

Vaughan Chapter

November 2020

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President's Report

by Josue E. Cordova, VPVA President

to talk to you about is what we're doing as a Chapter s. I am also glad to share what PVA NATIONAL is doing for all our members and caregivers.

With all the restrictions going on across the nation and here in our home office area of Chicagoland, our chapter Board of Directors has done an incredible job coming together and working well through our phone conference meetings. They continue to make sure the concerns our chapter members are facing throughout this pandemic are addressed. As much as the chapter board of directors is trying to address all these different questions and problems, we need your help. Our members need to reach out to us through emails or phone calls. Please let us know what the PVA can do to help you and your family during this pandemic. For example, maybe you have questions about doctors' appointments. If you have any questions regard-



ing your VA healthcare or about available activities for you and even your caregiver, please know that you can reach out to us. We are here to work with you to keep you active even while being isolated in your own home.

PVANATIONAL has put together an array of online activities, with live interactive video classes through zoom. We can participate in activities like wheelchair dance, adaptive fitness classes, spin classes, adaptive yoga, nutrition classes, book club, e-sports, and boccia ball. Our Chapter website has all the links.....

On a personal note, I had the opportunity to participate in some of these different online zoom activities, and they were *continued on page 5*



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2020 **Board of Directors Meetings**

Vaughan Chapter, Board of Directors Meetings are usually held at the Chapter office on the third (3rd) Wednesday of each month. Until further notie they will be held by conference call. You are welcome to attend as a member (no voice and no vote). (712) 770-4608 access code: 832487 listed below are th dates.

December 16

www.vaughanpva.org

VPVA Executive Director's Letter

Hello, Vaughan Chapter PVA. Members, Associates, and Volunteers

aughan Chapter urges everyone to adhere to the CDC guidelines to eradicate the Covid-19 virus until a formidable vaccine can be found. Until everyone does what is expected, your Chapter must remain closed for the time being. We are as frustrated as you all are, but you are all very vulnerable to catching the virus if CDC guidelines are not followed.

Reminder:

For those who responded to our call and email for the Holiday basket compliments of CARING PATRIOTS, please do not forget that the only days you can pick up the Holiday Basket groceries is Saturday, December 5th and Sunday, December 6th at the Jewel Store you already chose to go to between 8:00 am and 4:00 pm. The only Jewel stores that have agreed to participate are listed here:

- Jewel Store, 2480 Route 59, Plainfield, IL
- Jewel Store, 8801 S Ridgeland Ave, Oak Lawn, IL
- Jewel Store 7525 W Lake St, River Forest, IL.

Like everyone else, we are still not at the stage to start planning any activities or outings until it is safe to do so, including chapter events, sports events, and meetings.

We will continue to communicate with you via virtual connections online, Facebook, email, and phone to continue to protect everyone's health.

Furthermore, (as already expected and which everyone should be aware of by now) is that we have been prohibited from hosting our annual Christmas luncheon this year. Instead, the Board of Directors voted to do a Christmas cash gift to voting members. Chapter Officers and Board of Directors will be contacting voting members for this cash gift by phone the first week of December. If you are a member with an email address on file, you will be receiving an email message instead of a phone call; make sure to check your emails and do not miss out on this gift.

As I always have encouraged voting and all Associate and Volunteers, please call our office, and make sure your contact information is accurate to receive all the Vaughan chapter's benefits to our members. If we contact you and your phone is disconnected and does not have an email address where you can receive the communications we send out, you will miss what Vaughan has to offer for you. Don't forget the Vaughan Chapter \$500 death benefit for all Vaughan Chapter voting

members; you may find more details on the last newsletter published in August.

Let's continue to respect social distance guidelines, wearing a face mask, and staying home as much as possible.

Take care, stay safe, and healthy.

Vaughan Chapter still has face masks; if you need any additional, please contact us with any questions or concerns. 708-947-9790.

Thank you Vaughan Chapter, PVA

> Please let us know your accurate contact information as soon as possible.



November 2020



Letter from the Chief

By Michael S.A. Richardson MD FACP Chief, Spinal Cord Injury/Disorders

Greetings once more from the Chief at Hines.

ur new fiscal year is well under way and with the cool weather and autumn leaves the SARS-Coronavirus-2 (COVID-19) Pandemic is still rampant in the country. Unfortunately, the ongoing

in our country remains one of the top three highest in the world and our death toll has risen to over two hundred thousand American lives lost so far.

infection rate

the Wheel

Although our Veterans with SCI/D at Hines have not been severely or widely affected, there are few families overall who haven't been affected either by exposure, infection, or death of a loved one.

The hopeful news at the time of writing this letter however is the fact that there appears to be TWO effective vaccines that will soon become available to help us battle this deadly infection. These vaccines have been developed at an historic speed and appear to have better than expected effectiveness. The Pfizer vaccine with 90% reported effectiveness and the Moderna vaccine with 94.5% effectiveness. Of course, one expects that when universal administration (field usage) begins the actual percentage may be slightly lower - however expectations for a

vaccine with 50-60% effectiveness was the initial hope. The news is especially welcome because these vaccines utilize a unique messenger RNA (mRNA) structure rather than the usual protein live or attenuated virus agent.

This year ALL Veteran with SCI/D should be vaccinated against influenza... This isn't the year to roll the dice on getting flu!

In that way there isn't the worry about allergy and medication reactions that are potential. The initial reports show mild fatigue or pains for a couple days after the injection, and redness or local inflammation

at the injection site. These are the only reactions so far reported. However, we will wait for more full reports.

Importantly however the news means that masking, social distancing, testing and contact tracing are not the only means we have of fighting the spread. Vaccination naturally will take some time to show its effects, and vaccination requires two injections separated by approximately one month. The place, people, cost, availability etc. will all become things to be decided, and the VHA, like the rest of the country, is working hard at developing guidelines and programs to answer these questions. Persons living in long term care facilities, persons with significant comorbidities, and workers with high risks of exposure (nursing home, emergency departments, intensive care units etc) will have priority for receiving the vaccine.

A word of cau-

tion: it is even more important that we as healthcare employees (and especially persons at the extremes of age or with significant medical comorbidities) accept the seasonal flu vaccination this year. Evidence clearly shows that vaccination can reduce flu severity and prevent hospitalizations - these are important issues at this time when the health care system is burdened (and at times overwhelmed) by Covid-19.

This year there is the possibility that with the COVID-19 circulating, the symptoms of flu can be missed or misinterpreted. This year the risks of hospitalization could be increased by the presence and utilization of resources by COVID -19.

This year ALL Veteran with SCI/D should be vaccinated against influenza and there is plenty of vaccine for both Veterans and employees. Please accept the protection that is proven to work against influenza. This isn't the year to roll the dice on getting flu!

Thank you and keep safe & healthy during this winter.



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President's Report

continued from page 1

incredible. They have positively helped me. These classes have certainly helped me work on my fitness, but the camaraderie with the other participants online has been even more meaningful. Spending time on the zoom app, with the other PVA members online has been excellent. I enjoyed that we could all participate in the comfort of our own homes.

Thanksgiving is only weeks away, and next month Christmas. The holidays will be here in no time. As all our members, along with the Board of Directors, are self-isolating in our homes, I want you to know that the chapter is a phone call or email away. Please continue to see that you and your caregivers are our top priority as members if you have any questions or concerns. We encourage you to take part in these online classes. It can make a remarkable difference positively! The difference can be impactful in our daily lives. Again, I can speak personally about that—a last but essential reminder. Please be diligent in doing what you can to limit your exposure. Be sure to socially distance



By Josue Cordova, Vaughan Chapter President

and use PPE (personal protective equipment) when interacting with others. Thank you, and God bless all our Vaughan chapter members, your family, and your caregivers this coming holiday season.

Respectfully,

Josue E. Cordova

THANK YOU Our gratitude to Oliver-Hoffmann Foundation for the PPE Mask donation to Vaughan Chapter.

Vaughan PVA Members, if you require a KN95 surgical mask, please contact our chapter office to request one to be mailed to you at no cost. We are grateful for this donation and continue to serve our disabled vets at this difficult time.

Vaughan Chapter Members, Volunteers, and Associates

e urge you to please contact our office with any changes to your contact information as your address, email, or telephone number. We must have your accurate contact information on file for us to be able to communicate everything that is happening with our chapter, mainly through these difficult times. There are lots of benefits, sports, recreational and informational information that our chapter office shares with all of you weekly. However, still, we get many emails bounced back because the email address is inaccurate. It would help if you did not miss any vital benefits that you can get.

Thank you, Vaughan Chapter

THANK YOU VOLUNTEERS

s we all know, the year 2020 has been unfortunate for all of us in many ways. For the Vaughan Chapter, all the events scheduled on our calendar had to be canceled. I received calls from volunteers asking if there were any volunteer opportunities. Unfortunately, not currently due to CDC regulations.

I want to give my sincere gratitude to ALL Vaughan Chapter volunteers who always made an effort to volunteer their valuable time and help with our calendar of events (dinners, parades, luncheons, meetings, and sports and recreation).

Most importantly, to acknowledge our valuable Officers and Board of Directors, and Program Directors for volunteering their valuable time working on veterans' issues and helping the chapter.

Thanks to ALL our valuable Vaughan Chapter volunteers such as Robert Love and his band, which always delight our veterans with their live music at our picnic and Christmas luncheon. Anne Veltri, Marilyn Antwine, Edward Millar, Nathaniel Terry, Carlos Aviles, Margaret Oberholtzer, Jonathan Niemiec, Phil Kolb, Mike Walen, David Reyes, Diana Trujillo, Ramon Esparza, Charles Johnson, Fran Jiracek, Susie Wrencher-Dunson, and Donna Lambeth. Pardon me if I missed anyone because I want to make sure all the volunteers are recognized. Thank you for your

time, dedication, and caring towards our Vaughan PVA disabled veterans. Special thanks to our corporate sponsors such as AAPMR and UroPartners that continually contribute to our toy drive and come out as a volunteer to the events.

egular business and our events in 2021, so stay tuned for upcoming events and volunteer opportunities. In the meantime, stay healthy and take care.

On behalf of the Vaughan Chapter, thanks.

Maria Hernandez Vaughan PVA, E.D.







the Wheel

OUR EVENTS AND PROGRAMS WILL RETURN

















Do You Want to Learn More About Activity to Prevent Pressure ULCERS?







Be one of the first to use assistive technology currently in development

Participate in a trial that allows you to track your in-seat movement activity

ARE YOU...

✓ 18 years of age or older?
Do YOU...
✓ Primarily use a wheelchair for mobility?
✓ Use an iPhone?

HAVE YOU...

✓ Had a pressure ulcer on your buttocks?

IF YOU ANSWERED YES, YOU MAY BE ELIGIBLE TO PARTICIPATE IN OUR RESEARCH STUDY

The purpose of this study is to evaluate a new tool, WiSAT (Wheelchair in-Seat Activity Tracker), a system capable of monitoring weight shifting and pressure relief behaviors and informing users of in-seat activity to help prevent pressure ulcers. Participation involves two visits from 1-2 hours each and use of the in-seat movement activity tracker for 2.5 months.

INTERESTED?

To learn more about this study, please contact Marylou Guihan, PhD at 708-202-5870 or Dawn Irvin, 708-202-5649 Complete surveys to provide useful feedback

Receive compensation for your time

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PAVE Connect: A new virtual employment service

By Domenick Lasorsa, Associate Director, PAVE Program

In recent years, Paralyzed Veterans of America's employment program, PAVE: Paving Access for Veterans Employment, has observed that traditional hiring and employment fairs are ineffective for many PAVE clients — the overlooked and undervalued veteran workforce. Veterans with disabilities are less likely to attend large public events with crowds or in locations that are not easily accessible. To provide better support to PVA members, we created PAVE Connect, a virtual employment initiative with timely and relevant career information.

PAVE Connect bridges the gap by reaching veterans, caregivers and spouses, when and where they need it. The program provides members of the veteran community the opportunity to interact with employers and employment experts, as well as access to an online, on demand library of recorded presentations. The goal is for veterans and their families to discover a wide range of meaningful education, volunteer, and employment resources and opportunities.

Through this initiative, PVA members and their families and caregivers can engage experts on civilian resumes, Federal resumes, interview techniques, part-time employment, going back to school, LinkedIn as well as interact with employers such as Bank of America, Microsoft Retail, and other veteran ready organizations. PAVE Connect provides veterans and their families with the support needed to avoid discrimination and remedy the underemployment and unemployment of veterans. Daniel Rabun, a U.S. Army veteran shared with us his experience working with PAVE.

"There are a lot of vets out there who feel like there's no hope and that they are at a dead-end with nothing to offer," said U.S. Army veteran Daniel Rabun. "PAVE gave me hope and assistance when I needed it the most and inspired me to keep trying. The continued one-on-one contact with PAVE counselors who know my story keeps me going."

Rabun joined the U.S. Army just out of high school and served eight years. Although his time in the military gave him years of marketable qualifications, translating his military education, training and experience into civilian terms for his resume proved challenging and he faced many obstacles in finding employment. PAVE experts helped him with his resume and directed him to businesses seeking his skills. He also participated in a PAVE Connect session on interviewing techniques and tips, which provided him even more preparation for entering the civilian workforce. PAVE Connect is available to all PVA members, their family members and their caregivers. Learn more about PAVE Connect here: www.PVA.org/PAVEConnect

Vaughan Chapter has recently approved a \$500 death benefit for all Vaughan chapter voting members. This money will be dispersed to the person that is designated to pay your funeral services.

We advise you to share this information with whoever will be responsible for your funeral services. The person responsible for the funeral expenses that appears on the funeral home contract is the person that should be calling our chapter office with the name of the veteran deceased and funeral services information for Vaughan Chapter can send floral arrangements. A copy of your funeral home contract will be required by us and the name that appears on the contract will be the only one to receive this \$500 endowment.

Please reach out to Vaughan Chapter for more information 708-947-9790.

Vaughan Chapter, PVA

Revak

The ReWalk Exoskeleton-Suited for Your Mission



Did You Know That Paralyzed US Veterans May be Eligible For a ReWalk Exoskeleton?

Contact ReWalk for More Information

rewalk.com/contact or 508.251.1154 Option 2

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What is *Your* Mission?

Whether your goals include experiencing the proven health-related benefits of exoskeleton assisted walking, standing to hug a loved one or completing an entire marathon, ReWalk can you help you achieve them.



Service Officer's Report

Special Adaptive Housing Improvement Act

he Senate amended and approved in late March H.R. 3504, which increases the amount of the Specially Adapted Housing (SAH) grant to better match current construction costs, establishes a supplementary grant for veterans who need it, and allows veterans more opportunities to draw

from the grant funds to accommodate moving and life changes. PVA has led the charge for 75 years in ensuring that service members and veterans, who are entitled to these benefits, are receiving them. This program is primarily for those with severe service-connected disabilities to assist them in building, remodeling, or purchasing an adapted home.

As of October 1st, this legislation increases the overall value of the Specially Adapted Housing (SAH) grant to \$98,492 and provides qualifying veterans with twice as many opportunities to access their grant. As of October 1, 2030, eligible veterans who have exhausted their benefit will be able to apply for a supplemental grant if VA determines their residence still needs modifications. Now under the provisions of 38 CFR 3.809, and 38 U.S.C. 2101(a)(2)(A)(i), the SAH grant is available to certain veterans and service members who are entitled to disability compensation, due to the following:

- Loss or loss of use of both lower extremities, such as to preclude locomotion without the aid of braces, crutches, canes, or a wheelchair, or
- Blindness in both eyes, plus loss or loss of use of one lower extremity, or
- Loss or loss of use of one upper extremity together with (1) residuals of organic disease or injury, or (2) the loss or loss of use of one upper extremity, affecting balance or propulsion as to preclude locomotion without the aid of braces, crutches, cranes, or a wheelchair or,
- Loss or loss of use of both upper extremities at or above the elbow, or
- A severe burn injury.

The Special Adapted Housing Improvement Act, is another way that PVA continues to ensure all veterans and/or persons with disabilities have what they need to thrive and live full and productive barrier free lives. Today, with the extra incentives, the (SAH) grant provides a maximum of \$100,000.00 towards constructing or modifying the home to meet the veteran's adaptive needs.

Those that may be eligible for this program are usually contacted by a Veteran's Affairs (VA) representative from SAH who will come to the home to do an assessment of the home. This individual will inspect to ensure that the veteran has ready access to all main parts of the home and not isolated. Some of the minimum property requirements are to ensure ingress/egress, where there are at least two ramps that are suitable. Doors must be at least 36 inches wide; halls, a minimum of 48 inches wide and bedrooms and bathrooms must have adequate turn space for maneuverability. As we are fortunate to have such programs available, I believe it is our responsibility to ensure that our veterans are being provided with the fullness of what these programs provide. Meanwhile, this is just another way that PVA works to make America more accessible for all persons with mobility impairment.

If you should have any questions concerning this topic please feel free to contact Robert Statam, Sr. NSO, at the Chicago VARO, @ (312)980-4278, or Winston Woodard III, SBA at Hines VAMC@ (708)202-5623.

If you are experiencing any trouble with VA, please contact the National Service Officers.

Questions about PENDING claims and benefits Robert Statam 312-980-4278 RobertS@pva.org

Questions about Benefits, Access to Healthcare Winston Woodard 708-202-5623 WinstonW@pva.org

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

Getting Paralyzed Veterans Walking Again with Indego®



New VA Program offers eligible veterans an Indego[®] Exoskeleton at no cost.

What is Indego?

A robotic device that enables veterans to walk again.

Indego is an FDA-approved exoskeleton worn around the waist and legs that enables individuals paralyzed from spinal cord injuries to stand and walk, offering a new level of independence.

Indego can currently be used with spinal cord injury levels of T3 to L5 in community or home settings.

Free Indego Webinars

During the first Thursday of every month you can join a free live webinar to learn more about the Indego and hear from a veteran who owns a device already.



Contact us today to reserve your spot or find out if you are eligible to receive an Indego exoskeleton at no cost.

Email: support.indego@parker.com Phone: 844-846-3346



Watch Marine Veteran Steve Holbert's story at www.indego.com/veterans







Attached are photos of specialty items to raise funds for Vanghan Chapter Paralyzed Veterans of

America. The monies from funchaising of these items

will be used to continue funding the various activities our Chapter sponsors for our disabled military veterans. These activities help our veterans get back into the mainstream of life in spite of their transatic injuries and diseases. We hope you will support our fundarising efforts of these wonderful gift items. We look forward to your support by purchasing any of our items that will bring joy and happiness to our veterans who gave so much. Items can be purchased with cash, check or credit card. Please take a moment to share this information with your friends and support our cause. You can also find additional information in our Facebook page

Armed Forces Plaques Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, Army,

Navy & POW-MIA and God Bless America.

They are 11" x 11" Inches, Cost is \$40 each (plus) shipping if you want it shipped to you.

You may also obtain plaques at any of our upcoming events and outings; we will have them available to you as well.

Contact VPVA Office at (708) 947-9790 or reply to <u>vpva@vaughanpva.org</u> to place your order. Cash, charge cards and/or checks accepted.







ROUND PATCH IS 3X3 SQUARE PATCH IS 6X6 THEY BOTH ARE \$10





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We take great pride in serving those who served our country.

It's why we work with the Veterans Administration to make the process as simple as possible for you. This includes bringing the vehicle to the VA for inspection, taking care of all VA paperwork, and delivering the vehicle to your home once it's ready.

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Vaughan PVA 2235 Enterprise Drive, Suite 3501 Westchester, IL 60154



Vaughan Chapter

800-727-2234



HAPPY HOLIDAYS

COVID-19 SAFETY TIPS

- Stay home except to get medical care or essential services
- Separate yourself from other people and pets (except caregivers and service animals)
- Get rest and stay hydrated
- Soap and water are the best options for cleaning hands. Use hand sanitizer if no soap and water
- Have your caregiver wear a facemask while providing care
- Clean all "high-touch" surfaces everyday



See a List of Virtual Events & more info at vaughanpva.org