**New Mexico VA Health Care System**

**Albuquerque Facility (501)**

**1501 San Pedro Drive SE**

**Albuquerque, NM 87108**

Matthew McGahran, Wayland Strickland,

Chairperson, (Acting) Co-Chairperson

Associate Director Assistant Chief, CDCE

**VAVS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

**Held Virtually Via Conference Call**

**June 10th, 2024**

**Convened: 1300 Adjourned: 1400**

Wayland Strickland, VAVS Assistant Chief called the regularly scheduled meeting of the VAVS Committee to order at 1300.

**STAFF REPORTS**

***Bassford, Ronald W., Public Affairs Specialist***

* Reminder taking pictures on facility grounds is prohibited. Please contact PA team at abqpao@va.gov for assistance.
* Due to the blood shortage in NM, we are currently looking for donors please contact 505-246-1486
* There is a Hawk outside of building 1. Be careful.
* Remind staff that the Public Affairs Office puts together a monthly magazine for the facility. Any questions contact the PA office at abqpao@va.gov.

***Ogilvie, Vicki S., Fisher House Program Asst. Manager***

* October 11th we’ll be celebrating our five-year anniversary.
* Since 2019 Fisher House has accommodated over 832 families.
* If you have any question, please contact the Albuquerque Fisher House at 505-265-1711 x 3180.

***Doyle, Annalisa E., Recreation Therapist***

* Creative Arts Festival is coming up with the visual display August 13th through the 15th from 10am to 4pm
* Performance Arts live is coming up on August 16th from 1pm to 3pm.
* Donations are needed for Veterans to travel to the Golden Age Games and Wheelchair Games
* If you have any question, please contact Destiny Fritz at 505-265-1711 x 5153.

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***Johnson, James R., CHA Chaplain Service***

* The No Veterans Dies Alone Program is still in need of volunteers.
* If you have any question, please contact James Johnson ext. 2735 or james.johnson656@va.gov.

***Strickland, Wayland B., CDCE/VOL Assistant Chief***

* Comfort items needed are shampoo, razors, shaving cream, lotions, deodorants, and body washes.
* We are looking for travel size and full-size toiletries.
* Another need are comfort snacks such as small bag of chips, crackers, granola bars, and other small snack items.
* Men’s clothing items needed are as follows:
	+ Undershirts and briefs sizes Medium to 3X. Small quantities of items 5X to 6X.
	+ Graphic t-shirts sizes Small to 2X.
	+ Pants or Jeans waist sizes 30 to 38 and lengths 32 to 36.
	+ Sweatpants in sizes Small to 3X.
	+ Belts
	+ Bags and Backpacks
* Dehydrated or portable emergency food supplies in containers are needed to support Veterans in the HUD-VASH program.
* The 2023/2024 HOC (Hospital Occupation Careers) program ended in May.
	+ American Legion Auxiliary (ALA) hosted the end of the year luncheon for students and teachers where they have received awards and gifts from both CDCE and ALA.
* Volunteer Awards Banquets are in the works for August.
	+ RSVP invitation will be sent out with date, time, location, and meal once contracting approves the location.
* On 06/22/2024, CDCE hosted a wonderful baby shower for our new and expectant Veterans at the New Mexico Veterans Memorial.
	+ Fourteen Veterans and their partners attended, and they were showered with diaper bags, handmade quilts and blankets, diapers, clothing, and other essential baby items.
	+ This baby shower was the first of its kind organized by New Mexico VA.
* The 2024 Summer Student Volunteer Program began with orientation on June 11th.
	+ No scholarship application was received for this year due to COVID.
	+ Current balance of the scholarship funds is $8,197.70.
	+ The cost to sponsor a student and receive credit for their hours is $150.
	+ If any organization is interested in sponsoring a student, please write your check out to the American Legion Auxiliary (ALA) and earmark it for the VA Student Scholarship.
* 2024 Operation We Care is around the corner and monetary donation are needed to furnish Veterans that are in need with a frozen turkey or ham during the Christmas holiday.
	+ $25 gift cards are also needed from local grocery stores to assist Veterans with holiday needs.
	+ In 2023 we provided 220 Veterans with frozen turkeys or ham and thanks to the generous donations all 220 received a $25 gift card.
* If interested, please reach out to abqvolser@va.gov or call ext. 2771.

***Volunteer Vacancies***

* Clothing Closet- Wednesday 9am to 1pm
* Popcorn- Fridays 8am to 12pm (Requires two Volunteers)
* Shuttle Drivers (VA Campus)- Various days & time
* Compassionate Contact Corps- Currently 25 Veterans on the waitlist needing Volunteers.
* Piano Tuner for SCI Rec Therapy- Various days & times

**The next meeting will be held on Wednesday October 9th, 2024 @ 1:00pm.** Location TBD

* ATTACHMENTS: Attendance Roster

 VAVS Status Report

Mathew McGahran, Karla McGhan Barthel,

Chairperson Co-Chairperson

Assistant Director Chief, CDCE