



E-BRIDGE

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



Executive Director's Message

WRITTEN BY KORY AMARAL

This month is an important month because we get to celebrate our veterans who served this country. The Paralyzed Veterans of America, Bay Area and Western Chapter is proud to be a nonprofit veterans service organization who serve and honor our veterans every day. There will be a few events coming up to celebrate our veterans. On Tuesday, November 7, 2023 we will be hosting our Veterans Day Luncheon at 12:00 PM at VA Palo Alto Health Care System. Please see Page 6 for more details. The flyer says for SCI/D inpatients, but it is open to all PVA members, so feel free to stop by if you are in town. We will also have an event in Sacramento at the Boardwalk at 6:00 PM on Saturday, November 11, 2023. More information will be sent out to the members in that area soon.

On the last Friday of the month, 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 meetings in November and December are canceled due to the holidays, but we will continue on January 26, 2024. 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 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. We are not always in the office so please contact me first to make sure we do not miss each other. Also, if you need anything, do not hesitate to reach out. We are here for you, email Kory Amaral at amaral@bawpva.org or call (650) 399-5296 with any questions or concerns.

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ABOUT US

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



SCI Peer Mentoring Program - Education & Lunch

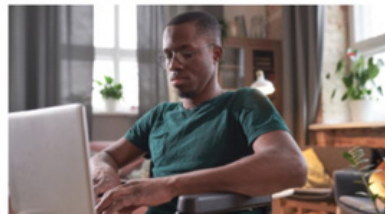
SPONSORED BY THE PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA, BAY AREA AND WESTERN CHAPTER, INC. AND SCI/D CENTER AT VA PALO ALTO HEALTH CARE SYSTEM



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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November Calendar

VETERANS DAY LUNCHEON
NOVEMBER 7

ADAPTIVE SPORTS CLINIC
NOVEMBER 9

VETERANS DAY OBSERVED
(OFFICE CLOSED)
NOVEMBER 10

NATIONAL SERVICE OFFICER
(NSO) MONTHLY CHAT
(VIRTUAL)
NOVEMBER 14

BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S
MEETING
NOVEMBER 14

BINGO & PIZZA NIGHT
NOVEMBER 16

THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY
(OFFICE CLOSED)
NOVEMBER 20 - 24

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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.

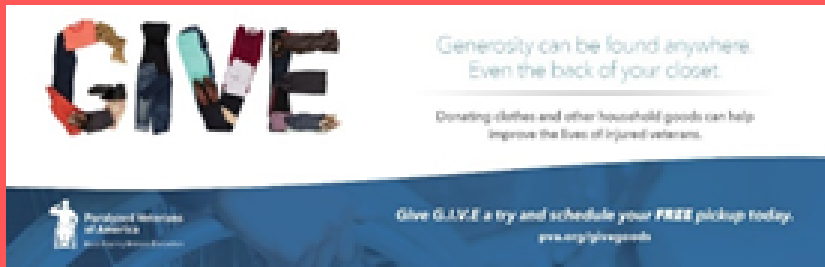
Clothing Donation Program - GIVE
<https://www.pva.org/ways-to-give/g-i-v-e-clothing-donation/>

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.

Joint Senate Hearing Examines Transition Process

On October 18, the Senate Armed Services and Veterans' Affairs Committees held a joint hearing to examine military to civilian transition processes. Much of the three-hour hearing focused on the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) which is run jointly by the VA, the Department of Defense, and the Department of Labor. Witnesses included representatives from all three agencies, the Government Accountability Office, and a small group of veterans' advocates.

A broad range of subjects were touched on during the question and answer portion of the hearing such as the availability of mental health care during the transition process, the interoperability of electronic health records between DOD and VA, and ways to get service members to start thinking about their civilian life earlier in their military careers. There was also discussion around DOD ensuring that transitioning service members are able to enroll in TAP courses at least a year out from the date of their separation.

One subject that came up during both witness panels was the need to fully integrate accredited veterans service organization representatives into the TAP process. The importance of veterans having assistance from an accredited representation cannot be overstated. PVA's accredited Service Officers specialize in providing services for veterans and service members who are severely injured or suffer disabling diseases. These services are free of charge and are offered from the time of disability to end of life.

Improving the transitioning of families, with emphasis on taking better care of spouses, is another area that drew considerable attention. DOD has a number of programs to help military spouses with employment while the service member is actively serving, but offers little assistance to them when the military member transitions back to civilian life. The hearing was recorded and you can watch a video of it [here](#).

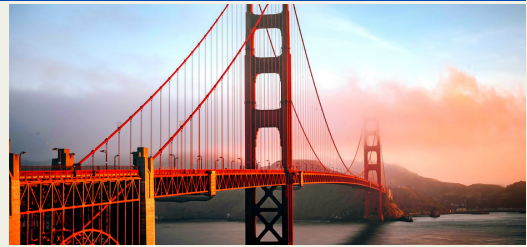
Upcoming Veterans' Committee Activities

Please visit the [House](#) and [Senate](#) Veterans' Affairs Committee webpages for information on upcoming hearings and markups.



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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

[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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Veterans Day Luncheon

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



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



★ ★ ★

VETERANS DAY Luncheon

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For Inpatients and SCI/D Staff

Catered by Armadillo Willys
Sponsored by the PVA



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Menu Includes:
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

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



Veterans Career Program

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

PVA VETERANS CAREER PROGRAM UPDATE

September 2023

EXPLORING SELF-EMPLOYMENT



According to a report by the National Disability Institute, 74% of people with disabilities do not participate in the labor force; and turn to self-employment and small business development as a viable alternative to traditional employment.

Thanks to a generous grant donation by the Wells Fargo Foundation, VCP launched a pilot program (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.

Howard Cleland is an enlisted Army veteran with a 100% service-connected disability rating. Howard originally contacted the Veterans Career Program in January 2023. He had questions about how starting a small business would affect his SSDI benefits. He had been working at starting a gunsmith business and had many questions about licensing and registering such a business. Our Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, Jim Arndt, and Howard also discussed the SSA Ticket to Work program to assist Howard with returning to work without immediately losing his SSDI benefits.

The same day that they talked, Howard was sent (by the Wisconsin PVA chapter) information about the disabled veterans self-employment pilot program. He applied for the program and was accepted. After 8 weeks, Howard pitched his business idea to a panel of business professionals, and was one of two PVA members to receive a \$2,500 subgrant to test start his business - Grouchy-Ole Mans LLC.

After completing multiple requirements and registrations, Howard was able to launch his business on September 11, 2023. He has expressed appreciation for the depth and direction of the Veterans Career Program's small business training. "In eight weeks, I learned probably two years' worth of education just in three hours a week for the eight weeks. Our instructor was informative. He provided everything we needed to pretty much exceed anything you want to know to start a business. I couldn't be any more grateful to PVA for hosting this class."

MONTHLY IMPACT

22 Client Placements

- 14 Paid Employment
- 6 Education/Training
- 2 Volunteer
 - 21 Veterans
 - 1 Family Members
 - 4 PVA Members
- The average salary for the 14 clients placed in full-time employment was \$67,661.



2023 Women Veterans Empowerment Retreat (WVER)



Women Veterans make up 1.8 million of the U.S. population, of which roughly 10 percent are disabled and enrolled with the Department of Veterans Affairs. They are the fastest growing Veteran population, yet many of these women often feel

forgotten and pushed aside while trying to navigate a system that wasn't designed to address their unique healthcare needs. They also feel isolated not only from the entire Veteran population, but from each other. PVA's Women Veterans Empowerment Retreat (WVER) is an all-expenses-paid retreat that focuses on the holistic well-being of women veterans with disabilities. VCP's Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, Danielle Hetu, helped plan and facilitate this year's WVER and had this to say:

Earlier this month, I attended the PVA women veteran empowerment retreat in Orlando. I had the great honor of meeting one of my clients, Tracey Cooper-Harris and her wife, Maggie Cooper-Harris for the first time, in person. Tracey, our event keynote speaker and an incredibly fierce advocate for veterans, really kicked off the event with her story of strength, resilience, and determination. Over the course of the event, I had the great privilege of meeting other remarkable veteran women PVA members who were passionate, resilient, making new connections, and so ready to take the information back home. I have absolutely no doubt that we will be seeing and hearing more from these amazing women in the future, and it was truly an honor to not only contribute to the event, but to also personally connect with these remarkable women.

Member Column

PVA RENO TAKE OVER
SEPTEMBER 16 -18, 2023

THE PARALYED VETERANS OF AMERICA, BAY AREA AND WESTERN CHAPTER HAD A GREAT TIME WITH OUR MEMBERS, STAFF, VOLUNTEERS, FRIENDS, AND FAMILY MEMBERS AT OUR PVA RENO TAKE OVER. THANK YOU TO THE CITY OF RENO, NEVADA PVA CHAPTER, MILITARY ADAPTIVE COURT SPORTS, AND NATIONAL PVA FOR THEIR SUPPORT.

WE HAD OVER 15 VETERANS SHOW UP FOR THE EVENT AND WE TRULY APPRECIATE ALL THE SUPPORT. WE KNOW HOW ADAPTIVE SPORTS AND SOCIAL ACTIVITIES CAN CHANGE THE LIVES OF OUR MEMBERS. WE WILL CONTINUE TO PROVIDE A VARIETY OF ADAPTIVE SPORTS AND ACTIVITIES THOUGHOUT OUR CATCHMENT AREAS.



PVA.org/VeteransCareerProgram

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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 529 members, but sees over 1,000 paralyzed veterans at the SCI/D Center at VA Palo Alto Health Care System. 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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Palo Alto, CA 94304

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