



## PVA-WI Athletes Gear Up for the National Veterans Wheelchair Games (NVWG) After a Successful 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Adaptive Sports Bootcamp!

The excitement was palpable as PVA-WI hosted its 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Adaptive Sports Bootcamp on June 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup>, 2025, at the Milwaukee County Sports Complex. With many enthusiastic athletes in attendance, the event was a resounding success—fostering growth, camaraderie, and confidence in a dynamic and inclusive setting.

Over the course of two action-packed days, athletes rotated through a diverse lineup of adaptive sports, each session led by certified coaches and trainers. The schedule included disc golf, air rifle, field events, adaptive fitness, bocchia, softball, pickleball, tennis, basketball, an obstacle/slalom course, bowling at Root River Bowling Alley, and cycling. This variety ensured that every participant had the chance to try something new, sharpen their skills, and build lasting connections.

Whether you're a seasoned athlete or brand new to adaptive sports, PVA-WI's bootcamp is designed to welcome everyone. Participants are grouped by ability level, creating a supportive environment where athletes can thrive without pressure. The focus is on learning, having fun, and building confidence—not just competition.

*Article continued on next page...*



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## Cover Story Continued

### Cover story continued...

**Feeling hesitant about joining bootcamp?** Don't be! We encourage individuals of all abilities to participate! There's no need to feel intimidated—our coaches, volunteers, and athletes are always happy to offer guidance, encouragement, and a helping hand.

With the NVWG just around the corner, PVA-WI athletes are more prepared and motivated than ever. This bootcamp not only honed their athletic abilities but also strengthened the sense of community that makes PVA-WI so special.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to the incredible volunteers and partners who made this event possible: Ryzing Fitness trainers JP Plesnik and colleagues, Project Mobility cycling staff, WASA staff, GLASA staff, other USA team trained staff, the Clement J. Zablocki VA Spinal Cord Injury Unit staff members, and the Milwaukee County Sports Complex team. Your dedication and support are the backbone of this event's success. **Please enjoy photos of this event on pages 7 and 8, courtesy of Adam Shea Photography.**

# THANK YOU SO MUCH! THANK YOU SO MUCH!



### Meet Brian Butler, Vantage Mobility's New Veteran Relations Program Manager



Brian is a recently retired U.S. Air Force Lieutenant Colonel who served 30 years on active duty. He began as an enlisted aircraft maintenance specialist and continuously advanced within the Air Force to become a professional pilot and multinational squadron commander. Throughout his career, he logged more than 5,000 flight hours in the C-17A Globemaster III and gained extensive combat experience during numerous deployments supporting contingency operations around the world.



Brian is now dedicated to building meaningful relationships with the military veteran community and the organizations that support their independence through enhanced mobility solutions. His new mission and commitments are to:

- Establish Vantage Mobility as the premier mobility choice for Veterans!
- Offer the best deals and personalized service throughout the sales and experience
- Advocate & Volunteer for Veteran-focused causes and organizations

#### Contact:

You can learn more about Brian and the many benefits Vantage Mobility offers our nation's Veterans at [www.VantageMobility.com/Veterans](http://www.VantageMobility.com/Veterans), or by giving him a call at 855-682-VETS (8387).



**Brian Butler**  
U.S. Air Force Veteran

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Dear PVA-WI Community,

I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to Scott Griffith, our National Director, Vice President, and Government Relations Director, for their outstanding participation in the annual PVA advocacy and legislation seminar. Their dedication to speaking with legislators on behalf of our members, chapter, and veterans demonstrates the commitment that makes our organization strong. His advocacy efforts help ensure that the voices and needs of our community are heard at the highest levels of government.

Congratulations are in order for all staff and participants who took part in our most recent events, including the adaptive sports bootcamp and trap shoot. These events showcase the incredible spirit and determination of our members while providing valuable opportunities for skill development, camaraderie, and recreation. The enthusiasm and participation we witnessed at these events reflect the vibrant community we've built together.

Finally, we wish the very best of luck to our talented athletes who are heading to the National Veterans Wheelchair Games in Minneapolis. These competitors always represent Wisconsin well, and we know they will demonstrate the same excellence, sportsmanship, and determination that defines our entire community. We'll be cheering you on from here and look forward to celebrating your achievements.

Respectfully,

Todd Drazy

PVA-WI, Board of Directors President & Air Force Veteran

### WHO WE ARE

#### **Officers**

President: Todd Drazy  
Vice President/GRD: Scott Griffith  
Secretary: Gary Stott  
Immediate Past President: Ken Ness

#### **National Director**

Scott Griffith

#### **Directors**

Richard "Rick" Buth  
Peter "Pete" Carrao  
Troy Kurczek  
Michael Thomas  
Angela Walker

#### **Recreation Therapy**

Erinn Kulba  
Sam Gracz

#### **Staff**

Amera Schaefer: Executive Director  
Brenna Frey: Advancement &  
Engagement Coordinator

#### **National SVC Office**

Brenda Stencil  
Call: 414-902-5655

#### **Rehab Counselor**

Doug Green MS, CRC

#### **Office Hours**

Monday-Thursday, 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM  
Friday, 9:00 AM - 2:00 PM  
Saturday & Sunday Closed  
750 N Lincoln Memorial Drive, Suite 422  
Milwaukee, WI 53202  
414-328-8910

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Dear PVA-WI Community,

PVA-WI has had a wonderful time re-engaging with our membership during these warmer months. We hope all members are staying connected by reading our monthly and quarterly newsletters and following our Facebook page to stay informed about upcoming events and opportunities.

We want to wish the very best of luck to Team Wisconsin as they compete at the National Veterans Wheelchair Games. Don't forget to register for our upcoming banquet! This is always a highlight of our year and a great opportunity to celebrate our community together. We look forward to seeing you there.

Amera Schaefer

### CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP

**Members: 314**

**New Members:**

John c. Wilson, Mark R. Jackson, Heidi Lablonde

**Associate Members: 187**

Rodney Johnson, Nicole Santos, Don Schweisberger, Joseph Kendall

**Final Bugle:**

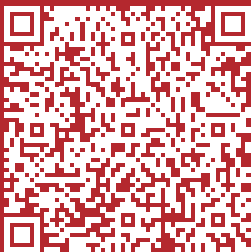
Michael P. Hary, Doug Harris, Richard S. Arndt, Harry G. Helfrich,  
Paul G. Willems, Wayne C. Larson

**Hello 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 414-328-8910.**

**Scan the QR code to start your scholarship application today!**



## SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITY



PVA-WI has a scholarship program for our members and their families. 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. Billing statement for the upcoming school year that includes the amount owed
3. Submit an essay between 500-600 words describing how you have been impacted by a veteran living with a spinal cord injury or disease.
4. Share any civic engagement activity you have performed.
5. 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 the QR code. These applications will be reviewed year-round on the first of every month. If you have any questions, please email [aschaefer@wisconsinpva.org](mailto:aschaefer@wisconsinpva.org).





## Upcoming Events



Please visit our website [www.wisconsinpva.org](http://www.wisconsinpva.org) for more events and information! New events are continuously added!



*Sunday, July 6, 2025* ★ *9:30 am - 5 pm*

# MILITARY & VETERANS FAMILY DAY

sponsored by  
**WATERSTONE BANK**

## Milwaukee County Zoo

**Enjoy free Zoo admission and parking**  
*Tickets available May 27 - July 3*

- ★ Active military and veterans residing in Wisconsin can pick up tickets at their local County Veteran Service Office (CVSO). Contact your local CVSO for information on obtaining tickets.
- ★ Don't miss the Veterans Benefit Expo from **9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.** where veterans can learn how to get the benefits they deserve. This one-stop-shop is presented by the Milwaukee County Veteran Service Office.
- ★ **Important:** Tickets are required for entry and available for immediate family only. Limit 10 tickets per family. Tickets are limited and will be distributed on a first come first service basis. Only obtain tickets if you are sure you will be visiting the Zoo on July 6.




Milwaukee County Zoo  
10001 W. Bluemound Rd.  
Milwaukee, WI 53226




# SALMON-A-RAMA

*"One of the World's largest salmon fishing tournaments!"*

Join PVA-WI on **Tuesday, July 15th, 2025**, at 5:30AM at the Reefpoint Marina for charter boat fishing!

**EVENT DETAILS:**

- Please register below by May 30, 2025.
- 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.
- Enjoy special prizes, a delicious breakfast, and lunch upon the return of all 10 charter boats. We'll also provide snacks while you're on board. Don't forget to bring sunblock and wear appropriate clothing for a fun and safe adventure!

**Reefpoint Marina**  
2 Christopher Columbus,  
Racine, WI 53403

**Registration**  
[Click Here](#) or scan the QR code



Scan me




## 2025 Annual Membership Banquet

**Date & Time**  
Sunday, September 14th at 11:00 AM

**Location**  
Roma Lodge, 7130 Spring St, Racine, WI 53406

**Tickets**  
\$25 per person  
(PVA-WI members reimbursed upon arrival)  
**Please register by September 3rd, 2025**

Scan the QR code, use the link below,  
or visit our website to register!

[paralyzedveteransofamerica.wisconsinchapter-bloom.kindful.com/e/2025-annual-membership-banquet](http://paralyzedveteransofamerica.wisconsinchapter-bloom.kindful.com/e/2025-annual-membership-banquet)

Enjoy a delicious dinner, exciting raffle baskets, and an online auction! Families and caregivers are warmly welcome. Don't miss this wonderful opportunity to connect, celebrate, and enjoy the camaraderie!

# JOIN THE MOVEMENT TO CURE ALS.



## JOIN THE PVA-WI TEAM

**1.3 Miles**

**Sunday, October 5, 2025**  
8:30am - 12:00pm  
Greenfield Park  
2028 S 124<sup>th</sup> st.  
West Allis, WI 53227

Visit the link below, click Join Our Team, and follow the registration instructions.  
<https://bit.ly/42Lgsd1>





## PVA-WI at Work



Mark Rose, PVA-WI's MS Point of Contact, and his caregiver join Amara Schaefer in participating in the Milwaukee MS Walk and helping lead the PVA-WI resource table.



Angela Walker (pictured left) and Tina Leet (pictured right) at the Women Veteran Retreat at the Milwaukee County War Memorial Center



Tim Martin

Students interview PVA-WI members during Service Experience Day hosted by the Milwaukee County War Memorial Center



Bruce Jensen



Jerry Howell



Hank Zarcone

# PVA 79<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention



## Celebrating Progress and Excellence in Austin, TX: PVA 79<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention



The heart of Texas came alive this past May as PVA hosted its 79<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention, bringing together chapter members and advocates from across the country to celebrate achievements, share innovations, and strengthen the mission of accessibility and inclusion for veterans and individuals with SCI/D.

### A Gathering of Purpose and Progress

The convention featured a dynamic agenda that included:

- **Guest speakers** sharing insights on advocacy, innovation, and veteran support
- **Voting on resolutions** to guide the future direction of PVA initiatives
- **Review and approval of the annual budget**
- **Election of the Executive Committee** to lead the organization forward



In addition to these accolades, PVA-WI proudly presented a check for \$1,250 to PVA National in support of the PVA Education Foundation, reinforcing its commitment to education, empowerment, and the future of advocacy.

One of the highlights of the event was the recognition of outstanding contributions by PVA chapters who have gone above and beyond in service and innovation.

### Honoring Excellence: PVA-WI Recognized

Among the distinguished honorees was the Wisconsin Chapter, which received two prestigious awards:

- 🏆 **Membership Development Award** – This award is presented to the chapter with the highest percentage increase in new members over the past year. PVA-WI earned this honor with an impressive 13% growth in membership during 2024, leading all PVA chapters nationwide.



- 🌐 **Best Chapter Website Award** – Originally awarded in 2020, PVA-WI has continued to enhance its website, making it more accessible, informative, and visually engaging.

### Looking Ahead

As the PVA continues to champion the rights and well-being of veterans and others with SCI/D, the 2025 convention stood as a powerful reminder of the progress made—and the work still to come.

**If you are interested in becoming a PVA-WI Board of Directors member**, please contact the office at (414) 328-8910 or email [info@wisconsinpva.org](mailto:info@wisconsinpva.org).





# ADAPTIVE SPORTS BOOTCAMP 2025









## Member Spotlight Series: Beth Bowman

### Shining a Light on Our Community: Introducing the Member Spotlight Series

At PVA-WI, we believe that every member has a story worth sharing — stories of resilience, strength, and transformation. That's why we're proud to introduce a new feature in ROLL WITH US: the **Member Spotlight Series**.

This quarterly segment is dedicated to highlighting the incredible veterans who make up our community, with a special focus on their journeys through adaptive sports and fitness. Whether it's discovering a new passion, overcoming challenges, or finding camaraderie through competition, these stories reflect the power of movement, determination, and community.

We hope these spotlights will not only celebrate our members but also encourage others to get involved, stay active, and share their own stories.

#### Interested in being featured in a future Member Spotlight?

We'd love to hear from you! Please contact Brenna at [bfrey@wisconsinpva.org](mailto:bfrey@wisconsinpva.org) to learn more.

Now, we're honored to kick off this series with our very first featured member:

## MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: ***Beth Bowman, Army Veteran***

"In 2012, I was diagnosed with MS. After a worsening of symptoms and additional testing, it was decided I had NMOSD, Devic's disease. There is no definitive proof of which disease I truly have and many of the symptoms are similar.

"I used to be strong, in shape, and a healthy weight. As my impairment increased and the side effects from medications piled up, I was no longer any of those things and I didn't think I could get them back. There were so many things that I could no longer do that it was easy to stop trying to do things, easy to justify sitting around for a large portion of my day while doing very little activity because I didn't feel good and I couldn't do anything about it anyway...



## Member Spotlight Series: Beth Bowman Continued

“so why bother trying.

“PVA, at both the national and local level, is a very proactive organization. They are always looking for ways to improve the lives of their members. I found out that classes were being offered online in strength training and yoga a couple times a week. The classes were great and I started to be more active and feel better. The downside was that the sessions lasted for around 6 weeks and then there would be a break while waiting for funding to come through, so I didn’t have consistency and I lacked the self-motivation to do the exercises on my own.

“The area I live in is very rural. It is a 20 minute drive to the nearest town that has gyms. None of these gyms are set up for people with disabilities. I found one class that could possibly be adapted for a person like me. One. I had spoken with PVA-WI representatives about the lack of fitness opportunities in my area and they were looking for solutions. In the spring of 2024, I decided to check out Bootcamp...”

**To continue reading Beth Bowman’s Member Spotlight,** please visit her member profile page at [www.wisconsinpva.org/meet-our-members/elizabeth-beth-bowman-us-army](http://www.wisconsinpva.org/meet-our-members/elizabeth-beth-bowman-us-army)

### Hidden Disabilities Sunflower: Making the Invisible Visible

The Hidden Disabilities Sunflower is a globally recognized symbol designed to help individuals with non-visible disabilities. This bright yellow sunflower symbol can be found on various products, including lanyards, badges, wristbands, and keychains. These items discreetly signal that the wearer may need extra assistance, patience, or understanding in public spaces.

Adopted worldwide, including in Milwaukee, the Sunflower symbol is recognized in airports, shopping centers, hospitals, and workplaces. It fosters inclusivity by making invisible disabilities visible, allowing wearers to navigate their environments with confidence and dignity.

To shop the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower products, scan the QR code or visit [www.hdsunflower.com/us/](http://www.hdsunflower.com/us/).





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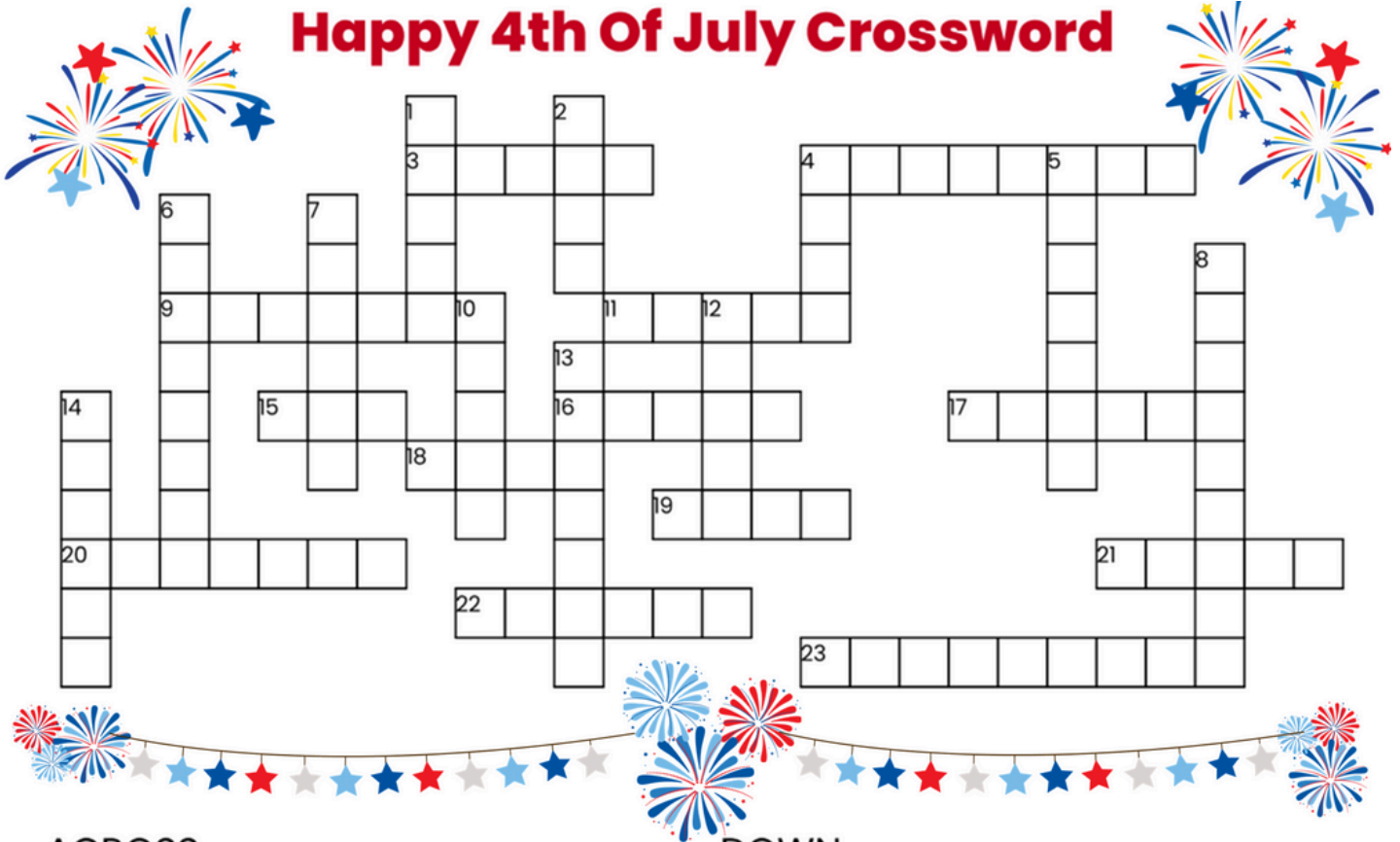
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847.200.5387



# Happy 4th Of July Crossword



## ACROSS

3. Publicly recognize and praise
4. BBQ
9. Bands of color
11. White headed national bird
15. Color of flames
16. Songs
17. Holiday procession
18. Allowed to do something
19. Red, white, and blue banner
20. Day free from work
21. Holiday gathering
22. Outdoor meal
23. Hand-held fireworks

## DOWN

1. Color of clouds
2. Loud explosion
4. Color of sky or sea
5. Nation
6. American pastime
7. Combined to form a group
8. Pyrotechnics
10. Five pointed shape
12. Barbecue for cooking food
13. United States
14. Symbolic song for a country



Find answers on page 24

## Veterans Day at the Capitol

### PVA-WI Represents at Veterans Day at the Capitol: United Voices, Powerful Impact



On an unforgettable day at the Wisconsin State Capitol, nearly 400 veterans from every corner of the state gathered in a powerful show of unity and purpose for Veterans Day at the Capitol. Among them was Scott Griffith, our dedicated Government Relations Director, proudly representing the Paralyzed Veterans of America - Wisconsin Chapter.

This year's rally was more than a celebration—it was a call to action. Veterans stood shoulder to shoulder, meeting directly with their State Senators and Representatives to advocate for two critical legislative priorities:

- **Expanding the Wisconsin Veterans and Surviving Spouses Property Tax Credit**
- **Securing funding for the UW-MIA Recovery and Identification Project**, which works to bring home Wisconsin's missing-in-action service members.

The energy was electric, and the message was clear: Wisconsin veterans are united, engaged, and determined to ensure our state honors its commitment to those who served.

Scott Griffith's presence ensured that the unique perspectives and needs of PVA-WI members were heard loud and clear. His advocacy helped reinforce the importance of accessibility, long-term care, and support for veterans living with disabilities—issues that must remain front and center in legislative conversations.

**Missed the event?** You can watch the full rally on WisconsinEye by scanning the QR code. This is what advocacy looks like. This is what solidarity feels like. And this is why your voice matters.





# Inaugural Phil Rosenberg Memorial Green Bay Trap Shoot Tournament



In honor of Phil Rosenberg, Bruce Rosenberg, Sean Nelson, and Scott Griffith proudly raised the flag at the inaugural Phil Rosenberg Memorial Green Bay Trap Shoot Tournament.



## Results:

Team 1st Place

Minnesota

Team 2nd Place

Wisconsin

High Overall

Stephanie Dennis

High Overall PVA

Member

Mike May

Doubles - A 1st Place

Dave David

Doubles - B 1st Place

Megan Stout

Doubles - C 1st Place

Dave Wittlinger

Doubles - D 1st Place

John Murphy

Doubles - D 2nd Place

Dale Nelson

Singles - B 1st Place

Bill Collins

Singles - C 1st Place

John Pilotte

Singles - C 2nd Place

Hank Ebert

Singles - D 1st Place

Tom Richey

Singles - D 2nd Place

Scotty Poehler

Short Yardage 1st Place

Doug Eckhoff

Short Yardage 2nd Place

Mike Peters

Medium Yardage 1st

Place

Joe Stout



### Summer Heat Safety Tips

By: Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation

**1. Stay hydrated:** Drink lots of water before, during and after any outdoor activities. Limit caffeine and alcohol, which can increase dehydration.

**2. 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 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.

**3. 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.

**4. 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 caused by burns or excessive moisture. Call a doctor immediately if new wounds appear.

**5. 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 car interiors; open windows or run air-conditioning for a couple of minutes before use when possible.

**6. Map local options for staying cool:** During extreme heat waves, it's critical to have access to air-conditioned spaces. Big box stores with wide aisles can provide quick respite from the heat, along with 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.

**7. 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.



## Summer Heat Safety Tips

**8. 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.

**9. 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.

### 10. Warning signs

Reddening face and 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, sweating above the level of injury, goose flesh below the level of injury, nasal stuffiness, nausea, and a slow pulse. Carry a Reeve Foundation AD card in case of emergency.

*[Original content provided by the Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation:*

*<https://blog.christopherreeve.org/en/life-after-paralysis/summer-heat-safety-tips/>*



**ILLINOIS WOMAN VETERAN LEADER**

**Angela Walker**

Angela Walker is a United States Navy veteran residing in Waukegan, Illinois. She serves as a motivational speaker, community navigator, and advocate for veterans. Angela is actively involved in several veterans' organizations, including the American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary, Paralyzed Veterans of America (both National and Wisconsin chapters), the Department of Veterans Affairs, Lovell Federal Healthcare Facility, Edward Hines Veterans Hospital, Clement J. Zablocki Veterans Hospital, and Military Outreach USA, along with numerous community groups dedicated to assisting veterans.

Angela was the past president of the Rotary Club of North Chicago for the years 2019-2020 and 2020-2021. She currently holds the positions of Assistant Governor, District Membership Chair, and Council Member at Large for the PETS Council. Additionally, she serves as a facilitator for the District Leadership Academy and is the District Literacy Chair. Angela also supports and promotes global grants through Rotary International, collaborating with multiple clubs. She holds a master's degree in Inner City Studies and Education from Northeastern Illinois University. Angela has taught at the City Colleges of Chicago and has served as a Veterans Representative for the State of Illinois.

Ms. Angela Walker collaborates with Dr. John P. Bair in leading and co-facilitating sessions with patients and families. They present regularly at multiple Rotary Clubs, Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine, and various medical science and mental health organizations, promoting awareness of Psychological Science related to Moral Injury and Post Traumatic Stress. Angela is also featured in two documentary films about Veterans filmed at Lovell Federal Veteran Hospital.

**ILLINOIS WOMEN VETERAN LEADERS OF 2025**

**Angela Walker**

**CONGRATS**

Angela Walker, a dedicated member of the PVA-WI Board of Directors, has been honored as one of Illinois's 25 Women Veteran Leaders of 2025!

**Congratulations, Angela!**

**25 ILLINOIS WOMEN VETERAN LEADERS OF 2025**

**Award Ceremony at Malcolm X College**  
March 31st, 2025

**VA** **U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs** **IDVA** **ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**

## National Service Officer (NSO) Report

### COMPACT Act

By: Brenda Stencil, Senior National Service Officer

The Veterans Comprehensive Prevention, Access to Care, and Treatment Act of 2020 (COMPACT Act) allows veterans in acute suicidal crisis to receive free emergency care at any VA or non-VA facility. This includes transportation costs, inpatient or crisis residential care for up to 30 days, and outpatient care for up to 90 days. The act ensures veterans can access care without worrying about cost, regardless of their VA enrollment status.

#### Eligibility for Emergent Suicide Care

Veterans must, however, meet at least one of the following criteria to be eligible for this emergency care:

- Veterans discharged from active duty under conditions other than dishonorable after a period of at least 24 months of active service.
- Veterans who served more than 100 days under a combat exclusion or in support of a contingency operation, either directly or by operating an unmanned aerial vehicle from another location, who were discharged under conditions other than dishonorable.
- Veterans who were the victim of a physical assault of a sexual nature, a battery of sexual nature, or sexual harassment while serving in the armed forces.

#### How it Works

In the event of an emergent suicidal crisis:

- Call 911 or go to your nearest VA or non-VA emergency room
- Notify staff that you're a veteran
- Staff will provide treatment

Remember, a veteran does not need to be enrolled in the VA health care system to receive emergency suicide care.

#### Suicide Among Veterans

According to the VA's 2024 National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report, there were 47,891 suicides among U.S. adults in 2022. These included:

- 6,407 suicides among veterans (three more than in 2021)
- 41,484 among non-veterans (1,476 more than in 2021)

#### Wisconsin Veteran Suicide Deaths, 2022

Sex	Veteran Suicides
Male	120-130
Female	<10
All	136

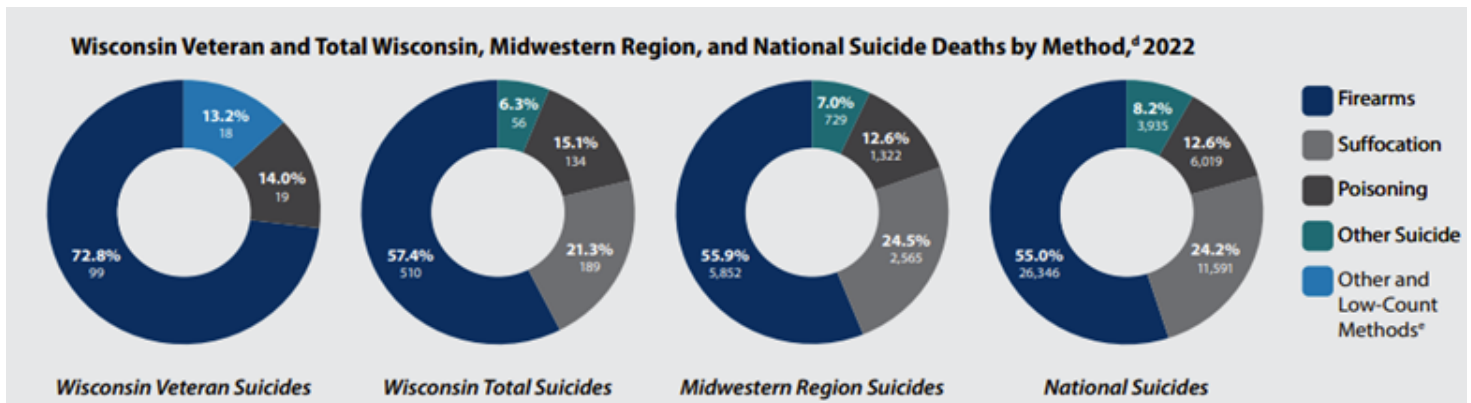
To protect confidentiality, suicide death counts are presented in ranges when the number of deaths in any one category was lower than 10.

The average number of veteran suicides per day rose from 16.5 in 2001 to 17.6 in 2022. The chart below shows 136 Wisconsin veteran suicide deaths that occurred in 2022.

# National Service Officer (NSO) Report

## Suicide Methods

Lethal means are objects that may be used by individuals experiencing a suicidal crisis. They include things like guns, medications, alcohol, opioids, other substances, ropes, cords, or sharp objects. If a veteran is in crisis or is having suicidal thoughts, these items can become deadly if easily accessible. Increasing the time and distance between a person in suicidal crisis and their access to lethal means can reduce suicide risk and save lives. The chart below shows firearms as the most common method used in suicides across the nation.



The VA is actively working to reduce veteran suicide, particularly by addressing firearm access. VA research shows that many individuals who have experienced a suicidal crisis indicated that it lasted only a matter of minutes. The VA states most people attempting suicide won't change their method if their attempt is interrupted. Meaning if a veteran in crisis is trying to access a gun, a barrier could save their life as they're less likely to try another means.

## Safe Firearm Storage

Research shows suicidal crises can be brief, so securely storing guns can be an effective barrier between the suicidal impulse and action. Making sure the guns are unloaded, locked, and secured when not in use can help prevent gun injuries. Ammunition should also be stored in a different location.

### Three effective ways to securely store guns:

- Cable Lock: This simple device is widely available and can be an effective barrier.
- Lockbox or Gun Safe: This method can be used to conceal or protect guns as well. Make sure to lock the case with an external device for added security.
- Electronic Lockbox or Biometric Safe: Only the person with the code, fingerprint, or other biometric identifier can access the contents. Some are designed for quick access to stored guns if needed but can still serve as a barrier during a moment a crisis.

**\*\*\*Cable gun locks are available at no cost at any VA medical facility (Suicide Prevention Coordinator). Cable gun locks are also available at the Milwaukee VA Regional Office.**





# NATIONAL WELLNESS AWARENESS MONTH

AUGUST 2025



## Diet, Exercise, & Healthy Behaviors

Staying healthy with MS involves more than disease and symptom management. Research shows some healthy behaviors can positively impact your MS progression and your lifespan. This Wellness Awareness Month, let's familiarize ourselves with some of these behaviors:

- Exercising
- Not smoking
- Ongoing preventative care
- Managing other medical conditions
- Monitoring alcohol use

To view resources on diet and nutrition, exercise, heat sensitivity, home and leisure, recreation, sleep, and vaccines, visit

<https://www.nationalmssociety.org/managing-ms/living-with-ms/diet-exercise-and-healthy-behaviors>.

Consult your healthcare provider before making any changes to your diet or exercise program.

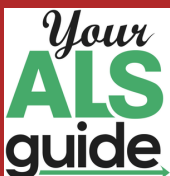


## Quality of Life with ALS

An ALS diagnosis changes many things—but it doesn't take away your ability to live a life filled with purpose, connection, and joy. Your approach to living with ALS can have a powerful impact on your quality of life.

This Wellness Awareness Month, let's focus on what truly matters:

- 🤝 Stay Connected – Nurture relationships that bring comfort and strength.
- 💬 Build a Support Team – Surround yourself with people who uplift and assist you.
- ❤️ Prioritize Self-Care – Your physical and emotional well-being are essential.
- ☀️ Rediscover Meaning – Find joy in everyday moments and activities that inspire you.



You are not alone on this journey. There are resources and communities ready to support you.

🔗 Learn more about living well with ALS. Visit <https://www.youralsguide.com/living-with-als.html>





## **FREEDOM TO DRIVE, FREEDOM TO LIVE.**

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**FREE DELIVERY NATIONWIDE**

## PVA-WI Annual Election



# PVA-WI 2025-2026 Board of Directors Nominations Now Open!



PVA-WI is now accepting nominations for its 2025-2026 Board of Directors through **July 31, 2025**. Election ballots will be mailed to members in early July.

### Board Members Up for Re-Election:

- Pete Carrao
- Gary Stott (Secretary)

# VOTE!

Their current terms end on September 30, 2025.

If you're interested in running for a board position, please contact the PVA-WI office at **(414) 328-8910** or email [info@wisconsinpva.org](mailto:info@wisconsinpva.org).

### Certification Requirement for Candidates

To be eligible to serve if elected, candidates must complete the **Paralyzed Veterans of America National certification process**. While uncertified candidates may appear on the ballot, they **cannot assume office** until certification is complete.

### Certification Requires:

- **Proof of U.S. Citizenship**
  - (e.g., birth certificate, passport, or naturalization documents)
- **Proof of Active Duty Military Service with a discharge other than dishonorable**
  - (DD-214)
- **Medical Documentation confirming a spinal cord injury or disease**
  - (physician's statement or medical records)

**⚠ Note:** Certification takes time. Please begin the process early to ensure eligibility.

Forms and assistance are available through the PVA-WI office.

### Have Any Questions?

📞 Call: (414) 328-8910

✉ Email: [info@wisconsinpva.org](mailto:info@wisconsinpva.org)





## Thank You

Thank you to everyone at the Wisconsin PVA for assisting us in attending the Winter Sports Clinic in Snowmass, Colorado! The picture on the top is the Wisconsin PVA Ski/Board/Sit Ski Team of Mike, John, Harold Hack, and Ted. Not pictured is our coach, Samantha Doughty, from the Zablocki VAMC. We spent the week skiing on the mountain as well as fly fishing, snowmobiling, and scuba diving in the heated pool. Picture 3046 is me sit skiing for the first time. It was a Miracle on the Mountain and we all had a great time! We all returned home safely after this exciting week.

-Ted Moorman



Amera,

WE WON!! It feels good to win! My sled hockey team went to the Hendrickson Foundation National Hockey Festival and won the adult tier C! Owen's youth team took 3rd in youth A. once again! Thank you, PVA-WI, for having programs that make these events financially possible for me. I am so grateful and share how amazing the PVA-WI is to anyone who will listen!

-John Wild

## Upcoming PVA-WI Webinars



**MS Insight Sessions**  
Webinar Series

Welcome to MS Insight Sessions, PVA-WI's virtual meetings designed to explore and discuss topics that matter to you.

Each session features a structured agenda focused on a specific MS topic, complemented by related videos or literature for us to review together.

Register now to receive the session 4 materials!

**Session 4 Details:**  
Topic: Spasticity  
Date: Tue, August 19  
Time: 7:00-8:00 PM  
Location: Zoom

Use link or scan QR code:  
<https://forms.office.com/r/1xc1RUCtA58?origin=ipLink>

Questions? Email Brenna  
[bfrey@wisconsinpva.org](mailto:bfrey@wisconsinpva.org)

### MS Insight Sessions

Welcome to MS Insight Sessions! Each MS Insight Session will feature a structured agenda covering specific MS topics for discussion and related videos or literature for us to explore and review together.

[Register to receive the Zoom meeting link, agenda, and reading materials.](#)

#### Meeting Details



Tue, Aug 19  
Tue, Sept 16  
Tue, Oct 21



7:00 - 8:00 PM



Zoom



#### Meeting Details



Every Tuesday  
of the week



12:00 - 1:00 PM

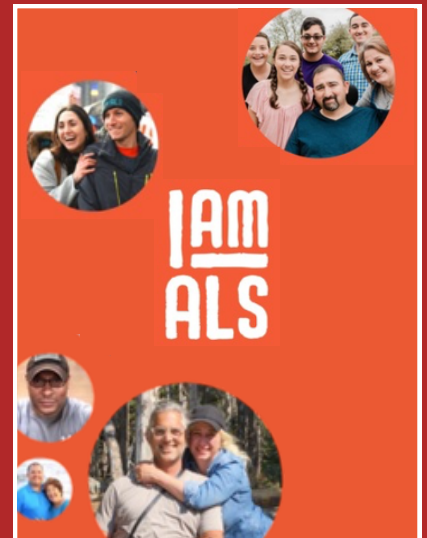


Zoom



### I AM ALS Support Group

"I AM ALS offers weekly virtual support groups for people who are living with and impacted by ALS. Each group provides a space for people to connect with others who can relate to what they're going through, and receive emotional support ([iamals.org](http://iamals.org))."



### WOMEN VETS RECONNECT

Monthly Zoom Meetings for Women Veterans



Take a break and reconnect with fellow women veterans who truly understand your experiences. This is your time to relax, share, and support each other in a welcoming and understanding environment. Join PVA-WI for our monthly Zoom meeting for women vets, *Women Vets Reconnect!*

**Thursday, July 3, 2025**  
7:00 - 8:00 PM  
Zoom (register to receive link)

PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA - WISCONSIN CHAPTER

**REGISTER**

### Women Vets Reconnect

Take a break and reconnect with fellow women Veterans who truly understand your experiences. This is your time to relax, share, and support each other in a welcoming and understanding environment. Join PVA-WI for our monthly Zoom meeting for women Veterans, Women Vets Reconnect!

#### Meeting Details



Thur, Aug 3  
Thur, Sept 4  
Thur, Oct 2



7:00 - 8:00 PM



Zoom





### Wisconsin's Gun Shop Project & Safe Storage Program

**Live Today – Put it Away:** This is a suicide prevention project to assist individuals who are in crisis to store their guns in a safe location. Various firearms retailers, range facilities, and police and sheriff departments will hold onto a veteran's gun(s) for no or a low fee. More information can be found at: <https://livetodayputitaway.org/>

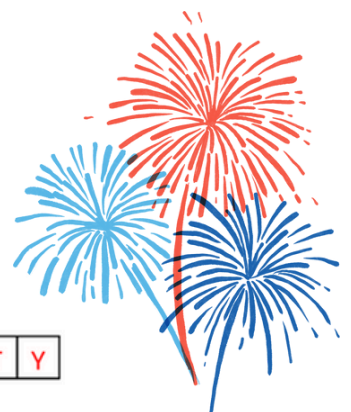
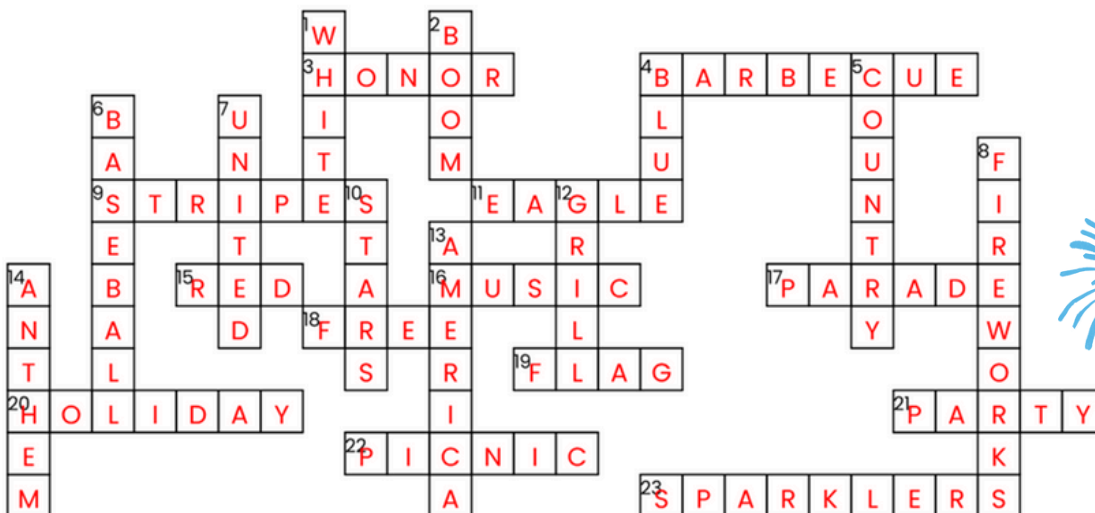
The VA stresses the critical role that firearm access plays in veteran suicide rates and highlights the importance of addressing secure firearm storage in prevention.

### Help is Available

If you're a veteran in crisis or concerned about one, contact the Veterans Crisis Line to receive 24/7/confidential support. You don't have to be enrolled in VA benefits or health care to connect.

- Call the Veterans Crisis Line: Dial 988, then Press 1, or
- Chat online at [VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat](https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/Chat), or
- Text 838255

If you have any questions relating to this article or VA benefits, please call our office. I can be reached at 414-902-5655 or [bstencil@pva.org](mailto:bstencil@pva.org).



## Supporting PVA-WI

PVA-WI has a variety of ways that individuals, groups, and companies can show their support. Please review the multiple opportunities to continue to support the PVA-WI mission and our work.

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



### Employee Matching

Does your employer have a matching gift program? Please check with your employer's human resources department for details. PVA-WI is happy to provide any other information your company may need to satisfy the requirements.



### Donor-Advised Funds (DAF)

Using a charitable giving account is another powerful way to put your charitable dollars to work. This method eliminates capital gains on donated stocks. Use the DAF donation tool at [www.wisconsinpva.org/become-our-hero-and-make-difference-today](http://www.wisconsinpva.org/become-our-hero-and-make-difference-today).



### Legacy Society

Join our Legacy Society by making a bequest or other estate gift to assure the sustainability of our organization. Visit [www.wisconsinpva.org/planned-giving](http://www.wisconsinpva.org/planned-giving). You can also leave a legacy through QCD donations using the QCD donation tool: <https://app.lifelegacy.io/qcd?partner=pva-wi>



### Stock Donations

You can donate appreciated, stocks, bonds, or mutual funds, which upon transfer, would be tax deductible. Please consult your financial advisor and submit questions to [info@wisconsinpva.org](mailto:info@wisconsinpva.org).



### Shop for Good

You can make a meaningful difference in the lives of our hospitalized veterans by purchasing items from our [Amazon](#) or [Walmart](#) Registries.



### Join VoterVoice

Advocate for our members with their unique needs to assure that Wisconsin is accessible for all! Join our advocacy team by visiting our Call to Action Center at [www.votervoice.net/PVAWI/Home](http://www.votervoice.net/PVAWI/Home).



Happy 4<sup>th</sup> of July!



Happy  
4<sup>th</sup> of July

Paralyzed Veterans of America VEHICLE DONATION PROGRAM

Especially now,  
we need your support.

Donate a car, truck or other vehicle.  
The process is easy, the pick-up is free,  
and your gift is tax-deductible.

Give Today



### Wisconsin's Gun Shop Project & Safe Storage Program

"Scan code for details"



- Suicide Prevention Education
- Responsible Firearm Ownership
- Voluntary, Temporary Safe Storage of a Firearm

### Veterans Crisis Line



1-800-273-8255  
PRESS 1

1155 N MAYFAIR RD  
MILWAUKEE, WI 53226  
414.955.8910 ph  
414.955.8965 fax



WWW.BETHEREWIS.COM

CaptianJohnDMasonProgram@mcw.edu

**LIVE TODAY —  
PUT IT AWAY!**

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[www.BetheReWis.com](http://www.BetheReWis.com)

### SAFE STORAGE OF FIREARMS —

What to do with guns when a person may be in crisis.

**FACT:** Safe storage of a firearm for a loved one is a critical way  
to get them safely through a crisis period and is proven to save lives.



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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	Patient Advocate	42604
Occupational Therapy	41126	NSO/Benefits - Brenda Stencil	414-902-5655
Badger Team (Social Worker)	41841	Packer Team (Social Worker)	42244
Pharmacy	42083	Packer & Badger RN	41236
Admissions ER	41885/41886		

## Wisconsin VAMC

Iron Mountain	Debra Pate	(906) 774-3300 ext. 31378
Madison	Heather Rehm	((608) 256-1901 ext. 18095
Tomah	Kristin Holloway	(608) 372-3971 ext. 61548

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