

Bay Area & Western Paralyzed Veterans of America Volume 38, No. 2 Oct-Dec 2023

In Loving Memory



Sebastian DeFrancesco, U.S. Army October 15, 1953 - August 29, 2023

PUBLISHED BY:

PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA, BAY AREA AND WESTERN CHAPTER, INC.

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Chapter Web Site: <u>www.bawpva.org</u>

National PVA Web Site: <u>www.pva.org</u>

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E-BRIDGE

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please email amaral@bawpva.org

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President Chet Miller



In August 2023, our friend and President of the Paralyzed Veterans of

America, Bay Area and Western Chapter Sebastian DeFrancesco unexpectedly passed away. Sebastian was a huge part of PVA for many years and his passion for adaptive sports helped shape the Chapter's adaptive sports program. He will be forever missed, but his legacy will remain.

I would like to introduce myself. I have three daughters and I am very proud of each of them. I have been a member of our local PVA Chapter since my injury in 1993. After returning from Desert Storm while stationed at Fort Campbell, KY in the 101st Airborne Division, as an Aviation Mechanic, I was injured in a motocross accident. It left me as a C-5, C-6 quadriplegic and ended my 12-year military career. I did my treatment and rehab at the Palo Alto VA. Since my injury, I have enjoyed spending time with my family and staying active by participating in wheelchair sports. I have played Quad Rugby for over 25 years now. I look forward to the next two years and I am honored to be your President.

The Paralyzed Veterans of America, Bay Area and Western Chapter and the SCI/D Center at VA Palo Alto Health Care System have revamped our peer support program. The SCI Peer Mentoring Program - Education & Lunch will take place on the last Friday of the month at the SCI/D Center's F-125 Conference Room at 12:00 PM. Some topics include PVA, Social Work, SCI Travel, Recreation Therapy, and more. Zoom is available if needed. We would love for our SCI/D veterans to either attend or call into the meeting to socialize with your fellow veterans. Please refer to Page 20 for more information.

Executive Director Kory Amaral

We have been busy the last 3 months. I want to thank all the PVA members, family, friends, caregivers, and staff who attended our membership events in Sacramento and Reno. I know we do not visit often, but when we do, you are all appreciative and willing to attend all events. Your support is what makes our mission and programs successful. We look forward to future events.



The Paralyzed Veterans of America, Bay Area and Western Chapter held our 12th Annual Golf Tournament on Monday, September 25, 2023. I would like to thank all the sponsors and volunteers who helped make our event a success. The funds raised at the Golf Tournament will be used to send our PVA members to various adaptive sports events. We know that adaptive sports can truly change a veterans life. Please view a list of sponsors on Page 13.

The office is now open to visitors at VA Palo Alto Health Care System, but we encourage you to call or email first, to make sure staff is in the office. I am always here for you if you need anything. Please feel free to reach out to me at amaral@bawpva.org or (650) 399-5296 with any questions.

Remembering Sebastian DeFrancesco, U.S. Army

Sebastian DeFrancesco, our resilient warrior, passed away peacefully on the evening of August 29, 2023, in the loving company of his wife Liz, three daughters Alicia, Emily, and Anna, his brother Bobby, son-in-law Amar, Emily's partner Chris, and the family dog, Pebbles. Seventeen years after being the first quadriplegic to receive a liver transplant, his body succumbed to liver and kidney failure at the VA Hospital in Palo Alto. He fought every challenge like the Green Beret that he was. Knowing that his last battle was complete, his final words were: "I'm transitioning. I love you all."

To many, Sebastian was known as an oft-honored adaptive sports champion. Prior to being injured at the age of 22, he had been a standout soccer player. He took that love of athletics and competition with him as he adapted to his life as a quadriplegic after injuries incurred during a training exercise in Italy while serving as a member of the Special Forces during the Vietnam War. He had been inducted into multiple halls of fame: Wheel-chair Sports USA, New England Wheelchair Athletic Association, US Quad Rugby Association, and US Table Tennis. He was a Paralympic table tennis medalist in 1984, 1988, 1992, 1996, 2000, head coach of a wheelchair basketball team that rose to national acclaim, coach to local soccer kids, Santa Cruz County Paralympic Wall of Fame Honoree, and always an ambassador for and participant in a variety of sports, including tennis, track and field, and bocci. His passion encouraged everyone, able-bodied and those with disabilities, to be active and to bring their best to every challenge, on or off the field. Even while hospitalized at the VA, he was making plans to return to table tennis training to compete in the 2028 Paralympics in Los Angeles. He was indomitable and fearless.

To others, Sebastian was known as an advocate for social justice and disability rights. When he was first injured, there was no Americans with Disabilities Act, and many persons with disabilities struggled to participate in society. Through his work with the Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA), Sebastian lobbied Congress on veterans' issues including mental health and homelessness. He fought for accessibility to all manner of venues and spaces, including investing in housing and hotel rooms that met the needs of persons with disabilities. He could be "a dog with a bone" when it came to fighting for equal rights. He was active in the PVA organization in both New England and Northern California and was serving as president of the Bay Area and Western chapter when he passed. In recent months, despite being hospitalized, he would conduct Zoom meetings from his bed. To countless many, Sebastian was a thoughtful and caring friend. He listened to concerns, focused his compassion and empathy on helping others, and cared passionately about the future of our country and world. His tender-heartedness was apparent. Sometimes when imagining how much better this world could be he would tear up, other times he would groan with frustration. He often brought the wisdom gained from his varied and challenging life experiences to help others see their situation in a fresh and hopeful light.

Monthly Chat with your National Service Officer (NSO)

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ABILITY CENTER PROUDLY SUPPORTS Bay Area PVA



Sacramento 6550 Freeport Blvd. Sacramento, CA 95822 Local: 916-392-1196

NEW Fremont LOCATION Santa Rosa 40975 Albrae St. Fremont, CA 94538 Local: 510-999-7959

3285 Santa Rosa Ave. Santa Rosa, CA 95407 Local: 707-575-6997

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That stuff that you keep telling yourself "someday I might wear that again."

The back of your closet can do something remarkable for injured veterans everywhere. Your generous donations of clothes and other common household goods help improve the lives of severely injured veterans and strengthen the fabric of our community.

Paralyzed Veterans of America

Boods Inspiring Veterans Everywhere Bay Area & Western Chapter

Give G.I.V.E a try and schedule your FREE pickup today. To learn more, call 866-281-1502 or go to pva.org/givegoods Paid for by the Jeffrey Carlton Charitable Foundation

Turn Your Used Vehicle Into Support for Paralyzed Veterans of America

We'll use the proceeds from the sale of your car, truck, RV or boat to change lives and build brighter futures for our seriously injured heroes.





Donating your car is easy, and your gift is tax-deductible

Vehicle donations to PVA are tax-deductible! Most vehicles are sold through local used-car markets. Our vehicle donation program works to get the highest return per vehicle and handles all the paperwork, too! Whether your vehicle sells for \$500 or less, more than \$500, or more than \$5000, you will be provided with the proper donation tax receipt(s).



Call 877-900-VETS or donate online at pva.careasy.org

National Service Officer Report Reese Levasseur, National Service Officer Candidate



Good year to all. As your National Service Officer Candidate (NSOC) at the Palo Alto SCI/D Office, I am happy to say it's been a fast year. With only one training lesson and a Capstone to pass, I will

hopefully be your NSO II by the end of October. I would like to let everyone know that the time has ended for the prorated back pay for the Pack Act, the end date was August 14th. That doesn't mean you can't still file a claim pertaining to the Pact Act. It means you will not get retro pay from August 10, 2022. If you think you may have an undiagnosed service-related injury, please feel free to contact me to discuss your issue. We can review the claim filing process together and determine your best option.

With the holidays coming up, many of you may be considering traveling to visit family from state to state and others traveling abroad. If you are ever planning to travel outside the United States as a service-connected veteran, you may want to file for the Foreign Medical Program (FMP). For eligible Veterans already in the VA system living or traveling abroad, the VA offers medical services through the Foreign Medical Program (FMP). Through this program, FMP will pay for health care services, medications, and durable medical equipment for service-connected conditions and conditions associated with and held to be aggravating a service-connected condition. Also, the VA may authorize foreign medical services for any condition if you are participating in the VA Vocational Rehabilitation Program (Title 38, U.S. Code, Chapter 31). To file a claim, you would use the VA form 10-7959f-2. Enrolling in FMP is simple. Fill out the FMP Registration Form (VA Form 10-7959f-1) and send it to the VHA Office of Integrated Veteran Care. (Fillable PDFs can be completed online, saved, and printed.) You may also send your full name, mailing address, residence address (including country), and VA claim number to the VHA Office of Integrated Veteran Care. See the full address and phone number below.

> VHA Office of Integrated Veteran Care Foreign Medical Program (FMP) P.O. Box 469061 Denver, CO 80246-9061 Foreign Medical Program Office: 877-345-8179

Most VA benefits are payable regardless of place of residence or nationality. VA benefits include disability compensation, pension, education and training, health care, home loans, insurance, vocational rehabilitation, employment, and burial. If you have any questions, contact me at 650-493-5000 EXT 65046 or VIA email at REESEL@PVA.ORG.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2023 12:00 PM BUILDING 7 ROOM E-118



For Inpatients and SCI/D Staff



Catered by Armadillo Willys Sponsored by the PVA



* * * * * * * * * * * * *

<u>Menu Includes:</u> Texas BBQ Ribs Texas Lone Star Chicken Veggie Burger Beans, Salad, and Corn Bread Chocolate Cookie Drink



Tickets are available from 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM on Tuesday, November 7, 2023 for SCI/D Staff

VETERANS WHO ARE UNABLE TO LEAVE THEIR HOSPITAL ROOM, WILL BE SERVED BEDSIDE

 $\star \star \star$







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THE PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA, BAY AREA AND WESTERN CHAPTER PRESENT

SPORTS CLINC



Bay Area & Western Chapter









BUILDING 7

3801 MIRANDA

AVENUE Palo Alto, ca 94304

2ND THURSDAY OF THE



AIR RIFLE, BOCCIA BALL, DISC. GOLF, INTERACTIVE ARTS, SHUFFLEBOARD, TABLE TENNIS, AND MORE

RSVP TO KORY AMARAL (650) 858-3936 Amaral@Bawpva.org

FOOD PROVIDED

THANK YOU SCI/D RECREATION THERAPY IN PALO ALTO FOR YOUR SUPPORT. PRIZES

The Bridge

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PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA, BAY AREA AND WESTERN CHAPTER'S



BINGO NIGHT

3RD THURSDAY OF THE MONTH

Bingo at: 3:00pm Pizza at: 4:30pm

MONEY PRIZES FOR EVERY ROUND!

1111

SCI/D Dining Room



Need More Information: AMARAL@BAWPVA.ORG OR (650) 858-3936

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12th Annual Golf Tournament - September 25, 2023

Special Thanks to Our Sponsors

Gold Sponsors

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Disabled Veteran Golfer Sponsors

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Bay Area & Western Chapter

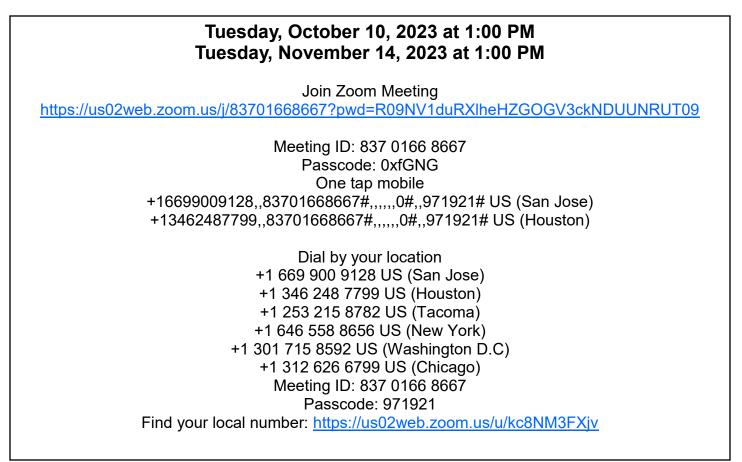
Board Meetings via Zoom



If you are interested in participating in the Paralyzed Veterans of

America, Bay Area and Western Chapter's Board of Director's Meeting via video and teleconferencing below is the information:

VA Palo Alto Health Care System is under slight restrictions due to the COVID-19 Pandemic; therefore, all meetings will be by invite only if coming in person.









MS Committee Member Report Mr. Richard Hagan

Let's Talk - Service Dogs

Having MS isn't fun, but having a service dog helps me cope. My first Canine Companion service dog, Kovin, was with me for over 12 years. It took three years from my initial application to receive Kovin, but he was worth every second of the wait. He helped me pick up dropped items, opened and closed doors, helped me pay for items at the store, and was just an all-around great companion who helped me get out and



exercise and socialize. My successor dog, Toggle, (see photo) is also a wonderful help, and I don't know what I would do without him.

Canine Companions train service dogs, skilled companion dogs, hearing dogs, and PTSD dogs. Their headquarters is in Santa Rosa, and that is where I was trained to handle my dogs. Canine Companions is not the only organization that supplies service dogs, but they are the one I am most familiar with. Please visit them at <u>www.canine.org</u> for further information, and you can contact me at <u>hagan@bawpva.org</u> if you'd like to hear more about life with a service dog.



SCI/D Outpatient Clinic

VA Palo Alto - Building 7 Room F-143 650-493-5000 x65871

SPECIALITY CLINICS

ACUPUNCTURE

CHIROPRACTIC

PSYCHOLOGY

SCI CLINIC

INTEGRATED EVALUATION

UPPER EXTREMITY

TELEHEALTH

SEXUALITY

FUNCTIONAL EXTREMITY

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

> PHYSICAL THERAPY

UROLOGY

URODYNAMICS STUDY

EMG

BOWEL AND BLADDER

WOUND

PLASTICS

To best serve our Veterans in our SCI Outpatient Clinic -

Masking and Visitor Requirements:

SCI/D Staff and Visitors may remove masks in these high-risk areas only under the following circumstances:

- · they are not in a patient room;
- they are not within six feet of a Veteran in a congregate area (e.g., shared meals in CLC); or
- they are not within six feet of a patient in an open treatment area/room.

Please check in AND check out with the scheduler especially after your Annual Exam; make sure you get an appointment on your way out as appointments are not made automatically. Thank you

SPECIAL MODE TRANSPORT

Review your Special Mode Transport (SMT) expiration dates – when you receive a letter of expiration, please notify clinic RN as soon as possible to resubmit transportation consult **Clinic x65871 Navarre (833) 628-2773** *for pick up/drop off*

GURNEY TRANSFER APPOINTMENTS

For appointments where Veterans need to be transferred from wheelchair to gurney by nursing staff (CT, MRI etc.) – please call and schedule an RN-TRANSFER Appointment at least 2 weeks in advance. **Scheduling x65871**

DEFENDER'S LODGE

Defender's Lodge is available for Veterans who live over 50 miles from the hospital – Consults can be placed only 7 days prior to the requested stay. Please contact social work to request a stay. **Social Work x63328**

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Ekso Indego® Gets Veterans Walking Again

Eligible veterans can receive an Ekso Indego exoskeleton at NO COST!

Ekso Indego Personal

What is the Ekso Indego?

Ekso Indego is an FDA-cleared, powered exoskeleton worn around the waist and legs that enables individuals paralyzed from spinal cord injuries (level T3-L5) to stand and walk, offering a new level of independence.



eksc BIONICS

> Scan with your phone for more information on how you could receive your own Ekso Indego Personal.

Getting Veterans with SCI Back on Their Feet

A recently revised VA policy allows Ekso Indego to be issued to qualified veterans at no cost.*

- Regain your independence
- Improve your cardio & bone density
- Enjoy eye-level conversations again



Contact us to find out if you are eligible to receive an Ekso Indego at NO COST! www.eksobionics.com/request-information/

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Sacramento, CA - More Information Coming Soon.

RSVP to Kory Amaral (650) 399 - 5296 amaral@bawpva.org

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LIVING WITH A SPINAL CORD INJURY

SCI PEER MENTORING PROGRAM -EDUCATION & LUNCH

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







D&O ID 310 - Last Hindated 10-17-2022

PVA Summit 2023 VISN 21 SCI/D Staff

Marisol Garcia-Manipol MSN, RN, Assistant Nurse Manager SCI/D Center

Attending the Paralyzed Veterans of America Healthcare Summit last August 14-17, 2023 was my first ever conference experience in VA Palo Alto Health Care System. I cannot help myself expressing immense pleasure to be part as an attendee in the event. I have gained new knowledge, skills, experience and hear advise and life hacks from the experts. The event held in Orlando, Florida where Disney World and Universal Studio located. The hotel venue at Renaissance



SeaWorld has an stylish accommodations and incredible amenities. The venue was conducive to learning and leisure. I do appreciate the opportunity for me to have participated in the conference. I was lucky to witness some of the important people of the PVA organization and gained a lot of insights and understanding of the VHA Spinal Cord Injuries and Disorders National Program. Also, most the sponsors/exhibitors are generous and friendly.

Most of the speakers are experts on their field and enthusiast. The one that interested me the most is about the Autonomic Dysfunctions. Following Spinal Cord Injury and the therapeutic Potential of Spinal Cord Stimulation. There are four speakers for this topic. One of the speaker mentioned the important management of AD in SCI as follows:

Step 1: Sit patient up. Loosen clothing and devices. If symptoms persist go to Step 2. (Monitor blood pressure and pulse frequently

Step 2: Check the urinary system- If indwelling urinary catheter is not in place, catheterization using lidocaine jelly. If symptoms persist go to Step 3.

Step 3: If blood pressure remains elevated, suspect fecal impaction. If symptoms persist go to Step 4.

Step 4: If blood pressure is at or above 150 mmhg systolic consider pharmacological management to reduce blood pressure.

Spinal Cord stimulation has two kinds which are epidural as invasive method while transcutaneous is non- invasive. Transcutaneous is non- invasive stimulation restores autonomic cardiovascular control. While Epidural stimulation modulate cardiovascular function.

With this very informative lecture assisted and improved me in providing service to our veterans. Thank you again for the opportunity.

Reference: Claire Shackleton, PhD Soshi Samejima, PhD, DPT Raza Malik, PhD Andrei Krassioukov, MD, PhD







| October | Rod Hart
Gary Dilday
Steven Coyle
Landon Henderson
Michael Nesby
Gilbert Thomas
Charles Boyer
James Gridley
Jon Houde
Mitch Driller
Kurt Steiner
Bruce Crockett
Dennis Mankel
Hector Mendoza
William James | Edward Arnold
Matthew Beller
Cliff Finch
Henry Potts
Daniel Matern
Patrick Malan
Christopher Bernard
Anthony Swetala
Charles Jellison
Eugene Gold
Stephen Davis
Shawn Hodge
Layne Inouye
Brian Rodrigues
Austin Parker | David Owens
Felix Ranoco
Jeremiah Michaels
Laura Bernhardt
Omar Hernandez
Stanford Tate
Cory Renfrow
Dennis Birch
Douglas Stalker
James Tigan
John Patricio
Kenneth Scott
Laurie Genishi
Christopher Moniz
Ralph Eckard | Robert Ray
Victor Catanzaro
Steven Morris |
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| November | James Ross
Marvin Tuttle
Demond Wilson
Theodore Reiff
Joseph Terrell
Leonard Burger
Blair Reels
Santos Ramirez
Dale Rule
Avory Gullick
Dwain Vinson
Mark Bonilla | Shane Wages
Philip Malasig
Ramon Ortega
Ralph Stovall
Scott Harger
John Peredo
Gary Combs
Raymond Hernandez
Thomas Leavell
Stephen Spleen
Ponciano Mencias
Quentin Collins | Nikko Olalia
Kirby Apps
Thomas Mihalyi
Eric Lizama
Debra Tillman
Erica Lucas
Fonoimoana Moala
John Solt
Jose Richardo
Sandoval
Marilen Peregrina
Shinji Grubbs | Michael Antosik
Richard Douglas
Roger Smith |

| December | Donald Collins
Andre DeCordova
David Funderburg
Scott Souza
Thomas Simi
Jesse Cervantes
Harvest Avery (Cooper)
Albert Wittwer
Richard Hagan
Robert Quijada
Stephen Burton
Walter Roy | Ellen Beauregard
Tracy Williams
Ronnie Santos
David Wagner
Larry Srutek
Tomasz Modrzejowski
Reese Levasseur
Buster Kawasaki
William Colter
John Bressler
Artemio Domingo
Gary Burton | Mancy Gant
Michael Allen
Richard Haney
Thomas Hildenbrand
Alonzo Cabral-Centeno
Frank Lopez
Erik Jaeger
Leroy Wolf
Ron Playda
Steven Holston |
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| | Stephen Burton | 0 | |

George Massad

Gary Dixon

Troy Maxey

| October 2023 | | | | | | | | |
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| 31 | | | | | | | | |

- 9 Columbus Day (Office Closed) Bldg. 7 Rm. E-118
- 10 NSO Chat (Virtual) 11:30am, Bldg. 7 Rm. E-101
- 10 BOD Meeting 1pm, Bldg. 7 Rm. E-118
- 12 Disability Awareness Day 10am, San Jose, CA

- 12 Adaptive Sports Clinic 3pm, TBA
- 19 Bingo & Pizza Night 3pm, Bldg. 7 Dining Room
- 19 to 24 Fall BOD Meeting (Office Closed) Orlando, FL
- 27 SCI Peer Mentoring Program 12pm, Bldg. 7 Rm. F-125

- 7 Veterans Day Luncheon 12pm, Bldg. 7 Rm. E-101
- 9 Adaptive Sports Clinic 3pm, TBA
- 11 Veterans Day Event Sacramento, CA
- 14 **NSO Chat (Virtual)** 11:30am, Bldg. 7 Rm. E-101
- 14 BOD Meeting 1pm, Bldg. 7 Rm. E-118

- 16 Bingo & Pizza Night 3pm, Bldg. 7 Dining Room
- 23 to 24 Thanksgiving Holiday (Office Closed) Bldg. 7 Rm. E-118

- 5 Winter Luncheon 12 pm, Bldg. 7 Rm. E-118
- 12 NSO Chat (Virtual) 11:30am, Bldg. 7 Rm. E-101
- 14 Adaptive Sports Clinic 3pm, TBA
- 21 Bingo & Pizza Night 3pm, Bldg. 7 Dining Room
- 18 to 31 Winter Break (Office Closed) Bldg. 7 Rm. E-118

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Important Telephone Numbers, E-Mail Addresses, & Web Sites:

Bay Area & Western PVATele:650-858-3936800-273-6789 (toll-free)E-Mail:administration@bawpva.orgWeb:www.bawpva.org

Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA), Washington, D.C. Tele: 800-424-8200 (toll-free) E-Mail: info@pva.org Web: www.pva.org

Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA) National Service Officers Reese Levasseur, NSO Candidate, Palo Alto Tele: 650-493-5000, ext. 65046

Kristel Crouse, NSO Candidate, Sacramento Tele: 916-364-6791 Tele: 916-843-2602 (toll-free)

Jason McDonald, NSO, Las Vegas Tele: 702-791-9000, ext. 14458 U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Tele: 800-827-1000 (toll-free) Web: <u>www.va.gov</u>

 California Department of Veterans Affairs (CDVA)

 Tele:
 800-952-5626 (toll-free)

 Web:
 www.cdva.ca.gov

Social Security AdministrationTele:800-772-1213 (toll-free)Web:www.ssa.gov

San Mateo County Commission on Disabilities Web: www.smco-cod.org

 VA Palo Alto Health Care System

 Tele:
 650-493-5000

 SCI Out-Patient:
 ext.
 65871

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 Social Work:
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 64496

 OT:
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 65604

 PT:
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 65672

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