

5000 West

Clement J. Zablocki VA Medical Center

Vol. 6, No. 2
March 2015

We Can Do It!



March is Women's History Month

Everyone is invited to attend a
TOWN HALL

CLEMENT J. ZABLOCKI VA MEDICAL CENTER
&
VETERANS BENEFITS ADMINISTRATION

Saturday, March 7
Noon - 2 p.m.
Matousek Auditorium

We look forward to hearing directly from you on issues that concern or affect you as we work to provide the quality, accessible health care you expect and have earned.

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search: **milwaukeeva**



5000 West is a recurring publication produced by the Public Affairs Office and Medical Media of the Zablocki VA Medical Center, and is intended for employees, volunteers, patients, and friends. Views expressed do not necessarily reflect the official policy of the medical center. While 5000 West encourages submissions for future editions, we cannot guarantee publication, and reserve the right to edit all copy so it conforms to editorial policy and guidelines. To submit information, e-mail: Public Affairs at VHAMIWPublicAffairs@va.gov or call the Public Affairs Office at 414-384-2000, ext. 45363.



On the Cover

Rosie the Riveter is a cultural icon of the United States, representing the American women who worked in factories during World War II, many of whom produced munitions and war supplies. Rosie the Riveter is commonly used as a symbol of feminism and women's economic power. This March we celebrate the women who served our country in uniform and in the VA. See page 5 for a profile on one of our many VA employees who served in the military.

5000 West



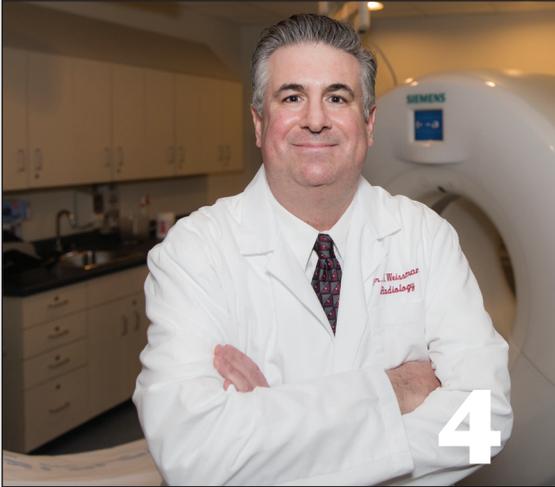
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Milwaukee VA news & events

4 VA doctor first in nation to complete innovative radiology program

Dr. Ian Weissman completed 175 credit hours over an 18-month timeframe. He is the first doctor out of more than 35,000 radiologists to finish the Radiology Leadership Institute.

4 Students from local school create hubcaps for Veterans

Three students and teachers from a local special needs program visited the Spinal Cord Injury Center Jan. 12 and dropped off 10 custom-made wheelchair hubcaps.

8 Occupational Therapy takes more holistic approach to rehab

Occupational Therapists are sprinkled throughout the Milwaukee VA Medical Center in various departments to help Veterans with a more holistic approach to rehabilitation.

9 VA celebrates, honors Martin Luther King Jr.

The Milwaukee VA Medical Center celebrated Martin Luther King Jr. Jan. 22, inside the Matousek Auditorium.

10 A healthy stretch

Milwaukee VA rolled out a new and improved yoga program for Veterans in January. Warrior Stance is a free wellness program for all Veterans.



Milwaukee VA spotlight

5 I'm just a Veteran

In less than one hour, four planes had been hijacked and crashed, and Mingerink instantly knew it was time to enlist.

6 Photo Feature: In and Around the VA

11 Kayleen's Kitchen

Kayleen Wichlinski, registered dietitian at the Milwaukee VA, gives her take on how to eat healthy. This month's recipe is mini-crustless quiches.

12 Service Awards, Employee of the Month and VA Voices



VA doctor first to complete innovative program

By Antony Kamps

Dr. Ian Weissman, radiologist at the Milwaukee VA, is the first physician in the nation to graduate from the Radiology Leadership Institute.

Weissman completed the 175 credit hours over an 18-month timeframe. He is the first doctor out of more than 35,000 radiologists to finish the Radiology Leadership Institute.

"It's not just for radiologists. A doctor from any field can pick and choose from the seminars that pertain to their field of interest," said Weissman. "The courses teach doctors to be better doctors."

The RLI focuses on seven main areas to help achieve the goal of training better doctors. The seven areas are: finance, ethics, legal, strategic planning, practice management, professional development, service quality and safety.

The RLI is an academy created by the American College of Radiology in 2012. According to their website their goal is to "equip practicing and academic radiologists with critical leadership skills for advancing in practice and strengthening the radiology profession." The ACR recognized the need for specialized training to develop leaders who can navigate the increasingly dynamic health care landscape.

Weissman said he was humbled to be the first person to complete the course. Now he feels the need to be a role model, especially to the radiology residents by bringing the skills and knowledge he learned from the RLI to contribute to and



Photo by Benjamin Slane

Dr. Ian Weissman is the first physician in the nation to graduate from the Radiology Leadership Institute.

strengthen the Milwaukee VA.

"I need to be true to the mission here, continue to innovate and provide the best possible care for Veterans," Weissman said. "This brings a lot of pressure, but is also very fulfilling."

Weissman, a radiologist at the Milwaukee VA since 2008, said it's not a surprise a VA doctor is the first to complete a course of this kind. He said the work VA is doing is moving in the right direction.

"VA gives you time to take and make sure you're providing the best care for Veterans."

Students create hubcaps for Veterans



Photo by Benjamin Slane

Quishaw Brown, 13, mounts a wheelchair hubcap to a handcycle. Quishaw and fellow Morse-Marshall students made and donated patriotic hubcaps Jan. 12 to Veterans at the Milwaukee VA's Spinal Cord Injury Center.

By Antony Kamps

With the simple tighten of a zip tie, students from Morse-Marshall School for the Gifted and Talented put smiles on the faces of Veterans.

Three students from the special needs program and three teachers from the school visited the Spinal Cord Injury Center Jan. 12 and dropped off 10 custom-made wheelchair hub caps. The caps are made out of Plexiglas. The students painted the caps blue and laminated drawings of eagles on the front. Amy Hufnal, special needs art teacher, said the goal was to brighten the day for the Veterans.

"The kids have worked really hard on the drawings of eagles," said Hufnal. "And it's an amazing way for our students to give back to the Veterans."

Six Veterans attended the event inside the recreational room of the SCI building. Army Veteran Eric Fife was among the Veterans to receive a hub cap.

"It's really amazing. These kids volunteered their time and that is just so thoughtful," said Fife. "It's nice to see the community, especially kids at such a young age, do this for us."

The students helped teachers zip tie the hubcaps onto the wheelchairs. The zip ties broke every now and then, causing laughter in the group but the students were determined. And so were the Veterans. They attached all 10 caps to five different chairs.

"Isn't it great when a good thing actually comes together and works out?" said Hufnal.

Fife looked at the newly minted hubcaps on his chair and said, "My chair looks styling now. This means a lot to not just me, but to all Veterans."

I'm just a Veteran

By Antony
Kamps

It was September 11, 2001, and like so many other Americans, Mindy Mingerink watched the TV as planes crashed into the side of the World Trade Center Towers. In less than one hour, four planes had been hijacked and crashed, and Mingerink instantly knew it was time to enlist.

"There were so many reasons for me to enlist. My father, grandfather and uncle all served, and then 9/11 happened," said Mingerink.

"I just knew I didn't want to be on my deathbed with the regret of never serving my country."

Mingerink works full-time at the Milwaukee VA Medical Center as administrative officer for Medical Information Systems. Her duties are to manage ancillary and special programs including Veteran's Choice, tort claims and RICOH contracts.

It's a much different life than when she was deployed to Baghdad, Iraq in 2009. She deployed as a Platoon Leader and Executive Officer for the 32nd Military Police Company. Their mission was to conduct assessments of prisons to ensure international standards were met. They also handled detainee transfers and ran the entry control point into Forward Operating Base Future.

She earned a Bronze Star for her work.

"We did our job to be completely honest, nothing more," said Mingerink. "I don't think we did anything that made us stand out."

It's been almost five years since Mingerink returned home. She continues



Courtesy photo

Capt. Mindy Mingerink, right, poses with her friend, Staff Sgt. Stacey Nelson while waiting for a helicopter to take them to northern Iraq. In honor of Women's History Month, we recognize Mingerink, one of our many VA Veteran employees, who served our country.

to serve in the National Guard as a captain. She's married now, with one child and another due in March of this year. She said her time in the military has made her who she is today.

"It changed me for the better. It gave me confidence, leadership ability and motivation," said Mingerink.

All of what she has today almost never happened. During her 2009 deployment, Mingerink was in a convoy headed to a prison for an assessment when the convoy commander missed their turn. Instead of getting upset, Mingerink just radioed ahead and told them to find an alternate route to the prison. She said the missed turn ended up being the best mistake.

"We arrived to the prison and you could hear and feel the explosion," said Mingerink.

She explained during that time of the war if a roadside bomb went off, vehicles in the convoy would form a perimeter around the attacked vehicle.

"Well, they (insurgents) started to figure this out and began to detonate second and third (bombs) when we did that," said Mingerink. "I don't know how many that convoy lost, I don't like to think about it, but it could have — would have been us. Somebody, somewhere was looking out for me and my platoon that day."

March 2015 will be Mingerink's fifth anniversary at the Milwaukee VA. March is also Women's History month, and while Mingerink is a female Veteran, she said she doesn't like it when men and women Veterans are treated as separate groups.

"My mindset is I am a person, who also is a Veteran," she said. "I don't like to put people into categories like male Veterans and female Veterans. Maybe it's a poor thought process on my part, but when I look out into the hallways of the VA I just see those people as Veterans."



In and Around the Milwaukee VA

Clockwise from top: Nutrition and Food Service team members don red apparel for National Wear Red Day to raise awareness about heart disease in women. Employees throughout the medical center wore red on this special day. Winter skies bring beautiful sunrises across southeastern Wisconsin, such as this shot of a Milwaukee VA police vehicle taken by Officer Bill Brown. Petty Officer 3rd Class Michael Bookman performs an impromptu trumpet solo at the Salute to African-American Veterans as Donatra Williams dances to the tunes of the Jeff Clair Project. Bookman is a member of the Great Lakes Navy Band. A Veteran tries on some Harley-Davidson gear donated by Harley-Davidson for the 2015 National Salute to Veterans. Veteran service organizations, VA staff and the community helped with the Salute. Milwaukee-area Veterans packed the recreation hall for more than two hours participating in games food and fun which also served as an opportunity to hand out thousands of donated Valentine's Day cards to the Veterans.





Photos by Benjamin Slane

VA employees (clockwise from top left) Tony Cruz, Alberta Essuman and Keith Bright were given on-the-spot I Care awards by Robert Beller, medical center director, after they were singled out by one Veteran for providing excellent care.

They cared

BY GARY J. KUNICH

Getting an e-mail from the boss can cause a little anxiety with anyone, even when the boss getting an email from the boss is Bob Beller, Milwaukee VA Medical Center director.

Beller came to work Jan. 30 to get a personal e-mail from another Bob – Bob McDonald, VA secretary.

It turned out to be a pretty good email.

McDonald received an email from Rhonda Maccou, an out-of-town Veteran who stopped at the Milwaukee VA's emergency department and wanted to let him know about the outstanding care she received.

"That's the kind of message you love to open and read first thing in the morning," Beller said. "I know the incredibly awesome and dedicated staff we have here, but it is always rewarding when others take the time to pass along their compliments that underscore the importance of what we do."

In her e-mail to the secretary, Maccou said she was

impressed with the speedy, two-hour service and excellent care she received from beginning to end at Milwaukee.

"I went with the expectation of staying about 4-5 hours," she wrote. "I arrived there at 1540 hours ... triaged in the ER, sent to Urgent Care, treated by Alberta Essuman (she provided excellent care and bedside manner with a sense of humor), sent to (orthopedics) and Keith Bright for a brace at 1617 hours (excellent customer service and sense of humor), then sized for a brace and treated by Tony Cruz (excellent customer service and extremely vet friendly). I returned to Urgent Care for prescription and discharge orders and was on my way by 1740 hours."

The VA secretary shared the good news with Beller in a quick response back to the Veteran.

"Thanks, Rhonda!" he wrote. "I will be sure to pass along your recognition to Tony, Keith and Alberta and let them know how proud we are of their efforts. Thanks for your service."

Beller said he was more than happy to pass along the kind words to the staff.

The three employees got a surprise visit from Beller to hear the good news in person and get an I CARE award for making the difference.

"They are living our values of integrity, commitment, advocacy, respect and excellence every day they are here," Beller said. "I just wanted them to know their hard work didn't go unnoticed."



Photo by Antony Kamps

Army Veterans Henry Staples (left) and Don Tuttle are regular attendees at the Walk a Mile or More group exercise sessions. They have lost a combined 132 pounds through exercise and healthy living taught by the program.

Occupational Therapy takes more holistic approach to rehab

By Antony Kamps

Occupational Therapists are sprinkled throughout the Milwaukee VA Medical Center in various departments to help Veterans with a more holistic approach to rehabilitation.

Although the Occupational Therapy Department is located in the basement of the Milwaukee VA, therapists are not confined to that department. They also work with the Mental Health Department, Acute Care, Substance Abuse Rehabilitation, and Spinal Cord Injury Center. The department goal is to enable Veterans of all ages to live life to the fullest by helping them to participate in all of the work, leisure, and everyday life roles that are important to them.

Occupational Therapy Supervisor Tony Wagner said helping the Veteran get back to doing meaningful activities is the most important part of a therapist's job.

"We don't just look at one aspect, but the whole picture," said Tony Wagner, Occupational Therapy supervisor. "It's not about just getting a Veteran to say, walk again, but we look at it as let's get this Veteran to be able to clean their kitchen."

A staff of 22 handles about 2,800 encounters a month with Veterans at the medical center. The number will start to increase as they begin to implement home visits in early 2015.

"This will give a different view of

patients," said Wagner. "OT can get a better look at Veterans' functionality in their home."

OT is a part of a variety of different programs offered at the hospital including: Telehealth, Strength and Lifestyle, and Walk a Mile or More. Veterans wearing the red W.A.M.M. shirts can be seen walking the entire length of the hospital and into building 70. Army Veteran James Boudreaux is a part of the group and said his life has changed completely because of the OT Department and W.A.M.M.

17 years ago Boudreaux was a victim of a physical assault. He suffered several injuries including a severe neck injury.

"They have helped me in so many ways. I have regained movement in my neck and got me back to a normal way of life," said Boudreaux.

OT doesn't just focus on the physical rehabilitation either. Therapists work with Mental Health patients who have trouble with socializing, building relationships, time management, and communicating effectively.

"All of the Veterans are different," said Occupational Therapist Jillian Taxman. "This makes it challenging, but also very rewarding."

"Ultimately, the Veterans do it, but we help them along the way."

W.A.M.M. helps Veterans get healthy

By Antony Kamps

Everybody has a moment when they know it's time to become healthy.

"I knew I needed to lose weight when I no longer could reach my feet because my gut was in the way," said Army Veteran Dan Ody. "But in one year I have lost 60 pounds."

Ody is one of many Veterans who participate in the Walk a Mile or More program. Veterans of all ages and war eras come together with one goal in mind — lose weight and be healthy.

Distinguished by the red shirts they wear around the hospital, this is more than just a weightloss group.

"We're a family really. A family of Veterans coming together with the goal of getting back in shape," said Army Veteran Harold Staples.

With two hips replaced, Staples started to notice he was no longer in shape. The Occupational Therapy Department suggested W.A.M.M. and three months later he has lost nine pounds.

"It's just like PT, everybody gets sore and tired, but we make sure everybody keeps going," said Staples.

Clapping and cheering for each other to keep going is a staple during the group exercise sessions.

Then there is Army Veteran Don Tuttle. W.A.M.M. Program Manager Nancy Wilke said Tuttle is a true inspiration to the rest of the group.

"He has lost me in terms of pounds," laughed Wilke. "I can't say enough about him and his determination."

Tuttle sat down after a recent session ended, sweat glistened off his forehead, but he still had that smile.

"Doctor told me I won't see 80 almost 12 years ago if I didn't change my lifestyle," said Tuttle. "So, I started this (W.A.M.M.) and here I am 123 pounds lighter."

Tuttle said he no longer has high blood pressure or stress, has seen a drastic improvement with his dementia and he can now walk almost four miles a day since losing all the weight.

"My health and attitude has changed completely since I've lost the weight," Tuttle said.

For more information about W.A.M.M., contact Wilke at 414-384-2000, ext. 42893.



VA celebrates, honors Martin Luther King Jr.

By Antony Kamps

The Milwaukee VA Medical Center celebrated Martin Luther King Jr. Jan. 22, inside the Matousek Auditorium.

The Fifth Annual Community Service Volunteers Recognition Awards coincided with the event, with the Milwaukee VA recognizing Shannon Cera with the 2014 President's Volunteer Service Award.

A diverse crowd of more than 50 attended the event that reflected on the words of King, and his many accomplishments. It included excerpts from some of his famous – and not so famous – speeches, as well as guest speaker Ed Hearn, 2006 Toastmaster's International World Champion of Public Speaking.

King Jr. was a pastor, activist, humanitarian, and leader in the Civil Rights movement. His life was about speaking up for those who could not speak up for themselves and giving courage to those who never knew they had it in themselves to be brave. In 1983, President Ronald Reagan signed a bill creating a federal holiday to honor King.

"Today is our opportunity to recognize the accomplishments of Doctor King," said Medical Center Director Robert Beller. "And we do that through our care of Veterans."

Hearn said the three ways we can appreciate the dream King spoke about so often, is to understand the power of the dream, embrace the dream and commit to the dream.

"Doctor King had a dream and it permeated throughout America," said Hearn. "It all begins with each of us to appreciate the power of that dream."

Hearn used past experiences in his own life to convey the message of how powerful a dream can truly be. He also talked about how important volunteers are to the community.

"It costs your time, and it is a commitment, and we

commend you for that today," said Hearn. "When you're committed, nothing can stop you."

Terry McMurray, EEO specialist, brought the program to a close with the announcement of Cera as the recipient of the 2014 President's Volunteer Service Award.

"In announcing the recipient of the award we must recognize the good and countless hours she has volunteered at JR's Pups-N-Stuff Dog Rescue in Brookfield," said McMurray. "She has done so much good and is a phenomenal employee as well."



Photo by Amanda Urrea

Guest speaker Ed Hearn, 2006 Toastmaster's International World Champion of Public Speaking, spoke to the crowd about Martin Luther King Jr's dream, and how powerful a dream really can be.

A healthy stretch

By Benjamin Slane

Milwaukee VA rolled out a new and improved yoga program for Veterans in January. Warrior Stance is a revitalized, free wellness program for all Veterans.

Erin Bullock said the more than 25 Veterans, plus 29 employees, who showed up for the first class was not expected.

"A dozen Vets, that was expected," said Bullock. "I was pleasantly surprised with how willing Veterans were to try new techniques and poses."

The group of men and women ranged in age from 29 to 92.

Bullock said yoga, the moving gently through the postures and engaging in flexibility and balance exercises, helps strengthen weakened muscles from lack of movement. She said it is also a good way to slow down the mind with useful breathing.

"So this might be a 60-minute period in their day where they are not thinking about anything but their breathing," said Bullock.

Warrior Stance is backed by primary care provider, Dr.



Photo by Benjamin Slane

Erin Bullock leads the Warrior Stance class every Tuesday in Room 171 inside the Spinal Cord Injury Building.

Margaret Holmes.

"Yoga is very healthy," said Holmes. "It helps with stress, physical pain."

She also said yoga is needs practiced with moderation to prevent injury. Over exertion or extending more than able can cause injury

"Responsible yoga is healthy."

Willard, a 92-year-old World War II Veteran, participated in the first Warrior Stance class after reading about it in the *Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel*.

*"I like that I am there with other veterans, if I am with them, it is like being with family. That is a big benefit."
— Willard Bertram, World War II Veteran*



Photo by Benjamin Slane

Warrior Stance takes place Tuesdays, 4-5 p.m., in Room 171 of the Spinal Cord Injury Center. The class is taught by Erin Bullock who also works as a social worker at the hospital.

HONORING SERVICE
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"I do not know if once a week is good enough," said Bertram, who served in the Pacific Theater. "I want more and I want to loosen up more!"

As a Veteran, Bertram likes the benefit of being a Veteran at the yoga class.

"I like that I am there with other veterans, if I am with them, it is like being with family. That is a big benefit."

Warrior Stance takes place Tuesdays, 4-5 p.m., in Room 171 of the Spinal Cord Injury Center.

For more information, contact Erin Bullock at 414-384-2000, ext. 46815 or the webpage (downloadable posters and info.)

http://www.milwaukee.va.gov/services/Yoga_and_relaxation.asp

Kayleen's Kitchen



**By Kayleen Wichlinski
Registered Dietitian**

The holiday season of chocolate, cookies and cocktails has come to an end, so it's a perfect time to take up healthier eating habits.

The best way to do that is to start the day with a healthy, sustaining breakfast.

Americans often skip breakfast due to busy schedules, forgetfulness, or often, lack of hunger in the morning. Studies show that eating breakfast provides you with energy and nutrients to maintain concentration and most importantly, avoid a mid-morning slump, and can help you maintain or lose weight over time.

Skipping breakfast can actually increase your risk for becoming overweight or obese because your body is experiencing a long period of fasting. Long periods of fasting actually increase your body's insulin response which, in turn, increases fat storage and weight gain.

Next time you think it is a good idea to skip your morning meal, try to remember the Power of Three, and pick one food item from each of the three food groups:

- Grains (Whole grain cereal, toast, or a small, low-fat muffin)
- Dairy (Low-fat yogurt, low-fat milk, or low-fat cheese)
- Fruit/Vegetable (Bananas, apples, diced peppers, sautéed vegetables in an omelet)

It is also good to incorporate a protein source like eggs or nut butters to keep your body fuller longer. Breakfast can come in the form of a box or bag, but more time-consuming meals can be made in advance and reheated to eat later. Homemade oatmeal with dried fruits and/or nuts can be made the night before and reheated when at work. Try making small homemade muffins with unsweetened applesauce instead of butter or oil. You can place them in individual bags, freeze them and take one out of the freezer each morning before work. The texture will be perfect by the time you reach your office or work area. Lastly, if a savory breakfast is more to your liking, try making mini-crustless quiches with a variety of vegetables and a small amount of low-sodium breakfast meat, if desired. This recipe will keep your metabolism steady throughout the morning and surely keep you satisfied until the lunch hour.

Recipe of the Month



Courtesy photo

Mini-Crustless Quiches

Makes: 12 individual quiches

Ingredients

- ½ head broccoli, cut into stems and florets
- 6 eggs
- 1 ½ cups skim milk
- Pepper and sea salt, to taste
- 2/3 cup fresh spinach, chopped
- 2/3 cup reduced-fat sharp cheddar cheese

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 375°F. Spray a 12 muffin cup tin with non stick cooking spray.
2. In a medium saucepan, boil about 6 cups of water. Add broccoli for 1-2 minutes.
3. Remove broccoli from water, and drain thoroughly and pat dry.
4. In a small bowl, whisk eggs, milk, and salt and pepper until light and fluffy. Set aside.
5. In each muffin cup, layer broccoli, spinach, and cheese (and meat if desired).
6. Pour egg mixture over each vegetable-filled muffin cup, about ¾ full.
7. Bake for 25-30 minutes or until golden brown.

In Service

Congratulations to the following Clement J. Zablocki VA employees who reached career milestones in March 2015:

40 Years

Peter Chavez
Marilyn Smith

Angela Paniagua
Regina Thomas

15 Years

Suzanne Ashland
Mary Day
Edwin Downing
Clifford Gilbert
Michael Janczy
Wendy Kasper
Patrick Probst

35 Years

Eileen Hardcastle

30 Years

Anna Marie Lieske

25 Years

Timothy Kolb
Garnette Payton
Jacob Stuker
David Vegafria

10 Years

Brian Carlson
Ronald Johnson
Treonace White

20 Years

Amy Couture

Employee of the month



Photo by Benjamin Slane

February 2015

Kimberly Gebauer
Physical therapist

According to Gebauer's nomination package, she is "Committed to providing excellent service to the Veterans, facilitating their discharge, working with them to address their challenges and providing needed equipment to help maximize their function or ease caregiver burden."



VA VOICES

Who do you think was the most influential woman in history?



Ivory Lewis, Employee Health: "All the women who were my supervisors in my chain of command. They led me and made me the man I am today, starting with my mama."



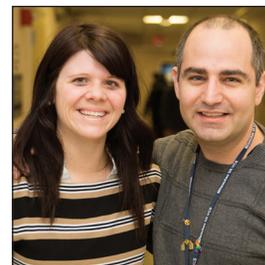
Valerie Kolmer, nurse specialist: "Florence Nightingale. She is the mother of all nurses, and we are still doing things she talked about — putting patients in an environment that provides the best healing."



Michelle Zirnhelt, nutrition and food services supervisor: "Probably Helen Keller. Look at all the obstacles she had to overcome and she still persevered."



Keira Phillips, certified nursing assistant: "Michelle Obama. I like the way she stands up for her husband, and she has a college degree on her own. She is not just a First Lady. She gets out there and does her own thing."



Dean Mantzavarakos, medical records administration specialist (with Rachel Witmer, VERA coordinator): "Cyndi Lauper, because she does a lot for the LGBT youth, and shares a lot of her money with the community and a celebrity doesn't have to do that. I think she's fabulous. And Rachel, too. They're both fabulous."