



The Journal

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Wounded Warriors Find Safe Harbor in Many Avenues

By Tracey Gold Bennett
NDW Public Affairs

Noe Cevallos is a veteran Marine and a wounded warrior, but to his credit he is not defined by his injuries and considers himself stronger as a result of his struggles.

"It's just the way I was raised, and also being a Marine you learn not to feel sorry for yourself and to get your job done," he said.

In 2007, just a day after Americans celebrated the 4th of July, Cevallos and another Marine were on patrol in Iraq as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

"I got hit by two IEDs [on two occasions nearly two days apart]," he recalled. "I had double vision, ringing in my ears, I was out of it, I was knocked out and I'd had my bell rung real good."

In a daze, Cevallos did not sustain any physical injuries from either blast, and was told by others in his unit he was lucky to be alive.

Shortly thereafter, Cevallos, an infantry machine gunner, was sent to Quantico, Va., to train other Marines on artillery. This time, the gunfire proved too difficult to endure.

"I couldn't take it. I'd be out on the range and the sounds gave me real bad headaches," he said. "I wasn't myself, I knew something was wrong."

Cevallos was diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). He worried about how his illness would impact his ability to provide for his wife and little girl.

"I'm not just going to sit

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(U.S. Navy photo by Photographer's Mate 3rd Class Timothy F. Sosa)

U.S. Navy Builder 3rd Class Mark Micks of Fredericksburg, Ohio, and Aviation Machinist's Mate 1st Class Jamie Garcia, of Englepass, Texas, participate in a track clinic at the U.S. Olympic Training Center in Chula Vista, Calif., in 2005. The Paralympics Military Summit tests injured military service members in archery, cycling, strength and various other athletic events.

Hope for Autism Spans, Resources Available

By Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Alexandra Snow
Journal staff writer

Though many studies have shed light on one of the most commonly diagnosed childhood disorders - autism - doctors at the National Naval Medical Center (NNMC) are quick to caution the findings do not signal a cure in the immediate future.

There has been an increase in knowledge about the condition, said Lowry Shropshire, a developmental pediatrician at NNMC, but there have been no major breakthroughs in the treatment of autism.

Autistic disorder, Asperger syndrome and pervasive developmental disorder, not otherwise specified (PDDNOS), are the different diagnoses on the autism spectrum, said Shropshire.

Children are typically diagnosed around age three or four based on a variety of characteristics, such as difficulty with social interaction, inadequate eye contact, unusual facial expressions, odd responses to other peo-

ple's emotions, reluctance to interact with others, and difficulty making friends.

Other markers include communication problems like delayed speaking, trouble initiating or carrying on a conversation, unusual language, poor imagination and repetitive behaviors, such as unusual insistence on following set routines, and sensory peculiarities, he said.

"Any person who has difficulties with social interaction, has problems with interpersonal communication and has repetitive, non-functional behaviors has a form of autism," said Shropshire. "No two children with autism are the same, although they share the common core features. There are so many different presentations and symptoms in people, and many different genetic possibilities."

Severe cases of autism may be detected in early infancy, he added, though mild cases may not be as obvious until the child enters school and their social deficits become apparent. Shropshire noted that autism does not worsen with age, though some symp-

toms may become more obvious as the child grows older. Overall, children with autism, like all children, show improvement in developmental abilities as they mature.

Typically, treatment consists of a combination of speech, occupational and behavioral therapy as well as special education techniques and strategies.

"Certainly, there is no cure on the horizon. There is no medical or dietary treatment that is effective in treating the core symptoms of autism. Occasionally, a behavioral treatment will lessen the severity of the symptoms, but the core features of autism almost always remain," said Shropshire.

Recent research has shown women who have another child less than two years after giving birth are at an increased risk of the second born having autism; however, this link does not prove causation, said Shropshire.

In addition, while the cause remains unknown, Shropshire urges that, contrary to popular belief, there is no link

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Commander's Column

Last week we had another successful Joint Commission inspection which followed our highly successful inspection held Nov. 14-19. This past inspection was to assess the quality and safety of services that now exists in our new outpatient and inpatient clinics, the America and Arrowhead buildings.

As you know, the mission of the Joint Commission is to continuously improve the safety and quality of care provided through the provision of health-care accreditation and related services that support performance improvements in health-care organizations. All hospitals and healthcare organizations must meet the minimum standards required by the Joint Commission and all are inspected routinely to ensure compliance.

A military organization must remain ready at all times for a possible deployment in defense of our country, yet in the case of a medical treatment facility we also must be ever-vigilant to ensure a high standard of care. The Joint Commission helps us maintain our patient readiness.

Last week the surveyor conducted both an abbreviated life safety building tour and patient tracers in care settings, looking at everything from infection control, patient safety to quality of care and more.

The survey identified a few areas for improvement while validating the high-quality, safe patient care we provide every



day. There is always room for improvement, but patients and staff can rest assured and take pride in the fact that our world-class quality of care for our patients did not go unnoticed. This was a very successful survey.

Chief of Staff, Colonel Charles Callahan, said it best, "Our journey is about transforming our behaviors so that excellence is our daily habit." That is exactly what you, our world-class staff, are doing as you continue to make a positive difference in the lives of so many. Keep up the good work!

Commander sends,
Rear Adm. Matthew L. Nathan,
Medical Corps, United States Navy

Bethesda Notebook

Awards Ceremony Today

All staff members are invited to attend a ceremony today at 8 a.m. in the Laurel Clark Memorial Auditorium to recognize outstanding Sailors, officers and civilians of the quarter. Come meet and congratulate these exceptional staff members who are making an impact on base and in Navy Medicine.

ICU Moves up a Floor

The Intensive Care Unit (ICU) has moved from the third to the fourth floor of the Arrowhead building. Any questions or concerns regarding this move may be directed to the Critical Care Nursing Department or the Deputy Commander for Nursing.

No Parking on South Palmer Road

Staff and visitors are reminded no parking is permitted on South Palmer Road in front of Building 10, nor is loading or unloading allowed in this area at anytime. Security will be monitoring this area to enforce this no parking zone. Also, in order to provide adequate line of sight for motorists traveling along South Palmer Road, please do not block crosswalks. Be careful when driving through this area and be aware of pedestrians.

Free Walk-in Resume Reviews

Fleet and Family Support Office is offering free, 30-minute resume reviews on the fourth Tuesday of each month from 10 a.m. until noon. Reviews will take place in Building 11, room 148, on a first come, first served basis. For more information, call 301-319-4087 or e-mail ffso@med.navy.mil.

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Town Hall Emphasizes Safety, Keeps Staff Informed

By Sarah Fortney
Journal staff writer

To keep staff members informed of the latest construction projects and to reiterate the importance of safety on base, a town hall meeting was held April 20 at Naval Support Activity Bethesda (NSAB) in the National Naval Medical Center's (NNMC) Memorial Auditorium.

Construction for the gate renovation project is well underway, said Jeff Miller, NSAB's transportation manager. Beginning Monday, April 26, North Gate transitioned to its second phase of construction affording three lanes of travel. Two of the lanes allow inbound traffic flow while the third lane allows outbound traffic flow. In addition, South Gate began construction, narrowing down to one lane of travel. In order to accommodate round the clock access to the facility, North Gate will become the new 24/7 gate for vehicles, pedestrians and bicyclists.

While South gate is under construction, Miller added, there will still be inbound and outbound travel for pedestrians. There will be one lane for vehicles, which will be inbound Monday through Friday from 5 to 9 a.m. and outbound all other times, he said. Signs will be posted to keep drivers and

pedestrians informed.

"The goal is to have both of these gates completed at the end of July," said Miller.

Major construction activities at the University gate are also scheduled to begin soon, he said, encouraging everyone to be aware of signs and the flow of traffic.

Until mid-May, a portion of South Palmer Road, from Brown Drive to Stokes Road, will be closed to support construction of the new 1,200 space multi-use parking garage, he added. During this time, detours will be set up; however, the road in front of the Fisher Houses will remain open, and staff and visitors will be able to use the NEX gate.

The next phase of construction for the staff garage, Building 54, began April 21. The former entrance is now blocked; thus, both entry and exit will be through the exit.

While many construction projects are in progress, it's essential to be aware of your surroundings, said Jim Ganz, NNMC's safety specialist and safety liaison for NSAB. While in the staff parking garages, it's particularly important for staff to use the stairs within the inner walls as opposed to walking along the outboards.

"If you're walking on the outside and a car comes around, they may not see you. It takes a couple more

minutes, but we don't want anybody clipping you because you're hugging the wall," he said.

Likewise, in the America garage, it's important to walk through the covered, marked entrance to get to Building 3, 5 and the America building, as opposed to walking where cars are supposed to go in and out, he added.

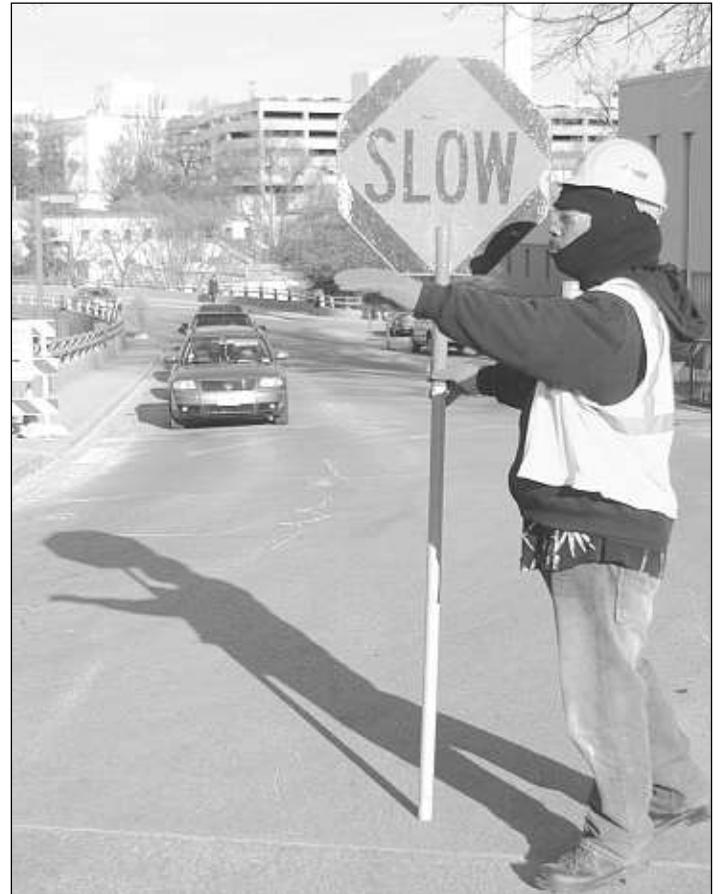
Additionally, Ganz cautioned drivers to look out for pedestrians, and pedestrians to look out for drivers, making sure to walk in crosswalks. Those who do not use crosswalks are putting themselves, and drivers, at risk, he said. When crossing the street, pedestrians should try to make eye contact with the driver.

"Don't assume that car will see you and stop," he said. "Do all that you can to make sure you are visible."

Now that it's starting to get lighter earlier in the morning, driving facing the sun can also put a glare on a driver's windshield, making it harder to see pedestrians, he added.

Ganz also urges those who may feel rushed to find a parking spot or to get off base to slow down.

"Drive slowly ... Drive carefully. The guy who's driving in front of you at 5 mph might be somebody who doesn't come to the hospital very often [and] is confused by all that's going on."



(file photo)

As construction projects continue to progress at Naval Support Activity Bethesda, flaggers help keep traffic moving.

They might not be as familiar as you are with what's going on and might need a little extra time, he said.

When it comes to changes in traffic patterns, he added, "We're doing all we can to make sure you're notified in advance. Follow the detour signs, be aware of the person driving in front of you.

Please read postmasters, stay informed of what's going on and anticipate delays. Maybe leave the house a couple minutes early so you can get to work on time. We want to make sure you are safe."

For more information about construction on base, e-mail Jeff Miller at jef-frey.miller@med.navy.mil.

Recognizing Lab Professionals, the Team Behind the Scenes

By Cat DeBinder
Journal staff writer

Honoring laboratory personnel and their impact on military medicine, the National Naval Medical Center (NNMC) kicked off National Laboratory Professionals Week on Monday with a cake cutting ceremony in the America building.

This year's theme is "The Team Behind the Scenes," to bring awareness to laboratory professionals who patients rarely meet face-to-face, but play an integral role in health care. Examining clinical specimens and tissues to properly diagnose patients, these individuals help treat and prevent disease and are inspected annually by outside agencies.

As the "team behind the scenes," laboratory personnel deserve special recognition, as patients rarely have

an opportunity to see the contributions these individuals make, which are a critical element of care, said Deputy Commander for Clinical Support Col. John Spain.

"Eighty percent of all patients need some kind of lab service involved in their care," said Spain. "Ancillary services in general are always behind the scenes. That's why it's important to recognize them, so the general public and folks that work at the hospital can know what this team brings to health care."

It takes a wide variety of personnel to run a lab, including health technicians, phlebotomists, histotechnicians, cytotechnologists, medical laboratory technicians, pathologist assistants, pathologists and other scientists, technicians and administrative support, said Capt.

Larry Ciorlito, integrated laboratory manager at both Walter Reed Army Medical Center (WRAMC) and NNMC.

The demand for these professionals and the services they provide are on the rise, noted Ciorlito, stating, "One baby boomer turns 50 about every seven seconds. Almost 13 percent of the U.S. population is now over 65 years old, and the over-85 [years old] category, which requires the greatest [amount] of health care services, is growing rapidly."

With an increasing global population comes the demand for preventive medicine, including early detection and the development of medical technologies, such as genetic testing, he added.

"More than 10 billion clinical diagnostic tests are performed each year in the United States," said

Ciorlito. "Locally, the Integrated Lab [WRAMC/NNMC] performs over four million tests annually and transfuses roughly 9,000 units of blood per year."

While the demand for laboratory professionals is on the rise, about 13 percent of current laboratory staff is likely to retire in the next five years and roughly 12,200 new laboratory professionals will be needed to meet the growing need of the world's population, he said.

"With only four to six thousand graduates joining the workforce each year, it is vitally important that we cherish those professionals we have and let them know how much they're appreciated. National Laboratory Professional's week is just one way of doing this," said Ciorlito.

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between immunizations and autism.

"There are many complicated reasons why some people choose to believe autism is caused by vaccines. It is not," he said, adding that genetics seems to play a strong role in the likelihood a child will be diagnosed.

"It is well-established that the siblings of a child with autism have a greatly increased risk of an autism spectrum disorder, (Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder) ADHD and learning disabilities; this points to the strong genetic basis. Unfortunately, specific genetic abnormalities have not yet been found in most children with autism," Shropshire said. "I believe the next big breakthrough will involve finding these genes that may allow for much earlier diagnosis, earlier enrollment in treatment studies, and perhaps preventive strategies. As of now, since we do not have a definitive biological test nor effective medical treatment for autism, it is not possible to prevent it."

The lifespan of those with autism depends on other existing health conditions; however, children with autism who also have a severe intellectual disability do have a reduced life expectancy, Shropshire stated.

For an autistic person, a reduced life span does not mean wallowing in self-pity, said NNMC Linen Manager William Bowling, whose department employs several special needs and autistic workers at the hospital.

"These workers are inspiring. Sam [Collinge], one of our autistic workers is also one of the most compassionate and independent workers we have. It's a pleasure to

work with him and it makes you question who is really handicap, the person with autism who always has a positive outlook and big smile on their face, or everyone else who lets life get them down," said Bowling.

Bowling recalled a time when Collinge decided he wanted to make a difference after the Sept. 11 terrorist attack.

"Sam, who lives two miles away and takes the bus to work every day, decided instead to walk every day for two months. After those eight weeks were up, he donated all the money he had saved by walking to a charity benefiting the victims of [Sept. 11]. That may not have been a lot of money, but that's incredible."

When asked why he enjoys working at the hospital, Collinge said, "I have friends here. Work is good, [and] teamwork is very good."

Not only does the hospital employ several special needs workers, the government as a whole does so as well. In addition, many resources are available to military members who have family members with special needs, such as the Navy's Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP). For Sailors who have family members with special needs, EFMP makes arrangements, such as developmental or educational requirements, wheelchair accessibility and adaptive equipment or assistive technology and services. In addition, the Fleet and Family Support Office's EFMP liaison works closely with the hospital's EFMP coordinator to ensure the necessary resources are provided.

For more information on the EFMP at NNMC, call 301-295-4092. For more information on autism, visit www.nationalautismassociation.org.

Marine Receives Purple Heart at Bethesda



(photo by Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Dion Dawson)

After receiving the Purple Heart award on April 20 at the National Naval Medical Center, retired Marine Sgt. Daniel Hernandez, left, is congratulated by Marine Maj. Paul Ewing. In 2005, the two were serving together in Iraq when Hernandez was injured by an improvised explosive device (IED). The Purple Heart is a presidential award given to those who have been wounded or who have sacrificed their life in the line of duty.

Eggstravaganza Delivers Food, Games, Fun

By Mass Communication
Specialist Seaman
Dion Dawson
Journal Staff Writer

More than 1,000 staff members and their families, on Saturday, enjoyed a Family Fun "Eggstravaganza" featuring face painting, storytelling, bowling, cotton candy and popcorn at Naval Support Activity Bethesda (NSAB).

"It's something you can give back to the troops, their families and people at NNMC. NNMC's staff works really hard taking care of our wounded warriors and active-duty military, so this is an opportunity to have their families get their picture taken with the Easter bunny, collect some Easter eggs, play some games and generally blow off a little bit of steam. I've always enjoyed doing things like this," said Robert Killion, Morale, Welfare and Recreation office (MWR) MWR's Quality of Life director.

Coordinated by NSAB's MWR and the National Naval Medical Center, the annual event took place at the Bowling Center. Along with the food and fun, parents could create identification cards for their children at an "Ident-A-Kid" station, and kids had a chance to meet and take pictures with the "Eggstravaganza" bunny, Bugs Bunny and Tweety Bird.

"We've done Easter egg hunts the last couple of years in the Galley and outside. This year, we changed it up," said Killion. "We decided to simplify our approach. With the added simplicity, more room for fun is created."

The amount of attendees spoke to the event's success, with roughly 1,200 people who came out to show their support, said John Rauckhorst, MWR's Liberty/Adventure Bound program manager.

"The turnout was outstanding and very successful," he said. "Allowing us to spend off work and duty hours together, building relationships and social skills, speaks volumes to the effort that takes place. The parents are involved with the children, bringing a natural sense of peace and security. This is a great opportunity on all parts."

Many of the volunteers were representatives of NNMC organizations, including members of the chief petty officers' mess who cooked for the event; dental staff members, who did face painting; members of the Medical Service Corps (MSC), who took photos; and Junior Enlisted Association (JEA) members, who manned the games.

"The frog catapult was my favorite game," said Hospitalman Maria Rojas-Rodas, president of the JEA. "A four-year-old girl next to me won. I didn't finish in first place, but I gave it my best shot and still received an Easter egg."

Rojas-Rodas, an ortho-dental technician who works in NNMC's Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery clinic, said the JEA has been involved in the family event for the last two years.

It's an opportunity to give back to service members, staff and family, she said, adding, "The biggest benefit is that staff of NNMC and NSAB can bring their families to an event that is so much fun and free. Service members have very little time to themselves, so to be able to spend this time having fun and relaxing with family is well received. The smiles on some of the faces motivate me to continue volunteering and giving back. With as many kids that got to smile and laugh today and just have a good time, I think that the goals were met and exceeded."



(photo by Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Dion Dawson)

At the Family Fun "Eggstravaganza" on Saturday, kids enjoyed a visit with Bugs Bunny and Tweety Bird.



(photo by Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Dion Dawson)

At the Family Fun "Eggstravaganza" on Saturday, children had their faces painted, while enjoying a number of other activities, including an Easter egg hunt and bowling.

VETERANS BENEFITS INFORMATION FAIR

Hosted by BPOE Elks Lodge 15
5 Taft Court, Rockville, Maryland 20850
Saturday - May 21, 2011 - 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Open to all currently serving, separated and retired
Veterans, Friends and Families.
Free Admission.

Representatives from Federal and State Departments of Veterans Affairs and Veterans Service Organizations will be present to assist determining veterans eligibility and filing for benefits regarding:

- Employment
- Education
- Disability Compensation
- Health and Nutrition
- Other Federal and State Veterans Programs



A team from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs will be on site to provide health and nutrition advice, referrals to social and volunteer services, related financial advice and other veterans'-related issues. A women's representative and a Veterans Attorney will also be available.

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- Systems Engineers
- Software Engineers
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- Mission Watch Officer

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Recreational Therapy: More Than Meets the Eye

By Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Dion Dawson
Journal staff writer

White water rafting, snow skiing, bowling - these are just a fraction of the services Recreational Therapy offers wounded warriors at the National Naval Medical Center (NNMC).

"As a recreational therapist, we work with occupational and physical speech therapists that provide a functional, goal-oriented treatment," said Cara Navarro, a certified therapeutic recreation specialist at Walter Reed Army Medical Center (WRAMC) who has also worked at NNMC. She added that recreational therapy also involves community re-entry, sports, education and adaptive tasks. "The bottom line is getting back to your day-to-day lifestyle with any adaptations and things needed to get there. We want them to get back to their day-to-day lifestyle."

To help slowly integrate patients back into their community, recreational therapists allow patients to participate in hobbies they enjoy and to do so in various environments outside the hospital, said Maj. Michael Robertson, NNMC's Occupational Therapy department head.

"If the patient is an amputee and they've been at [WRAMC] the whole time, which is a very safe environment, upon leaving, they go into the surrounding areas with increased attention," said Robertson. "They're the normal person at Walter Reed, but out in town, the pressure to not stand out is substantial."

Leaving the hospital for the first time during treatment can be a challenge, Robertson said.

"These [patients] haven't [been] out in the community yet and they're completely terrified. If you don't have an arm or another visible injury, you worry about your process of joining the general public again. They keep going and it gets better and more comfortable with the increased exposure. Then, you can watch their mood elevate," he said.

"The biggest [aspect] is our functional tasks. [Recreational therapists] target everything. It's for the whole body, including mind, body, social and soul. It's kind of the whole package. If they are going to get back into sports and running, then they have to be able to sit upright and sit in their chair longer," said Navarro, adding, "We do education and relaxation, with guided imagery available for pain, sleeplessness, anxiety, coping skills, and PTSD."

When it comes to teaching daily living tasks, recreational therapy focuses on planning and organizing, Navarro said. For some patients, performing these tasks may be more challenging, involving the use of adaptive equipment.

"You might need to use a mouth stick because you don't have hands or you use things for a computer with your head motions. Just figuring out ways to do things easier is always a goal," she said.

Karen Noel, a certified therapeutic recreation specialist with NNMC's surgical ward and traumatic brain injury unit, said there are ways to get the patient back to where they were not only by using adaptations and/or modifications.

"If you approach it with empathy and understanding, the patient will try it," said Noel. "The way I explain it to the patients is you can give me thumbs up or thumbs down to what I offer you and it won't hurt my feelings."

Retired Navy Machinery Repair Chief Benedict Chavez, a patient on 7 East, said recreational therapy has helped strengthen his memory and ability to think in sequence, such as alphabetizing words.

"I'm having so much fun. I forget I'm in the hospital. I don't want to

stay in my bed all day and watch TV. It's something to keep my mind busy. Chess really helps because I wrap myself up in the game and it keeps me busy, while taking my mind off other things," said Chavez. "I love to play the board game, Jenga. I enjoy playing because I get a mixture of emotions. I am happy that I'm playing, but I'm scared that I might lose. All in all, I am grateful for these services."

Wounded warriors aren't the only ones who benefit from recreational therapy.

"Recreational therapy has completely expanded my horizons as a therapist on activities patients can do," said Robertson. "I'm use to working in small clinics where we don't have therapists that can take people out into the community. Those are things I never used in my 15-year career, but now [that I'm] here, I have the opportunity to learn about and use these things. It's so cool and amazing because the recreational therapists carry out these specific goals through fun activities."

For more information on recreational therapy, contact the occupational therapy department at 301-295-4866.



(U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class R. Jason Brunson)

Volunteer scorekeepers Fred Babauta and his daughter Kylene tally scores for Culinary Specialist Judith Boyce during an archery competition at the inaugural Warrior Games at the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, Colo., in May 2010. Boyce maintains a strong and competitive spirit, participating in recreational activities, despite the vision and neurological problems she faces having a rare and progressive cerebrovascular disease called Moyamoya disease.



(photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Dion Dawson)

Retired Navy Chief Benedict Chavez, a 7 East patient at the National Naval Medical Center, plays a game of chess with Karen Noel, a recreational therapist at NNMCM. Noel lost the game, but was proud to see the patient's ability to move the pieces in sequence.



(courtesy photo)

Marine Sgt. Jared Bolhuis, a traumatic brain injury patient at the National Naval Medical Center, indulges in his favorite pastime, whitewater kayaking, which is also used as part of recreational therapy for wounded warriors.

Going 'Green,' Bethesda Cleans



(photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Alexandra Snow)

Above: In celebration of Earth Week, staff members at Naval Support Activity Bethesda participated in a base wide clean up on Thursday, scouring the base for trash and other non-biodegradable items.

Left: Public Works Officer Cmdr. Paul McComb kicked off the base wide clean up on Thursday in front of Building 10. With more than 100 staff members volunteering to pick up trash across the campus, the event helped promote the importance of being environmentally conscious.

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around and not work. I needed to find a job that would be suitable for me and that I could do to the best of my ability," said Cevallos, and that he did with the assistance of Naval District Washington's Human Resource Office, Washington (HRO-W) Wounded Warrior Employment Program.

The Human Resource Office, Washington (HRO-W) Wounded Warrior Employment Program is dedicated to assisting wounded warriors and disabled veterans from all branches of service with transition to federal civilian employment. With the help of advisor and program manager Laura Stanek, it took just four months to land Cevallos a job.

"Laura Stanek is awesome," said Cevallos. "She not only helped me with my resume, but made contacts, trained me and her contact didn't stop even when the job offers came."

Staffers at HRO-W take the skills service-members learn in the field and relate them to skills and abilities used in the traditional workplace, said Stanek.

"HRO-W is a one-stop shop for wounded warrior federal employment assistance," she said.

Another program that assists wounded warriors in making a successful transition from military service to the civilian workforce is the Navy's Safe Harbor program.

Navy Safe Harbor's goal is to return Sailors and Coast Guardsmen to duty and, when not possible, work collaboratively with federal agencies - including the VA and the Department of Labor - and state and local organizations to ensure successful reintegration of shipmates back into their communities. Navy Safe Harbor support does not end at the door of a medical treatment facility. The key to the program's success is providing service members with a lifetime of care and support.

Judith B. Carlisle is a Recovery Care Coordinator for the Navy Safe Harbor program at the National

Naval Medical Center (NNMC).

"We utilize wounded warrior's services and help them to participate in internships and education programs," Carlisle said. "If they're sitting around they are not building up skills and a resume they'll need on the outside to achieve their career goals."

According to Carlisle, participating in team sports also helps wounded warriors surmount some of their professional and personal obstacles. In fact, some of the wounded warriors in the region are competing in the Warrior games. This year marks the second annual Warrior Games, an athletic competition among 200 wounded, ill, and injured service members from all branches of the U.S. military.

The Paralympic-style event, which is organized by the U.S. Department of Defense, the U.S. Olympic Committee, USO, and Ride to Recovery, takes place May 16-21 in Colorado Springs, Colo. Thirty-five warrior athletes are participating in the Navy/Coast Guard team, which is sponsored by Navy Safe Harbor.

"The Warrior Games bring together active-duty service members and military veterans from across the country, fostering camaraderie and a healthy competitive spirit. The event helps them discover new capabilities they can apply to everyday challenges and opportunities, and encourages them to reach for and achieve a rich and productive future," Carlisle said.

Noe Cevallos, now working as an Access Control Assistant in the federal government, credits the support of his "amazing" wife and Naval District Washington's wounded warrior programs with his success.

"We coordinate non-medical care and we work hand-in-hand with the medical team and organizations like HRO-W to insure a smooth recovery and when necessary, transition," said Carlisle. "It is a blessing to work with this population."

For more information about Navy Safe Harbor, call 877-746-8563. Details are also available online at www.safeharbor.navy.mil or on Facebook, www.facebook.com/navy.safeharbor.

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