

Member Organizations:

24th Infantry Regiment
Buffalo Soldiers
Chicago Chapter

555th Parachute
Infantry Association
"Triple Nickle"
Chicago Chapter

American Legion
Dorie Miller Post 915

American Legion
Harold Washington
Post 1987

Blind Veterans
Association
Chicago Chapter

Disabled American
Veterans
Chicago Chapter 6

Montford Point Marine
Association
Chicago Chapter

Muslim American
Veterans Association
Chicago Chapter

National Women
Veterans United

Veterans of
Foreign Wars
Major Harris Post 2024

Veterans for Peace
Chicago Chapter

Veterans for Unification

Veterans Strike Force

Vietnam Veterans
of America
Chapter 311

VetNet

18 th Ward Veteran
Organization

Coalition of Veterans Organizations

CVO

Leave No Veteran Behind



CVO Executive Committee

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Larry E. Nazimek



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Recording Secretary



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David Rogers



Next CVO Meeting

October 17, 2015

At Jesse Brown Medical VA Center 1000 — 1200



Back to School event at Englewood High School

Darryl Howard reports on the Back to School event at Englewood High School on August 21st from 1 to 8 PM. Over 100 kids from the neighborhood attended the Back to School event this year at Englewood High School. **CVO** has been a co-sponsor of this event for 3 years. **Charles "Smudge" Coleman** — formerly a CVO Executive Committee member, now a resident of Paris, Tennessee — led the way on this, returning to Chicago for the event. Fathers United is also a sponsor. We had a table and handed out CVO literature and back to school supplies. Additionally, there was food, including BBQ, hot dogs, hamburgers, etc. There were also games, contests, and a Jungle Jim bounce-house for the kids to play in. The whole event was a grand success. Congratulations to the organizers of this annual event.

Veterans Against Violence

Darryl Howard chairs this important committee of **CVO**. It is dedicated to helping end the urban violence in Chicago. He will be calling a meeting to set the strategy for the committee in the coming year. The 18th Ward Veterans Organization under **Don Kimball** — a new **CVO** member organization — will be joining this committee as well. For those interested, Darryl Howard can be reached at (773) 592-6072 and **BLULU50@GMAIL.COM**.

MEETING WITH CONGRESSMAN MIKE QUIGLEY'S STAFFERS SHIRA SIEGEL & MELANIE THOMPSON

by
Larry E. Nazimek

On April 1, 2015, Bruce Parry and I met with Congressman Quigley's Congressional Aide Melanie Thompson, his point person on Veterans Affairs at his Chicago office. At the time, we did not know if this would be the start of a relationship with Cong. Quigley's Office or merely a one-time meeting. Fortunately, it has turned out to be the former. Ms. Thompson emailed us to say that Shira Siegel, her counterpart at their Washington, DC Office, would be in town, and she invited us to meet with them concerning veteran issues. I met with them at Quigley's Chicago office on Aug. 21, 2015.

Prior to Shira's arrival, I spoke with Melanie about the difficulty that CVO was having in getting JBVAMC to notify us of upcoming Town Hall meetings. She said that she is in contact with the VA hospitals here, and that she was being told about the meetings. She will notify us as to when future meetings will take place. I gave Shira a copy of our brochure and booklet, and I briefly went over our issues, such as universal eligibility, mandatory funding, etc.

While we can tell our elected officials what we need, it's another matter to hear from them as to what they are doing for us and what issues they are taking up.

Shira said that they have noted that access to VA healthcare by female vets has been a lot less than for their male counterparts, and this problem is even worse among African-American female vets. Cong. Quigley is working on VA accountability on this issue, and she anticipates that he will introduce legislation around October.

Cong. Quigley is also looking into the issue of presumptive benefits, noting the large backlog of claims that must be adjudicated. They felt that vets in need of healthcare should not have to wait until their claims are processed, but there are still points that must be ironed out before introducing any specific legislation.

It's one thing to discuss issues, but it helps to ask for support on specific legislation that has already been introduced. I mentioned H. R. 1170, Chiropractic Care for Veterans Act, asking that Cong. Quigley sign on as a co-sponsor. It is noteworthy that the National Univ. of Health Sciences, one of the top chiropractic schools, is in Lombard, with a Chicago clinic at 720 W. Maxwell St. (University Village), and while it operates a clinic at the Danville, IL, VAMC (which is not in VISN-12), it does not operate a clinic at Hines or Jesse Brown VAMCS, nor is there a program in place for referrals to their clinics here. The result of this request is that Cong. Quigley signed on as a co-sponsor.

Shira is moving to another job, but we have been assured that we will be in contact with her replacement. She had been making periodic trips to their Chicago office, and when her replacement is in town, Melanie will arrange for us to meet with them.

This is definitely a positive step in getting our issues heard and acted on.

VETERAN RESOURCE EXPO - AUG. 18, 2015

The Valor Games, a type of "Olympics" for disabled vets, is held every August, with the kickoff events outside of Soldier Field. A Veteran Resource Expo (which has also been the "Illinois Warrior Summit") is held in conjunction with this event on the ground floor of Soldier Field (where the Doughboy is located) and the "concourse" behind the stands surrounding the field. Since it is held in conjunction with the Valor Games, there are also demonstrations of adaptive sports equipment that able-bodied attendees may try out.

In previous years, the expos had been operated by the I-SAVE Foundation, but this year, the Special Recreation Dept. of the Chicago Park District ran it. The I-SAVE events were a "hard act to follow." As was the case previously, the VA had a large section, representing the Jesse Brown, Hines, and Lovell VAMCs. There were tables dealing with homelessness, suicide prevention, various health issues, screenings, etc. On this level were also tables with representatives of veteran organizations (including CVO and NWWU), agencies (incl. VAC), educational institutions, companies with services and goods for vets (and even some employment opportunities), adaptive sports demos, etc. While previous expos had numerous tables set up all around the concourse, this year, there weren't any.

In previous years, vets would have to register upon entering so that they could be contacted in the future. They would be given a T- shirt, lunch ticket, and pro sports tickets. These tickets may not seem like much to some vets, but for others, this is often the only way they can get to see a game in person. None of this, however, occurred this time.

Those wishing to contact the Park District can do so at: special.recreation@chicagoparkdistrict.com.

Good news: the Warrior Summit Coalition will be conducting the "2015 Welcome Home Warrior Summit in Illinois" (7th Illinois Warrior Summit) from 1000 to 1600, Saturday, Oct. 24, 2015, at the UIC Pavilion, 525 S. Racine Ave., Chicago, IL 60607. This event promises to have everything that the August event did not.

WRITE FOR THE CVO NEWSLETTER!

Submissions to the CVO Newsletter should be pertinent to veterans and their families and reflect the membership and mission of CVO. We reserve the right to refuse any submission. We may edit submissions but will strive to not change the content. Edited versions will be resent to the submitter for consideration. Articles should be 150 to 170 words in length.

Submit articles to Newsletter@CoalitionofVets.org or mail to:

CVO

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Our website is www.CoalitionofVets.org and the CVO Newsletter can be downloaded there. If you want to clarify your preference for an email version or a hard copy, please email us at Newsletter@CoalitionofVets.org stating your preference.

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