



# *E-BRIDGE*

Paralyzed Veterans of America, Bay Area & Western Chapter, INC.



## *Executive Director's Message*

**WRITTEN BY KORY AMARAL**

The Paralyzed Veterans of America, Bay Area and Western Chapter is excited that we were able to attend the Advocacy Legislative Seminar February 27 to March 2, 2023 in Washington, D.C. We were able to participate in person after 3 years due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. We met with over 20 representatives to secure the rights of our veterans. We know how advocacy can truly change the way veterans receive care at the VA Health Care System.

On Friday, March 31, 2023, the Chapter and the SCI/D Center in Palo Alto will be continuing our SCI Peer Mentoring Program - Education & Lunch. Each month we have an education topic pertaining to spinal cord injuries or diseases. The March topic is Recreation Therapy. This is also a great way to interact with your fellow veterans. Please refer to Page 2 for more information. Outpatients can join us via Zoom. The link is on the flyer.

The Chapter plans to visit both the Sacramento and Fresno communities soon. More information will be available in *The Bridge* next month. We apologize for the delay in the visits, but we wanted to ensure that everyone who is involved with the membership events could be present in person. We have to respect all the restrictions at various VA's, but things seem to be getting better.

A note from National PVA's Sports & Recreation Team:

*We also have several fitness, health, and wellness classes scheduled throughout the next several weeks. Classes include women's yoga, strength training and conditioning, and a women's coaching group. Classes take place Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday at noon ET.*

*You can register now for our classes by clicking here. Also, please follow our Facebook page to stay updated on our programs and events.*

*Registration is open for the 42nd National Veterans Wheelchair Games and will close on April 5. Our registration team filmed a video and developed a resource and helpful hints guide to assist Veterans with their registration. We encourage all athletes to review the video, resources, and events guide before registering. Click here to access the NVWG registration page.*

The office at VA Palo Alto Health Care System's SCI/D Center is now open to visitors. If you need to speak with us in person, let me know and I can put you on the visitor list with approval from the SCI/D Center. Please, if you need anything, do not hesitate to reach out. We are here for you, email Kory Amaral at [amaral@bawpva.org](mailto:amaral@bawpva.org) or call (650) 399-5296 with any questions or concerns.

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Paralyzed Veterans of America, Bay Area & Western Chapter, INC.



## SCI Peer Mentoring Program - Education & Lunch

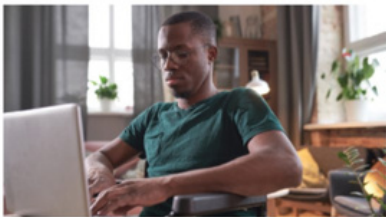
SPONSORED BY THE PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA, BAY AREA AND WESTERN CHAPTER, INC. AND SCI/D CENTER AT VA PALO ALTO HEALTH CARE SYSTEM



Please join us the **LAST FRIDAY** of the month in the **SCI Dining Room** at **11:30 AM** for a catered lunch and **F-125 Conference Room** at **12:00 PM** for education and a peer support activity. This is a monthly program designed for SCI Veterans to gather together and connect in a social and relaxed environment, socially distanced of course!

If you cannot attend in person, or if group is at capacity, you can call into ZOOM from your room or home.

MEETING ID: 835 1426 6166  
PHONE: +1 669 900 9128  
ONLINE: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83514266166>



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### March Calendar

ADAPTIVE SPORTS CLINIC  
MARCH 9

NATIONAL SERVICE OFFICER (NSO) MONTHLY CHAT  
MARCH 14

BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S MEETING  
MARCH 14

BINGO AND PIZZA NIGHT  
MARCH 16

WINTER SPORTS CLINIC (OFFICE CLOSED)  
MARCH 24 TO APRIL 1

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## Goods Inspiring Veterans Everywhere (GIVE) Program

**IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE NATIONAL PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA AND THE PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA, BAY AREA & WESTERN CHAPTER, INC.**

The Chapter is hosting a Clothing Drive in the Palo Alto, CA Office. The Chapter is looking to the community to donate lightly used clothing and other items that will directly benefit a veteran. Through the GIVE Program, we would love to expand the program by bringing in more funds for our veterans.

Clothing Donation Program - GIVE

<https://www.pva.org/ways-to-give/g-i-v-e-clothing-donation/>

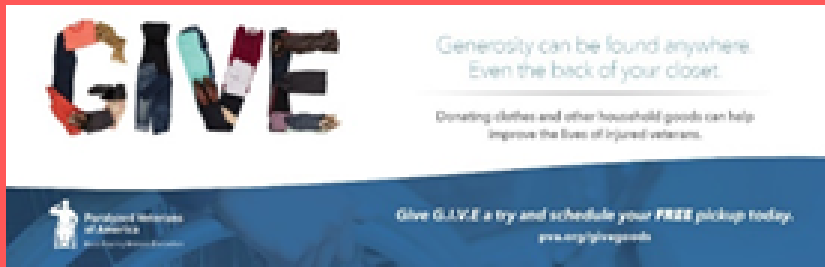
## Car Donation Program

**IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE NATIONAL PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA AND THE PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA, BAY AREA & WESTERN CHAPTER, INC.**

Are you tired of having too many cars or is your car getting old and you are looking to donate it? The Car Donation Program is a program in which we accept vehicles and the proceeds go to our veterans. The process is very simple and veterans from Northern California will benefit from the donation.

Car Donation Program

<https://pva.careasy.org/HOME.html>



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## *National PVA's Washington Update*

**WRITTEN BY NATIONAL PVA'S GOVERNMENT RELATIONS TEAM IN WASHINGTON, D.C.**

### **SVAC Approves Nine Veterans Bills**

The Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee (SVAC) recently approved nine veterans-related bills in a closed-door session. They will now head to the full Senate for consideration. The bills include S. 10, the VA Clinician Appreciation, Recruitment, Education, Expansion, and Retention Support (CAREERS) Act of 2023, which would provide VA with more tools to compete for highly-qualified medical personnel, support training for current and future VA clinicians to ensure veterans receive the highest quality of care, and provide more oversight and public transparency on VA's efforts to address vacancies. This legislation would also better prepare VA to manage care for the thousands of veterans newly eligible under the Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act (P.L. 117-168).

Also approved by the Committee were S. 30, the Fiscal Year 2023 Veterans Affairs Major Medical Facility Authorization Act, to authorize several VA major construction projects and S. 326, the VA Medicinal Cannabis Research Act of 2023, to allow VA to conduct research on the health effects of medicinal cannabis for veterans experiencing chronic pain and PTSD. Another bill approved by the Committee was S. 141, the Elizabeth Dole Home and Community Based Services for Veterans and Caregivers Act of 2023. PVA has been aggressively seeking passage of this bill to make a variety of improvements to access VA home care. One of the sections in the introduced bill would raise the cap on how much the VA can pay for the cost of home care from 65 percent of the cost of nursing home care to 100 percent. Unfortunately, that section of the bill was set aside as part of the recent Committee action due to cost, but panel members pledged to work with VA and other stakeholders to find a way to pay for it—hopefully in time to pass it with the remainder of the larger bill. Other provisions include directing VA to make key home and community-based services (HCBS) like Veteran Directed Care (VDC) and Homemaker and Home Health Aid available at all medical centers and certain U.S. territories; allow hospitalized veterans to retain their VDC payments for their caretakers; and instruct VA to assist veterans who are denied participation in the VA caregiver program with enrollment in other home health services for which they are eligible.

A fifth bill, S. 216, the Reinforcing Enhanced Support Through Promoting Equity for Caregivers Today (RESPECT) Act of 2023, would amend VA's Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers to make certain mental health professionals and neurological specialists participate in the evaluation and assessment process for veterans. It also creates an assessment waiver process for caregivers of veterans with chronic or degenerative conditions and ensures caregivers have access to valuable mental health resources in the community.

The remaining bills approved by the Committee were S.106, the Commitment to Veteran Support and Outreach Act, which authorizes VA to distribute grants to states in order to help enhance veterans outreach activities, assist veterans in submitting claims, and increase the number of service officers serving in the state; S. 112, to strengthen benefits for children of Vietnam veterans born with spina bifida; S.132, the Daniel J. Harvey Jr. and Adam Lambert Improving Servicemember Transition to Reduce Veteran Suicide Act, which creates a pilot program to aid servicemembers returning to civilian life; and S.185, the Native American Direct Loan Improvement Act of 2023, to improve the program for direct housing loans made to Native American veterans.

Check out the [PVAction Force](#) page to view our latest alerts and a list of key legislation and its status.





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## National Service Officer Monthly Chat

IN SPONSORSHIP WITH THE  
PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA'S BAY AREA AND WESTERN  
CHAPTER, INC. AND NATIONAL PARALYZED VETERANS OF  
AMERICA

### Monthly Chat with your National Service Officer (NSO)

**Who:** PVA Members &  
SCI/D Veterans

**When:** Second Tuesday of the  
Month  
11:30am

(Will only stay on the call for 15 mins if no one calls in)

**Where:** Virtual (Zoom)  
Meeting ID: 867 9150 1025  
Passcode: 370759  
+1 669 900 9128 US (San Jose)

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86791501025?  
pwd=OHJ1KzNoVi9XR0FoSHNvVHRkcFRUZz09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86791501025?pwd=OHJ1KzNoVi9XR0FoSHNvVHRkcFRUZz09)

**Why:** To receive benefit updates  
and to ask questions



### Important Links

[PATIENT EDUCATION](#)  
[REVIEW PAST PATIENT](#)  
[EDUCATION SESSIONS](#)  
[AND FIND OUT HOW TO](#)  
[PARTICIPATE](#)

[AIR ACCESS 30](#)  
[SHARE STORIES ABOUT](#)  
[YOUR AIR TRAVEL](#)  
[EXPERIENCES AS A](#)  
[PASSENGER WITH A](#)  
[DISABILITY](#)

[PUBLICATIONS](#)  
[VIEW CHAPTER](#)  
[NEWSLETTERS,](#)  
[ANNUAL REPORTS, PVA](#)  
[PUBLICATIONS](#)

[COVID-19 RESOURCES](#)  
[VIEW NATIONAL](#)  
[PVA'S RESOURCES AND](#)  
[UPDATES ON COVID-19](#)

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## National PVA Sports

IN SPONSORSHIP WITH NATIONAL PVA'S SPORTS TEAM IN WASHINGTON, D.C. AND PVA CHAPTERS



### 2022-2023 ANNUAL CALENDAR



#### PVA BASS TOURNAMENT SERIES

- Mid-America Bass Tournament  
September 16-18, 2022  
Eufaula, OK
- Vaughan Bass Tournament  
October 7-9, 2022  
Marion, IL
- Southeastern Bass Tournament  
September 30-October 2, 2022  
Evans, GA
- Florida Gulf Coast Bass Tournament  
March 24-26, 2023  
Kissimmee, FL
- Kentucky-Indiana Bass Tournament  
April 21-23, 2023  
Kuttawa, KY
- Mid-Atlantic Bass Tournament  
June 2-4, 2023  
Hopewell, VA
- Capital Clash Bass Tournament  
June 9-11, 2023  
Waldorf, MD

#### PVA BILLIARDS TOURNAMENT SERIES

- Mid-South Billiards Tournament  
October 28-29, 2022  
Memphis, TN
- Mid-Atlantic Billiards Tournament  
March 17-19, 2023  
Richmond, VA
- Mid-America Billiards Tournament  
June 16-18, 2023  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
- Buckeye Billiards Tournament  
June 24-26, 2023  
Columbus, OH

#### AIR RIFLE & PISTOL PROGRAM

- National Postal Matches  
November 2022 – March 2023
- In-person event dates coming soon!

#### PVA BOWLING TOURNAMENT SERIES

- Great Plains Bowling Tournament  
July 28-31, 2022  
Council Bluffs, IA
- Mid-Atlantic Bowling Tournament  
September 9-11, 2022  
Richmond, VA
- Nevada Bowling Tournament  
December 2-5, 2022  
Las Vegas, NV
- Florida Gulf Coast Bowling Tournament  
February 23-25, 2023  
Tampa, FL

- Mid-America Bowling Tournament  
March 31 – April 3, 2023  
Oklahoma City, OK

#### PVA NATIONAL SHOOTING SPORTS CIRCUIT

- North Central Trapshoot  
September 9-11, 2022  
Sioux Falls, SD
- North Trapshoot  
September 24-25, 2022  
Hillsboro, Oregon
- Cal-Diego Trapshoot  
March 18-19, 2023  
Redlands, CA

- Nevada Trapshoot  
March 31-April 2, 2023  
Las Vegas, NV

- Wisconsin Trapshoot  
May 19-21, 2022  
Green Bay, WI

- Vaughan Trapshoot  
May 26-28, 2023  
Elburn, IL

- Iowa Shooting Trapshoot \*  
June 16-18, 2023  
Cedar Rapids, IA
- \*Year-End Tournament

#### BOCCIA

- New England Boccia Tournament  
November 5-6, 2022  
West Roxbury, MA
- West Virginia Boccia Tournament  
December 2-3, 2022  
Charleston, WV

- Bayou Boccia Tournament  
February 3-5, 2023  
Gulfport, MS

- Gateway Boccia Tournament  
March 17-19, 2023  
St. Louis, MO

#### HANDCYCLING

- Echelon Racing League Virtual Paracycling Series (Online)  
November 2022 - February 2023
- PVA High Performance Off-Road HC Camp  
August 13-18, 2022  
Crested Butte, Colorado
- Off-Road Handcycling Championships  
August 19-21, 2022  
Crested Butte, Colorado

- Pocahontas Off-Road Camp  
September 29 – October 2, 2022  
Chesterfield, VA

- Tampa VA Handcycling Clinic  
January 21, 2023  
Tampa, FL

- PVA High Performance Camp  
January 30 – February 3, 2023  
Brooksville, FL

#### ADDITIONAL PROGRAMS

- PVA – NWBA Lakeshore Basketball Camp  
August 4-7, 2022  
Birmingham, AL
- Bay Area & Western Disc Golf  
August 19-20, 2022  
San Jose, CA
- New England Disc Golf Clinic  
September 10, 2022  
West Roxbury, MA
- PVA Rugby Clinic  
September 16-18, 2022  
Phoenix, AZ
- New England Basketball Camp  
September 23-26, 2022  
New Haven, CT
- PVA Wheelchair Rugby Invitational  
February 23-26, 2023  
Raleigh, NC

#### NATIONAL VETERANS WHEELCHAIR GAMES

-   
July 4-9, 2023  
Portland, Oregon

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO REGISTER FOR AN EVENT: [PVA.ORG/ADAPTIVE-SPORTS](http://PVA.ORG/ADAPTIVE-SPORTS)



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## Veterans Career Program

WRITTEN BY NATIONAL PVA'S VETERANS CAREER PROGRAM TEAM  
IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

### Member Column

ELECTIONS  
FY 23-25

THE PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA, BAY AREA AND WESTERN CHAPTER (BAWPVA) STARTED ON OCTOBER 1, 1962, SO WE ARE CELEBRATING OUR 60TH ANNIVERSARY.

BAWPVA SENT OUT ELECTION INFORMATION FOR FY 23-25 IN THE JAN-MAR 2023 EDITION OF *THE BRIDGE* AND VIA EMAIL. WE ARE ALWAYS LOOKING FOR MEMBERS TO GET INVOLVED WITH THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS.

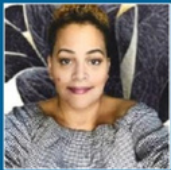
THE NOMINATION FOR ELECTIONS WILL CLOSE AT THE MARCH 14, 2023 BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S MEETING SO PLEASE GET YOUR NOMINATIONS IN IF YOU PLAN TO RUN FOR THE BOARD FY 23-25. WE ARE HERE FOR YOU IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS REGARDING THE ELECTION PROCESS.



## PVA VETERANS CAREER PROGRAM UPDATE

January 2023

### Grit and Determination



Meet Nicole Lane, a former commissioned officer in the U.S. Air Force. Nicole attended a Veterans Career Live session in December 2021, and began working with our Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC), Danielle Hetu, shortly thereafter.

Nichole had planned to spend her entire career in the military; however, after she had a serious complication from surgery that led to a stroke and long-term disability, she medically retired in 2011. She worked very hard to regain as much of her physical health as possible. Post stroke, Nichole has struggled to find her fit although she had all of the skills and experiences that an employer would want. Given the severity of her long-term illness and recovery, she lacked the confidence to truly pursue her next career. This is not an uncommon experience, and is something our counselors work with their clients to overcome.

Nichole had it all from the beginning - she just needed a sounding board and was able to have that while working with Danielle.

In January 2023, Nicole accepted a job as Associate Director for Proposals & Compliance at Caladwich Consulting, LLC - a Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business (SDVOSB) in Fairfax, VA. Getting the job and starting a career she wanted was 100% the result of Nichole's grit and determination.

Congratulations Nicole!

### IMPACT + OPPORTUNITIES

#### 15 Client Placements

- 11 Paid Employment
- 4 Education/Training
  - 13 Veterans
  - 2 Active Duty
  - 3 PVA Members

- The average salary for the 8 clients placed in full-time employment was \$65,256; and the average income for the 3 clients placed in part-time work was \$14,466.



### VCP Launches Disabled Veterans Self-Employment Pilot Program



According to the National Disability Institute, 74% of people with disabilities do not participate in the labor force. For multiple reasons - including lack of accommodations and discrimination in

the workplace - individuals with disabilities continue to turn to self-employment/small business development as a viable alternative that provides greater control, choice and flexibility in terms of work schedule, environment and economic advancement.

While entrepreneurship is an important employment option for people with disabilities, they are often hindered by scarcity of supports, services, programs, and affordable start-up capital tailored to their unique needs and challenges. Thanks to a generous grant donation by the Wells Fargo Foundation, VCP will be launching a pilot program beginning in February 2023 to provide training, counseling and access to capital to veterans with spinal-cord injury or disease (SCI/D) who are considering self-employment. We received an overwhelming 72 applications for 15 "seats" in the inaugural (virtual) class; and we look forward to providing updates on this class and its amazing participants.



[PVA.org/find-support/veterans-career-program](https://pva.org/find-support/veterans-career-program)

Powered By:



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## *About Us*

### **THE PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA, BAY AREA & WESTERN CHAPTER, INC.**

The Paralyzed Veterans of America, Bay Area and Western Chapter, INC. (BAWPVA) is a nonprofit, veterans service organization located in Palo Alto, CA. BAWPVA serves spinal cord injured and/or dysfunction veterans located in Northern California, Northern Nevada and the Pacific Islands. BAWPVA is one of 33 chapters of the Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA) located across the United States. Currently, BAWPVA has over 500 members. The Paralyzed Veterans of America, Bay Area and Western Chapter, INC. (BAWPVA) services provide direct support to the Chapter's programs. BAWPVA sponsors various events and adaptive sports clinics at the VA Palo Alto Health Care System in Palo Alto, CA, VA Northern California Health Care System, VA Central California Health Care System, VA Sierra Nevada Health Care System and VA Pacific Islands Health Care System.

If you are interested in membership, volunteering, or donating please contact us today.

Our office is located at:

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