Medical Center.

Dave Fryer is one of the AmeriCorps Senior volunteers for the DAV department who coordinates other volunteer drivers as well as drives veterans to appointments.

Dave explains the roles of the volunteer DAV drivers, “DAV drivers are... (continued page 2)

James E. Van Zandt VA Medical Center Continued



Dave Fryer, AmeriCorps
Senior Volunteer

...voluntary positions that provide a vital service to veterans. Many of the VA patients are without personal transportation and do not have family members to assist them or they are not physically capable of driving, so VA patients are dependent on DAV transportation and there is no cost for the transport. Drivers are responsible for picking up a VA patient for a VA appointment, taking the veteran to the facility where the medical care is to be provided, and then returning the veteran to their residence.”

Dave describes how a veteran can be eligible to receive transportation services through the DAV department, “Individuals must be a veteran active in the VA system to be eligible for transportation to any VA sponsored appointment at a VA facility. If the appointment is outside the VA medical services, then it must be an authorized VA referral. If it is a VA referral, then DAV will schedule transportation.” Dave also explains who is able to be a DAV driver, “You do not have to be a veteran to be a driver. Any county resident of age to drive can volunteer as a driver, but they must pass a VA physical and attend some training.”

Not only do veterans receive an essential service from AmeriCorps Senior volunteers by being transported to their appointments, but they are also escorted when they arrive to James E. Van Zandt VA Medical Center. John expresses the importance of this service, “AmeriCorps Senior volunteers help individual veterans understand the hospital and get them to where they need to go. From the minute that the veteran gets in the door, they are greeted warmly, and they are helped to wherever they need to go from that time all the way until when they leave. That is one of the most important things that all of us would want when we visit our hospital is, ‘Wouldn’t it be great if somebody is there to help me where I am confused or lost?’ and that is what our volunteers are able to do.”

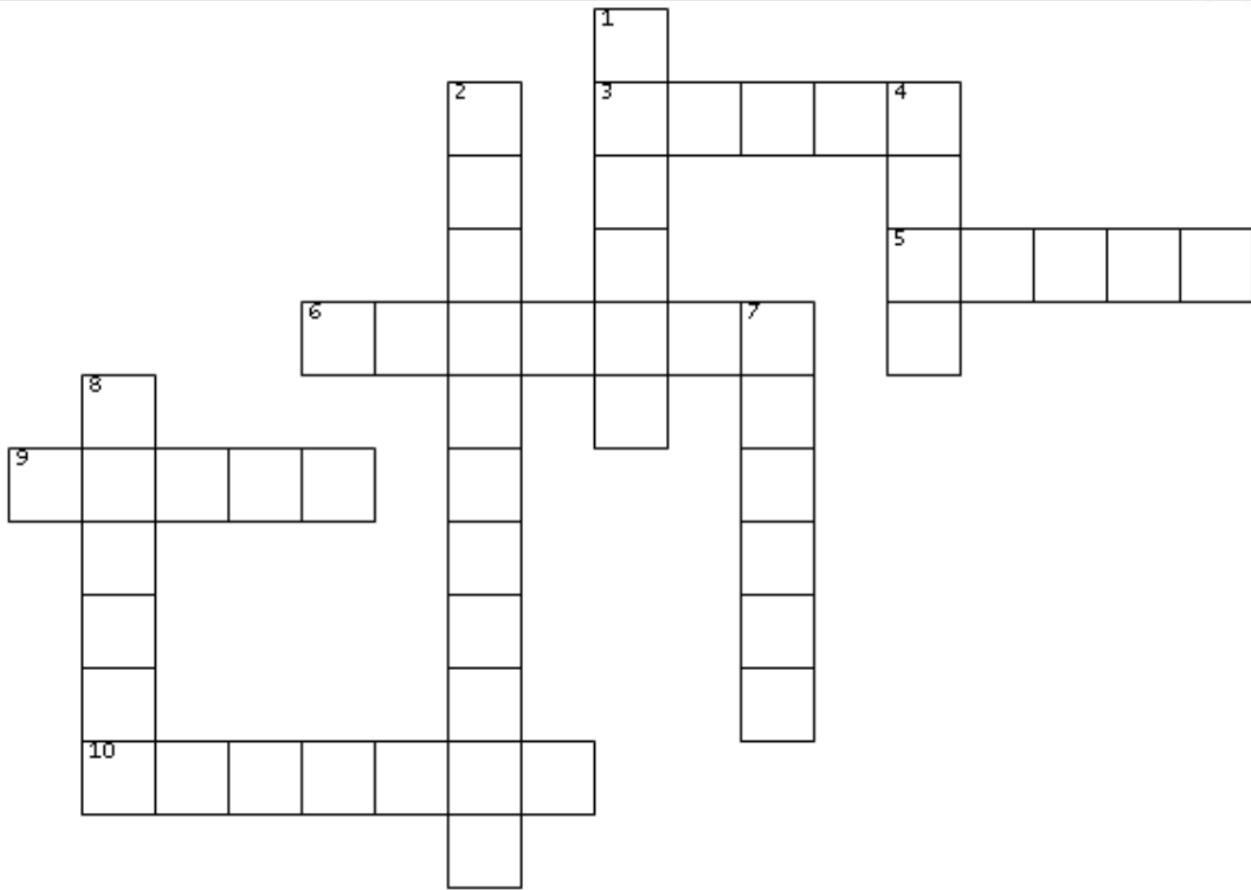
Volunteers at the DAV department provide an enormous amount of assistance for veterans by driving and escorting them to important medical appointments. Dave states, “As a driver and county coordinator scheduling drivers for transports the past 8 or 9 years, I have seen the critical need for and importance of this service. Many



veterans are struggling with physical and mental issues that have in many cases overwhelmed them and add to their dependence on DAV transportation. It is with pride and in the volunteer spirit for me to provide a service when I can, and to see the results of a struggling veteran get to the medical care they have earned.” John also expresses his gratitude in helping veterans through the DAV program, “I am so blessed to be able to help fellow veterans. I am a veteran and I wanted to be able to give back to that community and assist those people who have given so much for our country. I am constantly surrounded by people who really love being here and love the mission we have that supports our veterans.”

The AmeriCorps Seniors at the DAV department receive recognition and support from RSVP which helps them continue to volunteer their services and help veterans get access to the medical care they need. John says, “One of the big benefits for AmeriCorps Senior volunteers is that they have another service/agency that supports them. I think that having RSVP get people involved and active is crucial to the success of the hospital and we really appreciate it.”

Spring It On Volunteers!



ACROSS

3. National Volunteer Month.
5. People spring _____ to get rid of the dirt from Winter and prepare for the year.
6. April _____ bring May flowers.
9. Flowers _____ during Spring.
10. You will find the pot of gold at the end of the _____.

DOWN

1. A small piece of ground used to grow vegetables, fruit, herbs, or flowers.
2. The RSVP _____ Events are going to be held in March.
4. The _____ of the Irish.
7. March 19, 2024.
8. Finding a four-leaf _____ is a sign of good luck.

March Birthdays

2-Carol Yoder
 4-Linda Weir
 5-Deb Grove
 6-Trudy Miller
 7-John Vellone
 16-Jaye Souders
 17-Dave Fryer
 20-Shirley Franke
 22-Marc Masucci
 23-Jim Bonerigo
 27-Susan Rollings-Savory

April Birthdays

1-Nancy Weichel
 2-Linda Fryer
 3-Linda Blake
 4-Jody Wallace
 5-Monica Maus
 9-Greg Grove
 13-Sandi Harris
 15-Tommy G Gavazzi
 16-Darla White
 18-Pat Benton
 21-Elwood Keller
 24-Maxine Spickler
 25-Arkey Morelli
 29-Betty Dennis
 30-Dave McKinney

Answers To We Love Our Volunteers

Below are Answers to the January/February newsletter word search:

T	U	T	C	Q	Z	F	T	T	A	S	P	G	S	I
G	D	G	L	G	L	L	J	R	N	K	U	V	I	J
R	F	A	O	O	A	R	F	A	Z	H	V	A	G	M
V	O	B	W	M	H	R	H	E	K	D	W	L	Z	Z
C	K	E	E	J	M	R	D	H	M	S	Y	E	R	C
F	R	E	V	O	L	U	U	W	Q	M	I	N	E	A
M	N	L	F	E	E	W	N	H	W	V	E	T	E	R
D	B	B	F	U	U	T	P	I	A	F	M	I	T	E
S	W	E	E	T	H	E	A	R	T	K	V	N	N	Z
T	O	A	G	S	R	A	I	L	V	Y	H	E	U	S
X	Y	M	E	G	Y	X	C	F	O	Y	F	B	L	O
M	O	S	E	R	V	I	C	E	H	C	D	Q	O	T
X	O	A	Y	F	N	Y	C	W	Y	F	O	N	V	A
R	S	V	Q	L	J	A	R	O	P	R	X	H	A	J
T	H	U	M	S	E	B	K	U	P	M	K	H	C	C