

# NEWS RELEASE

North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System | Office of Communication & Outreach



For immediate release

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## **North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System Celebrates Volunteers During National Volunteer Week**

**Gainesville, Fla.** – In recognition of National Volunteer week, April 17-23, the [North Florida/ South Georgia Veterans Health System \(NF/SGVHS\)](#) will honor its volunteers who support local Veterans with events throughout the week and a public campaign encouraging other citizens to give back.

Volunteers have been valued partners at VA for more than 75 years and provided countless hours of support to Veterans. In fiscal year 2021, around 897 volunteers at NF/SGVHS contributed 29,035.75 hours toward caring for Veterans. Their volunteerism and donations were valued at approximately \$407,606.55 in fiscal year 2021.

“The support provided by volunteers to our health system is invaluable,” said NF/SGVHS Executive Health System Director, David Isaacks. “During this week we show appreciation to our volunteers as they provide us with a unique perspective and valuable insight on how to improve our patients’ experience.”

National Volunteer Week also presents an opportunity for other civically minded individuals to join the ranks of volunteers serving Veterans. There are many ways to volunteer. For instance, the NF/SGVHS ambassador program offers a “first impression” of the hospital to Veterans, families, and visitors. Volunteers, known as ambassadors, are outfitted in red vests and assist Veterans and visitors with getting the information they need and by personally escorting Veterans throughout the facility.

“Many of our sites of care are huge. Having ambassadors stationed at our front entrances and at high traffic areas within the facility to answer questions and assist Veterans with getting to and from their appointments shows our commitment to improving the Veterans experience” said Dion Blake, NF/SGVHS Veteran Experience Officer. “Ambassadors-young and mature, are an integral part of NF/SGVHS’s transition from the information desk concept to a true concierge service.”

Monique Burns, a newly established ambassador is assigned to gain feedback from Veterans on their experience at the Malcom Randall VA Medical Center. As a retired VA

nurse, she is skilled in providing a listening ear and shows compassion and respect to all Veterans she encounters. “Being an ambassador puts me back in a space to positively impact Veterans. I am honored and excited to make a difference and support the health system in a new way,” stated Burns.

“Our ambassadors are motivated to help others. They want to help make a difference in Veterans lives,” said Blake. “We are always looking for additional volunteer ambassadors to join our team at our medical centers and at our community-based outpatient clinics”.

No medical experience is necessary to become a VA volunteer and volunteers are encouraged to share ideas on how they would like to give back using their unique skills.

To become a VA volunteer, go to our website at <https://www.va.gov/north-florida-health-care/work-with-us/volunteer-or-donate/> and follow the given instructions.

The NF/SGVHS is one of the nation’s leading VA healthcare systems, employing more than 5,800 medical professionals and support staff dedicated to providing high-quality care to Veterans residing throughout North Florida and South Georgia. The organization operates 15 facilities, including two medical centers located in Gainesville and Lake City, a Domiciliary and 12 outpatient clinics located throughout a 50-county catchment area.

To learn more about the facilities and services offered by NF/SGVHS, please visit: <https://www.va.gov/north-florida-health-care/>, “like” us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/VANFSG](http://www.facebook.com/VANFSG) or follow us on Instagram at [www.instagram.com/VANFSG/](http://www.instagram.com/VANFSG/) or Twitter at <https://twitter.com/vanfsg>.

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*“...to care for him who shall have borne the battle  
and his widow, and his orphan...”*

- President Abraham Lincoln



U.S. Department  
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### **North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System**

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