



The Journal

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Volunteer Program Gives Teens View Inside WRNMMC

By Sharon Renee Taylor
WRNMMC Public Affairs
staff writer

This summer was like no other for 16-year-old Elizabeth McCarver.

The rising junior at Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School in Maryland learned instrument handling, knot tying, suturing and the basics of laparoscopic surgery in the same simulation center where fellows from medical training programs at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC), Washington Hospital Center, and other area hospitals receive training and learn the same techniques as well as clinical skills.

"This is just so intense and requires so much skill and practice..." McCarver said. She wants to pursue a career in medicine, likely primary care or family practice after her experience in the WRNMMC Simulation Training Center.

The 16-year-old and 75 other teens participated in the Red Cross Volunteens program held for six weeks in the Nation's Medical Center. Earning a spot in the annual program is highly competitive, explained McCarver's mom, Jill, a Red Cross

volunteer who coordinated this year's program. Each applicant had to submit an essay and a teacher recommendation.

"We received 80 applications this year," Jill said, explaining that the goal was to place as many applicants as possible.

She said the number of participants may be reduced to about 50 next year to ensure each receives as rich of an experience as possible. Less spots means more kids will likely vie for the same opportunities in the 2016 program.

Teens in the six-week program spent more than a month shadowing physicians inside the medical center, watching procedures, and some earning certification in basic life support. Others made models and performed clerical and filing duties, along with answering phones.

"I think it was successful," Jill said. Students completed a survey after their experience. She said they were really excited about the opportunity to shadow and observe procedures.

With exception, not all of this year's Volunteens seek medical careers. Seventeen-year-old Sam Richmond, a senior at W.T. Woodson High School in Fairfax,



Photo by Sharon Renee Taylor

Red Cross volunteer Jill McCarver (left) coordinated this year's Red Cross Volunteens program which had more than 70 teenagers participate, including Sam Richmond (center), and McCarver's daughter Elizabeth.

Va., is interested in computer science. He spent his six weeks in the Audiology Clinic learning how to set up a type of virtual reality ocular set for brain tests.

Richmond worked with scientists conducting research.

"They were using software to develop the program for it that

they weren't entirely familiar with and I was familiar with it so I was able to help them," he said.

He said the experience helped to affirm his interest in computer science. Elizabeth McCarver explained the Volunteens program gave her insights that

she probably wouldn't have received until she got to medical school.

"I did stuff that third- or fourth-year med students would do," at the end of med school, in the beginning of

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MWR CON Set to Celebrate Geek Culture

By Andrew Damstedt
NSAB Public Affairs
staff writer

Get your geek – nerd – or whatever you feel like on Saturday, Aug. 29 at Morale, Welfare & Recreation's (MWR) first popular culture convention, or MWR CON.

MWR Activities Coordinator Rachel Cornette said she came up with the idea to host a CON on Naval Support Activity Bethesda (NSAB) after the character brunch earlier this year, which is geared to-

ward a younger crowd.

"I got the idea right after we had the character brunch, because we don't have as much stuff for the grownups or big kids to do and at the same time there was a comic CON going

on downtown, so I went to the CON downtown to check it out," she said.

She said she is hoping that this event will help get service members out of their barracks and out to MWR activities.



Courtesy graphic

MWR CON will have plenty of activities, including laser tag, bowling where you can make your own avatars, strategic board games, trivia contests and costume contests, she said.

"The time is 100 percent ripe for this pop culture celebration," she said. "There are TV shows celebrating it, a whole realm of people who like to play board games and video games, and entire fandoms."

A unique feature will be a TARDIS photo booth – which a veteran made for his daughter's wedding and offered for

the MWR Con, Cornette said. Attendees will be able to choose from a variety of science fiction backgrounds for the pictures – and can get more than one strip of photos, she said.

She said the costume contests will have two main groups – a 17-and-under category and an 18-and-up group. People can dress up in whatever costume they like – "you don't have to make it a geek-related thing; any costume character," she said.

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Small Acts Can Save Lives

Navy Observes Suicide Prevention Month

While September is Suicide Prevention Month, subject matter experts from the 21st Century Sailor Office's Suicide Prevention Office, OPNAV N171, say their goal isn't to prevent suicide on just a single day or month, but every day of the year.

"Every life is precious, and the fight is year-round," said Capt. Mike Fisher, OPNAV N171 director. "We want people engaged with their shipmates every day of the year. We're talking about being there for every Sailor, every day."

This year, Suicide Prevention Month will focus on a new message with its Every Sailor, Every Day campaign, "1 Small ACT." The message promotes simple, everyday actions that can ultimately save lives, using Navy's "ACT" (Ask Care Treat) bystander intervention model.

Last week, the Navy Suicide Prevention office released a toolkit to help Navy commands and Sailors engage in the fight to prevent suicide. This toolkit features educational resources, high-resolution graphics, and ideas for actions to take during September and year-round.

Also in the toolkit are engagement ideas to promote peer support, personal wellness and bystander intervention all year long. One way to get involved as an individual or organization is to participate in the "1 Small ACT" Photo Gallery. Participants can print the "1 Small ACT" sign directly from the toolkit or online, personalize it with their example of a small act that they can perform in a shipmate's life, and then send a photo with the sign to suicideprevention@navy.mil.

Submissions will also be accepted through the Real Warriors mobile app, which can be downloaded on the Apple App Store or Google Play.

"We want to highlight people across the fleet as they share their ideas for supporting their shipmates and promoting psychological health," Fisher said. "You never know when



Photo by MC2 Lorenzo John Burlison

Lt. David Dziengowski, left, Yeoman 1st Class Silvia Raya, and Lt. j.g. Victor Gutierrez, from the Chief of Naval Personnel office, show support for the 1 Small Act message as part of the Every Sailor, Every Day campaign during Suicide Prevention Month. The campaign is designed to encourage dialogue and provide early resources to prevent suicide.

that everyday action - a kind word, an offer to help - will make the big difference in someone's life."

The "1 Small ACT" Photo Gallery will be displayed on the Navy Suicide Prevention Office's Operational Stress Control Facebook page, building a virtual wall of hope for the entire Navy community. Submissions will be accepted from Sept. 1 through Aug. 31, 2016.

For more information, please visit the Navy Suicide Prevention's Every Sailor, Every Day webpage at: http://www.npc.navy.mil/bupersnpc/support/21st_Century_Sailor/suicide_prevention/Pages/default.aspx.

Help is always available. Call the Military Crisis Line at 1-800-273-TALK (press 1), text 838255 or visit www.militarycrisisline.net for confidential, free support, 24/7.

For more news from Chief of Naval Personnel, visit www.navy.mil/local/cnp/.

Bethesda Notebook

Birth Month Training

Anyone who is non-compliant with annual Birth Month Training for Fiscal Year 2015 must attend one of the remaining sessions before Oct. 1 (even if your month is October, November or December): Sept. 1 in Clark Auditorium; Sept. 9 in Memorial Auditorium; Sept. 10 and 24 in Clark Auditorium; and Sept. 30 in Memorial Auditorium. Times for all sessions are from 8 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. For more information contact Hospital Corpsman 1st Class William Davis at William.f.davis3.mil@mail.mil or Rebecca Croyle at Rebecca.e.croyle.civ@mail.mil.

Women's Equality Day

The Multi-Cultural Committee at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center hosts a Women's Equality Day observance today at 11:30 a.m. in the America Building (Bldg. 19), in the lobby. Master Sgt. Staci Harrison will be the guest speaker. Women's Equality Day is Aug. 26. For more information, contact Chief Hospital Corpsman Reese at 301-319-2624 or Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Silvey at 301-295-4263.

TeamSTEPPS Training

TeamSTEPPS (Teamwork Skills, Team Strategies and Tools to Enhance Performance and Patient Safety) two-day train-the-trainer course is Sept. 28-29. For registration, times and location, contact Hospital Education and Training (HEAT) at dha.bethesda.ncr-medical.list.wrnm-class-registration@mail.mil.

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Construction Presents 'Growing Pains, A Vision For The Future' As WRNMMC Evolves

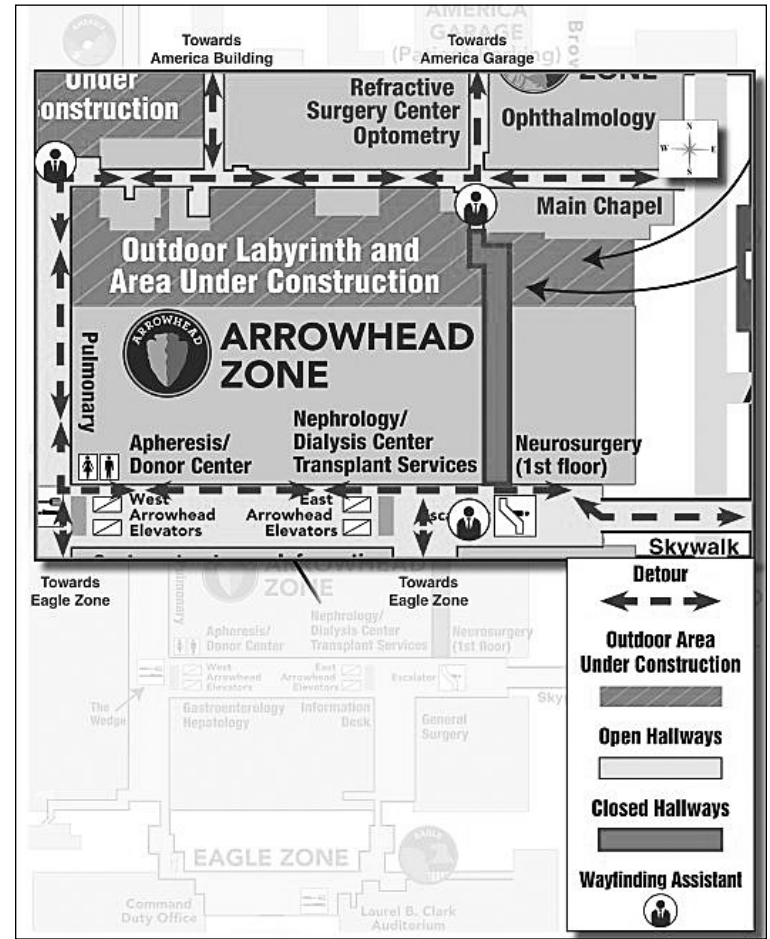
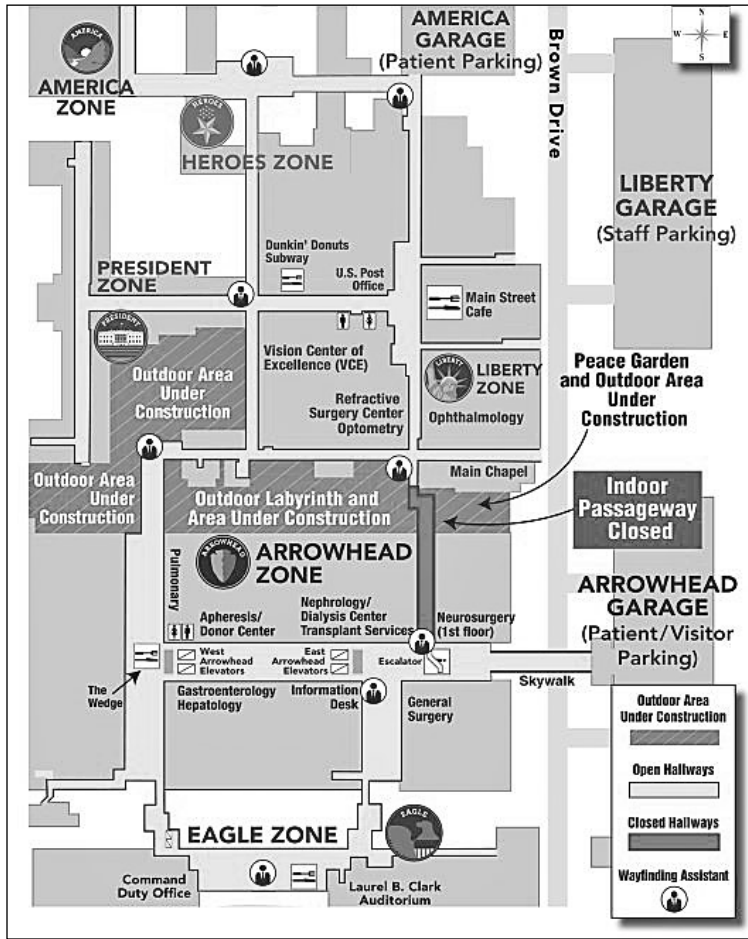
By Joseph Nieves
WRNMMC Public Affairs staff writer

In the coming weeks, patients and staff will see several projects designed to upgrade the facilities at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC). The projects will create new possibilities for even further upgrades in the future and allow WRNMMC to expand on its ability to continue to provide world-class patient care.

"The project (P130) modernizes and adds additional capacity to the existing infrastructure that supports hospital facilities. This project allows for minimal utility disruptions to the surrounding facilities that are not directly impacted by other future work," said Miguel Belen, Engineering and Project Management Division director for WRNMMC.

Belen said the projects will bring noise and vibrations that might be a concern for staff and patients.

Throughout the life of P130, the connecting corridor located near Brown Drive, between Buildings 8 and 9 will be closed indefinitely. The Peace Garden, Garden of Angels, Labyrinth, bus canopy area and sidewalk between Buildings 8 and 9 will be closed, Belen explained.



Courtesy graphic

The Peace Garden, Garden of Angels, Labyrinth, bus canopy and sidewalk between Buildings 8 and 9 will close indefinitely once construction begins on a utility tunnel at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center. The affected areas will not hinder hospital operation or clinic hours.

There are several ways the hospital will help patients to minimize impact on travel times between their appointments and their vehicles.

These efforts will include posted signage throughout the facility, as well as the Blue Coat ambassadors and clinical staff providing direc-

tions to assist patients and visitors.

Currently, the skylights in Building 9 are under renovation. There are sections of the

hallways that are closed off for safety due to this work, but clinic hours remain unaffected and there are no planned closures at this time.

Assistive Technology Volunteer 'Gives Back'

By Sarah Marshall
WRNMMC Public Affairs staff writer

Listening to music, using a computer, putting on deodorant ... these are some of the tasks that may not seem so simple for some wounded, ill or injured service members.

At Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC), however, the Assistive Technology program has been creating devices and software to help patients with those everyday functions we may often take for granted.

Helping with that program and its staff is Navy veteran Joel Kavet. He is among several American Red Cross volunteers in the Assistive Technology program, and is among the more than 600 Red Cross volunteers at the medical center who contribute almost 6,000 volunteer hours monthly.

Kavet became a volunteer at

WRNMMC in October 2012 to show his appreciation for the military not just with words, but deeds, he said. He retired in 2010 from a career mostly spent in public health and health care administration, and wanted to give back to the community.

When he started volunteering, he was unfamiliar with the Assistive Technology program, but was quickly intrigued by their services when he learned what they have to offer, he said. Assistive technology specialists create adaptive and rehabilitative devices for patients, to help improve their basic living functions. He explained they spend a lot of time experimenting and strategically piecing together nuts and bolts to determine what will work best for each individual, depending on where they are in their rehabilitation. Additionally, these specialists work in various areas of the hospital, such as Occupational Therapy, Speech and Audiology,



Photo by Sarah Marshall

American Red Cross volunteer Joel Kavet, left, comes to Walter Reed Bethesda once a week to support the Assistive Technology program. Pictured with Assistive Technology Specialist Mark Lindholm, the two discuss a device created by the program that allows patients with limited mobility to play and listen to music.

and at the National Intrepid Center of Excellence, as well as with inpatients.

These specialists have creat-

ed "switches," allowing patients to simply tap a lever with their elbow, to change the channel or volume on their TV. This is

especially helpful for someone who may be missing an arm or unable to use their hands. They've also set up speech recognition equipment to help patients use their computers, and have set up a device allowing patients to move their computer mouse with their head movement.

Some devices they've produced may seem remarkably simple, and may involve creating "things that don't exist in the marketplace," Kavet explained, "but they make life easier for individuals."

Kavet helps support the program by giving the equipment a "trial run," he explained, to help foresee any trouble a patient may have with using some of the assistive equipment. "I'm sort of a beta test," he said.

Additionally, if assistive technology specialists are working in the hospital and they need something from their

'I Am The Patient Experience'

Ground Rounds Focuses on 'Being Present' for Patients, Families

By Bernard S. Little
WRNMMC Public
Affairs staff writer

"You are the patient experience," Lt. Col. Clausyl J. Plummer said to a group of health-care providers gathered in Walter Reed National Military Medical Center's Clark Auditorium for Grand Rounds on Aug. 18.

Plummer, the executive staff officer/Patient Caring Touch System (PCTS) manager, Office of The Surgeon General, Army Nurse Corps, explained while members of the Military Health System (MHS) are busy, averaging 5,000 inpatient admissions, 834,000 outpatient visits, 943 births and 28,000 emergency room visits per week, it's important staff remember the patient is at the center of all that is done within the MHS.

The PCTS is a framework for nursing designed to reduce clinical quality variance by adopting a set of best practices to im-

prove the quality of care provided patients and their families. Plummer explained within PCTS is the Care Team, which includes the lead registered nurse (RN) responsible for building the therapeutic relationship with the patient. He added a "nursing imperative" for the lead nurse as well as others, is "being present."

He said patients experience vulnerability mentally, emotionally, physically and spiritually. The privilege of nursing is having the knowledge, skill, position and relationship to interact with a vulnerable human being in a way that alleviates pain and increases mental, emotional, physical and spiritual comfort.

"When we decide that we're going to be present...that falls directly in line with the patient experience," Plummer said. He said within the patient experience, "every role and every perception matter." He explained the patient experience "is

the responsibility of those providing direct care, be they nurses, physicians or technicians, as well as others who support any part of the experience, from the individual who schedules an appointment, the Red Cross volunteer, nutrition services to the housekeeping team."

In addition, "every interaction matters," Plummer continued. "Every touch point in health care is part of only one experience for the patient and their family. We cannot isolate efforts, but must work to see how they all fit together in providing the best experience possible.

"Every perception matters," he added. "Every action we take or process we implement is only as valuable as the perception it leaves with patients and families."

Plummer said Jason A. Wolf, Ph.D., recognized as an expert on organizational effectiveness, service excellence and high



Photo by Bernard S. Little

Lt. Col. Clausyl J. Plummer, the executive staff officer/Patient Caring Touch System (PCTS) manager, Office of The Surgeon General, Army Nurse Corps, discusses the importance of staff members understanding their role in the patient experience at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center during a Grand Rounds on Aug. 18 in Clark Auditorium.

performance in health care, "encourages all of us to proudly declare, 'I am the patient experience!'

With all respect to policy, process and protocol, the ultimate resource in an unparalleled patient ex-

perience is you, your behaviors, your actions and the choices you make, in whatever role you play, lend to the patient experience."

"Your attitude does matter," said Claudia Avila, the wife of Wounded Warrior Army Capt. Luis Avila, who has been cared for at WRNMMC for more than three years after being severely injured in Afghanistan by an improvised explosive device. The Avilas have three sons - Luis Jr., Miguel and Jose.

The Avila family has faced a number of challenges since the captain was injured, his wife said, as she encouraged health-care providers to "embrace" their patients and families. "If you help us, train us, teach us, we are on your team," she added. "That means a lot." She said to the WRNMMC providers, "Thanks to all of you, I have my husband and my children have their father. Thank you very much."

Soldiers, Sailors Graduate From Practical Nurse Course

By Bernard S. Little
WRNMMC Public
Affairs staff writer

Clark Auditorium was filled to capacity with family members and friends gathered to congratulate graduates of 68 C Class 14-149 from the U.S. Army Practical Nurse Course during a ceremony Aug. 14 at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC).

"I could not be more proud of these Soldiers and Sailors," said Maj. Gen. (Dr.) Jeffrey B. Clark, WRNMMC director, of the graduates. "This is truly a family event," he added. He explained those who wear the uniforms of the U.S. military, whether at home or abroad, could not do so

without the support of their families and friends.

Forty Soldiers and Sailors graduated from the year-long course which began with Phase I at the Academy of Health Sciences, Army Medical Department Center and School at Fort Sam Houston, Texas. There, they received 11 weeks of didactic study including 10 examinations covering human anatomy and physiology, as well as basic medical terminology and concepts.

Phase II of the course at WRNMMC included 18 more written examinations concerning nursing proficiency, as well as 22 practical exercises and skills labs culminating in more than 1,900 didactic hours. The training also included nearly 800 hours of clinical nursing recep-

torship and 80 hours of transition-into-practice or on-the-job training.

The average first time pass rate of graduates from the WRNMMC Practical Nurse Course who take the National Council Licensure Examination Practical Nurse (NCLEX-PN) test is, 97 percent, 12 percent higher than the national average, according to WRNMMC officials.

"If you ask any of the graduates, most of them would say that it wasn't easy getting to this point," said Army Lt. Col. Christine Ludwig, director of Phase II of the course. She added that among the graduates were two Navy corpsmen, part of a one-year pilot program during which they trained alongside

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Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Christopher Krucke

Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC) Director Maj. Gen. (Dr.) Jeffrey B. Clark praises the graduates who completed the year-long U.S. Army Practical Nurse Course and thanks their families, instructors and leaders for their support during a ceremony Aug. 14 at WRNMMC. "I could not be more proud of these Soldiers and Sailors," said Clark said of the graduates.

VOLUNTEER

Continued from pg. 3

office in Building 62 – perhaps a gadget to assist in attaching a smart phone to an amputee’s wheel chair – Kavet will go back to the office, so the assistive technology staff can continue working with their patients.

He also helps the program’s staff by writing material – be it for a brochure about the program, or helping draft correspondence to hospital administration.

Prior to his career in the health care industry, Kavet joined the Navy in 1962 after completing his undergraduate studies. He served on active duty for two years then held a commission for 11 years. Being in the military during the height of the Cold War, his job was to monitor incoming and outbound aircraft headed from Canada to Cuba. One of his most memorable moments, though, was riding out a hurricane while at sea.

After serving in the military, he became interested in health care issues and worked in hospital administration in both the public and private sector. He worked for large corporations, managing employees’ health benefits. He also helped develop health care

programs for coal miners, ensuring they had adequate health care resources.

Today, as a volunteer, he enjoys still being connected to the military and medical community. Most of all, he enjoys getting to see patients progress through their recovery, and getting back to a sense of normalcy.

“That’s what I enjoy about it, [and] the opportunity to help out,” he said.

Though he may downplay his role and suggest he is “along for the ride,” the program’s staff describe him as an invaluable asset. Assistive technology specialist Amanda Reinsfelder said Kavet is among their “valued volunteers.”

“Joel’s expertise in health care administration stands out,” Reinsfelder said. “He is one of our go-to guys when we need program development guidance or to edit our correspondence with hospital administration.”

He has “extremely valuable knowledge,” she added, and he is not afraid to “get his hands dirty” cleaning equipment.

“His time is very valuable to us because he also helps with the multiple small tasks that add up to a significant value,” she said.

At WRNMMC, the American Red Cross offers a variety of services for patients and their families, such as providing clothing and blankets, movies, toiletries and/or simply providing comfort. In Fiscal Year 2015, Red Cross volunteers provided more than 34,000 items to support patients and families throughout the hospital. Volunteers include civilians and active duty members, administrators and doctors, who practice to the full extent of their credentials and support activities across Naval Support Activity Bethesda, where WRNMMC is located. They greet wounded, ill and injured service members arriving via medical evacuation, and during the summer, approximately 75 youth volunteers serve throughout the medical center as well.

For more information about becoming a volunteer at WRNMMC, call 301-295-1538.

TEENS

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their residency or internship,” the teen explained. “I learned all this and I saw a class of med students come in from USU, and they were doing the stuff I had learned. I actually picked it up faster than them,” she said with a smile.

“I got to do this thing that people much older than me do, and they have to wait for it,” McCarver said, computing that the Volunteering experience enabled her to skip about eight years of schooling and proceed straight to her third-year residence.

“I’m practically a doctor,” she said, laughing.

CON

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Costumes cannot include realistic looking weapons, she said, noting that light sabers are not realistic. Any swords need to be peace tied [not removable from the sheath], she said.

There will be door prizes and giveaways on a first-come first served basis, she added.

Cornette said she’s heard people are very excited about the first MWR CON, and she hopes enough people attend so this can become an annual event.

“I’ve heard people say, I hope my costume comes in time,” she said.

MWR CON will be at the NSAB Bowling Center (Bldg. 56), from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. and Cornette said people can RSVP to the event on NSAB’s Facebook page. MWR CON is free and anyone with base access is invited to attend.

Other upcoming MWR activities include:

- Annual Freedom 5K: Sept. 11 at 11 a.m. at the MWR Sports Complex. Registration is available at www.nsab2015freedom5k.eventbrite.com.

- Tuesday Night Intramural Bowling: Tuesdays, starting Sept. 15 at 7 p.m. Registration ends Sept. 14 and signs ups are available at the Building 17 Fitness Center front desk.

- Super Fun Monday League: Mondays, starting Sept. 21, NSAB Bowling Center, for anyone with base access 18 and older.

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NURSE

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Soldiers and had the opportunity to sit for the NCLEX-PN. She said so far, six corpsmen have successfully graduated from the pilot program.

"This is an exciting day for all of the graduates as they enter into the profession of nursing," Ludwig said.

Retired Army Command Sgt. Maj. Tom Craig, a paratrooper and combat medic who earned the prestigious Expert Field Medical Badge while on active duty, was guest speaker at the graduation. The Soldier, who met his wife in the Army's LPN Charlie School, also stressed the importance of family and friends, saying they provide service members with the inspiration to be successful in their mission.

In addition, Craig encouraged the graduates to continue to work hard and practice good values, such as those of

the Practical Nurse Course which include loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, personal courage and commitment. "Everything you do, give it 100 percent," he continued.

Craig added maintaining traditions is also important, as well as service members from different branches learning from each other and working together to better serve beneficiaries.

"We must all carry a burning torch of respect with us every day, in every conversation, and every act we have with Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Civilians, leaders and adversaries," Craig said. "Treat others as we wish to be treated," he said.

Craig concluded by recognizing the sacrifices of Wounded Warriors.

"We all have ties to Wounded Warriors and their sacrifices," he said. He encouraged the graduates to practice with safety and compassion, "the science of medicine" they have been given the privilege to provide to Wounded Warriors and their families.

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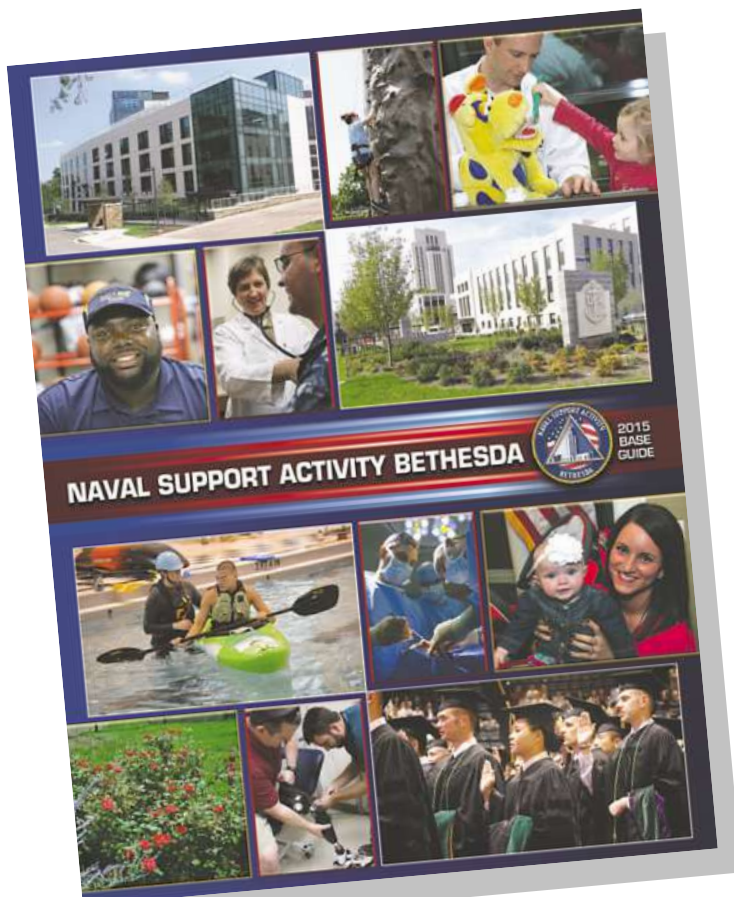
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