



## Press Release

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### **Washington DC Veterans Affairs Medical Center Staff Offers Care Beyond the Scope of Duty for Local At-Risk Veterans and Community Members**

WASHINGTON, DC— Going above and beyond to help Veterans and the community is all in a day's work for the Washington DC VA Medical Center's Inpatient Unit-3 East team. In spite of their hectic schedules, every week the team provides bag meals and clothes to area homeless shelters at their own expense.

It began in 2014 during a frigid cold spell, the 3-E team of doctors, nurses and support staff repurposed their holiday leftovers into 15 meals for at-risk Veterans. Then an amazing thing happened. The team's effort not only fed Veterans but opened the hearts of medical center employees who witnessed how a small gesture can have such a big impact.

They wanted to do more. Soon the unit's medical support assistant, a Veteran who was once homeless himself, proposed the idea of a weekly project to prepare bagged lunches for the vulnerable community members who frequent the area around Union Station.

So from those few plates of holiday leftovers, in 2014, grew a voluntary employee engagement effort that has delivered more than 1,600 meals to hungry Veterans and community members in the DC area. Then another amazing thing happened. The members who came together for a community purpose, saw themselves transforming and becoming a more cohesive and cooperative team.

Now in true team spirit, some donate time, some donate money and some bring supplies. The team is large enough so that no one person has to bear the cost alone. Every Thursday, without fail, they meet to prepare sandwiches and bag the meals. After work, they deliver the meals to two different shelters, Central Union Mission and D.C. Shelter for the Homeless.

According to Shirley Johnson, a leader of the Central Union Mission, "The teams' efforts have had a big impact on feeding the 170 men and women of this shelter."

For their unselfish dedication, the team was recently honored with a Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary's Honor Award for ICARE. The prestigious honor is given to those who embody the VA's Core Values: Integrity, Commitment, Advocacy, Respect and Excellence; and those who go above and beyond to support Veterans and make the VA a better place to work.

Among those recognized include: Marcie Booker, Robert Freeman, Llosvani Galvez, Kelvin Glover, Pandolla Hicks, Mohammed Hossain, Barbara Johnson, Adesisi Sanni, Elaine Sherman, Stephen Smith, Michelle Ward and Worknesh Zeleke.

For more information about the Washington DC Veterans Affairs Medical Center, its services or programs, contact the Office of Public Affairs, 202-745-4037, or visit: [www.washingtondc.va.gov](http://www.washingtondc.va.gov) or Facebook: @WashingtonDCVAMC.

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