

Vinson Vine

In This Issue

**Customer Service
Recovery**

**A Survivor's
Story**

The VA Seal

Plus

From the Director

Employee Spotlight

IT & Police

Volunteer Service

Our Premiere Issue!!!!



Welcome to the inaugural edition of the new *Vinson Vine* magazine, a monthly publication that chronicles our efforts at the Carl Vinson VA Medical Center to provide all of our customers with service excellence!

By changing to a monthly format, we can offer more information to all stakeholders—Veterans, employees, and anyone interested in our progress. Our mission is to provide our Veterans with “the best care anywhere,” and our teammates have worked hard in 2012 to honor that commitment. We expect to make 2013 an even better year with continuing improvements and new programs. The challenge of the 21st century for our medical center is to provide for the unique needs of Veterans living in rural areas. With this in mind, we are thinking creatively and acting flexibly to move as many services as possible to our clinics, as well as taking many services to Veterans’ homes. Programs to end Veteran homelessness, to provide

prosthetics, and to provide audiology are just a few of the initiatives that we are using to make services as convenient as possible, all while strategically managing our costs by making the best use of available resources. By collaborating with Eisenhower Army Medical Center in Augusta, GA, and other VA medical centers, we are striving to combine resources that not only will allow us to use existing resources more economically, but also will result in enhanced services for Veterans.

The future of VA is effective cooperation with other governmental organizations, and our medical center is definitely headed in the right direction!

Throughout this magazine you’ll see a multitude of inspirational stories and educational information that will keep you current on our programs, accomplishments, and other activities that help us honor our mission. Also, to make use of the latest technology and provide the most convenient access, the *Vinson Vine* will be available on our web site <http://www.dublin.va.gov/contact/> and on Facebook, including current and past editions starting with this one.

Enjoy the magazine! And a sincere “Thank you!” to all of our stakeholders, especially America’s heroes, our Veterans, for their service to our country!

John S. Goldman
John S. Goldman
Director

IN THIS ISSUE

Feature Articles

Customer Service Recovery

4

When something goes wrong

A Survivor’s Story

8

Breast Cancer Survivor

The VA Seal

12

An icon of service

Newsletter Staff

Editor: *Frank Brooks*

Senior Copy Editor: *Frank G. Jordan, Jr.*

Photo/Layout Editor: *Greg Swars*

Departments

Education and Training 6
Human Resources

IT & Police 7

**Employee Spotlight/
Behind the Scenes** 10

Welcome to Our Family 11

Volunteer Service/Events 12

Ethic’s Corner 13





Service recovery is a critical -- yet all too often missing—element in providing customer service that will attract and retain customers and have a positive impact on the bottom line of any business -- no matter where it is located or what product or service it provides.

Service recovery builds customer loyalty that brings a customer back from the brink of defection, simply put; it is putting a smile on a customer's face after you've screwed up. It's solving a customer's problem or complaint and sending him out the door feeling as if he's just done business with the greatest company on earth -- and it's doing so in 60 seconds or less."

Service recovery involves a series of steps that must be taken in order to attract- and retain-- customers.

They include:

APOLOGIZE

You must apologize and take responsibility for the error. "For service recovery to work, it has to happen with the first per-son the customer tells about the problem. Unfortunately, many employees don't want to admit that they or their company screwed up, so they lie or make excuses, which irritates the customer even more. You must apologize sincerely on behalf of the company."

SOLVE THE PROBLEM

Once made aware of the situation, the employee must do whatever is necessary -- as quickly as possible -- to solve the problem. That means that employees must be empowered. They must be given the author-ity to bend and break the rules in order to satisfy the customer.

EMPOWERMENT

Empowerment is the backbone of service recovery, "It's impossible to be a service leader, to be customer centric and focus on a service strategy without empowering employees. The definition of empowerment is giving employ-ees the authority to do whatever it takes, on the spot, to take care of a customer to that customer's satisfaction—not to the organiza-tion's satisfaction."

GIVE SOMETHING OF VALUE

Give the customer something of value as compensation. "To simply say you're sorry is nice, but it's not very powerful, "You must give the customer something that has value in his eyes, something so powerful that he/she not only will continue to patronize your business but will tell everyone he knows about the wonderful service you provided to him/her. Every company has something of value it can give to a customer who has experi-enced a problem. It can cost the company from nothing to a few dollars but, as long as it has value in the customer's eyes, it will be effective."

What is Service Recovery -- And Why Do You Need It?

CREATE A PROCESS

Create a service recovery process. It is important to develop a process that allows employ-ees some latitude in serving the customer but that also includes specifically defined steps that must be followed in providing service recovery. "Put in place at least five examples of service recovery with strict instructions to employees to meet or exceed them, That might include pre-printed coupons for free services for customers who experience ser-vice issues, a free lunch or a free drink.

TRAIN

Train employees. "Too many executives think employees are born with good customer service skills, If you want to provide service so awesome that it wows our customers, We must combine the fundamentals of customer service with flawless execution. Employees must be knowledgeable about your products and services, but they also must be trained to

provide the best service possible in order to keep your customers coming back to you."

Service recovery not only builds customer loyalty, it draws more customers to our facility and can drastically reduce the complaints our company's receives. The customer experience is what will bring him back to you time and time again. Our Customer Service Academy is a great place to start on learning Customer Service Recovery.

Service recovery is how you pull a customer from hell to heaven in 60 seconds or less. You need to apologize, solve the problem, com-pensate with something of value, create a service recovery process and train employees. This article will define service recovery, detail the importance to the bottom line, identify role models and describe the elements of service recovery.

Service Recovery Is Everyone's Responsibility

EDUCATION & TRAINING

Heart Saver
1 Oct, 1230-1630

CPR/Police Training Room
11 Oct, 0800-1200, 1230-1630

ACLS/Auditorium
18 Oct, 0830-1630

PFCC/Auditorium
31 Oct, 0800-1200

PMDB/Auditorium
4 Oct, 0800-1600

Supervisor's Meeting/Auditorium
1, 22 Oct, 1400

Nursing Fair/Auditorium
17-19 Oct

Benefits Fair/Auditorium
29 Oct

This year's Federal Benefits Open Season will run from Monday, November 12 through Monday, December 10, 2012. The Open Season participants includes programs covered by FSAFEDS, FEDVIP, and FEHB. Updated information regarding individual plans will be

available and distributed in late October.

As a reminder, the Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance (FEGLI) Program and the Federal Long Term Care Insurance Program (FLTCIP) do not participate in the annual Federal Benefits Open Season.

- Program information may be found on our website at www.opm.gov/insure
- Go to www.opm.gov/insure/fastfacts to read FastFact highlights on each of these benefit Programs
- Health insurance plan brochures are at www.opm.gov/FEHBbrochures
- Dental insurance plan brochures are at www.opm.gov/insure/dental/planinfo
- Vision insurance plan brochures are at www.opm.gov/insure/vision/planinfo
- For information on FSAFEDS, please visit the FSAFEDS website at www.fsafeds.com

IT TRAINING SCHEDULE

Intro To Microsoft Outlook:
1 Oct 9-10am.
5 Nov 9-10am
3 Dec 9-10am

Intro to Microsoft Excel:
15 Oct 9-10a.m.
19 Nov 9-10am
17 Dec 9-10am

Intro to Microsoft Word:
29 Oct 9-10am.
26 Nov 9-10am
14 Dec 9-10am

To register for a class, please email James Davidson (james.davidson3@va.gov) Individual training sessions are also available to work around your schedule.



ON PATROL

Dealing With Violence

As always, when dealing with a violent or potentially violent person, call VA Police as soon as possible. However, also remember the following: Don't mirror aggression. If a person is argumentative, continue to speak calmly and rationally. If you argue with the person, you will each become progressively louder and the situation will deteriorate from there. It may take a few minutes, but most people, when met with a calm demeanor, will gradually become calmer themselves.

Also, remember that the best preventative of violent behavior is often superior customer service. Be polite and helpful.

Finally, if you are experiencing a threat from a former spouse or significant other, let the VA Police know early. Most violence is perpetrated on victims by people that they know, and the sooner we know who to look for, the safer you will be.





Regina Bell-Pepin, a Carl Vinson VA Medical Center employee and Desert Storm Army Veteran, is 50 years old and a breast cancer survivor. Regina knows the fear and anxiety that come with being told you have **CANCER**. When Regina was only 44 years old, she was doing a self-breast exam when she found a large, tender

mass in her right breast. In a recent interview, Regina said, “When I found the mass I was nervous and waited 3 months before I went to my doctor because I was concerned about the dreaded ‘C’ word.” When she finally saw her doctor, her worst fears were confirmed: she had a malignant mass. A follow-up mammogram confirmed that she had a golf-ball size mass on her right breast and she was diagnosed with early Stage 3 breast cancer.

In January of 2006, she had a lumpectomy, removing the mass along with 12 lymph nodes, three of which were cancerous. After surgery, she underwent 4 months of chemotherapy which included 37 radiation treatments. Regina stat-

“When I found the mass I was nervous and waited 3 months before I went to my doctor because I was concerned about the dreaded ‘C’ word.”

ed that during the chemotherapy and radiation treatments she stayed sick and weak all the time and lost all of her hair. When asked how she made it through, she said, “as long as you have a strong family base and faith you can make it through anything. There were days when I would sit outside of the radiation therapy office and just cry

and they would have to come and get me for the treatment.” When asked what advice she had for other women, she said, “you need to stay positive, do what the doctor says.” She also advised that a positive attitude can mean a positive outcome, and stressed the importance of self-exams and annual checkups.

“as long as you have a strong family base and faith you can make it through anything.”

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

BY GREG SWARS

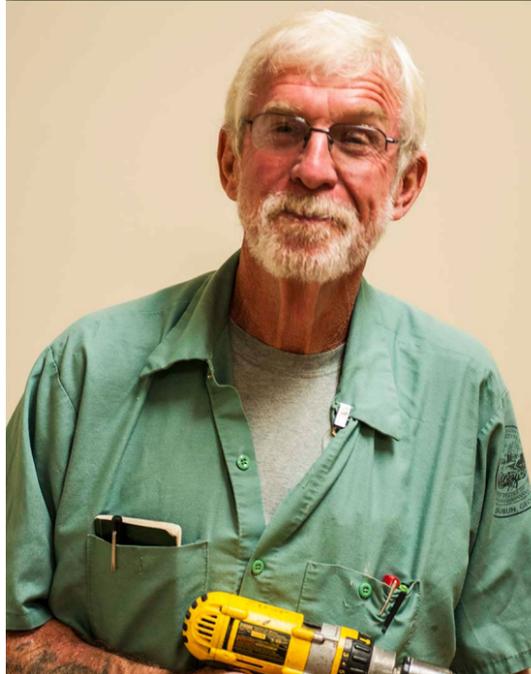


Janice Stuckey

Janice has been with the CVVAMC for just over 21 years. She has been with Restorative Care for the last 5 years. Prior to that she was in Nursing Service for 16 years. She also trains new employees in Nursing Service on the equipment they use. What she likes about working at the VA is “taking care of and making my veterans smile.” She said she also has the satisfaction of giving back to the veterans who sacrificed so much for us.

BEHIND THE SCENES

BY GREG SWARS



Samuel Dykes

Sam has been with the CVVAMC for just over 2 years. He works in the Carpentry Shop. He is a Vietnam Era USMC Veteran and helped evacuate Saigon when it fell. When he got out in '78, he began his career in the construction business. What he likes about working at the VA is “being surrounded by fellow veterans and being able to further enjoy the comradery we felt in the service.”

WELCOME TO OUR FAMILY



Front row left to right: **Frebrena C. Stone**, Recreation Therapist; **Adrian L. Henley**, Food Service Worker; **Darry D. King**, Housekeeping Aid; **Amy M. Lackey**, Emergency Management Specialist; **Muriel Stephens**, Administrative Assistant; **Yolanda M. Bailey**, Food Service Worker; **Shuntoya L. Chatman**, Social Worker



Front Row: **Debra C. Gatlin**, Nurse Practitioner; **Femalelei Fowler**, Voluntary Services Assistant; & **Danielle E. Pelton**, Physician Assistant Trainee.

Back row: **Dorothy A. Wilson**, RN Supervisor; **Anthony L. Wimbley**, Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist; **Clairissa R. Knight**, Cook; and **Joe Jernander**, Associate Chief of Primary Care

VOLUNTEER SERVICE

Volunteer opportunities are found in the Medical Center, community and outpatient clinics. Our goal is to meet the needs of our Veterans while meeting your interests, skills, and talents as a volunteer. Opportunities are categorized in the following areas:

Clerical

Volunteers provide administrative support such as data entry, answering phones, running errands, filing and assisting with department-specific projects.

Clinical

Volunteers interact with Veteran patients doing such things as reading, listening, visiting and much more!

Community

Volunteers serve as a liaison for the incoming community (patients, visitors) and assist them with finding their way throughout

the Medical Center. Volunteers can visit Veterans through the Good Neighbor Program within their community.

HOW TO GET STARTED:

The following are required to be completed before you will be scheduled for an interview.

- Volunteer Application
- Background check

THEN WHAT?

- Orientation
- Assignment specific training

FOLLOW UP:

If a volunteer does not feel fulfilled after a few days work, we want to hear about it. We'll do what we can to find a new assignment.

ETHICS CORNER

What are Work Ethics

Frank Brooks, *Chief of Volunteer Service*

Work ethics include not only how one feels about their job, career or vocation, but also how one does his/ her job or responsibilities. This involves attitude, behavior, respect, communication, and interaction; how one gets along with others. Work ethics demonstrate many things about whom and how a person is.

Work ethics involve such characteristics as honesty and accountability. Essentially, work ethics break down to what one does or would do in a particular situation. The begging question in a situation involves what is right and acceptable, and above board, versus what is wrong, underhanded, and under the table.

Throughout the last few years, there have been companies whose work ethic -- honesty, integrity and accountability -- have been rather shady and have a rather negative impact on other people. This has involved people looking the other way when people have done something questionable, or thinking it would not matter.

Work ethics, such as honesty (not lying, cheating, and stealing) , doing a job well, valuing what one does, having a sense of purpose and feeling/ being a part of a greater vision or plan is vital. Philosophically, if one does not have proper work ethics, a person's conscience may be bothered. People for the most part have good work ethic(s) ; we should not only want to do, but desire to do the proper thing in a given situation.

Work ethics are intrinsic, they come from within. A question may involve where they came from, if they come from within. Philosophically, this may lead to various perspectives.

One worldview holds fundamentally to two central work ethics -- humility and the treatment of others. Humility is being humble, no task is too demeaning. Humility involves servitude, which emphasizes placing other peoples need before ones own. Treating others with decency and respect equate to the golden rule. The treatment of others involves loving your neighbor, loving your enemy, doing good to those who dislike you. It involves valuing others, and knowing they have worth.

Next month our topic will be "Personal Ethics."



THE VA SEAL AN ICON OF SERVICE



Frank G. Jordan, Jr., *Public Affairs Officer*

On October 25, 1988, President Ronald Reagan signed Public Law 100-527. Known as the *Department of Veterans Affairs Act*, it made the former Veterans Administration a presidential cabinet-level department, emphasizing the importance of Veterans' needs to our nation and our national commitment to caring for them. To recognize this monumental change, the VA solicited designs from all employees for a new seal that would represent its new sta-

tus, receiving 187 designs.

The seal design selected came from the Indianapolis VAMC. Designed by was Mr. David Gregory, a Medical Media staffer, it was chosen by a selection committee of eight, and the US Army's Institute of Heraldry created the final specifications for the design. A Veteran who served in the Army Reserves, Naval Reserves, and Army National Guard, after leaving the military, Mr. Gregory began a Federal career, starting with DoD as an illustrator before taking a job with the VA in 1985. Retiring from VA in 2000, sadly, he died on July 29, 2004, at age 53.

When he designed his famous seal in 1989, Mr. Gregory could not have guessed that his iconic vision of our values and commitment to Veterans would one day become the symbol of VA across the Department of



Veterans Affairs and the Our seal is an icon that immediately conveys our commitment to our nation's heroes and inspires pride in VA staff, Americans devoted to their needs and committed to "serving those who served." and Mr. Gregory's beautiful design will continue to do so for decades to come!





I CARE

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

*"Attitude is the
foundation and support
for everything I do!"*



Tamara Jackson
Eligibility, HAS