

Advanced Low Vision Rehabilitation Newsletter



**Department of Veterans
Affairs: Salt Lake City, UT
Spring/Summer 2015**

SERVING VETERANS WITH VISION LOSS

The goal of the Advanced Low Vision Team is to improve the quality of life, through rehabilitation, for all Veterans with a visual impairment as well as that of their families.

You are receiving this newsletter because you work closely with, have been treated by the Advanced Low Vision program at VASLCHCS, or been served by the Visual Impairment Services (VIST) program also located at the VASLCHCS.

If you would like to stop receiving the newsletter please call Nadja Walton at 801-582-1565 x1574 or email

Nadja.Walton@va.gov

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STAFFING CHANGES

We are sad to say goodbye to our Low Vision Program Specialist, Sheena Torgersen. She has been a wonderful asset to the Salt Lake City VA Hospital, Rehabilitation, and Low Vision teams!!

Sheena is staying in Rehabilitation, but has accepted a new position with the Polytrauma Amputation Networking Site (PANS) Program.

She will be the Program Specialist, and will be working towards getting The PANS Program CARF Accredited as well! She is so excited to continue doing what she loves most... working with Veterans, and helping them to regain their independence and quality of life!

We are going to miss her greatly, but wish her well in her new job!! Good luck Sheena!!



Welcome our new Low Vision employee!!!

We are so excited to welcome our new employee for Low Vision, Nadja Walton! She is coming from Physical Therapy, and has been at the Salt Lake City VA Hospital for 2 ½ years now. Loves serving the Veterans that served us, and is excited to help us in our clinic!

She is our new *Advanced Low Vision Rehabilitation Program Specialist*. She will be helping us stay organized, and helping to make our clinic even better!

Wishing her well in her new job!! Good luck Nadja and welcome!!

WINDOWS 10

By: Darren Lindsay, CLVT, OMS, VRT

On the July 29th Microsoft will release Windows 10 with much anticipation after a dire uptake of Windows 8. Microsoft is hoping to redeem some of its prestige after several years of lows. Windows 10 will sport a similar look to the start menu found in Windows 7 (the desktop version), but with options to increase or decrease the size of the pop menu with tiled apps also added.

The most significant aspect of Windows 10 that will benefit blind and visually impaired users, is the inclusion of Cortana a personal assistant. Like Siri found on Apple cellphones and tablets, Cortana will offer the desktop and cross platform user access to files, internet searches, and command of built-in apps. After viewing tests of Cortana against Apple Siri and Google Now, it was evident that Microsoft has gained some ground on its competitors.

The operating system will be provided with an improved internet search engine codenamed Spartan, and for those able to experience the virtual reality capabilities the wearing of a headset will offer a variety of educational and entertainment options. The great news is that it will all be free to anyone choosing to upgrade from Windows 7 or 8 during the first year of release.

Update: Windows 10 will not be compatible with Zoomtext magnification or text-to-speech software version 10-10.1 initially. You can visit Ai Squared's website and view under their news section when the upgrade will be available for download. There could be a small charge for an upgrade depending on which version of Zoomtext you own. Ai

Squared are expecting the upgrade to be available approximately 2-3 weeks after July 29th. The link for Ai Squared's Windows 10 news section here:

www.aisquared.com/support/more/windows_10_status

ONLINE RESOURCES

By: Sharon Jones, VIST Coordinator
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Our legally blind Veterans are followed by the Visual Impairment Services Team (VIST) and are offered periodic VIST Reviews. Through these VIST Reviews the Veteran's visual impairment, total health, clarified needs and interests are considered in discussion of available options for optimal independence and wellbeing. VA and other services, training programs, benefits and a variety of resources are presented in determining those to be facilitated for the individual Veteran. Our Veterans are encouraged to continue to explore options for maintaining health, optimizing their skills, feeding their interests and pursuing their goals. Those who have access to Internet (by their own access or that of a designee) have opportunities to be informed, explore their interests, and even to

pursue studies on their own. Although resourceful websites are numerous, here are just a few that have much to offer our visually impaired Veterans:

MY HEALTHeVET: www.myhealth.va.gov

This is an online Personal Health Record that empowers Veterans to become informed partners in their health care. Through this website Veterans can access trusted, secure, and current health and benefit information, as well as record and store important health and military history information as they wish. They can also order prescription refills, see their appointments, receive wellness reminders and communicate with their VA health care providers through the My Healthy Vet website.

HADLEY SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND:

www.hadley.edu; www.hadley.edu/veterans; www.lowvisionfocus.org; Hadley is a well-established school that offers distance education programs at no cost for visually impaired individuals and their families. The school also offers affordable continuing education courses to professionals and service providers working in the field of blindness. An individual can go to the website or call Hadley for a catalog of more than 100 courses across many interest areas. Courses are offered in braille, audio or large

print and sent through the mail, with some online courses becoming available. Hadley recently launched a site to educate and inspire blinded Veterans to pursue their personal and professional goals. More recently the www.lowvisionfocus.org program is added for older adults with age-related vision loss. Those providing services for older adults will also find this site very helpful. Go there to request (at no cost) materials designed for self-study (as 10 CDs that cover a variety of tips, techniques, and modifications that can be made to the daily routine to ensure safety and independence for persons living with visual impairment).

VISIONAWARE: www.visionaware.org

This is a magnificent website for both those interested in receiving vision rehabilitation services and those providing relevant professional services. It provides a national directory of vision related services and highlights individuals, programs and innovations across the country. There are links to take the user to those specifics for which there is a search: Eye Conditions; Emotional Support; Everyday Living; Working Life; For Seniors; Get Connected (community, newsletter, peer advisors, calendar, announcements, blog).

VisionAware offers a "Getting Started" Kit for

People new to vision loss. The website has links to other very helpful websites (as www.afb.org ; and <https://nei.nih.gov>). Call Sharon Jones to request a VIST Review. (801)582-1565 ext. 1555.

RECREATIONAL THERAPY

What is Recreational Therapy? Recreational Therapy uses recreation services to help people with illnesses, disabilities, and other conditions to use leisure in ways that enhance their health, functional abilities, independence, and quality of life.

What programs are offered?

- **Dance-**
Thursdays from 4pm-5pm: Spouses/Family welcome!! Wellness Room in Bldg. 8
- **Singing Group-**
Tuesdays from 2:30pm-3:3pm:
Wellness Room in Bldg. 8
- **Scuba Diving Certification-**
Tuesdays (Times vary).
Bldg. 8
- **Paddle-Sports-**
Every other Friday @ 1600-1800
Bldg. 8 VA pool

For more information regarding Recreational Therapy and the activities available, please contact Heather Brown 801-582-1565 x1559 or Michael Scott 801-582-1565 x2617

(Reference: Recreation Newsletter, Aug. 6, 2015)

SUMMER SAFETY TIPS

Summer is here, and it is natural for us to want to be outside when the weather is so beautiful!

Here are some tips for a safe summer!

Moving Safely Outside-

Moving safely outside your home can be a challenge. Take care when walking up and down stairs and curbs. Be sure to wear sturdy, comfortable shoes and pay attention to where you step. On the following pages are more tips to keep you from falling.



Using Curbs and Stairs-

Curbs, steps, or uneven pavement can trip you. Take care when near them.

- Check the height of a curb before stepping up or down.

Be careful with uneven and cut-out sections of curbs.

When stepping off a curb with a walker, lower the walker onto the street first, then step off the curb.

- Don't rush when crossing the street. Watch for changes in pavement height.
- On stairs, grasp the handrail and take one step at a time. If you ever feel dizzy on stairs, sit down until you feel better.

Wear Shoes that Keep You Safe-

When you shop for shoes, keep these things in mind:

- Choose shoes with rubber or nonskid soles. Athletic shoes are a good choice.
- Choose flats or shoes with low heels. Avoid high heels or platforms.
- All footwear should be sturdy and well-fitting. Don't wear flip-flops or backless shoes. Make sure any slippers you have/buy have a rubber or nonskid sole.
- Don't walk around in just sock, as they can be slippery. Shoes are your safest bet, even when indoors. If you like, keep one pair of shoes just for indoors.



(Reference: ALVC Veteran Safety Handbook)

Have a great summer!!

uSPEQ

What is *uSPEQ*? *uSPEQ* is one of the ways that we work to better our services...by listening to you!!

This survey allows our patients to anonymously voice their feelings about the Advanced Low Vision Clinic. Some of the questions include:

Were you able to get what you needed at the Low Vision Clinic? Was your privacy respected? Are you being included in choices?

Each *uSPEQ* questionnaire is very specific to our clinic, and provides our clinic with valuable data we need to improve our services, and outcomes. We value any feedback that we receive, and take it seriously!

For more information on *uSPEQ* and how it helps our clinic, visit www.uspeq.org or call (888) 877-3788

Below are the FY 15 "OVERALL VALUES" results for the SLC Advanced Low Vision Clinic from *uSPEQ*...

Quarter: 1	Percent Positive
Quarter Dates: Oc.t 1st-Dec. 31st, 2014	
Section 2.5-Overall Value	
5.1. Would recommend to friend	99.4%
5.2. Services met my expectations	94.3%
5.3. Felt safe here	100.0%
5.4. Services enabled me to do things better	95.3%
5.5. Met my needs	96.5%

Quarter: 2	Percent Positive
Quarter Dates: Jan. 1st-Mar. 31st, 2015	
Section 2.5-Overall Value	
5.1. Would recommend to friend	96.4%
5.2. Services met my expectations	91.1%
5.3. Felt safe here	95.5%
5.4. Services enabled me to do things better	90.5%
5.5. Met my needs	93.6%

Quarter: 3	Percent Positive
Quarter Dates: Apr. 1st-Jun. 30th, 2015	
Section 2.5-Overall Value	
5.1. Would recommend to friend	100.0%
5.2. Services met my expectations	100.0%
5.3. Felt safe here	100.0%
5.4. Services enabled me to do things better	100.0%
5.5. Met my needs	100.0%

*Wishing you safe and happy summer!
Advanced Low Vision Staff*