

WDVA Veteran Voices  
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## WDVA Veteran Voices

SEPTEMBER 2022



### A Message from the Director

#### Suicide Prevention Month - Addressing Veteran Suicide

Suicide prevention for our Veterans, Service Members, and their families is a high priority for WDVA. One suicide is one too many and the need for our communities to come together has never been more important.

Since 2019, WDVA's Suicide Prevention program has worked tirelessly to provide aid to those experiencing suicidal ideation. In the past year, our suicide prevention team has increased from a team of one to a team of eight, with four Peer Specialists placed strategically throughout the state of Washington in our NW, SW, Central and Eastern regions. Each specialist is uniquely qualified to provide peer-based consultation, education, and connections to resources.

Suicide prevention is everyone's business, and it is toward that end the Washington State Legislature provided funding to the WDVA to bolster our

#### September Events & Observances List



Here is a current list of upcoming events that your WDVA is tracking.

Please email us your events at [communications@dva.wa.gov](mailto:communications@dva.wa.gov) so we can get them added.

**September - Veterans Training Support Center - [VTSC Events | WDVA \(wa.gov\)](#)**

**September 08 - YesVets Employer Recognition & Resources Symposium - [YesVets Employer Recognition & Resources Symposium | WDVA \(wa.gov\)](#)**

**September 09 - Clark County Veterans Expo & Stand Down - [CLARK COUNTY VETERANS ASSISTANCE CENTER 2022 VETERANS EXPO and STAND DOWN | WDVA \(wa.gov\)](#)**

**September 15 - JBLM Hiring Our Heroes Career Summit - [HIRING OUR HEROES - JB Lewis-McChord CAREER SUMMIT | WDVA \(wa.gov\)](#)**

**September 16 - POW/MIA Recognition Event - [PROCLAMATION - POW/MIA Recognition Day | WDVA \(wa.gov\)](#)**

**September 25 - Gold Star Mothers and Families Day - [PROCLAMATION - Gold Star Mothers and Families Day | WDVA \(wa.gov\)](#)**

**September 29 - LEARN Suicide Prevention Training - [LEARN Suicide Prevention Training - | WDVA \(wa.gov\)](#)**

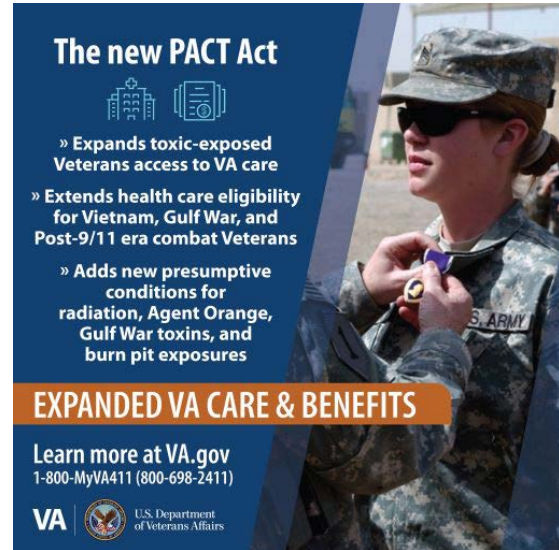
efforts. With these additional resources, our mission will continue to advance by:

- Reviving and co-chairing the SAFER homes task force to raise public awareness and increase suicide prevention education among new partners who are in key positions to help reduce suicide. To learn more about SAFER Homes- Suicide Aware visit their page at [saferhomescoalition.org](http://saferhomescoalition.org)
- Creating a database of information on nonprofit, for-profit, city, county, state, and federal organizations, providers, and resources that address the mental health, well-being, and suicide prevention of SMVF's.
- Create, in consultation with the suicide-safer homes task force, a web-based application to be shared by state agencies and primary care providers with SMVF's to provide applicable information and resources including but not limited to benefits, mental health resources, and lethal means safety information.
- Co-creating the "Prevent Veteran Suicide" emblem with DOL for display on license plates
- Creating educational materials informing health care providers about the availability of the nationwide 988 phone number for individuals in crisis to connect with suicide prevention and mental health crisis counselors.
- Establishing a process to receive, review, process, and award grants to organizations, including nonprofit and peer support community programs that address SMVF's who may be at risk of suicide and other mental health crisis.

If you would like to learn how to become a suicide prevention advocate, or are in need of assistance please call Codie Garza or any member of the Suicide Prevention team at [connect@dva.wa.gov](mailto:connect@dva.wa.gov), or 360-522-2894.

[Read More](#)

## Historic PACT Act will expand benefits for thousands of veterans in Washington state



**The new PACT Act**

- » Expands toxic-exposed Veterans access to VA care
- » Extends health care eligibility for Vietnam, Gulf War, and Post-9/11 era combat Veterans
- » Adds new presumptive conditions for radiation, Agent Orange, Gulf War toxins, and burn pit exposures

**EXPANDED VA CARE & BENEFITS**

Learn more at [VA.gov](http://VA.gov)  
1-800-MyVA411 (800-698-2411)

VA U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Gov. Jay Inslee and leaders from the Washington Department of Veterans Affairs are applauding the U.S. Senate's passage of the historic [PACT Act](#).

Once signed by President Biden, the PACT Act will [expand Veterans Administration health care and benefits](#) for veterans exposed to burn pits and other toxic substances. This includes the more than 354,000 veterans in Washington state who served during the Vietnam War, Gulf War, and post 9/11 eras. It also adds more than 20 new presumptive conditions for burn pits and other toxic exposures.

The bill includes provisions and funding sought by Sen. Patty Murray for a [new Veterans Administration clinic in the Tri-Cities area](#).

"This bill is among the most significant expansions of VA health care benefits in history, and demonstrates our nation's commitment to our veterans," Inslee said. "We're incredibly grateful to those in our congressional delegation who helped make this bill possible."

[Learn More](#)

## WDVA Hot Jobs - Incentives Available



**\$3,000**  
**incentive payment for new Nursing Assistant-Certified staff!**

Your Washington Department of Veterans Affairs is in the market for new NACs right now, and we're ready to sweeten the deal!

New full-time permanent hires are eligible for a payment of **\$1,500** on the date of their hire. These new staff members may also be eligible for an additional **\$1,500** after their six-month probationary period and any required training.

*Want to know more? Contact us at [recruitment@dva.wa.gov](mailto:recruitment@dva.wa.gov).*

For more information on this limited time incentive, go to [www.dva.wa.gov/nursing-assistant-recruitment-and-retention-incentive](http://www.dva.wa.gov/nursing-assistant-recruitment-and-retention-incentive)

### Available Opportunities:

[WDVA Nursing Assistant Certified \(CNA\), Walla Walla Veterans Home](#)

[WDVA Nursing Assistant Certified \(CNA\), Multiple Positions, Spokane](#)

[WDVA Nursing Assistant Certified \(CNA\), Multiple Positions, Port Orchard](#)

[WDVA Compliance Officer, Full Time - Permanent, WMS 3](#)

[WDVA Senior Compliance Auditor, Management Analyst 5, Full Time - Permanent](#)

[WDVA IT Application Developer - Journey, Full Time - Permanent](#)

[WDVA Nursing Assistant Certified, IN TRAINING, Washington Veterans Home](#)

[WDVA Nursing Assistant Certified \(CNA\), Orting](#)

[State of Washington Job Opportunities |](#)

**Other Positions Available at our Walla Walla, Spokane, Orting & Port Orchard Veterans Home.**  
[Recruiters@dva.wa.gov](mailto:Recruiters@dva.wa.gov)

[View More](#)

## Suicide Prevention Program - Governors Challenge

Suicide has been an ongoing battle for the Veteran community. Many of our Service Members, Veterans, and their family members find themselves in unbearable pain, feeling disconnected from their own community.



Through connection, your WDVA Suicide Prevention Program aims to improve self-efficacy and hope. Washington State is home to many resources for the Service Members, Veterans, and their families; therefore, our goal is to develop a strong network to sincerely support and guide those in need.

Learn More: [Suicide Prevention Awareness Month Toolkit | WDVA](#)

## Walla Walla Veterans Home



Drum circles have long been used in Eden Alternative communities with great success. "Recent research finds that drumming accelerates physical healing, boosts the immune system and produces feelings of well-being and release of emotional trauma." - Kavan Peterson

"Group drumming tunes our biology, orchestrates our immunity, and enables healing to begin." - Dr. Barry Bateman, MD (cancer researcher and author)

"When you take your drum to a rhythm circle and play it with your community, healing happens. It does not matter if the group's focus is purely



## Port Orchard Veterans Home

Remember how you stayed cool on a hot day as a kid?...you waited for the Popsicle man or the Ice Cream Truck to come into the neighborhood, hoping your parent would said yes!

Well today at the Washington Veterans Home in Port Orchard, with special thanks to our own Theresa Stanton-Grose and Patty Hampton from Dietary Services, honored residents and staff were able to cool down with a popsicle.

Of course, the only way to make this even more reminiscent of enjoying a cool treat on a hot day was by playing the Ice Cream Truck song on a Bluetooth speaker up and down the hallways.

[#TheseAreOurHeroes](#)



[PHOTOS: Washington Veterans Home Honored Residents Attend Tacoma Rainiers Game](#)

## Spokane Veterans Home

social or ritualistic. If you come and drum, the healing is compounded because everyone is putting their spirit into their drum, and their hearts are open. You get and give a rhythmical massage that is compounded by the number of people in the circle and the energy they are sharing with each other." - Arthur Hull



More Photos

**Mail Donations To:**  
WDVA Purple Heart Sign Campaign  
PO Box 41150  
Olympia, WA 98504



**Total Sign Costs**  
\$1,100 Larger Signs  
\$1,000 Smaller Signs  
All Donations Welcome



*Your donation helps place signs at all WA highway entrances!*

To Donate or For More Info:  
[communications@dva.wa.gov](mailto:communications@dva.wa.gov)



**You can help recognize Washington as a Purple Heart State...Donate Today!**

Recognizing and Honoring Washington State Purple Heart Veterans – Washington Highway Sign Campaign

Every donation counts towards the goal of placing Purple Heart Highway Signs at all 34 state entrances into Washington!



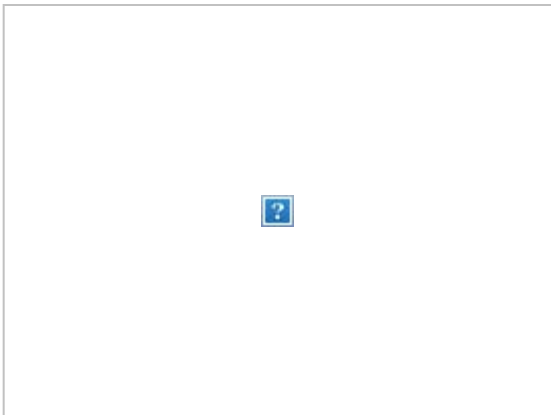
### Spokane County Cattlemen Donates Beef to Spokane Veterans Home

Our Spokane Veterans Home was greeted with 500lbs of ground beef, graciously donated by the [Spokane County Cattlemen](#) earlier this week.

Our honored veterans and staff greeted them and thanked them. Everyone is excited for the next big barbecue and we would like to thank our amazing community members for all they do.

Our community serves our mission by [#ServingThoseWhoServed!](#)

[#WeLoveOurCommunity](#)



## Serve Washington receives \$21.3 million in federal grants to support 1,490 AmeriCorps members statewide

Purple Heart Medals are presented to Armed Forces members who are killed or wounded in combat.

Learn more: [Purple Heart Donation](#)

## Washington Soldiers Home in Orting



### Kings Men Car Club Poker Run

The Washington Soldiers Home in Orting honored residents were excited to reconnect with the [Kings Men Car Club](#) and provide space on their grounds for the poker run stop.

The WA Soldiers Home poker run stop has been a longstanding tradition with the Kings Men Car Club Poker Runs. Many car club members expressed delight in returning to the WA Soldiers Home after a long break.

Residents were equally delighted as they could hear the rumble of beautiful classic & antique cars cruising through campus. These beauties were a feast for the eyes as they passed by the Nursing Care Facility! Residents and Kings Men Car Club members exchanged social greetings with big waves and "Hellos!". The cars circled the Nursing Care Facility, so residents who stayed inside could see and hear the cars from their windows.

Thank you to the Kings Men Car Club for their ongoing support for the WA Soldiers Home residents! [#WeLoveOurCommunity](#)

Serve Washington receives \$21.3 million in federal grants to support 1,490 AmeriCorps members statewide

Gov. Jay Inslee announced today that Serve Washington, the state's commission on national and community service, has been awarded \$21.3 million in federal AmeriCorps funding that will help place 1,490 AmeriCorps members statewide.

AmeriCorps is the national community service program where AmeriCorps members and AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers serve directly with nonprofit organizations to tackle the nation's most pressing challenges. Over the course of their service, AmeriCorps members serve in program focus areas related to economic opportunity, healthy futures, environmental stewardship, disaster services, education and the needs of veterans and military families.

"AmeriCorps members are a force multiplier when it comes to helping communities thrive," Inslee said. "Their resourcefulness, creativity and unwavering dedication to service has helped community organizations meet critical needs of the most vulnerable Washingtonians. I'm proud we have these AmeriCorps members to help our communities thrive through results-driven service and make Washington state an even greater place to live."

[Read More](#)

## 5th Annual Serving Those Who Served Conference held in Wenatchee

To all who



## FINAL CALL: Outstanding Service to Veterans Awards - Nominate Now



[Washington State Outstanding Award For Service to Veterans \(google.com\)](http://www.wa.gov/veterans-awards)

You know who they are, volunteers, service officers, community members or others who day in and day out go above and beyond the call of duty making sure veterans and their family members are cared for. Whether they submit claims for benefits, arrange funeral honors for grieving families, coordinate events or donate countless hours in veterans hospitals or nursing homes, here is your chance to nominate them for one of seven Outstanding Service to Veterans Awards.

This awards program is sponsored by the Governor's Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee (VAAC) and award winners are invited to participate in the Auburn Veteran's Day Parade, followed by recognition at a special luncheon.

**You can nominate individuals for Outstanding Service to Veterans Awards in the following categories:**

- Superior Award - This award is the Committee's highest honor and is given to recognize clearly superior accomplishments, achievements, and



attended the 5<sup>th</sup> annual Serving Those Who Served Conference, we say THANK YOU!



You made this conference our largest conference to date.

Over the two days we spent together, we saw individuals forming connections, being inspired, and gathering knowledge and resources that didn't have in their toolbelt before.

YOUR Washington Department of Veterans Affairs had this to say about the conference in a Facebook post: *"At the Serving Those Who Served conference in Wenatchee!!! Amazing turnout of 300+ passionate veterans, providers and advocates. Two days of learning, networking and relationship building to better serve our veterans and their families!"*

We look forward to seeing you all next year our 6<sup>th</sup> annual Serving Those Who Served Conference.

Learn more about the conference and how you can get involved at: [www.dva.wa.gov/stws](http://www.dva.wa.gov/stws)

**2022 Serving Those Who Served Conference – WDVA – YouTube Playlist Link:** [2022 Serving Those Who Served Conference - WA Dept of Veterans Affairs - YouTube](#)

**2022 STWS Photo Album:** [2022.08 Serving Those Who Served Conference | Flickr](#)

## WDVA Offers Free Military Culture Training to Staff at State's Largest Healthcare Provider

The Washington State Department of Veteran Affairs (WDVA) announced a program to offer a military cultural competency training certificate program to healthcare practitioners at Providence, Washington State's largest healthcare provider. The Veteran Ready certificate program is offered by PsychArmor, a nonprofit training provider for military cultural awareness, serving members of the military-connected community and anyone who wants to

outstanding performance.

- Distinguished Service Award - This award is used to recognize significant accomplishments and special contributions.
- Team Award - This award is designed to recognize significant accomplishments of a team or group of individuals. This may be for their contributions on a special project, special contribution and outstanding performance.

Nominations may be submitted by any person, organization, or institution and must be received by September 30, 2022.

## Suicide Prevention Awareness Month Toolkit

September is Suicide Prevention Awareness Month — a time to raise awareness on this stigmatized, and often taboo, topic. In addition to shifting public perception, we use this month to spread hope and vital information to people affected by suicide. Our goal is to ensure that individuals, friends and families have access to the resources they need to discuss suicide prevention and to seek help.

WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS  
"Serving Those Who Served"

September is Suicide Prevention Month – Among the highest priorities for *your* WDVA is preventing suicide among service members, veterans and their families. Working with partners, we have made strides in providing training, resources, and peer support throughout our state. During Suicide Prevention Month, we encourage everyone to get involved because suicide prevention is truly everyone's business.

1. **Reach Out** to people you know who may be struggling.

more effectively engage with them. WDVA believes that by encouraging community members to better understand military and veteran culture, Veterans, military and their families will receive the best possible care.

An outgrowth of the [Governor's Challenge](#) to prevent suicide among service members, Veterans, and their families, funding was secured by the Washington State Department of Health to train up to 300 learners. Courses will be available through a custom, online learning portal and includes the foundational course [15 Things Veterans Want You To Know for Healthcare Providers](#). Additional courses focus on suicide prevention, PTSD, caregiver support, communicating with Veterans, military culture, mental health wellness and more. Providence providers are required to take seven of the 14 courses to receive their Veteran Ready Healthcare Practitioner status. Dr. Heidi Kraft, PsychArmor's Chief Clinical Officer and a Navy Veteran, kicked off the program with a live webinar on June 21 for state employees and Providence leadership.

"This partnership will change lives, plain and simple," said Lourdes "Alfie" Alvarado-Ramos. "Many people think that all Veterans receive their health care from the VA but that is simply not the case. Nearly 75% of Veterans are seen by community providers, so the commitment from Providence to train staff to better serve Veterans and their Families will make a difference."

[Read More](#)

2. **Listen** and let them know they're not alone
3. **Seek Help** by calling 988 and using tools available in the [WDVA Toolkit](#). Portions of this will be shared throughout the month via the WDVA website and social media.



# September is Suicide Prevention Awareness Month



**Veterans  
Crisis Line**








**DIAL 988 then  
PRESS 1**

**#BeThe1To #SPAM**  
Suicide Prevention Awareness Month



## Your Suicide Prevention Team

	<p><b>Codie Garza</b> Suicide Prevention Program Manager Region: State-wide Cell: 360-522-2894 Email: <a href="mailto:codie.garza@dva.wa.gov">codie.garza@dva.wa.gov</a></p>
	<p><b>Jen Prewitt</b> Suicide Prevention Peer Specialist Region 1: Clallam, Island, Jefferson, King, Kitsap, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish &amp; Whatcom Counties Email: <a href="mailto:jennifer.prewitt@dva.wa.gov">jennifer.prewitt@dva.wa.gov</a></p>
	<p><b>Connie O'Brien-Larsen</b> Suicide Prevention Peer Specialist Region 2: Clark, Cowlitz, Grays Harbor, Lewis, Mason, Pacific, Pierce, Skamania, Thurston &amp; Wahkiakum Counties Email: <a href="mailto:constance.obrien-larsen@dva.wa.gov">constance.obrien-larsen@dva.wa.gov</a></p>
	<p><b>Mike Badgley</b> Suicide Prevention Peer Specialist Region 3: Chelan, Douglas, Grant, Kittitas, Klickitat, Okanogan, &amp; Yakima Counties Email: <a href="mailto:michael.badgley@dva.wa.gov">michael.badgley@dva.wa.gov</a></p>
	<p><b>James Hansen</b> Rural Suicide Prevention Peer Specialist Region 4: Adams, Asotin, Benton, Columbia, Ferry, Franklin, Garfield, Lincoln, Pend Oreille, Spokane, Stevens, Walla Walla, &amp; Whitman Counties Email: <a href="mailto:james.hansen@dva.wa.gov">james.hansen@dva.wa.gov</a></p>

Please take a few moments and provide us with feedback to make us better in 2022 at Serving Those Who Served.

Your feedback is instrumental in the continued improvement of your Washington Department of Veterans Affairs.



<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/WDVA2022>

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