VETERAN FAMILY WELLNESS CENTER • MEMORY CARE UNIT • SKILLED NURSING UNIT • TRANSITIONAL HOUSING FACILITIES • PERMANENT RESIDENTIAL FACILITIES • MUSICAL PERFORMANCES • VETERAN SWIM PROGRAM • JOB ASSISTANCE • FAMILY SERVICES • WORD COMMANDO • TRANSITIONAL PROGRAMS FOR FEMALE VETERANS • MEMORIAL DAY 5K RUN/WALK • IMAGINATION WORKSHOP • DAY OF BEAUTY FOR FEMALE VETS • PORTRAIT PROJECT • VA SUMMER SCHOLARSHIPS FOR CHILDREN OF VETS • WLA VA STAND DOWN • CLOTHING BOUTIQUE • MOVE-IN KITS • THANKSGIVING DINNER FOR 209 • HEROES GARDEN • MUSICAL PERFORMANCES • WEEKLY SHUTTLE BUS FOR BUILDING 209 • RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES • HOUSING ASSISTANCE • SOFTBALL LEAGUES • WEIGHT ROOM • BEE KEEPING • VETERAN RESILIENCE AND RECOVERY • VETERAN GARDEN PROJECT • EMERGENCY KITS • VETERAN SUPER BOWL CELEBRATION • PAINT & SIP PARTIES • FRUIT AND VEGETABLE DISTRIBUTION • WEEKLY SACK LUNCHES FOR HOMELESS VETS • HEROES GOLF COURSE • UMPIRE TRAINING PROGRAM • JAPANESE GARDEN • HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS • TOILETRIES DRIVES • FAMILY RESILIENCE TRAINERS • TELEWELLNESS • SURF CAMPS • MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA SUPPORT GROUP • CAREGIVER SUPPORT • PARENTING & RELATIONSHIPS GROUPS • VETERANS LEGAL CLINIC • JACKIE ROBINSON STADIUM EVENTS • BASEBALL GAMES • MOVIE NIGHTS • OUTREACH EVENTS • INCOME STIPENDS • BBQS FOR VETERANS • VETERANS CENTER FOR RECREATION AND EDUCATION • VETERAN FAMILY WELLNESS CENTER •
Veteran Services and Activities Council

Honoring Veterans by connecting them to resources that enrich their lives and elevate their legacy is our shared purpose. This strategic collaboration of VA and community partners strengthens outreach efforts, broadens options, and facilitates access to opportunities and activities that benefit Veterans and their families.

This is just a glimpse at the past year. We hope it inspires you to imagine a fully re-vitalized campus and motivates you to take advantage of what’s available in our increasingly stronger, more connected community for Veterans.

In 2018...

23,456 Veterans Assisted
27,592 Meals Served
VA Stand Down

The October 26 Stand Down at the VA West Los Angeles Medical Center Campus literally took a village to plan and manifest. With the support of other Services Council members, VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System (VAGLAHS), Village for Vets, Brentwood School, and UCLA partnered to lead the planning and execution of the event. Every building on campus hummed as centralized access to a range of resources at the Stand Down brought desperately needed relief to 910 Veterans, many of them chronically homeless, in the span of just one day. The volunteers and service providers, 253 strong, connected Veterans with food, shelter, clothing, health screenings, mental health resources, pet care, VA and Social Security benefits counseling, legal services, and more. It was a wonderful day that reinforced the value of collaboration, a strength of the Services Council. Given the rather chaotic nature of the event and the wide array of personalities in attendance, volunteers will surely be able to swap a range of interesting stories from the day. We also know, though, that the Services Council was instrumental in making a difference by helping hundreds of people get help with housing, receive medical and legal attention, eat one (or more) hot meal(s), get new clothes, and feel cared for and valued—a small thing to offer given their service to our country.

“We’re just kind of struggling, but we are on our way. We’re just blessed to be here.”

—Veteran

910 Veterans
226 Housing Referrals
137 Volunteers
128 Metro Passes
116 Services & Vendors
Meals and Food

In 2018, Westside Food Bank consistently provided nutritious food for Veterans from the two dozen raised beds of Heroes’ Garden, a beautiful and therapeutic space, surrounding the Heroes’ Golf Course on the northern end of the West LA VA campus. Veterans, golfers, community members, and students from Brentwood School, volunteer their time throughout the year to help maintain the space and keep the garden flourishing. Veterans are welcome to pick and eat freely as they spend time in the garden.

Produce is harvested to contribute to Westside Food Bank’s weekly distribution of fruits and vegetables that consistently serves up to 150 Veterans every Thursday at Noon at the outdoor pavilion adjacent to Building 500. Any Veteran with a valid military ID is welcome and receives a free bag of fresh fruits and vegetables such as carrots, broccoli, apples, and oranges. Veterans may also be offered additional non-produce food items, such as prepared meals, snack bars, and canned items. The food is especially helpful to Veterans being discharged from the VA hospital, who may need a little bit of help getting back on their feet, or for homeless Veterans seeking treatment and services at VAGLAHS. Westside Food Bank provided Veterans with 163,696 pounds of nourishing food on the West LA VA campus in 2018.

This past year, Meals on Wheels of West LA had the privilege of serving 13,284 meals to Veterans living in Building 209. In addition to the RDA approved meals, each client’s birthday is recognized with a cake, small gift, and a card. National holidays are celebrated and recognition is given to days of religious significance. We have provided over 4,600 half pints of milk, emergency kits, duffle bags (filled with clothing and personal care items), and Subaru “Share the Love” reusable lunch bags filled with food. Also, bagels and baked goods are delivered with meals three times per week.

In collaboration with Village for Vets, Meal on Wheels has provided 12,650 sandwiches and 6,500 meals to homeless Vets in Building 257’s Welcome Center. At this year’s Stand Down on October 26, Meals on Wheels of West LA provided over 500 bagels, 400 of which were served with cream cheese or peanut butter and jelly. In addition, our volunteers donated and distributed “shelf stable” food at the event.

Through the UCLA Veteran Garden Project, the UCLA Veteran Resource Center, UCLA Recreation, and the UCLA Student Veterans of America collaborate with VAGLAHS to restore the 15-acre garden behind Jackie Robinson Stadium. These partners host monthly “Garden & Grill” events that engage a diverse range of military-connected persons in activities that promote positive physical and mental health, community and social engagement, and environmental wellness. Each event is followed by a meal where volunteers gather together, break bread, and build community. In 2018, the eight clean-up events involved more than 426 volunteers.
SafeParkingLA Veterans Program

SafeParkingLA’s Veterans program began in April of 2018 and has provided 1,877 nights of service to 95 Veterans. Lot 1, at the south end of the campus, provides a secure sleeping place for 10-15 Veterans every night. Meals are served every night from Village for Vets, as well as several churches and synagogues. The Veterans are also able to go to the Welcome Center (Building 257) where they can shower and get breakfast every morning before they go out to their work or programs for the day.

Beyond providing a safe place for vehicle-dwelling Veterans and their families to park overnight, SafeParkingLA, in concert with VA, connects Veterans with representatives from a variety of critical social services. Less than a year into the program, 50% of Veterans who have parked with SafeParkingLA are now in permanent housing. This is a testament to the safety of the lot and the tremendous benefit of offering Veterans the opportunity to access social services in the same location.

Village for Vets

Village for Vets is a vehicle for the community to help Veterans and to support VA. Among the other collaborations noted in this publication, Village for Vets impacted Veterans in 2018 by serving as Stand Down Co-Chair and providing over 1,000 breakfast burritos as well as hundreds of articles of clothing, hosting four “Paint ‘n Sip” days that served approximately 100 female (and some male!) Veterans, creating a Super Bowl weekend celebration that served 100 meals and gave away sleeping bag coats, introducing Veterans to Bee Keeping through “Operation Buzz,” bringing approximately 1,000 avocados and grapefruits from the Birney Farm to the WLA VA Campus for Vets, VA Staff, and VA Police, and awarding one $10,000 income stipend to a Veteran through a partnership with PATH.

City of Los Angeles: Umpire Training Program

The City of Los Angeles Municipal Sports Section is recruiting energetic military Veterans to be trained and certified as softball umpires. Applicants that pass the multi-day certification become active umpires for the City of Los Angeles Softball program earning $32 per one hour and fifteen minute game. The training program is free and includes Umpire Shirt, Cap, Bases, Template, and Instruction. Contact David Gadelha (david.gadelha@lacity.org) for more information and registration materials.
Brentwood School

Brentwood School created the Veterans Center for Recreation and Education (VCRE) to partner with VA and support the needs of the most vulnerable Veterans—chronically homeless, aging or female Veterans who are currently or formerly enrolled in VA healthcare, rehabilitation, and/or homeless programs. While other Veterans and Veteran family members also have access to VCRE services and offerings, the most vulnerable Veterans receive priority.

Each year, Brentwood School touches the lives of thousands of Veterans and their families through the aggregate impact of its efforts. Not only does VCRE offer daily access to recreational and athletic facilities (to date 454 Veterans have registered), Veterans also benefit from a range of social, vocational, and educational opportunities, transportation services, robust student engagement, multiple donation drives annually, and 120 full scholarships to Summer at Brentwood each year for children of Veterans.

“We were treated with utmost respect and we seemed to be a regular part of the community.”

—Veteran parent of Summer at Brentwood scholarship recipient

This is just a sampling of Brentwood School involvement in 2018:

**Annual VA Stand Down**
- Coordinate all 253 community volunteers and vendors
- Provide 1,450 lunch and afternoon meals for all attendees and volunteers
- Musical performances
- Passport and other ID photos (348)
- Mobile mammogram screening

**Social Opportunities**
- Weekly shuttle to Westwood Village for Building 209 residents
- Veteran Day of Beauty
- Thanksgiving Dinner for residents
- Fund monthly social activities for Building 209
- Weekly visits with Home for Heroes residents
- Veterans Day Assembly
- Weekend music performances

**Education**
- 120 annual scholarships to Summer at Brentwood School
- 100 free tickets to Parent University
- 100 free tickets to Hutson Lecture Series
- Unlimited free tickets to Brentwood School arts performances and athletic games
- Veteran Portrait and Biography Project
UCLA School of Law Veterans Legal Clinic works to address the unmet legal needs of Veterans, particularly those living or accessing services on the West Los Angeles VA campus. In 2018, the Clinic assisted 278 Veterans with 388 legal matters, providing 5,300 hours of legal services.

UCLA/VA Veteran Family Wellness Center (VFWC) offers high quality, customized services and resilience-based behavioral health and wellness training to meet the needs of a variety of family dynamics. In 2018, 10,609 Veterans and family members benefitted from VFWC services. The VFWC coordinated or partnered on 35 events in conjunction with VA section and a wide array of external community partners.

UCLA/VA Center of Excellence (COE) for Veteran Resilience and Recovery: Research and Training Divisions develop and promote innovations in services that effectively engage Veterans who have experienced homelessness, supporting their improved health, social outcomes, and person-centered recovery.

UCLA Department of Intercollegiate Athletics is committed to serving the Greater Los Angeles Veteran and military-connected community by providing recreational opportunities, entertainment, and recognition to our nation’s bravest men and women. In 2018, approximately 1,379 Veterans attended 40 different events. UCLA athletics also served 774 meals and donated 575 items of clothing.

UCLA Recreation—Wordcommando Creative Writing Program began in 2016 when writer and teacher Robert Morgan Fisher was called upon to form a creative writing workshop for Veterans suffering from homelessness and PTSD. There are 298 Veterans who have participated in the program and 3 have had their work published.

“...I became a Wordcommando over two years ago, when I was homeless and severely depressed. This program helped me develop friendships and rediscover my love for writing...”

–Veteran, Army National Guard
Veteran Services and Activities Council Members DIRECTORY

Bandini Foundation
Bryan Bandini, Director
bryan.bandini@yahoo.com
(818) 414-7426
bandinifoundation.org/

Brentwood School
Gennifer Yoshimaru, Assistant Head of School
gyoshimaru@bwscampus.com
(310) 476-9633
bwscampus.com/vcre

CalVet
Ron Brand, Information Officer
ron.brand@calvet.ca.gov
(424) 832-8210
calvet.ca.gov

City of Los Angeles
David Gadelha, Senior Recreation Director
david.gadelha@lacity.org
(818) 765-0284
laparks.org

Meals on Wheels WEST
Chris Baca, Executive Director
chris@mealsonwheelswest.org
(310) 394-5133 x4
mealsonwheelswest.org

Meals on Wheels WLA
Ellen Horwitz, Executive Director
mealsonwheelswla@gmail.com
(310) 208-4028
mealsonwheelswla.org

New Directions for Veterans
Chris Crowley, Director of Development
ccrowley@NDVETS.org
(310) 696-5662
NDVETS.org

Safe Parking LA
Pat Cohen, Lead Liaison
pat@iapatco.com
(310) 795-4639
safeparkingla.org

Step Up on Second
Rebecca Ricci, VASH Program Manager
rricci@stepuponsecond.org
(323) 499-2650 x2109
stepuponsecond.org

UCLA
Kristie Hernandez, Director, Program & Operations
khernandez@conet.ucla.edu
(310) 794-1824
veterans.ucla.edu

UCLA School of Law Veterans Legal Clinic
Willi Watts, Co-Director
watts@law.ucla.edu
(310) 478-3711 ext. 43669
law.ucla.edu/academics/clinical-and-experiential-programs/veterans-legal-clinic/

UCLA Veterans Family Wellness Center
Teresa Banko, Executive Director
tbanko@mednet.ucla.edu
(310) 478-3711 x 42425
vfwc.ucla.edu/

Vets Advocacy
Anthony Allman, Director of Outreach
anthony@vatherightway.org
(424) 348-0083
vatherightway.org/

Village For Vets
Marcie Polier Swartz, Founder & President
marcie@villageforvets.org
(310) 922-8080
villageforvets.org

Westside Food Bank
Bruce Rankin, Executive Director
bruce@wsfb.org
(310) 828-6016 x-13
wsfb.org

To learn more about the services you can enjoy as a Veteran through the Veteran Services and Activities Council, please contact Public Affairs at vhaglapublicaffairs@va.gov.

Inquiries about VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System should be directed to: VHAGLAMasterPlan VHAGLAMasterPlan@va.gov