



# G ateway azette

July/August 2022

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No.4





**VETERANS WITH SPINAL CORD INJURY OR DISEASE, LIVING LIFE TO THE FULLEST**

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YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION?**

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314.427.0393 or 800.426.4058  
Fax 314.427.4183

info@gatewaypva.org

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Ruth Kult  
Lou Monken  
Matt Schneider

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Martha Rampani, Transportation

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JB SCI, Room 2S25  
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Office: (314) 894-6467 or (866) 328-2670  
Fax: (314) 894-6465  
Rodney Harris, Senior Benefits Advocate

## PVA National Liaison VP

Josue Cordova



# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Rose Ganz

## FY23 Board of Directors and Officers

The votes are in, the Gateway Chapter members have voted, here is the new BOD for FY23:

### Officers

- President** – Rose Ganz
- Vice President** – Steve McIntosh
- Treasurer** – Don Feldott
- Secretary** – Bram Lucieer

### Board Members

- Doug Barnes
- Harry Brown
- Chad Buder
- Doug Conklin
- Bonnie Hilburn
- Robert Huskey, PhD

- Ruth Kult
- Lou Monken
- Matt Schneider

I look forward to serving and growing in the new year.

## PVA National Resolution for eligible members with MS

A new resolution at the May PVA National Convention voted to expand membership to include all Veterans with a Multiple Sclerosis diagnosis. Up until now, only veterans living with MS that were affected by bowel and bladder issues, mobility issues, and spinal cord involvement, were eligible to become a member. Now all veterans living with MS are eligible to join the PVA, no matter what the progression of their disease is. National PVA has formed a committee committed to serving veterans with MS. Every PVA Chapter has a representative that reports to this new MS Committee.

## Interim Final Rule-Presumptive Service Connection for Rare Respiratory Cancers Due to Exposure to Fine Particulate Matter by Brent Follas, Senior National Service Officer

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced the addition of nine rare respiratory cancers to the list of conditions presumed to be service-connected due to military environmental exposure to fine particulate matter.

VA determined through a focused review of scientific and medical evidence there is biological plausibility between airborne hazards, specifically particulate matter, and carcinogenesis of the respiratory tract, and that the unique circumstances of these rare cancers warrant a presumption of service connection.

Based on these findings, VA published an interim final rule establishing presumptions of service connection for several rare respiratory cancers for certain Veterans.

These cancers include:

- Squamous cell carcinoma of the larynx;
- Squamous cell carcinoma of the trachea;
- Adenocarcinoma of the trachea;
- Salivary gland-type tumors of the trachea;
- Aden squamous carcinoma of the lung;
- Large cell carcinoma of the lung;
- Salivary gland-type tumors of the lung;
- Sarcomatoid carcinoma of the lung; and

- Typical and atypical carcinoid of the lung.

The rarity and severity of these illnesses, and the reality that these conditions present a situation where it prompted us to take action. We are utilizing a new approach, one that takes all available science into account, with one goal in mind— getting today's Veterans—and Veterans in the decades ahead—the benefits they deserve, as fast as possible. We are fulfilling our promises to provide more care, more benefits and more services to more Veterans than ever before.

VA focused its rule on the rare respiratory cancers above for Veterans who served any amount of time in the Southwest Asia theater of operations and other locations. VA invited and will consider public comments as part of this process.

VA focused its rule on the rare respiratory cancers for Veterans who served any amount of time in the Southwest Asia theater of operations and other locations. VA invited and will consider public comments as part of this process. VA will contact impacted Veterans and survivors to inform them about potential eligibility.

<https://www.regulations.gov/document/VA-2022-VBA-0014-0001>

# FROM THE DESK OF GATEWAY CHAPTER'S **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Chris Blanchard

## **GOLF TOURNAMENT FUNDRAISER**

Tuesday, October 4, 2022, is our 26th annual charity golf tournament. This event is our biggest fundraiser of the year and we usually net after expenses \$70,000- \$100,000. The tournament again this year will be held in far West St. Louis County, at the Landings at Spirit Golf Course.

It is most important that we get as many members as possible there to be seen by the golfers who are participating in the tournament and staying for the auction.

Please try to arrive by 9 AM, stay for a free lunch, stay a little to mingle, and earn 20 fundraising points.

We still need teams, sponsors, and silent and live auction items. Solicit your local merchants or restaurants you frequent.

Call or email Amber at [amber@gatewaypva.org](mailto:amber@gatewaypva.org) for brochures and registration forms.

## **HOUSE DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION SUBCOMMITTEE EXAMINES FINANCIAL INEQUITIES FACING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES**

via PVA Washington Update

On May 24, the Diversity and Inclusion Subcommittee of the House Financial Services Committee held a hearing titled, "Diversity Includes Disability: Exploring Inequities in Financial

Services for Persons with Disabilities, Including Those Newly Disabled Due to Long-Term COVID." Witnesses included Alison Cannington, Senior Manager, Advocacy and Organizing, The Kelsey; Cynthia DiBartolo, Founder and CEO, Tigress Financial Partners; Thomas Foley, Executive Director, National Disability Institute; Vilissa Thompson, LMSW Fellow, The Century Foundation & Co-director, Disability Economic Justice Collaborative; and Caroline Sullivan, Executive Director, North Carolina Business Committee for Education, Office of the Governor. The hearing explored many of the housing and employment barriers that impede economic security for people with disabilities and highlighted particular challenges faced by those affected by long-COVID-19's impacts.

The webcast and testimony can be found <https://financialservices.house.gov/events/eventsingle.aspx?EventID=409380>

by Ruth Kult

Hello to all:

This is my version of a fish tale - part two. But this is no tale, it happened. Last September I unexpectedly lost my beloved 20 year old nephew, Jackson, who was a few months shy of turning 21 years old.

Even though I never thought I'd be interested in fishing, Marion County was only a few hours away. The PVA Vaughan Chapter had been hosting the PVA Bass Tournament in a week or so. Well, I went. I needed the serene time to calm down and gather my thoughts and feelings after such a significant loss. Long story short; you need two working rods. The only two in my garage were a regular size one and a toddlers Scoop Doo rod, which happened to be my dearly departed Jackson's.

I caught 21 fish that first day. Granted most were little, but in this competition it's not a huge deal breaker. They needed to be at least four inches long. LaRoy Smith and I took second or third in the team competition the next day. I honestly don't recall what was won that day, but it was a still quite the surprise. It was all good, but my next fishing experience was the bomb!

Now to the present Kentucky Lake awesomeness:

I, of course, bring my Scooby with my Zebco Dock Demon. I primarily use Scooby because it's usually little fish right off the dock or at least I thought. I use short rods because I have messed up shoulders, and of the good karma my nephew gives me. It's just entirely a sentimental issue for me to use his Scooby pole. This whole thing kind of blows my mind. I caught 21 fish the first day once again. There is a limit, but 21 was personal. At the end of the day the officials weigh the heaviest of ten; ka-ching, I won \$500.00! I also won a nice award shaped like a fish and a beautiful new fishing rod. Not too shabby for unskilled fisherman.

The second day was team day. We drew numbers out of a hat earlier. I got paired up with Michael Murphy from Kentucky. As luck would have it, I have known him for many years. He was a spinal cord patient at Jefferson Barracks back in the day. I considered myself lucky because he was from Kentucky and I have heard through the gossip he always done well. Well, here we are on beautiful Kentucky lake with the extreme wind and hot sun when

it was out it wasn't bad, but then when sun disappeared behind a cloud it was chilly.

Fishing on the one side of the dock was dead after awhile so I suggested to move to the other side. It took about 30 seconds to cast and - bam - a fish. Then another, then of course more dead time. I stayed in the spot and persevered. Patience is a virtue. It's important in this kind of an event. Back to catching a few more. Cast it out again and a bit later I asked the volunteer if the line was tangled? It's heavy. The volunteer said no, hold on, do not pull he ran down borrowed a net, came back and scooped out of the water a 2 lb 17 oz catfish using a toddlers Scooby Doo Amazing the line didn't break. Oh the excitement! A few hours left and I'm still in disbelief over the catfish.

Now everyone is just catching fish sporadically. The volunteer I would often use was off helping someone else. Luckily the guy in charge of bank fishing was walking behind me when my line started dragging down again. He too started saying stop, pull, don't pull. Luckily the net was near. He grabbed it, swooped down, scooped up a second catfish. This one weighing in at 2 lb. 2 oz. I still can't believe this. Unbelievable fishing done with a scooby rod.

Well it's awards time. All the people from the Gateway Chapter placed. Very nice. My partner and I took first place for another \$500 a piece, and another fish shaped award. I also won \$75 for biggest fish in the bank division.

Jackson's smile once again helped Auntie Roo out. I used his Scooby pole He'd be 22. I caught two 2 lb catfish. I don't believe in coincidences. I caught 21 fish my first day, I have faith in the forever love of my nephew.





# We proudly support Gateway PVA



If you have a **service-connected disability**, you may qualify for VA funding assistance for wheelchair accessible vehicles or driving modifications. If your current mobility vehicle is more than two years old, you may even qualify for a brand new conversion. Veterans discounts available. Check out our daily rental rates!

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# 76th Annual Convention

## 17-21 May 2021 Atlanta GA

by Donald Feldott, Gateway National Director

I delivered the Stan Brown Memorial edition of the Gateway Gazette to National Vice President, Hack Albertson. On Thursday we wore bowties and the Gazette was given to each National Director. All had good things to say about Stan. He was one of a kind and had a positive impact at National. Following are some of the highlights from the Convention.

### First day of Convention (Tuesday)

Welcoming remarks by National PVA President Brown, Call to Order, Certification of National Directors, and Report of Code of Ethics. We then heard from each member of the Executive Committee.

Received a sheet on FY21 Chapter Financial Data. I was surprised to see how well Chapters were doing. Of the 33 chapters, 20 had Net Assets over \$1 million dollars. Four had a balance of \$400,000 or less. High was \$3,440,000 and low was \$104,000. Four had an Expense Ratio of 90% or above. High was 95% and low was 57%. Nationals target is 65%.

### Several Resolutions were presented and voted upon:

Resolution was presented to allow veterans with ALS to be fast tracked into PVA membership. This resolution passed.

Mountain States National Director Izzy Abbass and 21 other National Directors presented a resolution to change one of the award categories from the John M. Price award to the Stanley D. Brown Most Improved Chapter award. This award category will begin in 2023.

National Executive Director Carl Blake, and the Director of Communications Liz Deakin provided a presentation on PVA branding.

ALL of us contribute to how we are perceived. That means all the way from National level, to Chapter level, down to the individual. It all impacts how we are perceived and how others see us!

The DRTV Program is designed to provide this information. In order to make this program self-sustaining for the new projections, it will take a minimum of an additional \$5,000,000 over and above the \$7,000,000 already earmarked for the program.

### DRTV Goals

More revenue diversification and growth. More sustainers for a predictable revenue stream. Increase PVA awareness:

- a) Among Veteran Service Organizations (VSO) donors, PVA Brand awareness is between 1% - 3%
- b) Currently PVA is last in recognition behind WWP, DAV, VFW, USO, Amer Legion, AmVets.
- c) Among VSO donors who are familiar with PVA, we are their last choice to give a donation to, and this remains the same across all age groups.
- d) Only 2% - 4% of VSO donors who are familiar with PVA would donate to PVA first.

Lack of Awareness = Distrust. Under Charity Navigator PVA is 2 stars out of 4 stars. Charity Navigator believes donors can give with confidence to charities with a 3 or 4 star rating.

With PVA 67% goes to Veterans and 33% goes to administrative costs, including staff salaries, and fundraising costs.

After much discussion it was decided that our star rating needed to be upgraded if we are to be considered favorably. DRTV group also is looking to increase television advertisements with some big star endorsements.

Need to expand our donor list. More individual monthly donors, more annual corporate sponsors, etc. The DRTV program was approved with additional funding. The Board of Directors will get regular updates at each Convention.

### STRATEGIC PLAN

The board was presented with a five year Strategic Plan developed by Wellspring Consulting. PVA has never had a strategic plan. Also provided was a Governance Recommendations (THOUGHT STARTERS FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION). This plan would:

Provides a road map for PVA over the next five years. Outlines strategic goals and processes to attain them. Change to PVA's organizational structure to support this work, etc.

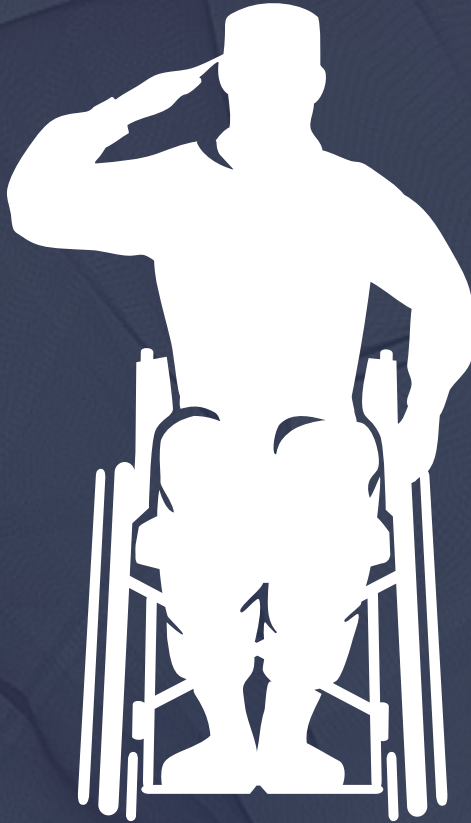
Will be reviewed annually to determine how we're doing and what needs to change.

After much discussion, approval was granted to move forward.

It was mentioned that the National PVA has difficulty passing on national information to members. It's important that they have valid contact information. E-mail addresses and telephone numbers.

The FY 2022 budget contains a 3.9 % increase to help with inflation. New National Grant is \$12,555 a month or \$150,655 a year.

I learned a lot and look forward to passing on information to membership. If you have questions or need clarification on something email me at don@gatewaypva.org.



# GATEWAY G.I.

## WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

William Baker  
John Becker  
Rebecca Gentry  
Ellory Glenn  
Stanley Huddleston  
Gregory Jacob  
Martha Lowe  
Daniel McGuire  
Frederick Pieper

## MISSING IN ACTION

Have you seen or know the whereabouts of these members? They are in danger of being dropped from the PVA roster. Please contact the Gateway office with current contact information for the following members:

Ronnie Anderson  
Lynda Hauth  
Jarid Hill  
Kevin Jackson  
Robert Melchior  
Charles Packard  
Sylvester Roddy  
Laurice Sappington  
Robert Schneider  
Donnell Thames  
Willis Walker

## IN MEMORY OF

Jerry Gause of Carondelet, IL	10/01/2021
Von Virdure of Black Jack, MO	11/27/2021
George Breeze of Scheller, IL	03/14/2022
Steven Rufer of Pacific, MO	04/04/2022
Dennis Paglia of Collins, MO	04/11/2022
Alexander Beaton of St. Peters, MO	05/27/2022



# GENERAL INFORMATION



## JULY

JULY 1 to 4  
OFFICE CLOSED

JULY 7 to 12  
National Veterans Wheelchair Games

JULY 19 at 11:30am  
Board of Directors meeting  
Via Zoom (contact office for link) and  
in person w/proof of COVID vaccination  
and signed waiver  
*15 points for nonBOD members*



## AUGUST

August 7 to 12  
National Veterans Summer Sports Clinic

AUGUST 9 at 11:30am  
Board of Directors meeting  
Via Zoom (contact office for link) and  
in person w/proof of COVID vaccination  
and signed waiver  
*15 points for nonBOD members*



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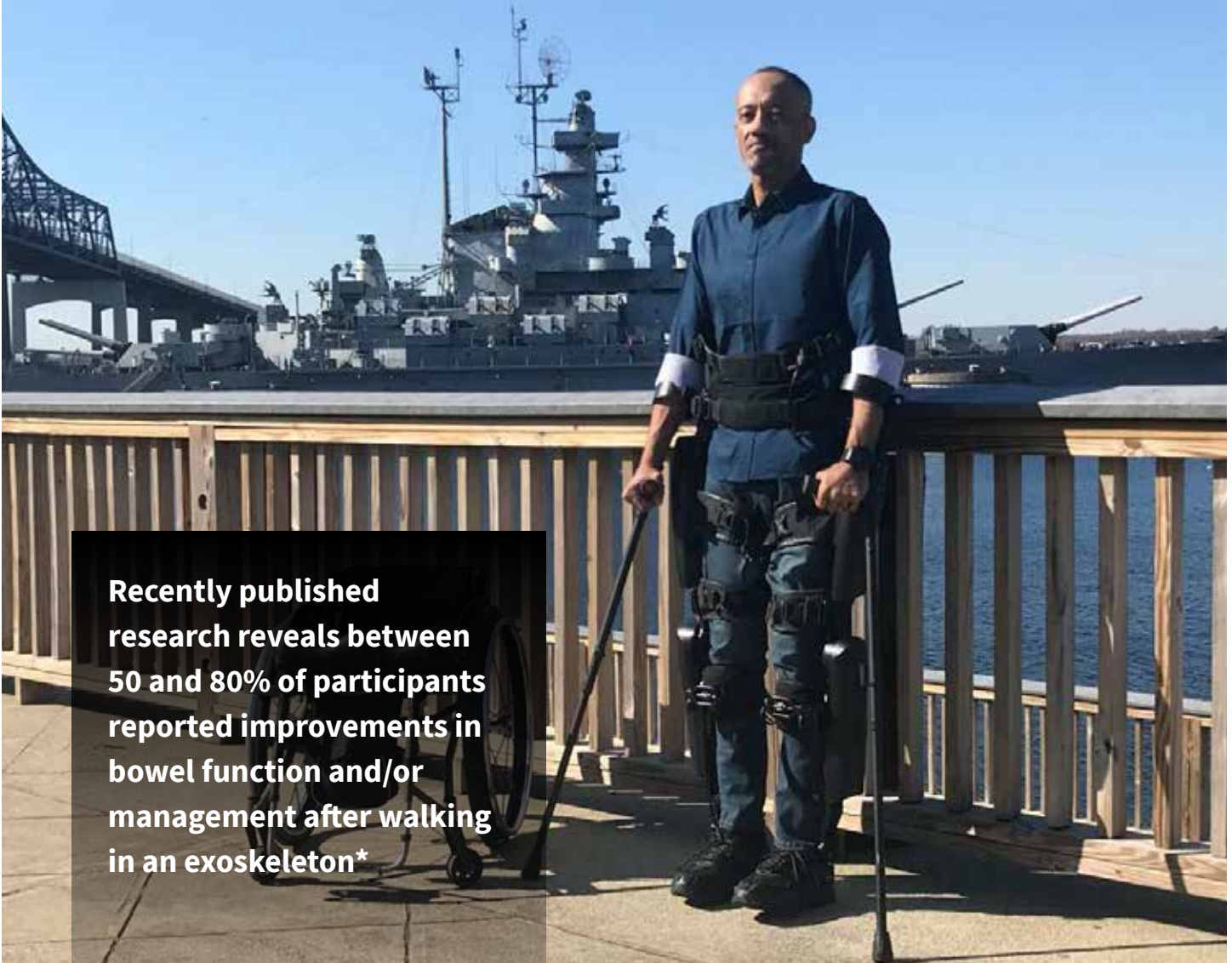
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# Want To Improve Your Bowel Function?



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**508.251.1154** option 2**

\*Chun A, et al. Changes in bowel function following exoskeletal-assisted walking in persons with spinal cord injury: an observational pilot study. Spinal Cord. 2020;58(4):459-466.



# Making Memories at Field of Dreams

by Steve McIntosh, Gateway Chapter Vice President



Approximately two years ago during the VVC connect meeting we started tossing around ideas about things to do when life got back to normal. We wanted to incorporate a location that was equal drive for the Kansas City side of the state and the St. Louis side. I started googling locations and came up with what I felt might be the perfect place. That place was the movie site for Field of Dreams, plus some dining experiences in the city of Dubuque, Iowa. Dubuque is only about a thirty minute drive from the Field of Dreams movie site. Charlie Wright Recreation Therapist for the VA Jefferson Barracks was all for the idea so we started to run with it. I contacted the travel bureau for Dubuque, got connected with a lady named Becky Carkeek. I informed Becky that we would be a group of wheelchair-bound paralyzed veterans and need accommodations plus dining options that would be fully accessible. This lady is a saint, she prepared the itineraries with times plus travel to get us to the next destination perfectly. She negotiated a discount rate at the hotel, and made reservations at all the venues we attended. She was the true hero in this trip.

Now for some of the highlights of the trip, the important stuff. We all arrived approximately the same time from each area of the state.

We checked in at the Holiday Inn Dubuque right downtown. It's a beautiful hotel. The only negative was this weekend was filled with what looks like 11 and 12 year old boys for a baseball tournament. The hotel was completely sold out. After checking in and unpacking, we headed to our first destination dining venue. The restaurant named appropriately Catfish Charlie's, set on an island in the Mississippi River. When we arrived there was a line out the door to get in but because of our travel pro Becky, we were whisked right to the front of the line and taken into our own private dining room all set up and ready to go. We ate a wonderful meal, enjoyed each other's company and got to meet each other personally most of us for the first time. After dinner and the long day we all retreated back to our rooms to get some much-needed rest and prepare for the next fun filled day.

The next morning some of us gathered in the hotel restaurant for breakfast discussing our fun plans for the day. Everyone is excited to head to the Field of Dreams movie site. We had six veterans plus the caretakers, so we had several different vehicles. We all caravan in a row headed out to Field of Dreams. And our tour professional Becky had also arranged for a ghost player to spend time with us and

explain the history of the area. When we arrived it is exactly the same as displayed in the movie. The house is the same the field is exactly the same. Mostly people come from all over the world and are continually playing games on the field. It truly lives the saying if you build it they will come because to this day they still come and they still play. After visiting in the gift shop we decided to venture over towards the field and lo and behold as soon as we left the gift shop the ghost player was waiting for us. His name is Chad and he was an incredibly professional. He even stated he would stay with us all day if we needed. And he informed us it was his honor to help and be of service to the veterans in our group. He went over the history of the movie site and details about the movie and of course took photos with all of us. The most magical moment at that site to me was before we left the field. I hope you can picture this but on the first base side of the field there were a group of younger girl softball players tossing the ball along the side of the diamond. On the third base side they were a group of boys approximately the same age 12-14 maybe younger tossing the ball around. I spoke over to Lou Monken that we should take a lap around the bases in our power chairs,

continued on page 14





# Jacqueline Black, PT, ATP

I would like to share some updates on our wonderful SCI/D Aquatics programming. If you haven't been here in a while, the home base for our aquatics program is now next door to Building 52 in Building 54. It is a beautiful new pool, equipped with a lift and ramp access. There is also a changing room that has a roll-in shower, height adjustable changing table, and overhead lift to access both changing table and shower area.

SCI Therapy has slotted times in the pool on Monday, Wednesday and Friday afternoons. All therapy staff can and have used the pool with SCI veterans for SCI PT, OT and Rec Therapy sessions. Some of the sessions are scheduled for the purpose of skilled therapy inpatient and outpatient treatment sessions, and many sessions are used for the purpose of

wellness programming.

What are the benefits of aquatic therapy? There are many! Some benefits include the buoyancy of water allowing more freedom of movement after SCI. It may help with spasticity management and pain management. The pool can also be used for cardiovascular exercise.

Medical clearance is required prior to participation in VA SCI aquatics programming. If you are interested in learning more about aquatics programming, please contact Charley Wright or Matt Luitjohan at 314-652-4100, ext 64590 or 66602.

Is JB too far for you? Don't give up on considering aquatics to meet your health and wellness goals! It may be more feasible to explore a community pool that is closer to your home, and our SCI Therapists can still help! We can talk with you about accessibility items to consider when touring local pools. Our therapists have even done site visits with veterans to community centers, when it is within reasonable distance from JB. If you are outside reasonable range- we can certainly use virtual technology to assist you. Once you have identified a local aquatic center that will meet your needs- we can discuss programming to meet your goals.

If you have questions, concerns, or kudos about SCI Therapy- please contact me at [Jacqueline.black@va.gov](mailto:Jacqueline.black@va.gov) or 314-652-4100, ext 64691.

of course Lou is all for it. Lou calls out the rest of the veterans lineup in a line behind us and everybody make a lap. So here we go and I'm leading the group as I'm going towards first base I noticed that all the young women that were out playing start walking off the field. They then lined the sideline along first base and they start cheering, yelling go for second you can do it you guys can make it go for it and they're cheering us it's amazing. Next I turn from second towards third and the same things going on with all the boys they're all leaving the field and standing along the 3rd baseline. They start cheering for us, "go guys go, try to get home, you can score, make it all the way!" My smile is ear to ear, I really feel like I'm scoring the winning run in the World Series and the crowd is roaring. These kids and their parents and everyone cheering could not have been a more perfect ending to a visit to a truly magical place. Everyone felt young again and I can never thank the GPVA enough for allowing me that experience. Charlie Wright filmed from the pitchers mound all of us



round those bases hopefully we can share that video when he gets it edited and publishes it.

As we departed Field of Dreams, we were headed to our next destination, of course it involves food. Our travel icon Becky had reserved us a room at the

oldest continuing operated restaurant in Iowa. The name of it is Breitbachs Country Dining. Continuously in operation since 1862. Again everything was all set up special dining room area and they had a country dining buffet



for us. The route to the restaurant took us across the scenic highway. The highway was across the top of the Bluffs of the Mississippi river looking down in the valleys to the river itself absolutely beautiful. The restaurant itself was on the top of the bluffs and we walked just a short distance to overlook viewing area. This view can be seen on page 12. The food was excellent but it was now time to head to the next stop.

Some of the group was tired and headed back to the hotel to rest, others of us visited the next stop that was planned the Mississippi River Museum and Aquarium. It is quite interesting to read and understand the history of the river that far for up north. It's quite a large aquarium museum, approximately six buildings, so needless to say we spent the rest the afternoon there the ones who opted. We had pre-determined the dinner reservation but we canceled because everyone was just wore out and kind of ate on our own, sat around the fire pit in the lounge and reminisced.

Dubuque is directly on the corner of Illinois, Iowa and Wisconsin. In fact after dinner we took a drive on the

two bridges crossing the Mississippi. The first and further North bridge exited into Wisconsin the lower Bridge took you to East Dubuque, Illinois. Kind of similar to East St. Louis, St. Louis area.

I have so many precious memories from this trip plus some beautiful souvenirs gifted me from Victor and Rose. They actually purchased me a portion of the original backstop from the baseball field and I will treasure it for the rest of my life. I'm

truly thankful for my wonderful dear friends in the GPVA.

I'm not a professional writer, I hope you understand and don't critique me too much. I tried my best to give you a glimpse of the excitement of this trip. Before I end this I want to say - don't be afraid to try these things. I was so afraid and scared about how I would be able to handle normal daily functions. I even had thoughts of canceling myself. But I'm here to tell you we are resilient and we always find a way to overcome. We find bumps in the road that we just climb over. Don't let anything hold you back. I got to relive my dreams, feel like a child again and get to know some truly beautiful wonderful people on a more personal level. Thank you Gateway Chapter, thank you to everyone who volunteered to help. Hopefully we can do another trip like this in the future.





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Watch Marine Veteran Steve Holbert's story at [www.indego.com/veterans](http://www.indego.com/veterans)





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