

The Veterans' Voice

SPRING 2012



Colorado Department of Human Services
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Facility improvement project to begin at State Veterans Home at Rifle

Upgrades and remodeling to enhance quality of life for veterans and spouses

In January 2012, our \$3.75 million capital improvement project got started. So keep your eyes open for changes and improvements around Rifle's home that will make life more pleasant for our residents!

The project got a jumpstart with the completed removal of glass and walls around first and second floor nurses' stations. Without glass around these areas, nursing staff members now are more accessible to our friends living here, as well as to family members and visitors.

Other plans that will be started later include a new telephone system, nurse call lights and communication system that will eliminate all overhead paging.

The Grass Mesa secure neighborhood will be expanded from 12 to 16 beds. Also added to the secure unit will be a new kitchen, which will allow food to be served to residents as soon as it is prepared, and a new nurses' station.

All rooms will get new air conditioning/heating units controlled by each resident. Also in the plans are many equipment upgrades: Toilet fixtures will be replaced to save water; new boilers and a new hot water tank will be installed; laundry area improvements will be made; and the fire alarm system will be upgraded.

Also coming are new sidewalks, allowing for wheelchair access and enjoyment of the grounds and views of the surrounding mountains. Tree plantings in this area will serve as tributes to friends who have passed.

We all look forward to these new improvements!



Volunteers William Contreras and Steve McBeain are seen removing glass and framing from the second floor nurses' station as part of a facility improvement project.



Once the walls came down, *everyone* began enjoying the new look of the first and second floor nurses' stations. Korean War veteran Dave Scott (right) savors the moment with Betty Bendetti (left), a certified nursing assistant. Terry Clemons, registered nurse, is on the telephone, while Jamie West, also a registered nurse, gets a kick out of the whole situation!

Holidays bring lots of cheer!

From young to old, everyone enjoyed Christmas at the Rifle Veterans Home

During the Christmas holiday, many family members, volunteers and community members reached out to our friends who live at the Veterans Home in Rifle. Without the help of these people, our celebrations would not have been so enjoyable—or successful.

December was bustling with activity! Activities Department “Fun Chicks” Carolyn Creech, Janet Elkins, Deana Jacoby and Lesa Rust were busy decorating, shopping and wrapping gifts.

Community volunteers from the Rifle Veterans Home’s Citizens Advisory Board, Glenwood Springs Elks Lodge and Rifle American Legion and Auxiliary showed their support by helping with donations, shopping and wrapping hundreds of gifts that were purchased or received. Many state and district chapters of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, American Legion and Disabled American Veterans gave monetary donations for gifts and other items needed for holiday celebrations.

A Holiday Open House brought in community members, family and friends for an afternoon of visits, live entertainment and homemade desserts. Staff and residents thoroughly enjoyed music with Sara Strong (daughter of Jessica Strong, Admissions) on vocals and Dominique Del Signore on guitar.

Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners were once again enjoyed by our friends, family members and visitors. We always look forward to the holiday meals! Thanksgiving dinner served up traditional turkey and dressing, homemade rolls and pumpkin



Standing (from left) are Morale Team members Lindsey Doiel (Social Services), Sharmen Jerin (Restorative Nurse) and Raquel Creamer (Dietary Manager). Sitting (from left) are Margie Maynard (Director of Nursing), Janet Elkins (Activities), Carolyn Creech (Activities), Deana Jacoby (Activities Director) and Lesa Rust (Activities).

pie. Christmas dinner wowed the crowd with ham and sweet potatoes, corn, homemade rolls and cheesecake.

Other holiday recognitions go to the Morale Team, who hosted a holiday dinner for staff and their guests. A crowd of about 75 came to enjoy the evening, with door prizes donated by local businesses, along with a karaoke contest and white elephant giveaway. Everyone enjoyed the meal, entertainment, door prizes and visiting. Thank you to ALL Morale Team members, past and present, for your hard work in recognizing our wonderful employees ... employees just like yourselves.

Special thanks also go to John Pettit, from the Glenwood Springs Elks Lodge and chairman of their Veterans Committee, for spearheading shopping and spending thousands of dollars on gifts for residents. Appreciation also goes to Candyce Lowery, family member and volunteer extraordinaire, who spent many hours wrapping gifts; and to Jamie West, Jennifer Sisseck and Mike Walker for their expertise in hanging Christmas lights and making our Home look so festive!



Our neighbors, volunteers and Rifle American Legion and Auxiliary members Ted and Jo Diaz lend a hand with countless hours of gift-wrapping.



Korean War Army veteran George Vuovich enjoys the Holiday Open House with Activities Department “Fun Chick” Janet Elkins.



Staff members Jackie Bluis (R.N.) and Lily Farr (R.N.) are seen here showing true holiday spirit.



Korean War-era veteran Fred Jackson enjoys a moment at the Holiday Open House with Jessie Strong (Admissions Coordinator).

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Local community volunteers and Rifle American Legion and Auxiliary post members are (from left): Tom Valdez, Jim Meeker, Mildred Meeker and Michelle Valdez.

Employees rewarded for providing comments, suggestions on satisfaction surveys

Response rate increases by 36 percent, helping identify areas for improvement

Employees stepped up to the plate this year in returning their annual satisfaction surveys. Three employees who completed the surveys were selected by raffle to receive gift baskets with items donated by department managers and other employees.

The surveys give us a chance to review employee comments and suggestions. Management will strive to improve the work place for residents and staff at the Colorado State Veterans Home at Rifle. We truly do care!



Employees Gina Gardner (left), Pam Mead (top right) and Patty Gyolai (bottom right) pose with gift baskets they won through a drawing among employees who completed satisfaction surveys.

COLORADO STATE VETERANS HOME AT RIFLE

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Our Mission

Under the direction of the Colorado Department of Human Services, the mission of the Division of State Veterans Nursing Homes is to honor and serve our nation's veterans, their spouses and Gold Star Parents by creating opportunities for meaningful activity, continued growth and feelings of self-worth in resident-centered long-term care and supportive living environments.

Our Vision

Our vision is that residents experience compassion, dignity and companionship in communities filled with life, love and laughter.

Key personnel

Lori Seim, Administrator
Margie Maynard, Director of Nursing
Kim Coppock, Office Manager
Raquel Creamer, Dietary Manager
Deana Jacoby, Activities Director with Eden Certification
Tom Elkins, Plant Manager
Christa Little-Fawn, Restorative Nurse
Tammy Waller, MDS Coordinator
Lee Snyder, Social Services
Lindsey Doiel, Social Services
Jessica Strong, Admissions Coordinator
Nikki Maynard, Medical Records
Lisa Adams, Marketing Coordinator
Charla Abbott, Infection Control
Bev Henderson, Wound Nurse
Sara Christen, Staff Development Coordinator
Lisa Reed-Scott, Payroll and Workers Compensation
Tanya Madison, Accounting
Leslie Robey, Accounting

No ordinary Cinderellas

Housekeeping Department employees are always on their toes!

Anyone living at the Colorado State Veterans Home at Rifle is likely aware of one thing: How clean the Housekeeping Department keeps the rooms and the entire Home!

“They are one of the greatest teams I have ever supervised,” says Plant Manager Tom Elkins, who has overseen the Housekeeping Department since 1997.

Tom is proud of his team of 12 women, who work in both laundry and housecleaning. The women are responsible for the commendable ratings for facility cleanliness that family members and residents give on our annual satisfaction surveys. In fact, residents consistently give top scores for the survey item “Cleanliness of premises.”



The dedicated and hardworking housekeeping team members are (from left): Phyllis Goure, Maria Lobo De Amaya, Juana Alfaro, Amelia Saenz, Blanca Amaya, Gaby Quezada, Sylvia Calix, Felicitia Romero and Anna Palaez. Not pictured are Meagan Dutton and newly hired employee Rebecca Duran.

With never a minute for rest, the housekeeping team is constantly on the move, scrubbing, wiping, sweeping, mopping, washing, drying and



Housekeeper Eileen Davis poses after missing the group picture.

folding, as there is *always* something to do!

The department’s direct supervisor is Gaby Quezada, who has worked at our Veterans Home since 2005 and also is proud of her team.

“All of the girls come to work and work very hard,” says Gaby. “I am very lucky to have the team I do.”



We missed including these long-time Dietary Department employees in a photo in the last issue of the Veterans’ Voice. From left are Laura Andonian, Pam Dutton, Veronica (Margaret) Morales and Dietary Manager Raquel Creamer.

The Kudo Korner

Special thanks go to ...

- ★ Parachute/Battlement Mesa VFW Post #5485, whose members recently donated a second set of two recliners for residents’ use. They had given us two recliners last year that got used very quickly! The new recliners are in the second floor entry area, but will be available for anyone living here who may need a new recliner!
- ★ Registered Nurse Tammy Waller for spending countless hours at home crocheting pink and red hearts for every employee on Valentine’s Day—at least 125 hearts! She made the hearts out of a scrub-brush type of material and on each heart was the sentiment, “*Because your heart is in your work, this heart will help you do your dishes. Happy Valentine’s Day!*” Thank you for putting so much love and effort into recognizing our staff, Tammy.
- ★ Local business owners who stepped up to the plate and donated tickets for Symphony in the Valley and Symphony of Swing concerts. Eight tickets were donated, enabling residents and a few certified nursing assistants to attend the local concerts! The tickets were donated by Lisa Reed-Scott (Rifle Payroll Department employee, Marine veteran and owner of L.D. Properties and LLC/Mosaic Gold, Inc.); Kay Hileman of Stereo Unlimited; Cheryl Chandler of Cheryl & Company; and staff member Christa Little-Fawn (Restorative Department Manager). Thanks to each of you for your kindness!

What’s happening

NATIONAL VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION WEEK IS APRIL 15–21

Volunteer Appreciation Dinner to be held Friday, April 20

NATIONAL NURSING HOME WEEK IS MAY 13–19