

# ROLL WITH US

JULY - AUGUST - SEPTEMBER, 2022



This past May, PVA-WI hosted our first Adaptive Sports Bootcamp. This engaging three-day event was hosted at the Milwaukee County Sports Complex and Roc Ventures in Franklin, WI. Athletes from across Wisconsin and northern Illinois participated in a wide variety of events, some for the very first time! The rotating schedule gave the opportunity for each athlete to play wheelchair basketball, wheelchair football, cycling, boccia, field events, softball, power lifting, corn hole, air rifle, tennis, pickle ball, and adaptive fitness.

All of the participants highly encourage other PVA members to attend this event next year! One PVA-WI member shared, "I learned a lot about the different events I will be participating in [at the 2022 National

Veteran Wheelchair Games]. I have a much better understanding of how to prepare for the NVWG and being around other vets who refuse to give up was inspiring!"

Additionally, we would like to thank all of our collaborating partners and volunteers who supported this event, without each one of you, it would not have been possible to provide such a great experience to these athletes. Here is a list of partners who supported the event: Adaptive Adventures, Aramark, Briscoe Family YMCA Wellness Center, Chick-fil-A, GLASA, Justin Plesnick, Midwest Orthopedic Specialty Hospital Performance Center, Milwaukee County Sports Complex, Mission Barbeque, Move United, Roc Ventures, VA staff, and WASA. Please enjoy pictures from the event on pages 8 & 9...



Awarded 2021 President's Award



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## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

We have a very busy calendar of events coming up over the next several months and I hope everyone has a chance to partake in as many of these activities as possible. We are just coming off of the successful completion of our inaugural Adaptive Sports Bootcamp, designed to expose as many athletes, to as many different adaptive sporting events as possible, while at the same time providing the necessary coaching and training expertise for them to become more competitive. I am happy to report that we had a very successful Bootcamp that hopefully will propel our Wisconsin team on many successful outcomes as the National Veterans Wheelchair Games in Tempe, AZ, which are rapidly coming up in July. By that time we are hopeful of releasing our Virtual Battle Buddy app, that is designed to holistically improve the users' lives in many aspects and help them be happier and healthier.

Before we send our athletes off to Arizona, our chapter is hosted our annual PVA National Trap shoot up in Green Bay, June 9 through the 12. Shooters from around the country attended this multi-day event. As in the past, a good time was had by all.

I recently attended PVA's 76th Annual Convention, on behalf of our chapter. This was the 12th time that I had attended one of these conventions and this was definitely the most uplifting one. The Development Department's head advised that PVA has found and nurtured a number of possible corporate partners that may assist us with funding and developing our programs aimed at enriching and bettering the lives of the disabled. One of the corporations is Amazon. Amazon has expressed a keen interest in assisting PVA in expanding its programs specifically designed to reach out and assist women veterans who have SCI/D. Hopefully these potential corporate partners will become active participants in making a real difference in the lives of our members, and the disabled community at large.

...Continued on page 4

### WHO WE ARE

#### **Officers**

President: Ken Ness  
Vice President: Todd Drazy  
Secretary: Derrick Trentin  
Treasurer/GRD: Scott Griffith  
President Emeritus: Phil Rosenberg

#### **National Director**

Ken Ness

#### **Directors**

LeToi Adams  
Richard "Rick" Butth  
Peter Carrao  
Troy Kurczek  
Ken Matthews  
Michael Thomas

#### **Staff**

Amera Schaefer: Executive Director  
Tom Daily: Associate Sports Director  
Grace Malkusak: Nonprofit Admin. Asst.  
Darrin Ferguson Jr: PR and Media Design Specialist

#### **Recreation Therapy**

Erinn Kulba  
Sam Gracz

#### **National SVC Office**

Linda Roberts: Accredited Administration  
Call: 414-902-5655  
Toll Free: 800-795-3580

#### **Rehab Counselor**

Doug Green MS, CRC

#### **Office Hours**

Monday-Friday 9:00 to 3:00  
Saturday & Sunday Closed  
750 N Lincoln Memorial Drive, Suite 422  
Milwaukee, WI 53202  
414-328-8910



## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

This spring has been an eventful time for PVA-WI staff and members. Not only has staff been working on our next five-year strategic plan, we have been working toward increasing membership engagement through various types of events, such as our Adaptive Sports Bootcamp and Lego Event.

PVA-WI is looking forward to continuing to build upon the success of the 2022 Adaptive Sports Bootcamp to start planning for our 2023 Adaptive Sports Bootcamp. It was great to see so many smiles, the friendly competitiveness, and overall joy of participants during this event! Again, thank you to the first-year participants for your feedback and thank you to the volunteers and partners that made this event possible.

Please continue to review our calendar of events on our website as we have additional opportunities through Adaptive Adventures and Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation Sitting Yoga Session. Additionally, please register for Salmon-A-Rama and our Annual Membership Banquet if you have not already registered, visit [www.wisconsinpva.org](http://www.wisconsinpva.org).

Lastly, good luck to all of our Team Wisconsin athletes competing in the 2022 National Veteran Wheelchair Games in Tempe, Arizona.

If you have any questions, please contact me at [aschaefer@wisconsinpva.org](mailto:aschaefer@wisconsinpva.org) or call 414-328-8910.

### CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP

**Members: 269**

**New Members:**

Aurthur L. Anderson, Francis Halbach,  
Gerald A. Alessandrini, & Paul A. Friefag

**Associate Members: 131**

**New Associate Members:**

Chad Bertrand

**Final Bugle:**

Jerome Kusy, Ronald A. Pritchard, &  
Douglas R. Jorns

**Attention PVA-WI Members,**

**A donor has donated a crypt to us  
located at West Lawn Memorial Park  
in Racine, WI.**

**If you are interested or have any  
questions please  
email [info@wisconsinpva.org](mailto:info@wisconsinpva.org) or  
call the office at 414-328-8910.**

### Scholarship Opportunity

PVA-WI has a scholarship program for our members and their family. Eligibility is open to all PVA-WI members, their spouse, their children, and their grandchildren. This scholarship opportunity is not open to associate members or their dependents.

Application submission guidelines:

1. Proof of enrollment in an accredited college, university, or technical school
2. Submit an essay between 500-600 words describing how you have been impacted by a veteran living with a spinal cord injury or disease
3. Share any civic engagement activity you have performed
4. Must have a cumulative GPA of 2.5 or above, please submit your most recent transcript showing grades and GPA

The application is available on our website under policies; click on the policy titled PVA-WI Scholarship for Members/Dependents or scan QR below. These applications will be reviewed year-round on the first of every month. If you have any questions, please email.





### **Presidents Report Continued...**

At the convention there were a number of resolutions that were proposed, debated, and ultimately voted on. In my mind the key resolution that was passed, expanded PVA's membership criteria to include veterans diagnosed with MS. This is a major change from PVA's prior membership criteria, and it is estimated that there could be as many as 58,000 veterans with MS that could potentially become new members.

I also have some great news on the PVA National awards front. Our chapter was judged to have the best website out of all the chapters nationwide. Indeed, after we were awarded this award, even some of the PVA National personnel in the Communications Department contacted our chapter to learn how we were able to incorporate certain things into the chapter's website. As the saying goes "Imitation is the best form flattery." Please don't take my word, or the accolades of PVA judges, for how amazing our website is.... I encourage everyone to check it out for themselves. There is something there for everyone.

Finally, the most coveted award that PVA National awards to chapters is the President's Award. This award is presented to the chapter that is judged to have the singular best program for the year. This year I am happy to report that President's Award was presented to our chapter for the efforts we have put forth in getting marine lifts for the disabled installed in marinas around the State of Wisconsin. We have been able to locate funding for these needed devices from governmental sources, foundations, charitable individuals and organizations. Indeed, only one day after the President's trophy found its resting place in the office, we were advised that the Reeve Foundation approved one of our grant requests for the purchase and installation of additional marina lifts. Our very first marina lift installation will be dedicated and celebrated during our annual Salmon-A-Rama fishing expedition at the Racine Marina on July 14. You are all encouraged to come for the fishing and stay for the dedication/celebration.

This will truly be a day to celebrate disabled individuals being afforded the opportunity to easily and safely perform the simple activity of getting into and out of a boat...something that has long been an impossible hurdle for many to clear. Getting the award was nice, however, it was the ability of our chapter leaders to identify a problem faced by the disabled community, quickly find a solution to resolve this problem, and find the funding to pay for the devices to resolve this problem - - that is truly the key. After accepting the award on behalf of our chapter, a number of other chapter representatives approached me for additional information so that they could potentially achieve the same solution for the disabled in their respective states. Perhaps, our initial dream of making just Wisconsin's waterways accessible, will expand to waterways and marinas across the nation, maybe even globally. We can only hope and help.

#Rollwithus

Ken Ness

**Check out our YouTube Channel  
to catch up on things...**

**SUBSCRIBE LIKE SHARE**





## PVA-Wisconsin at Work



### The Next 18



PVA-WI sponsored the Next 18's First Annual Golf Outing at Western Lakes Golf Club in Pewaukee. Next 18 is a nonprofit that "uses the sport of golf as a conduit to provide transformational mental health resources and holistic life resource training to veterans with disabilities and first responders." Our Board President, Ken Ness, Associate Sports Director, Tom Daily, and two PVA-WI members, Terrence Green and Pete Mittelstaedt participated in the event.



### New Glarus Support for NVWG

PVA-WI Board Members visited New Glarus to be presented a \$20,000 check from the New Glarus Foundation. New Glarus has supported our athletes for two consecutive years!

Thank You New Glarus for supporting our Team Wisconsin athletes in the 2022 NVWG.

### Angels of the Road for Veterans



Angels of the Road for Veterans hosted a Bingo Benefit on Saturday, April 2 to contribute the proceeds to PVA-WI. The organization presented the \$4,000 check to PVA-WI during our Adaptive Sports Bootcamp evening event at Root River Bowling in Franklin, WI. Thank you for the support and spending time with our members!

### Mission BBQ - West Allis



PVA-WI presented our 2022 Community Partner Award to Mission BBQ - West Allis for their continuous support of our events by providing food to our members throughout the year. Mission BBQ was a big hit at this year's Adaptive Sports Bootcamp!



# Mark your Calendar for these upcoming events...

PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA - WISCONSIN CHAPTER



## SALMON-A-RAMA

### July 14, 2022

Join us on Thursday, July 14, 2022, at 6:30AM at the Reefpoint Marina for Charter Boat fishing! There will be a Hoyer lift at the marina.

★★★★★

PVA-WI members and 1 guest are priority for spots. Associate members on a standby list. Hotel is provided for PVA-WI members traveling > 50 miles.

Special prizes and lunch upon return of all 10 charter boats. Snacks will be provided while on the boats. Bring sun block and wear appropriate clothing!

RSVP: (414) 328-8910 // RSVP BY JUNE 30, 2022

EVENTBRITE LINK: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/269154407977>

PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA

## 2022 ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP BANQUET

Sunday, September 18th at 4:00 PM

Roma Lodge  
7130 Spring St, Racine, WI 53406

Tickets: \$25 per person (PVA Members will be reimbursed upon arrival)

Hotel provided for Members who live more than 100 miles away from event

EventBrite Registration:  
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/354837016067>

RSVP by September 5, 2022



### 2022 Veterans Day Poster and Poem Contest Paralyzed Veterans of America - Wisconsin Chapter Contest Rules and Guidelines

#### I. Contest Theme and Criteria

The theme for the 2022 Veterans Day Poster and Poem Contest is *Just Plane Wrong*. Students should draw a poster or write a poem that shows or tells how they would make today's airplanes more accessible and safer for Veterans and people who use wheelchairs. Posters must include the visual image of a wheelchair and poems must reference the use of a wheelchair.

The poster contest is open to students in first through fourth grades.

The poem contest is open to students in fifth through eighth grades.

#### II. Contest Deadline

All poster and poem entries must be received by **Friday, October 21, 2022**. See submission guidelines below. Participants (teachers, group leaders, parents) of winning students will be contacted no later than Thursday, November 3, 2022. Entries that do not meet the deadline or guidelines will be automatically disqualified.

#### III. Contest Grade Categories and Grand Prize Winners

Voting for the contest should be evaluated in the following grade categories:

- First and second grades category: Poster
- Third and fourth grades category: Poster
- Fifth and sixth grades category: Poem
- Seventh and eighth grades category: Poem

#### Please note:

- Each grade category (first and second grades, third and fourth grades, fifth and sixth grades, and seventh and eighth grades) should have a winner, so four grade category winners overall.
- The poster with the most votes is the grand prize winner overall for the poster contest and the poem with the most votes is the grand prize winner overall for the poem contest.
- The grand prize winner overall for the poster contest should not be a poster grade category winner. The grand prize winner overall for the poem contest should not be a poem grade category winner.

PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA



## PGA HOPE LEAGUE

DATES: JUNE 21ND, 28TH,  
JULY 5TH, 12TH, 19TH, 26TH  
AUGUST 2ND, 9TH

6 CONSECUTIVE TEE TIMES (24 PLAYERS) BEGINNING AT 1PM

**\*\*PARTICIPANTS MUST BE AN ASSOCIATE MEMBER OF THE PVA IN ORDER TO BE ELIGIBLE TO PLAY.**

**\*\*NO COST FOR VETERANS\*\***

**LOCATION:** CURRIE PARK GOLF COURSE  
3535 N. MAYFAIR RD.  
WAUWATOSA WI 53226

**CONTACT:** TO REGISTER OR HAVE QUESTIONS  
BEN CIHA  
[cihaben@gmail.com](mailto:cihaben@gmail.com)



PGA HOPE  
HELPING OUR VETERANS ENJOY GOLF



# 2022 Brown County Trapshoot

And the winners are:

**Top Overall:** Dave David

**Top Overall SCI:** John Pilotte

**1st Place Team:** Wisconsin (Dale Nelson, Mark Hawn, Ken Buchholz, & John Pilotte, and Dave David)

**2nd Place Team:** Iowa







## ADAPTIVE SPORTS



# BOOT





# CAMP

**MAY 16, 17, & 18, 2022**





# National Service Officer Report

## Exciting New VA Insurance Programs

By Aaron Stevens, Senior Benefits Advocate

VA Insurance Service has two major program announcements based on Veteran advocacy and legislation (Public Law 116-315).

First, is the Service-Disabled (S-DVI) program, including Supplemental S-DVI, will close to new enrollment after December 31, 2022. Second beginning on January 1, 2023, a new program, Veterans Affairs Life Insurance (VALI), will begin.

Veterans who are within two years of receiving a disability rating for a new condition should consider applying for S-DVI and must apply before December 31, 2022. Disabled Veterans that meet certain criteria may be eligible for a waiver of premiums for S-DVI coverage. The new VALI program does not offer a waiver of premiums.

For service-disabled Veterans who may have missed the deadlines or not met the health requirements for S-DVI, it is important to inform you that VALI is open for enrollment on January 1, 2023. VALI offers guaranteed acceptance whole life coverage up to \$40,000 to all service-connected Veterans age 80 and under with no time limit to apply and no medical underwriting. Some Veterans over age 80 may also be eligible. The program has an initial two year waiting period, which replaces medical underwriting, before the face value of the policy take effect. The VALI premium rates are based on age and the amount of coverage elected. If the policyholder's death occurs before the face value of the policy takes effect, all premiums paid plus interest are paid to the beneficiary.

Any Veteran currently enrolled in the S-DVI program should know that they can remain in the SDVI program if they want to. If an S-DVI insured Veteran wants to apply for VALI, then they can apply between January 1, 2023 and December 31, 2025, those insured may not be covered by both programs at the same time and must drop S-DVI if they want to apply for VALI and start the two-year initial period.

The mission of the Insurance Service is to provide our Nation's Veterans, service members and military families insurance products and services. They provide financial security to those who served. It's all about peace of mind. This new program will make life insurance coverage available to more than 5 million service-connected Veterans. Life insurance is foundational in family financial planning, as 63% of adults have coverage to protect their spouse, children, or other beneficiaries.

Here are S-DVI and VALI resources:

- Find out how to apply for S-DVI: <http://www.va.gov/life-insurance/options-eligibility/s-dvi>
- An online timeline of key dates and changes that impact the S-DVI program: [https://www.benefits.va.gov/INSURANCE/docs/Important\\_VALI\\_Milestones.pdf](https://www.benefits.va.gov/INSURANCE/docs/Important_VALI_Milestones.pdf)
- An online fact sheet outlining VALI coverage up to \$40,000, premium rates, and FAQs: [https://www.benefits.va.gov/INSURANCE/docs/VALI\\_Information.pdf](https://www.benefits.va.gov/INSURANCE/docs/VALI_Information.pdf)
- A link to register for email updates on VALI: <https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/USVAVALI/subscriber/new>
- The VA.gov Life Insurance website: <https://www.va.gov/life-insurance>
- VA Life Insurance Call Center: 800-669-8477 (Monday-Friday 8:30 AM - 6:00 PM EST)

If you have any questions about VA Insurance please call the temporary NSO, Armando De La Rosa, phone: 210-617-5300 ext 16819.



## THANK YOU'S

### Supporting Community Partners

*Dear Paralyzed Veterans of America - WI Chapter,*

*I am Dominic from Holy Apostles 5th grade. We did a charity project that consisted of picking out a charity to donate money to. When I was browsing, I came across your charity and loved what you were doing so I picked you. I had to create a PowerPoint and present it to my class. Our teacher had us vote on the one that was the most persuasive in wanting to help. I had the most votes! We did a coin drive at our school, and we raised \$324. I am so thrilled to help your charity.*

*Dear PVAWI,*

*I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for allowing me to volunteer at the first Adaptive Sports Bootcamp. I loved meeting and talking to the numerous Veterans and hearing their stories. Everybody at the event were so friendly - I can't wait to volunteer for future events. Thank you for what the organization does for Veterans to help them cope with their medical conditions.*

*Sincerely,  
Linda*

### Adaptive Sports Bootcamp Participants

**First I wanted to THANK YOU again for EVERYTHING you did for me and my Fellow Brother and Sister Veterans. I know it takes a lot of individuals to put on an event like this one. Thank you for everything!**

*-Ervin*

*I really liked all of the events offered and interacting with fellow paralyzed veterans. It was great to learn from one another and learn new sports like tennis and wheelchair football. Since I am new to adaptive sports, learning about a brand new organized sport is a great opportunity to get involved when everyone else is still learning.*

*-Adaptive Sports Bootcamp Participant*





## Want To Improve Your Bowel Function?



Recently published research reveals between 50 and 80% of participants reported improvements in bowel function and/or management after walking in an exoskeleton\*

**Did you know Paralyzed US Veterans May be Eligible for a ReWalk Personal Exoskeleton?**

**Contact ReWalk for more Information:  
[rewalk.com/contact](https://rewalk.com/contact) or  
508.251.1154 option 2**

\*Chen A, et al. Changes in bowel function following exoskeleton-assisted walking in persons with spinal cord injury: an observational pilot study. *Spinal Cord*. 2020;58(1):139-146.



## GOVERNMENT RELATIONS & ADVOCACY

### S.2533 Making Advances in Mammography and Medical Options for Veterans Act Signed into Law 7 June 2022

The bill addresses the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) provision of mammograms and breast cancer treatment.

Among other requirements, the VA must:

- submit a strategic plan for improving breast imaging services for veterans;
- implement a three-year pilot program to provide telescreening mammography services for veterans who live in locations where access to breast imaging services a VA facility is difficult or unfeasible;
- upgrade all mammography services at its facilities to use three-dimensional breast imaging;
- study the availability of access to testing for the breast cancer gene for veterans diagnosed with breast cancer, as recommended by the guidelines from National Comprehensive Cancer Network;
- update guidelines to increase the use of molecular testing and genetic counseling for veterans diagnosed with breast cancer;
- study the accessibility of breast imaging services at VA facilities for veterans with paralysis, spinal cord injury or disorder, or another disability; and
- update its policies and directives to ensure that it confirms the accessibility of a breast imaging site when referring a veteran with a spinal cord injury or disorder to a non-VA provider.

The Inspector General of the VA must report to the VA and to Congress on mammography services furnished by the VA. In addition the VA must enter into a partnership with at least one cancer center of the National Cancer Institute of the National Institutes of Health in each Veterans Integrated Service Network to expand access to high-quality cancer care for women veterans. In implement such partnerships, the VA must ensure that veterans with breast cancer who reside in rural areas or states without a partner cancer center are able to receive care through telehealth.

Finally, the VA must collaborate with the Department of Defense and report on all current research and health care collaborations between the departments on treating veterans and members of the Armed Forces with breast cancer.

A Big Thanks for your continued advocacy support!

Simply scan this QR code or visit: <https://www.votervoice.net/PVA/Campaigns>









For the 2nd year PVA-WI held the May the 4th be with you, Lego exhibit, to share U.S. Army Veteran Jeff's LEGO collection. Jeff uses the hobby as a coping mechanism to help deal with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, and it also just fun to build things. We are thankful for Jeff sharing his passion with the various people and groups that stopped in to see the massive display he assembled.







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## PVA-WI ANNUAL ELECTION 2022-2023

PVA-WI is accepting nominations for the Board of Directors until July 31st, 2022. In early August, the election ballots will be mailed out to the voting membership for selections. Current PVA Board Members **Peter Carrao** and **Derrick Trentin** are up for re-election as their term ends September 30, 2022. Nominations are now being accepted, please contact the office with your nomination.

If you are considering running for one of these open positions, you must successfully complete the Paralyzed Veterans of America Certification process. If the National Secretary has not certified you, your name can still be placed on the ballot, but you cannot assume an elected position until you are certified. The certification process is very simple, and the forms are available at the Chapter Office. As members, many of you are already certified.

### Certification requires three items of proof:

- Citizenship (birth certificate, passport, immigration or naturalization form number)
- Active Duty service in the Armed Forces and character of discharge other than dishonorable (DD-214)
- Medical proof of spinal cord injury or disease (physician's statement or medical records)

Please note – this process does take some time, so make sure to allow enough time to complete the certification process. If you have questions, please contact the office at (414) 328-8910.

## Move United Football

Tom Daily, PVA-WI's Associate Sports Director and Sam Gracz, RT at the SCI clinic, attended Move United's Wheelchair Football League Training. Fellow PVA-WI member Ervin Mulkey also attended.

The Teaching the Wheelchair Football Athlete Development Model was held in La Crosse, WI from June 10 –June 12. During this session the following items were taught as part of the continuing education curriculum: Clinic playbook, League Rulebook, Concussion Protocol, and Emergency action plans.

Wheelchair football is the newest sport offered by Move United. The USA Wheelchair Football League is the first of its kind football league for adults with disabilities to reach their highest potential through a competitive, fast-paced, team sport. The USA Wheelchair Football League brings together highly trained coaches with passionate athletes, building skills and inspiring athletes to excel both on and off the field through teamwork, dedication, and resilience.

Since 2020, more than 700 athletes and coaches have participated in USA Wheelchair Football League programs, growing their skills and love for football.

Courtesy of Move United: <https://moveunitedsport.org/usa-wheelchair-football-league/>





# Indego® Gets Paralyzed Veterans Walking Again



**NEW VA Program offers eligible veterans an Indego® exoskeleton at NO COST!**

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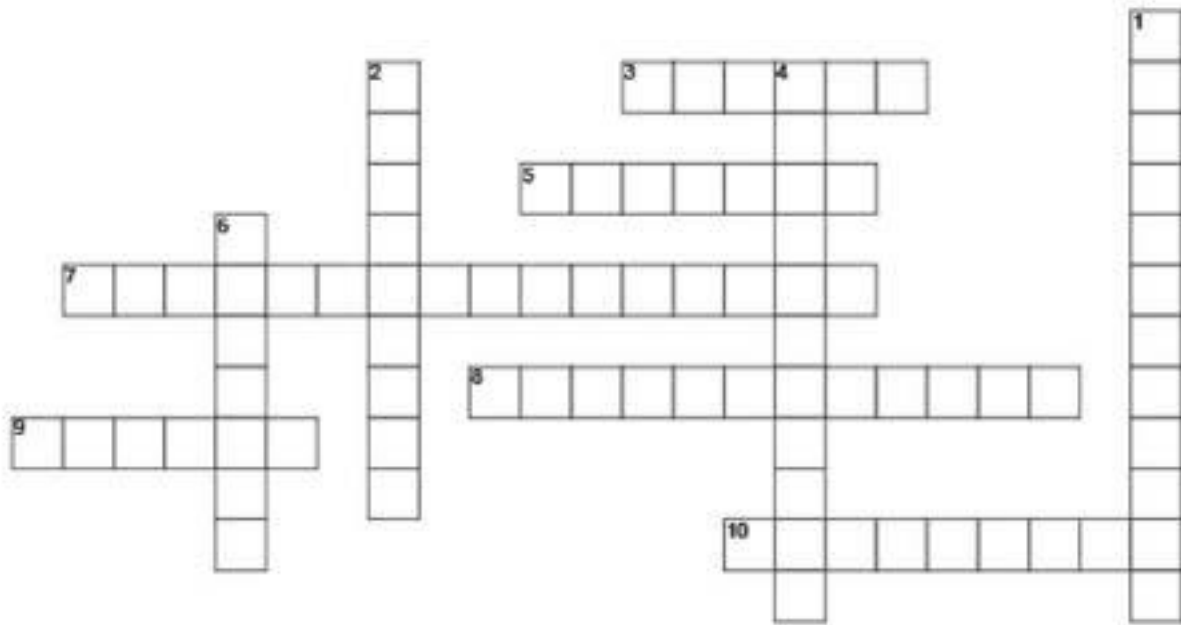
Phone: 844-846-3346

Email: [support.indego@parker.com](mailto:support.indego@parker.com)





## Fourth of July Crossword



### ACROSS

3. An outing or occasion that involves taking a packed meal to be eaten outdoors.
5. The Statue of \_\_\_\_\_.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ was the first president of the United States of America.
8. Consists of thirteen equal horizontal stripes of red alternating with white, with a blue rectangle bearing fifty small stars.
9. A public procession, especially one celebrating a special day or event.
10. The Fourth of July is considered a \_\_\_\_\_ holiday.

### DOWN

1. The Declaration of \_\_\_\_\_ was adopted on July 4, 1776.
2. A device containing gunpowder and other combustible chemicals that causes a spectacular explosion, used typically for display or in celebrations.
4. Independence Day is the \_\_\_\_\_ of the United States.
6. Independence also means \_\_\_\_\_.

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### CONVENIENCE



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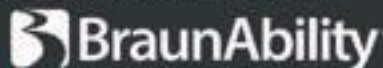
### CLASS



CHRYSLER PACIFICA

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# STAY SAFE IN THE SUMMER HEAT

Courtesy of Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation



Whether cheering on young graduates, picnicking in local parks, or exploring beachside boardwalks, much of life moves outside in the summertime. Individuals living with paralysis can safely enjoy the festivities of the season but should be aware that a spinal cord injury impacts the body's ability to regulate temperature, increasing the risk of heat exhaustion and heatstroke. Skin must also be monitored carefully for sunburn, which can cause pressure wounds and infections - and trigger autonomic dysreflexia, a life-threatening medical emergency that affects people with spinal cord injuries at the T6 level or higher. Understanding seasonal risks and following simple precautions can help prevent heat-related complications without limiting life's enjoyment.

## Tips to stay safe in the summer heat:

- **Stay hydrated:** Drink lots of water before, during, and after any outdoor activities. Limit caffeine and alcohol, which can increase dehydration.
- **Wear sunscreen:** Always apply sunscreen when going outdoors, no matter the time of year. On both sunny and cloudy days, sunscreen helps protect skin from ultraviolet rays, which can cause sunburn and increase the risk of skin cancer. Sunburns may also cause skin breakdowns among people living with spinal cord injuries. Completely cover all exposed skin (including tops of feet) with a thick layer of water-resistant, broad-spectrum sunscreen with an SPF of at least 30. (Most adults need to use one ounce - roughly the amount in a shot glass - to fully cover their body.) Apply to dry skin about 15 minutes before going outside and then reapply at least every two hours, or after being in the water.
- **Wear protective clothes:** Wide-brimmed hats shield the head, neck, and upper chest from the sun. Clothing with built-in UV protection may help prevent sunburn, while lightweight wicking fabrics can keep the body cooler and limit excessive moisture buildup that can lead to skin breakdown.
- **Pay attention to skin:** Daily skin inspections are important for people living with paralysis, especially in the summer. Continue to monitor skin for sunburn or breakdowns by burns or excessive moisture. Call a doctor immediately if new wounds appear.
- **Protect equipment:** Wheelchairs can become extremely hot when left in the sun or even just from being outside on a hot day. Overheated equipment can easily burn the skin of individuals who brush up against hot armrests and seats, or place bare feet on a metal footrest. When leaving a wheelchair outdoors, place it in a shady spot and cover it with a towel to prevent its overheating. Also, be aware of hot care interiors; open windows or run air-conditioning for a couple of minutes before use when possible.
- **Map local options for staying cool:** During extreme heat waves, it's critical to have access to airconditioned spaces. Big box stores with wide aisles can provide quick respite from heat, along with the movie theaters, and many public libraries. When temperatures rise, local government leaders often open cooling centers in schools government buildings or recreation centers to provide residents with a place to safely cool off. Contact local or regional public health departments to identify what is available (and to double-check accessibility) in your community.
- **Pay attention to your surroundings:** If you notice people around you sweating profusely, take it as a sign to seek out cooler spaces indoors or out of the sun.
- **Consider timing:** Plan to exercise or be outdoors early or later in the day to avoid peak temperatures between 10 AM and 2 PM. On extra hot or sunny days, avoid spending more than 15 minutes at a time outside.
- **Be prepared:** Always carry water, along with spritz bottles and towels. Spray or apply damp towels to the skin to help cool off. Keep an emergency supply in the car or travel bag to have on hand when needed.

## Warning Signs

Reddened face and the neck, headaches, dizziness, stomach cramps and nausea are all signs that the body is overheating. Respond to symptoms as soon as they appear by immediately finding an indoor space with a fan or air-conditioning. Drink fluids and sponge off with a cool towel. If symptoms do not improve or body temperature is higher than 100, seek medical attention. Also watch for signs of autonomic dysreflexia (AD), which can include high blood pressure, pounding headache, flushed face, nasal stiffness, nausea, and a slow pulse. Carry an AD card in case of emergency.

Sources: Craig Hospital, Shirley Ryan AbilityLab, Shepherd Center, U.S. Food & Drug Administration.



# REEVE FOUNDATION MILITARY & VETERAN PROGRAM

## Military and Veterans Program Spotlight: Scott Griffith

Scott Griffith's path toward a military life was practically preordained. Born at MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa, Florida, Griffith grew up in a family defined by a history of service dating to the mid-1600s.

"We grew up playing soldiers," he says. "That's what we aspired to be."

Griffith enlisted in the U.S. Army when he was just 17, launching a career in aviation maintenance that would take him around the world. During the Gulf War, when he was deployed to Iraq with the 24th Infantry Division, Griffith became the 8th generation of his family to serve in combat.

But in 2010, a tumor inside of his spinal cord shifted what Griffith assumed to be a settled life. He developed Brown-Sequard syndrome, a rare neurological condition that caused him to lose sensation in his left leg and foot, along with the fine motor skills in his right hand.

Griffith retired from the military but remained determined to "live with integrity and purposefulness, to leave a legacy."

"I needed to give back," he says.

In his current role as a member of the Reeve Foundation Military & Veterans Program (MVP) advisory council, Griffith is doing just that.

Since its inception in 2008, the MVP has helped thousands of families access specialty care and resources at Veterans Affairs (VA) hospitals while navigating the more emotional aspects of a life changed by paralysis. Council members like Griffith – retired service members, civilians and caregivers with ties to the various branches of the Armed Services – not only connect with veterans and caregivers who call the National Paralysis Resource Center for guidance, but also serve as outreach ambassadors at adaptive sporting events and disability expositions across the country.

"Our council members are critical to our success," says MVP coordinator James Howard. "They're reaching out and staying connected, filling the gaps for our veterans. And they're bringing a wealth of knowledge to the council that helps us support the community."

The MVP serves all veterans with paralysis, no matter whether acquired while on active duty or through disease or an accident that occurred after discharge or retirement. The council meets monthly to discuss the challenges faced by veterans – from finding caregiver respite to winding through a thicket of red tape to understand and access benefits – and share information about successful programs, resources and strategies that ensure families get the support they deserve.

"That's what this council is all about," Griffith says. "We may not have all the answers, but we can connect you to the person who does. We're here to unburden families."

Through his work with the MVP, Griffith has distributed comprehensive information packets from the National Paralysis Resource Center throughout the VA healthcare system in Milwaukee. And he's met with nurses, educators and social workers to raise awareness about the MVP's mission and Reeve Foundation resources including the Peer & Family Support Program.

"We want to make sure that every newly injured person that comes into these hospitals is introduced to these resources," says Griffith, who is also chief operating officer and government relations director for the Wisconsin chapter of the Paralyzed Veterans of America. "The family of a person with a new injury is overwhelmed with their new norm and how it turns a world upside down. We have these resources on deck as they're ready to start looking at them."

More than a decade after he first began living with paralysis – with his health stable and his life as busy as ever – Griffith is grateful for the chance the MVP council provides to not only help other veterans with paralysis adapt but thrive.

"Every day is a bonus," he says. "I look forward to continuing this work on the council and developing and sharing the resources that make life easier for people."

To reach the Reeve Foundation's Military and Veterans Program, please go to [www.ChristopherReeve.org/MVP](http://www.ChristopherReeve.org/MVP) or call 1-866-962-8387.







# Virtual Resilience

**Join us for a virtual program!**

## Resilience: Addressing the Challenges of MS

Many people living with chronic diseases, including MS, have learned that practicing behaviors that promote resilience is the secret to not just coping with the disease, but thriving with it. Join us in this virtual discussion to build strategies for developing your own personal resilience with a local self-help group.

**DATE:** Tuesday, July 12, 2022

**TIME:** 1:00-2:30PM

1pm ET / 12pm CT / 11am MT / 10am PT

**LOCATION:** A Virtual Event

**GROUP NAME:** VA MS Centers of Excellence-East

**FACILITATOR:** Maggie Kazmierski, LCSW-C

**DETAILS:** There is no cost to attend. Register to receive the meeting link.

**RESERVE YOUR SPOT TODAY!**

[nationalMSSociety.org/Resilience](https://nationalMSSociety.org/Resilience)



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## SPINAL CORD INJURY SERVICE INFORMATION

These resources are available statewide, to all qualified Wisconsin residents.  
Please call 414-384-2000 or 888-469-6614 and the extension listed below for services.

Department / Office	Extension	Department / Office	Extension
General Information	41288	Prosthetics	42608
Triage	45845	Recreation Therapy	41256/41245/41258
SCI Clinical Appointments	41230	VA Van Travel	42057
Physical Therapy	41126/41128	Patient Advocate	42604
Occupational Therapy	41142/41143	National Service	414-902-5655
Admissions ER	41885/41886	Officer PVA	800-795-3580
Badger Team (Social Worker)	41841	Packer Team (Social Worker)	42244
Pharmacy	42085	Packer & Badger RN	41236

### Wisconsin VAMC

Iron Mountain	Debra Pate	906-774-3300 ext. 31378
Madison	Kurt Brunner	608-256-1901 ext. 11960
Tomah	Kristin Holloway	608-372-3971 ext. 61548

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