



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

News Release

Office of Public Affairs
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Nov. 10, 2016

VA Celebrates New Strategic Partnerships on Veterans Day

Partnerships Affirm VA's Commitment to Engaging External Organizations to Support Veterans and Families

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) today announced nine new strategic partnerships that will provide additional health care and support services for Veterans and their families. These new formal relationships are the latest in a series of strategic partnerships developed to bring the private and public sectors together with VA to enhance the Veteran experience.

“Strategic partnerships allow us to expand the reach of services available for Veterans and their families,” said Secretary Robert A. McDonald. “Since we’ve named strategic partnerships as one of our five MyVA strategies, I’m happy to report we’ve established partnerships at unprecedented rate to tackle a myriad of different Veteran needs.”

The following partnerships were announced:

- **Cardinal Health.** Through their “Operation: Support our Heroes project,” Cardinal Health has pledged to donate 2,000 care packages (consisting of toiletries and other personal hygiene items), as well as other consumer health products to VA facilities for distribution to homeless Veterans. The program is being piloted at 9 VA facilities across the country, including several in the Midwest, parts of the Southwest, and California.
- **Downs Designs Dreams.** Downs Designs Dreams works to design and develop clothing specifically designed for individuals with disabilities. VA has partnered with Downs Designs Dreams to put these tailored designs in the hands of Veterans with disabilities. To date, Downs Designs Dreams has already donated 166 pairs of jeans to Veterans through this partnership, representing an investment of \$8,610.
- **Dream Foundation.** Dream Foundation is dedicated to honoring our Veterans’ service by fulfilling their final Dream, providing them, their families and caregivers inspiration, comfort and closure at the end of life. Through this partnership, VA social work staff will coordinate referrals to support Dream fulfillment for Veterans experiencing life-limited illnesses.
- **First Quality Enterprises.** First Quality Enterprises is an American manufacturer of absorbent hygiene (adult incontinence, feminine care, and baby care), tissue (bath and towel), and industrial (non-woven fabrics, print and packaging materials, thermoformed plastics) products, serving institutional and retail markets throughout the world. First Quality is teaming up with the VA to donate baby products to pregnant women Veterans through VA’s maternity care coordinators.
- **Hair Cuttery.** In partnership with VA, Hair Cuttery is sponsoring their annual “Share-A-Haircut” program. For every adult haircut purchased in any Hair Cuttery salon on Veterans Day, Nov 11th, Hair Cuttery will donate 2 free haircut certificates for VA patients who may otherwise be unable to get this type of professional service. All Hair Cuttery locations are participating and will honor the certificates through January 25, 2017.
- **The Jonas Center for Nursing and Veterans Healthcare.** The Jonas Center is dedicated to improving Veterans health by developing outstanding nursing researchers, educators and clinical leaders. This partnership builds and supports a network of current and former VA Jonas Nursing Scholars to focus on Veteran-specific healthcare needs.
- **NCR Corporation.** This year’s Veteran’s Day parade features NCR’s self-service kiosks in New York, N.Y. and Los Angeles, Calif. developed by NCR especially for Veterans. It provides a point-of-service for all veterans (rural, homeless, economically disadvantaged, and medically disabled) and their spouses and dependents, via NCR’s world-class self-service technology.
- **Project Hero.** Project Hero is national nonprofit that saves lives by providing hope, recovery, and resilience for Veterans focusing on physical and psychological rehabilitation programs. Through this partnership, VA Mental Health and Recreation Therapy resources will be made available to Veterans participating in Project Hero’s “Ride 2 Recovery” research programs.
- **United Through Reading (UTR).** UTR unites families facing physical separation by facilitating the bonding experience of reading aloud

together. They offer an opportunity for military service members and Veterans to video record a book for children or grandchildren who are located elsewhere. The child receives a copy of the book with the video to read along. The first Veteran site to participate is Honolulu, Hawaii, and they have readings leading up to Veterans Day.

This latest round of partnerships reflects the growing number of success VA has achieved over the last eighteen months. By nurturing and maturing these relationships, VA is able to help focus the Nation's powerful support and goodwill for Veterans and their families. In the last 18 months, VA's partnerships and collaborations have brought in more than \$300 million in investments and in-kind services to support America's veterans.

"Our Veterans have honorably – and voluntarily - served our Nation. Now it's our turn to provide them a quality of life that matches that service" said Matthew S. Collier, Senior Advisor for Strategic Partnerships. "The VA will never be able to achieve that on our own, but we can bring together good partners who want to fill in the gaps."

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