

THE VETERAN VOICE

WISCONSIN VETERANS HOME AT UNION GROVE

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Veterans Home - Union Grove



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The Butterfly Effect

By: Diana Venus, Activity Therapy Assistant

During this time of quarantine, Boland Hall started a butterfly nursery. On June 18th, we found 4 monarch caterpillars, brought them in, and watched them morph into beautiful butterflies. The whole process took about 16 days.

This project became more than a science experiment, it taught us a life lesson. If a small caterpillar can change “within confinement”, we can change too. We used the symbolism to give us hope during these uncertain times. We also educated ourselves on the lifespan of a caterpillar, what they eat, and how miraculous they change in such a short time. Did you know that the most recorded miles a butterfly can fly in one day is over 265 miles!? We are wowed by all the butterfly facts and the resiliency of the monarchs’ journey.

We had daily discussion groups, question and answer sessions, we even sent photos to families. Grandkids of some 2nd floor family members started their own butterfly nurseries. It has been a fun community building project. The butterflies were released between June 30 and July 2. Members enjoyed watching the butterfly releases. The milkweed flower is in full bloom and monarchs need this “weed” to feed its caterpillars as well as gather its nectar.

Our Member engagement included naming the four butterflies... “Liberty, Honor, Glory, and Freedom!” They brought a lot of joy, hope, curiosity, and education. Who would have thought, four tiny caterpillars would receive such attention? The most intriguing thing about this whole process is watching the changes daily.

We would like to continue this “Butterfly Project” with other species- Swallowtails, Mourning Cloaks, and Painted Ladies. If you are interested, please share resources on how to gather and start other species. When you see a monarch butterfly, think of your Veterans. Think of your liberties, honor, glory, and freedom.

Without change, there would not be butterflies.

Member Birthdays

- Marian Velk – 2nd – 7/1
- James Horn – 3rd – 7/3
- Dean Ohms – 1st – 7/5
- Dorothy Davis – 1st – 7/10
- Charles Brintnall – GH – 7/13
- Lawrence Heusdens – GH – 7/20
- Roman Ozechowski – 3rd – 7/21
- Mark Craig – 1st – 7/23
- Jack Anderson – 1st – 7/24
- Allen Hanson – 1st – 8/1
- Shirley Davis – 2nd – 8/6
- James Klein – 3rd – 8/8
- Thomas Stachow – 3rd – 8/8
- James Folger – 1st – 8/9
- Henry Ellenberger – GH – 8/10
- James Mundschau – 2nd – 8/10
- Edward Torrey – 1st – 8/11
- Gerald Bayer – GH – 8/12
- Donald Sadowski – 3rd – 8/13
- Orville Hamilton – 2nd – 8/13
- Donald Brevitz – 3rd – 8/13
- Thomas Minich – GH - 8/13
- Philip Mangus – 2nd – 8/15
- Gregory Noldin – 2nd – 8/15
- Alan Nehls – GH – 8/19
- John Esparza – 2nd – 8/28

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About Dementia

By: Beth Wishua, CSW

Dementia is an umbrella term used to describe memory/cognitive loss serious enough that it interferes with daily living. There are several kinds of Dementia like: Alzheimer's, Lewy Body Dementia, Vascular Dementia, Frontotemporal Dementia, and others like Parkinson's Disease and Huntington's Disease. A person can also have a mixed Dementia, or Dementia that has more than a single cause. This is a serious issue facing our country. Currently there are over five million Americans living with Alzheimer's. If you would like to know more facts, figures, signs, research, caregiving, help, and support surrounding Dementia, the Alzheimer's Association is a wealth of knowledge. Please see their website: alz.org.

The Fair & Parade at Union Grove

During this challenging time of COVID, state and county fairs have been cancelled, so we are bringing the fair to the Members. August 3-7 we will have our own fair activities including: fair trivia with cream puffs, carnival games, State Fair movie and popcorn, entertainment by Mark Paffrath, Purple Heart and Coast Guard recognition, and a happy hour birthday celebration for all of our August birthdays.

On Tuesday, August 4 we will be hosting an Animal and Pet Parade for Members. You are invited to participate -- bring your pet and walk or drive through the Boland Hall and Gates Hall entrance.

- Safety is our #1 priority. Please have your animals leashed, haltered, or enclosed.
- We will be physical distancing (6 feet minimum). There will be no contact between our Members and visitors/animals.
- Please clean up after your animal if necessary.
- There will be a parade path setup for all to follow. This will separate our Members from you and your animals to assure physical distancing.

Welcome New Members

John Baltes – Marine

Raymond Fox – Army

Charles Macaluso Jr. – Navy

William Buzzell – Navy

New Employees

LaShawnda Laura – NA2

Yolanda Jaiyesimi – NA2

Nicholas Szablewski – Scheduling

Alisa Jemison – NA2

Lavaya Hill – NA2

Shantelle Williams – NA2

Tiara Ellison – NA2

Katherine Bennett – NA2

Mang Vang Chin – NA2

Scott Campbell – NA2

Ahshena Barr – NA2

Denitra Sabala – Custodial Program Sup.

Karly Willms – Therapy Assistant

Georgia Beadles – NA2

Trina Butler – NA2

Beverly Ford – NA2

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Message from the Secretary

Mary M. Kolar

We began this month with a celebration of our nation, remembering that on July 4, 1776, American colonies declared their independence from England. It is an important day in our country's history, and as we commemorate this month, let's reflect on the sacrifices the earliest Americans made to achieve our freedom, and honor the men and women who have protected our great country ever since.

The fourth of July also, for many of us, has been a highlight of summer activities. With it comes a season of warm, sunny days to enjoy events with our friends and family. By now, though, we know this year is different. As COVID-19 has begun to spread more rapidly in Wisconsin and across the nation, we must continue to take precautions at Union Grove to protect ourselves. While some larger events must be cancelled, our activities staff will continue to offer safe activities. The groups may be smaller, but there is still much enjoyment to be had this year!

I know these past months have been hard. Thank you for being patient and flexible, and for adhering to the new procedures that will keep us all safe. These are unusual times for our all of us but, together, we can make the best of it.

On a final note, you may notice some new neighbors. Veterans in our Veterans Housing and Recovery Program (VHRP) will be moving out of Cottage 16 to Fairchild Hall within the next couple of months. It's a short move down the road, but we are so pleased that it is a move that will allow us to serve more veterans, including women in our program.

I hope you had a happy Independence Day and continue to have a wonderful summer.

Safe Visits at Veterans Homes

We are pleased to seek your input on a prospective safe visit plan as we continue to monitor and respond to the evolving COVID-19 situation. We understand that interacting with loved ones plays an important role in the overall health of an individual and we are committed to finding safe ways for us all to be together again.

As we have learned more about the virus and gathered information from experts in the long-term care industry, we are now prepared to develop a plan for safe visits. We have pulled together tenets of other plans that have been adopted by long-term care facilities that we believe can work for us, too.

You should have received a letter that outlines the tentative plan. You can also see the tentative plan on the Wisconsin Veterans Home at Union Grove webpage at www.WisVets.com. We would appreciate your comments and suggestions on the draft plan so we can put in a place a visitation protocol. Send comments to SafeVisits@dva.wisconsin.gov by July 26, 2020.