

Health Headlines

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(NBC correspondent Ron Allen interviews veterans (l-r) William Cuffe, Robert Young, and William Paul Foley)

Veterans Affairs Medical Center Hosts NBC's “Making a Difference”

Non Profit Group Teams Up with Local Volunteers to Entertain Resident Veterans

BRONX, NY – President Ronald Reagan once said, “Some people spend an entire lifetime wondering if they’ve made a difference in the world. But, the Marines don't have that problem.” The same could be said for our friends at the Veterans Bedside Network and members of the Charles Bajart post of the American Legion. These two groups have teamed up to make a difference in the lives of their fellow Veterans who reside at the James J. Peters (JJP) VA Medical Center.

Several times a month, Pam Title, local coordinator of the VBN, with the support of the JJP Recreation Therapy staff and members of the Bajart Post of the American Legion, provide a

unique entertainment venue which brings great enjoyment to local Veteran residents. The VBN specializes in coordinating the reading and recording of old TV and movie scripts. To begin the program, staff members of the VBN pair resident Veterans with characters from the script. The Veterans read their parts in turn and Bajart Post volunteers provide sound effects. The end result is a great deal of fun and a recorded show that the VBN will play back for the participating veterans. On Wednesday, July 28th, NBC correspondent, Ron Allen, will visit the medical center to observe their program and to tape a segment of NBC's *Making a Difference*.

An excerpt from the VBN's own website, describes the program thusly: "VBN is a 58-year-old not for profit organization of dedicated volunteers who conduct a program of therapeutic activities in Veteran's hospitals. Our activities are TV & radio programs and patients are the stars. The volunteers bring scripts, adaptations of favorite radio and TV shows. They bring songbooks with the lyrics of the most popular songs of the century. They bring tape machines and record the productions. Before they leave the hospital, the tape is played back for the veterans to hear their performance as actors and singers. It's this element of participation, which makes VBN activities a unique form of therapy."

"We are grateful to the VBN, our recreation therapists and the Veteran volunteers who provide this great entertainment on a regular basis," Stated MaryAnn Musumeci, Medical Center Director. "Through programs like this and through the generous acts of VA Volunteers, our Veterans are reminded that their sacrifices are valued and appreciated. We are here to care for them and their satisfaction is our greatest reward."

For more information related to this story or the James J. Peters VA Medical Center, please contact James E. Connell, III, Director of Community and Government Relations, at 718.584.9000, Ext. 6620.

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