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VA Northern Indiana Health Care System Celebrates Volunteers

Fort Wayne – April 6 through 12 is National Volunteer Week and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) will use the opportunity to thank more than 79,000 citizen volunteers who give back to Veterans every day at local VA medical facilities.

Locally, the VA Northern Indiana Health Care System (VANIHCS) will recognize the 507 volunteers for the over 67,000 hours they contributed toward caring for Veterans, driving, directing, sitting, serving, comforting and counseling on a regular basis.

“Our volunteers are vital members of our team that provides for the Veterans of Northern Indiana. Many of the volunteers are Veterans themselves giving back to their brothers and sisters. I truly appreciate all the hard work that the volunteers do on a daily basis,” said Denise Deitzen, Director.

Of course, National Volunteer Week also presents an opportunity for other citizens to join the ranks of appreciative citizens serving Veterans. With President Obama’s memorandum to expand national service, VA is inviting everyone in the community to explore how they can use their skills and unique assets to thank Veterans with service of their own.

There are as many ways to volunteer as there are willing people to do so. For instance, American Legion Auxiliary visits weekly our Veterans to provide candy bars, bananas, and other snack items. Veterans celebrating birthdays also receive a birthday card with a book. This group of ladies is led by American Legion Auxiliary Representative Irene Davis. Ms. Davis continues to provide personal comfort items as well as a Holiday gift shop each year. American Legion Auxiliary hosts its annual holiday gift shop at the Marion Campus Recreation Clinic.

The American Legion Auxiliary volunteers shop, make crafts and prepare all year long to furnish a variety of gifts for hospitalized Veterans to select for their family’s Christmas. The gifts, wrapping materials, packaging and shipping are all donated and provided to hospitalized Veterans free of charge. The American Legion Auxiliary gift shop donations totaled over \$12,000.

Also, Raytheon, in Fort Wayne, donated \$2,300 for VANIHCS Veterans. Raytheon employees purchased flags with proceeds being collected to donate to VANIHCS.

While National Volunteer Week kicks off April 6, Americans have the chance to show their appreciation to Veterans all year by volunteering their time or donating to VA medical facilities. No medical experience is necessary, and volunteers are encouraged to share ideas how they would like to give back using their unique skills. To find opportunities, visit your nearest VA medical facility or visit <http://www.northernindiana.va.gov/giving/index.asp>

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