

# Family Council Matters Newsletter

## MVH-Minneapolis



December 2017

### Family Council Alumni Membership Explained

*Note: This article was originally published in the December 2009 Family Council Matters Newsletter.*

The MVH-Minneapolis Family Council has several members who have joined the ranks of alumni. Becoming an alumni member of the Family Council is no easy feat. It usually involves having traveled a rocky road, full of potholes and detours that can be unpredictable and upsetting. Walking alongside your loved one who lives in a nursing home is so emotionally exhausting that it tests your moral fiber to its very core. Difficult decisions will likely be faced, with consensus among family members sometimes hard to find. It can be a lonely and costly journey. Along the way, laundry piles up at home, the checkbook no longer gets regularly balanced, and plans for travels with your loved one to any number of fun destinations are severely curtailed, if not dashed altogether. The loss of these anchors that are part and parcel of one's identity can leave you feeling adrift, and unhinged from life as you know it. Or rather, as you knew it. And after all that, after that bumpy ride of spending weeks, months, or even years at the beck and call of your loved one's needs, it is suddenly over. Your loved one moves onto his or her place in eternity, and you are left behind. The hectic and erratic rhythm that had become your life, for better or for worse, abruptly halts. Sometimes with no warning, other times with plenty. In either case, all that tender loving care you had been giving, is no longer needed.

That's the point at which you are ushered into the position of alumni with the Family Council. And while your loved one may no longer need you, the Family Council invites you to remain involved, as you are still needed. In fact, you have earned the dubious distinction of becoming an expert on such matters as care conferences, emergency hospitalizations, and hospice. Be assured that your hard-earned expertise is highly valued, especially to those families just beginning that tumultuous journey with their loved one. So if you are feeling inspired to stay on with the Family Council, please know that your presence is warmly welcomed, and deeply appreciated.



Please Join Us for the  
Monthly Family Council Meeting on  
**Saturday, December 9, 2017**

1st -- A Social Half-Hour  
From Noon Till 12:30  
Then Starting at 12:30pm

**2018 Officer Elections**  
followed by the  
**Holiday Potluck Party**  
**AND Marcus Gustafson**  
**on ElderCare Dental**

**Theater Room**  
**Building 21**





## December "Goings-On" at the MVH-Minneapolis

At the MVH-Minneapolis, the month of December is a parade of joyful events and activities. The following paragraphs describe some of the festivities that are planned.

On **Wednesday, December 6 and Thursday, December 7**, in keeping with a 34-year-old tradition, the American Legion Auxiliary will be sponsoring a Gift Shop in the Building 6 Craft Room. At the Gift Shop, our Veterans who live at the MVH-Minneapolis will be invited to choose two gifts. One for themselves, and another for a caretaker, spouse, sister, brother, or child living in the home. Gifts are labeled and wrapped at no cost. Watch for more details about the Gift Shop to be posted around campus.

Then **Saturday, December 9**, the monthly Family Council Meeting will transform into an Elections Event, followed by the Annual Holiday Potluck Party. This year there will be an addition to the elections and holiday party. We have invited Marcus Gustafson to provide a brief, informational overview about ElderCare Dental services offered at the MVH-Minneapolis, after which he will stay and answer our questions. Family members who have or have had a loved one living at the Vets Home are invited, along with our loved ones who live at the MVH-Minneapolis. Bring a dish to share (maybe your loved one's favorite?), then get ready for some lively conversation, and lots of laughter! The event will be held in the Building 21 Theater Room.

Next, on **Friday, December 22**, a long-standing tradition gets underway on each nursing unit. From 10:00am till noon, all family members and our loved ones who live at the MVH-Minneapolis are invited to a brunch that is complete with lots of yummy food. Such as cheese omelets, Swedish meatballs, baked ham, warm

bread pudding with caramel sauce, Christmas cookies, fresh fruit, herring, cheese and crackers, plus coffee and egg nog. Come early to get a nearby parking spot, as this event is well-attended. If you plan to bring more than four family members, please inform your loved one's Recreation Therapist at least one week in advance. Live entertainment will be provided, along with a gift for each of our loved ones.

Here is the brief back story about these particular gifts that will be distributed to our loved ones at the December 22 Holiday Party. They are made possible by the MVH-Minneapolis Adopt-a-Vet Program, which began in 2003. It is primarily organizations, but also individuals, who "Adopt a Veteran" for Christmas. This consists of purchasing a gift for our loved ones from a wish list that was created by their Recreation Therapist in collaboration with the nursing staff, our loved ones, and even in some cases having asked family members for the best gift ideas. Based on that information, the adopting groups take it from there! It is a "feel good" program that feels as good to give, as it does to get.

Also on **December 22**, the Family Council is sponsoring a fun event that has been hugely popular. From 10:30am till 1:30pm, in the Building 19 Atrium near the Christmas Tree, Michael Proebstle of Legacy Creative Images will be taking a photo of each resident and his or her family, then printing one free keepsake portrait for you to take home.

Then all of us are invited to participate in a Worship Service that is also scheduled on **Friday, December 22**, in the afternoon at 1:15pm. The service will be held in the Building 19 Community Room.





## **Thank You's**

A heartfelt thanks to Jennifer Swedberg, who donated two handmade quilts to the Family Council for our New Resident Welcome Baskets.

Another heartfelt thanks to Nancy Knoll and the Bloomington Women of Today, who donated 16 handmade crocheted blankets, also for our New Resident Welcome Baskets.

## **2017 Accomplishments**

**Bridge.** Several members of the Family Council worked with the MVH-Minneapolis leadership team during the 2017 Legislative Session in support of bills that ultimately approved the funds needed to repair the historical bridge. In September, construction crews arrived and began working. The bridge is expected to open by the end of this month.

**Meetings with Administration.** The Family Council has resumed monthly meetings with the MVH-Minneapolis Administration. These meetings provide a forum in which family members' concerns and successes, as well as the administration's feedback and updates, are collaboratively discussed and resolved.

**Dental Clinic.** In April 2017, ElderCare Dental began providing preventative dental care services onsite at the MVH-Minneapolis. Also in 2017, the MVH-Minneapolis secured funding to construct a fully operational dental clinic onsite that will provide restorative dental care as well. The clinic is expected to be operational by the spring of 2018.

**St. Catherine's Nursing Students.** During fall 2017, a total of 30 St. Catherine's pre-licensure nursing students were on the MVH-Minneapolis campus in a variety of capacities, including pre-licensure nursing, nurse practitioner and clinical scholars. The students were able to interact with nursing staff on campus, learning about specialty areas such as wound care, restorative nursing, quality, and the MDS. Students were also involved in a Veteran's interview project, and have been able to develop excellent competency in the area of Veterans health care. The Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs (MDVA) has

hired Mary Mehelich, RN, MPH, who is an Education Clinical Liaison. Mary is working to bring students from various colleges and universities to complete their clinical requirements at each of the Veterans Homes in Minnesota, then will recruit those excellent students for future Veterans Homes' jobs.

**Sleep Project.** The goal of this research project is to find and implement best practices that ensure all residents sleep as soundly as possible every night. The research project involves MVH-Minneapolis Behavioral Health Services Department and a group of St. Catherine's University graduate students. The students meet with a core group of MVH-Minneapolis staff and St. Catherine faculty every other week to discuss the process of the project, learn skills on the research process and relate it to this project, as well as assign tasks. Right now, this core group is looking at evidence based practice and research in a number of areas related to sleep, some of which include sleep medications, the sleep environment, sleep stages and the older population, mental health and sleep, as well as the use of aromatherapy and "snooze" food. This project is expected to be completed by the fall of 2018.

## **Officer Elections in December**

At the Family Council Meeting on Saturday, December 9, 2017, members will vote in a new slate of officers for 2018. You must be present at the meeting to vote. There will be no absentee balloting. Please plan to join us if your schedule permits to vote in a chair, vice chair, secretary, treasurer, and members-at-large.

## **A Quiet Act of Kindness**

Five years ago, two employees at the MVH-Minneapolis noticed that our loved ones were often not quite warm enough during trips to outside appointments. Their solution was to coordinate the production of converting fleece blankets into cold weather ponchos, which are quick and easy to slide over each resident's head, keeping them very warm throughout the trip on wintery days. Handmade knit stocking caps are now available too. Quiet acts of kindness can make such a difference!



*Our condolences go out to the families and friends whose loved one recently passed away.*

**2018 Meeting Dates**  
**Second Saturday of**  
**Each Month at 12:30pm**  
**Bldg 21 Theater Room**

**January 13**  
**February 10**  
**March 10**

**April 14**  
**May 12**  
**June 9**

**July 14**  
**August 11**  
**September 8**

**October 13**  
**November 10**  
**December 8**

### Holidays, Gifts, and Staff

Just a friendly reminder ... staff at the MVH-Minneapolis are not permitted to accept gifts from residents and/or their families.

**Officer of the Day (OD)**  
**MVH-Minneapolis**  
**612-221-6389**  
Call at Night and on Weekends  
At Other Times,  
Please Call Unit or Building Manager

Ombudsman for the MVH-Minneapolis  
Kristen Rice  
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### **Family Council Officer Contact Information**

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