



E-BRIDGE

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



Executive Director's Message

WRITTEN BY KORY AMARAL

I just want to start out by saying Happy Holidays. I know this time of year should be about celebrating, but we should recognize that some veterans are alone and do not have family or friends around to celebrate. Please take a moment to interact with veterans who may not have someone; a small gesture goes a long way. On Tuesday, December 5, 2023 we will be hosting our Winter Luncheon at 12:00 PM at VA Palo Alto Health Care System. Although this may seem to be for SCI/D inpatients, but it is open to all PVA members, so feel free to stop by if you are in town.

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 masking mandate has come back to VA Palo Alto Health Care System due to the flu season. Please expect to wear a mask when you enter the buildings on campus. I cannot do anything to change the policy, this mandate came from the recommendations of the county and VA leadership. 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

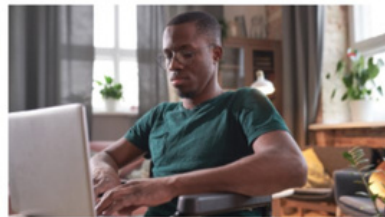
SPONSORED BY THE PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA, BAY AREA AND WESTERN CHAPTER, INC. AND SCI/D CENTER AT VA PALO ALTO HEALTH CARE SYSTEM



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>



08/18/210 - 1 and 11/16/2021 10.12.2023

December Calendar

WINTER LUNCHEON
DECEMBER 5

NATIONAL SERVICE OFFICER (NSO) MONTHLY CHAT (VIRTUAL)
DECEMBER 12

ADAPTIVE SPORTS CLINIC
DECEMBER 14

BINGO & PIZZA NIGHT
DECEMBER 21

WINTER HOLIDAY BREAK (OFFICE CLOSED)
DECEMBER 15 - JANUARY 2

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



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/>

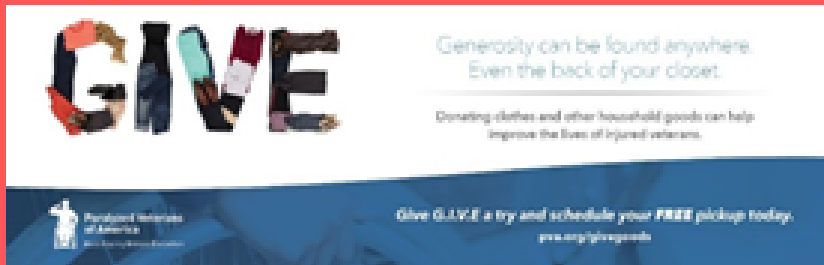
Car Donation Program

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



National PVA's Washington Update

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

DAMA Subcommittee Reviews Pending Legislation

The House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs (DAMA) recently held a legislative hearing to look at several pieces of pending legislation. The hearing was originally scheduled to take place on October 24, but was delayed roughly two weeks while the House worked to choose a new Speaker. Included among the 10 bills examined by the Subcommittee was H.R. 3790, the Justice for ALS Veterans Act of 2023, which would authorize payment of a higher Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) rate to surviving spouses of veterans who die from amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) regardless of whether the veteran had a disability rated as totally disabling for a continuous period of at least eight years immediately preceding death. The additional rate of DIC is commonly known as the "DIC Kicker."

The Justice for ALS Veterans Act was drafted with PVA's help and this change is a key part of our efforts to improve VA benefits and services for ALS veterans and their survivors. The current version of the bill asks VA to study and inform Congress on other conditions with high mortality rates that deserve similar consideration from lawmakers. VA recommended incorporating a clearer definition of high mortality rate in the bill to ensure implementation would be consistent with congressional intent.

The Subcommittee also looked at H.R. 5890, the Review Every Veterans Claim Act of 2023, which seeks to limit the VA's authority to deny a veteran's claim solely based on the veteran's failure to appear for a medical examination associated with the claim. Thousands of veterans' claims for service connection, claims for increase, and for other benefits like Total Disability Individual Unemployability and Aid and Attendance have been denied solely on the basis of missing an examination. There are many legitimate reasons why a veteran may not be able to attend a scheduled exam. We are also aware of numerous instances where VA contractors have erroneously recorded the veteran as a "no show." PVA strongly supports passage of this legislation, which would ensure that a missed exam isn't the only basis for denying a veteran's claim.

At the request of the Subcommittee, PVA submitted a written statement for the hearing. To view the hearing or read the statement, click [here](#).

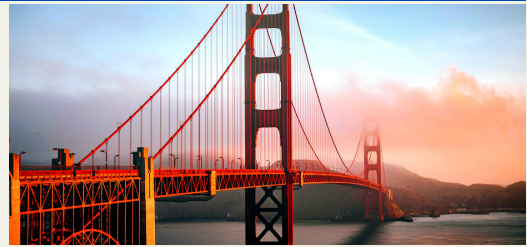
Upcoming Veterans' Committee Activities

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



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



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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Adaptive Sports Clinics

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



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

ADAPTIVE SPORTS CLINIC



LIVE CLINIC
2ND THURSDAY OF THE MONTH
3:00PM

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

RSVP TO KORY AMARAL
(650) 858-3936
AMARAL@BAWPVA.ORG

BUILDING 7
3801 MIRANDA AVENUE
PALO ALTO, CA 94304

FOOD PROVIDED

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

PRIZES

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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.

Member Column

BAY AREA NEWS GROUP/
MERCURY NEWS
WISH BOOK GRANT
NOVEMBER 28, 2023

THE PARALYED VETERANS OF AMERICA, BAY AREA AND WESTERN (BAWPVA) CHAPTER WAS LUCKY ENOUGH TO BE CONTACTED BY THE BAY AREA NEWS GROUP/MERCURY NEWS REGARDING THE WISH BOOK GRANT. THEY HAVE BEEN CELEBRATING THE GOOD INDIVIDUALS AND NONPROFITS DO IN THE COMMUNITY FOR THE PAST 40 YEARS.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR KORY AMARAL REACHED OUT TO BOARD MEMBER KYLE HANSEL AND ASKED HIM TO SHARE HIS STORY. BAWPVA WAS ON THE FRONT COVER OF THE MERCURY NEWS ON NOVEMBER 28, 2023. WE ARE HOPING TO RAISE \$45,000.00 FOR OUR SPORTS AND RECREATION PROGRAM. PLEASE FOLLOW THIS LINK TO VIEW THE STORY: [HTTPS://WISHBOOK.MERCURYNEWS.COM/2023-PARALYZEDVETS/](https://wishbook.mercurynews.com/2023-paralyzedvets/).



PVA VETERANS CAREER PROGRAM UPDATE

October 2023

WORKING TOGETHER TO FIND MEANINGFUL EMPLOYMENT



Elsia is a Navy veteran who transitioned out of the military in 2022; and went on to finish her Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration in May of 2023. Just prior to graduating, Elsie reached out to VCP's Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC), Danielle Hetu, for

career assistance. Together, they revamped her resume & cover letter, conducted job searches and practiced interview skills; however, Elsie was not getting the type of job offers she desired. She had some work trials in the private sector, but really desired a job that had structure, rules, and boundaries. They determined that federal employment would be ideal; and while she was open to all federal jobs, she was drawn to working at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). They created a federal resume and Elsie applied to a few positions but had not heard back on any of them.

So, Danielle brought Elsie's case to the VCP team of counselors, and worked with VRC James Arndt (our federal employment guru) to connect directly with the VA recruiter in PA.

Not only was Elsie interviewed, but was offered and accepted a job as a Veteran Service Representative for the VA. She has started working, and while she knows that there is much to learn, she is thrilled to be working for the VA. Congratulations, Elsie!

MONTHLY IMPACT

- 19 Client Placements**
- 15 Paid Employment
 - 2 Education/Training
 - 2 Volunteer
 - 19 Veterans
 - 1 Caregiver
 - 4 PVA Members



The average salary for the 11 clients in full time employment is \$68,740; and the average income for the 4 clients in part time employment is \$29,029.

Welcome Aboard: David Martinez



We are very excited to introduce the newest member of the Veterans Career Program team, David Martinez – our Employment Analyst on the West Coast. David will be assisting members of the military community

(transitioning service members, veterans, family members and caregivers) with finding meaningful careers by helping with job searches, resume writing and tailoring, certifications, interviewing skills, and much more. He's a Marine Corps veteran; and has a background in recruiting with a large focus on assisting transitioning service members through the DoD SkillBridge program.

In my free time, you'll find me in the mountains of the Pacific Northwest (Puyallup, WA) looking for the next fishing spot or looking for bigfoot. Serving the veteran community has always been a strong passion of mine and I'm looking forward to working with you all!

Welcome aboard, David!



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 531 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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Building 7 Rm. E-118
Palo Alto, CA 94304

Our Mailing Address is:

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