



The Biloxi Breeze

Spring 2016



A Publication of the Gulf Coast Blind Rehabilitation Center
Gulf Coast Veterans Health Care System

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Mission Statement

The mission of Blind Rehabilitation is to provide instruction to Veterans and military personnel who are blind or visually impaired. The goal is to promote independence, self-care, and improve the overall quality of life.

Produced By

The Biloxi Breeze is a publication of the Gulf Coast Blind Rehabilitation Center (GCBRC).

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Gulf Coast Blind Rehabilitation Center:

Vision Statement

To help veterans and their families live more fulfilled and productive lives by providing the best rehabilitation experience possible. Veterans receive world class rehabilitation with access to the latest technology and proven techniques for living with vision loss surrounded by highly trained licensed and certified staff in a state of the art program.

Values

Integrity, Commitment, Advocacy, Respect, Excellence

Characteristics: "I Aced It"

Integrated, Attentive, Compassionate, Encouraging, Diligent, Independent, Trustworthy

Message from the Chief



Days are always busy here at the Gulf Coast Blind Rehabilitation Center. So far this fiscal year we have had over 100 Veterans pass through our doors to receive training in our various programs, graduated five Veterans from the CATs and Dogs program, and trained more than a handful of Veterans on the OrCam.

The garden is going strong in the courtyard and growing beautifully in the spring weather. Temperatures are slowly climbing and nights are warming up.

New staff has come on board, and we have our fingers crossed for another one before too long. This allows us to bring in Veterans in a timely manner and keep our Veteran satisfaction high.

We have had wonderful community-based instruction days to a Mardi Gras parade, the National Seashore Park for exploring the nature center, fishing and grilling out, and, next, we have a fishing rodeo planned.

A few of our Veterans are working on starting an alumni group. They hope to meet at least once a year. If you are interested in having your name in the directory or being a part of the group, please let me know.

Before I close, we here at the GCBRC would like to extend congratulations to VIST Coordinator John Laakman on his retirement. It has been a pleasure working with you, and we know your Veterans will miss you. We wish you all the best as you start a new chapter in your life.

Take good care of yourself!
Until next time...Keep in touch!

*Debra Gilley, M.Ed., COMS, CLVT
Chief, Gulf Coast Blind
Rehabilitation Center*

MEET OUR STAFF

Staff Updates

2016 has brought a few new additions to our staff.

In January, Maighdlin (Maddie) Martinez joined the CATs Department. Some of you may remember Maddie as one of our Orientation and Mobility interns from the fall. She received high marks from our Veterans and their families, and we were told that if we ever had an opening we should “hire her on the spot.” Well, we took the comments to heart and brought her back on board as a full time staff member.

Also in January, we had the much anticipated arrival of our new Low Vision Optometrist, Dr. Jessica Badillo. She comes to us from the Virgin Islands with glowing recommendations, and we are very excited to have her with us.

Then in March, Robin Clenney arrived to fill our vacant

Orientation and Mobility position. Robin was also an intern with us a couple summers ago. She did a terrific job then and is an asset to our staff now.

Be sure to welcome them all when you get the chance!

Featured Staff:

Dr. Jessica Badillo



Dr. Badillo was born and raised in San Juan, Puerto Rico. She attended the University of Puerto Rico from 1990 to 1994, and graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Natural Sciences. Dr. Badillo settled in San Juan and started her scientific career in 1995. After several years of working in the scientific profession, deep inside she knew she always wanted to be a part

of the medical field. Having a strong family background of physicians, she turned her focus toward optometry.

She got admitted in the Interamerican University of Puerto Rico in 1999 and graduated in June 2003. She accepted a residency at the VA San Juan Blind Rehabilitation Center from July 2004 to June 2005. In this position, Dr. Badillo developed a passion for helping Veterans with visual impairments use their vision to the maximum with available and accessible technology.

In 2007, Dr. Badillo and her husband moved to the U.S. Virgin Islands and she focused her attention back on general optometry. Dr. Badillo worked nine years as a private practitioner and served in various islands in the Caribbean. She worked with patients of all ages and prescribed glasses and contact lenses, diagnosed and prescribed for ocular diseases and therapeutics.

In February 2010, she turned her focus to the Veterans Health Care System Blind Rehabilitation Service. Always interested in returning to VA, she eventually was selected for a Blind Rehabilitation Center Optometrist position. She transferred to the Gulf Coast Veterans Health Care System, Gulf Coast Blind Rehabilitation Center in Biloxi, Miss., in 2016.

Currently, Dr. Badillo is the Low Vision Optometrist in the Surgical Service. She is excited that our Veterans are able to come to one place for all of their visual impairment needs. She hopes she can be an asset to expand the program even further in the future.

Dr. Badillo is married and has a son. In her free time, she enjoys taking her son to the park, going to the movies, or just a walk on the beach on a sunny Sunday morning on the beautiful Mississippi Gulf Coast.

Manual Skills Update

*Nancy Shampo, M.Ed., COMS,
TVI Manual Skills Supervisor*

Hello again from Manual Skills. Deanna and I were discussing how mild this winter was. We have started planning our spring garden and are looking forward to the longer days and warmer weather. Our fall crop was a big success with fall tomatoes, broccoli, collard greens and cauliflower. We enjoyed all of the above at our Thanksgiving celebration.

For the spring crop we planted potatoes, pole beans and some lettuce. We had a lot of rain this past fall and into the new year. If only we could bottle it and save it for the dry season.

The holidays were great, and the Veterans enjoyed many holiday activities which included a breakfast on Christmas Eve prepared by the BRC staff. We hope your holidays were equally enjoyable.

Manual skills is busting at the seams with Veterans and projects that run the range from leather work, copper tooling, ceramics, pottery, and many other creative endeavors by the Veterans. We even made some Mardi Gras decorations earlier this year.

In parting, we hope your new year is filled with exciting times and much success in all that you do.

Admissions Coordinator/CATs

*Michael "Andy" Amberson,
M.Ed., COMS, CLVT
Admissions Coordinator/CATs
Supervisor*

The Admissions Office has been busy with referrals so keep them coming. Our 100th Veteran to get training at the GCBRC this fiscal year just arrived. We currently have 13 approved and waiting to be scheduled. The wait time from referral to admission is currently averaging 30 days. Our

CAT instructors are very popular; so the wait time to get into CATs ONLY program is a little longer. We are so pleased that Maighdlin (Maddie) Martinez joined our CAT department in January. Welcome, Maddie. It is great to have you with us!

Update: Windows 10

*Tim Sniffen, CATIS
Computer Access Training
Specialist*

The GCBRC issues new Windows 10 computers to Veterans for whom Windows 10 is the best solution to meet their needs. An all-in-one Windows 10 desktop may be the best solution for Veterans who benefit from a large touchscreen device and the sharp magnification of Zoomtext for home use. We have issued quite a few Windows 10 systems over the last half year. Even so, some Veterans we have served need to use Windows 7 on the job, and they continue to be trained on that operating system. Overall, Windows is a smaller part of our training than in years past because many

Veterans have found that the iPhone, iPad or Macintosh computer meets their needs and provides a simpler, more accessible, and often more enjoyable user experience. That said, we cannot recommend upgrading existing Windows computers to Windows 10. A number of Veterans across the country have done so, succumbing to the constant prompts from Microsoft to update their computers to the new and shiny Windows 10. In most cases, their copy of Zoomtext or JAWS was disabled during the update process and no longer functions. They needed a paid upgrade, and for that they needed their Zoomtext or JAWS serial numbers. They needed professional help installing the upgrade, and several have called or brought their computers here as outpatients. We can't stock upgrades, since they are serial-number specific. We have to order them, and the Veterans have to wait several weeks for

upgrades to arrive. They can get upgrades immediately online – if they are willing to pay themselves – but Prosthetics Service need to order upgrades through approved VA vendors.

Then, there are the new programs such as the Edge browser, Mail client, Calendar, News and other programs that still won't work well with Zoomtext or JAWS. The Start menu and other features are different and unfamiliar.

Windows Explorer has changed and cloud services are now the default. There is a lot to learn to use Windows 10 with accessibility software. Upgrading is not something one should do just because it's new and possibly better.

If and when your Windows computer fails to meet your needs, then you may return for training on newer equipment and software or receive such training from a blind rehabilitation specialist in your

home where such help is available.

Apple Music

*Tim Sniffen, CATIS
Computer Access Training
Specialist*

Many of our Veterans have enjoyed the free Apple Music service on their iPhones or iPads because it works well with Siri. Just say, "Play Frank Sinatra radio" and Siri will open Music, create a play list, and begin playing Frankie and similar music. Well, no longer. Now it's a paid service and will cost you \$9.99 a month or \$14.99 a month if you want a family subscription.

We suggest that our music-loving, but frugal, graduates install Pandora on their iPhones or iPads. It won't work with Siri, other than saying "Open Pandora," but the basic plan is still free.

Lorrie's Corner

*Lorrie Bowen, CVRT
Living Skills Supervisor*

What's on your plate?

I ordered a large bulletin board a few years ago and it had been sitting in a corner. Well, last summer I decided to have the bulletin board put up in the training kitchen in the GCBRC. The next step was to decide what I was going to do with this bulletin board. I decided to do a nutrition board addressing the five food groups: Vegetables, Fruits, Grains, Protein Foods, and Dairy.

As part of teaching meal preparation skills and safety techniques in the kitchen, we also discuss healthy eating. Good nutrition is important at any age. Eating well helps you feel your best each day. Once we hit that retirement chapter of our lives, we may not eat as often for various reasons. Healthy eating will help to prevent or manage heart disease, diabetes,

osteoporosis and some cancers. As we age gracefully, our bodies are changing as well. I can say that because that's where I am now. I have to eat healthy foods, drink water and not soft drinks, and exercise. If I don't want any health challenges, then I must learn to make healthy choices.

Maintaining a healthy weight is important as you age. Instead of dieting to lose weight, it's better to make wise food choices, watch your portion size and be active. From time to time, you might say, "Oops... I forgot to eat, or I am not hungry, so I won't eat anything." Skipping a meal, especially breakfast, isn't good. I often hear my Veterans say, "I don't have an appetite any more or don't like to eat alone." The bottom line is: Don't skip meals.

I want to share information and tips in how to stay healthy by including the five basic food groups in planning your meals. For the most part, we may just go in the kitchen and prepare something to eat, but may not

pay any attention to whether any of the five basic food groups are in your meal. If you are like me, I may throw something in the microwave and that's my meal. Or I go running out the door in the morning with a breakfast shake thinking this is my "healthy" breakfast for the day.

This year, I will be writing articles on the five basic groups which will include charts, short recipes, and basic information a guide to healthy eating. I am starting off with this article by listing the five groups and a list of various food items in each group. I hope, this information will be helpful and will encourage you (and me). Good nutrition is important at any age. The list of the various foods will help you in planning your meals to include the five basic food groups. Until next time: What's on your plate?

Vegetables: Any vegetables or 100% vegetable juice counts as a member of the Vegetable Group.

Vegetables may be raw or cooked, fresh, frozen, or canned.

- ❖ Broccoli
- ❖ Greens
- ❖ Spinach
- ❖ Carrots
- ❖ Beans
- ❖ Peas
- ❖ Starchy vegetables (corn)

Fruits: Any fruit or 100% fruit juice counts as part of the Fruit Group. Fruits may be fresh, canned, frozen, or dried.

- ❖ Apple
- ❖ Applesauce
- ❖ Banana
- ❖ Cantaloupe
- ❖ Grapes
- ❖ Mixed fruits (fruit cocktail)

Grains: What foods are in the Grains Group? Any food made from wheat, rice, oats, cornmeal, barley, or another cereal grain is a grain product.

- ❖ Bread
- ❖ Pasta
- ❖ Oatmeal
- ❖ Breakfast cereals
- ❖ Tortillas
- ❖ Grits
- ❖ Biscuits
- ❖ English muffins

Protein Foods: All foods made from meat, poultry, seafood, beans, peas, eggs, processed soy products, nuts, and seeds are considered part of the Protein Foods Group. Yes, beans and peas are also part of the Vegetable Group as well.

- ❖ Seafood (cooked fish or shell fish)
- ❖ Eggs
- ❖ Nuts and seeds
- ❖ Meats
- ❖ Poultry

Dairy: All fluid milk products and many foods made from milk are considered part of the Dairy Group.

- ❖ Milk
- ❖ Yogurt
- ❖ Cheese
- ❖ Soymilk
- ❖ Milk-based desserts

Information to write this article is from the following resources:

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)--
ChooseMYPlate.gov

A guide to healthy eating for Older Adults/Canada's Food Guide Healthy Eating for Adults/Health and Wellness/ Vanderbilt University

Mardi Gras CBI

*Molly Mather, COMS
O&M Specialist*



Fun Fact: Mardi Gras is Fat Tuesday in French.

Mardi Gras is a huge tradition down here along the Gulf Coast as a last hoorah before Ash Wednesday. Although Mardi Gras is technically the day before Ash Wednesday, along the Coast it has become its own season with celebrations and parades beginning weeks prior to Fat Tuesday. From New Orleans to Mobile, from Lafayette to Ocean Springs, all of the coastal cities host a parade in celebration of the season.

Biloxi hosts the Gulf Coast Carnival Association parade of over 100 bead-throwing, music blastin', bedazzled floats on Fat

Tuesday. What better way to celebrate the season than to attend the Mardi Gras parade for a CBI! It was a blast! The King and Queen even exited their floats to visit with our Veterans; what a royal surprise!

Our Veterans and staff were weighed down by the hundreds with bead necklaces that stacked up to our ears thrown from the floats! But beads aren't the only things thrown — stuffed animals, souvenir cups, flowers, fake tomahawks, and many more unique items are also treasures of the Mardi Gras parades. Moon Pies, too! Yumm!

If you have not experienced Mardi Gras along the Gulf Coast, I highly recommend you do! It is something you won't forget!



Low Vision Tips

Gail Beard, CLVT, CVRT

Low Vision Therapist

FACTS ABOUT LOW VISION

- Low vision is one of the biggest issues as people grow older
- A healthy 60-year-old retina requires three times as much light as a 20-year-old retina
- Low vision is very individualized; not all devices work for every individual.

TIP #1: USE TASK LAMPS FOR BETTER LIGHT

CHARACTERISTICS OF A “GOOD” TASK LAMP

- Flexible arm or gooseneck
- CFL bulb of 15 watts OR incandescent bulb of 60 watts
- Light directed down on reading material or object
- Lamp shade should never block the light
- Use at eye level
- Use on the side of the better eye

TIP #2: USE QUALITY MAGNIFICATION TOOLS

- Handheld magnifiers
- Stand magnifiers

- Lighted or unlighted magnifiers
- Distance magnification
- Hands-free magnification
- Electronic magnification
- Computer screen magnification

HANDHELD MAGNIFIERS:

- PROS: portability; most common style
- CONS: needs additional lighting; can scratch easily

LIGHTED HANDHELD MAGNIFIERS:

- PROS: portable with light
- CONS: replacement of batteries; may not be enough light

STAND MAGNIFIERS:

- PROS: holds correct viewing distance; hold page flat; if lighted, has own light source
- CONS: not able to write underneath; reflection from light

DISTANCE MAGNIFICATION:

- PROS: see things at a distance; can be mounted on frame for hands free
- CONS: small visual field; can be hard to hold; can be heavy if mounted on spectacles

HANDS-FREE MAGNIFICATION:

- PROS: hands are free; easier to use when writing
- CONS: close viewing distance when increasing magnification

ELECTRONIC MAGNIFICATION:

- PROS: easy to use; lighting not an issue; various magnifications; new portable/handheld units
- CONS: space needed with most models; difficulty tracking lines of print with some models

COMPUTER SCREEN MAGNIFICATION:

- PROS: software options to enlarge text; increase print size, contrast options
- CONS: larger size print makes it harder to see the entire screen

TIP #3: PROTECT EYES FROM SUN AND GLARE

- UV rays from the sun may cause damage to eyes
- Wear filters and/or hat, indoors and outdoors, where glare is a problem
- Many styles, frame sizes and tints

TIP #4: USE NONOPTICAL DEVICES

- Writing guides: signature, envelope, letter, check
- Large number phone, clock, TV remote, thermostat, watch
- Talking devices: clock, watch, calculator, weight scale, food, thermometer, personal care thermometer, color identifier, microwave, blood pressure monitor, blood glucose monitor, tape measure, level
- Lap desk, reading stand, posture board
- Bold line paper
- Dark, felt tip pen
- Magnifying mirror
- Large print or large-size pill organizer
- Tactile markings

TIP #5: KEEP YOUR HOME SAFE

- Reduce clutter
- Be organized
- Arrange furniture for clear paths
- Install handrails by stairs; both sides, if possible
- Use good lighting on stairs
- Remove or tape down throw rugs
- Use contrast; put yellow tape on or paint the leading edge

of steps, paint door frames a contrasting color, use different colored plates on electrical outlets, use plates and cups that contrast with the tablecloth or placemat or food

TIP #6: SET UP AN IDEAL WORKING AREA

- Comfortable and adjustable chair
- Desk or table free of clutter
- Posture board, lap desk or reading stand
- Good task lighting
- Magnification device(s)
- Appropriate writing device
- Appropriate writing tablet and writing guides

TIP #7: SLOW DOWN AND PACE YOURSELF

- Most falls happen when someone is rushing
- Using magnification requires practice and learning a new way of doing things
- Read for shorter periods of time
- Know that tasks will usually take longer to do

TIP #8: OBTAIN LARGE-PRINT MATERIALS

- Books, checks, menus, playing cards, magazines, utility bills, religious materials, address books, calendars, prescription labels, phones
- Inquire at libraries, book stores, restaurants, banks, utility companies, pharmacies, phone stores

TIP# 9: USE YOUR RESOURCES

- Access services from federal, state and local agencies: Veterans Affairs, State Blind Rehabilitation Services, State Library, State Radio Reading Services, private blind and visually impaired rehabilitation services
- Local phone companies: free directory assistance
- Personal shopper, customer service, order groceries by phone or internet
- Utilities: large-print bills,
- Bank Services: large-print checks
- Public transportation, family, and friends

Sighted Guide

Kailey Case

Orientation and Mobility Intern

When working with someone who is blind or visually impaired, one of the very first things typically taught is sighted guide. Sighted guide, also known as human guide or guided assistance, is one of the most important tools of orientation and mobility. It allows a person who is blind or visually impaired to use another person as a guide to navigate in an area, instead of having to use a cane or other means to get around. It is often used in situations where an area is crowded with many obstacles, when someone needs to travel very quickly, when in a completely unfamiliar area, or when someone simply prefers not to use his or her cane.

Always offer someone who is blind or visually impaired the option of sighted guide, rather than grabbing his or her arm and pulling him or her to where he or she needs to go. After offering someone assistance, if the person accepts, the sighted person can touch the back of the

person's hand in order for the person to know that he or she is near and offering his or her arm. Then, the person who is blind or visually impaired will grasp the sighted guide just above the elbow. Sometimes it helps to picture this grip as "holding a can of soda." By holding the sighted guide's arm in this manner, it gives the person being guided the independence to let go whenever necessary. While walking with a sighted guide, it is important that both parties are relaxed and walking at a normal pace. The sighted guide will be just a step ahead of the person being guided. This will allow the person being guided to feel as the guide moves around obstacles and over terrain changes.

There are also a few specific gestures used during sighted guide to signify upcoming changes. When approaching a narrow space, the sighted guide should move the arm being gripped by the other person behind his or her back. This will let the person being guided

know that they are entering a small space and he or she should get "single file" behind the guide as they move through that area. Another cue a sighted guide may give is a pause (or complete stop) before stepping on or off a curb or using stairs. Finally, to guide a person to a seat, the sighted guide should place his or her hand on the back of the seat so the person being guided can then follow along that arm until he or she finds the seat.

These are just a few basic rules on how to use sighted guide. Modifications to this technique may be added for travelers who have other disabilities that impact their ability to use standard sighted guide. Overall, this practice is highly important for travelers who are blind or visually impaired in order for them to receive the assistance they may need while still keeping the independence they deserve.

Intern Experience

Elizabeth Stevens

Orientation and Mobility Intern

Temporarily joining the staff at the Gulf Coast Veterans Health Care System Gulf Coast Blind Rehabilitation Center was an incredibly educational experience! Although I was only an intern with the Orientation and Mobility department for nine weeks, I can say that the Veterans and staff members I worked with made a mark on my life.

This was my first experience working with blinded Veterans, and the Veterans were very kind, appreciative, sharp, and entertaining. It was an incredibly rewarding experience to give Veterans their first long canes and instruct them on the techniques of two-point touch and intersection crossings. The joy on Veterans' faces when they realized they could increase their speed with the support of a rollator or that they could locate

curbs using constant contact, reminded me of why I joined this profession.

Plan Healthy Meals

Jane Osowski, PhD, RD

GCBRC Dietitian

Lorrie wrote a great article about the importance of eating healthy foods to stay healthy throughout your life. I would like to add some information to help you plan your meals.

Each of the five food groups she highlighted contains different nutrients to help you stay healthy. Therefore, throughout the day, it is important to consume adequate amounts of these foods and to include a variety of foods each day. In other words, don't always have a banana for your fruit; switch up your choice to include other fruits such as an orange or strawberries.

I'm going to highlight the five food groups she listed and include recommended servings as well what constitutes a serving of that food.

The recommended servings are based on women and men 51 years and older. These amounts are suitable for individuals who get less than 30 minutes of moderate physical activity per day, beyond normal activities. If you are more physically active, you may be able to consume more servings.

Vegetables:

A serving of vegetables: 1 cup raw or cooked vegetables or 2 cups of raw leafy greens

Recommended amounts daily: 2-2 ½ cups; be sure to vary the colors for the most variety of nutrients

Fruits:

A serving of fruits: 1 cup fruit or 4 ounces fruit juice or ½ cup of dried fruit

Recommended amounts daily: 1½-2 cups; be sure to vary the colors for the most variety of nutrients

Grains:

A serving of grains: 1 slice of bread, 1 cup of ready-to-eat cereal or ½ cup cooked rice, cooked pasta or cooked cereal can be considered as a 1 ounce

Recommended amounts daily: 5-6 ounces; try to make 3 ounces be from whole grain sources

Protein foods:

A serving of protein: 1 ounce of meat, poultry or fish, ¼ cup cooked beans, 1 egg, 1 tablespoon of peanut butter or ½ ounce of nuts or seeds

Recommended amounts daily: 5-5½ ounces

Dairy foods:

A serving of dairy: 1 cup milk, yogurt or soymilk, 1½ ounces of natural cheese or 2 ounces of processed cheese.

Recommended amounts daily: 3 cups

So, as you plan your day full of activities, don't forget to plan your meals. Include plenty of colorful vegetables and fruits, whole grains, lean protein and low-fat dairy products.

Wise planning will make sure you are getting the nutrients you need to stay healthy.

For more information like this visit the website:

<http://www.ChooseMyPlate.gov>
developed by the United States Department of Agriculture

From The Front Desk

*Veronica Johnson,
Medical Support Assistant*

Gulf Coast Blind Rehabilitation Center has been a blessing to many of our country's blind and visually impaired Veterans.

We've been blessed to have a vast amount of Veterans from all walks of life and from many, many different places.

No matter where their geographic region of origin, they come here and make a friendly atmosphere among themselves.

We've had:

Doctors, lawyers and an Indian Chief,
Preachers, Teachers, even a Priest,
Farmers, Carpenters and a Wood Chip maker;

We had Grillers, Cookers and a lot of Bakers!

There have been Musicians, Singers and Artists, too!
You'd be surprised by our Veterans and what they can do.

The smell of "Cookie Man's" baking filling the air

While others were tired and needed a chair.

The age is unlimited as to how high they go;

They pick a Mayor and Sheriff, both watch the flow.

If you don't believe we're happy...just come. You'll see All the Love we share here at Gulf Coast BRC.

Chaplain's Thoughts

Chaplain W. Lance Hoggatt

What values do you hold as dear? Values direct our lives and guide our decisions. I hold faith, hope, and love as values that direct and guide my life. Your values may be different from mine, but, whatever your values are, they guide your steps and determine your choices. The Gulf Coast Blind Rehabilitation Center (GCBRC) helps our Veterans accomplish many great things because the GCBRC is an organization that holds dear values such as Integrity, Commitment, Advocacy, Respect, and Excellence. Each of these values is essential for the success of every member of the GCBRC team and to the successful graduation and rehabilitation of each Veteran

who walks through the doors of the GCBRC.

I would emphasize just one of these values: Excellence. Excellence is defined in Webster as “a quality that gives something special worth.” The quality of work that each member of the GCBRC Team demonstrates their “special worth” in what is being accomplished day in and day out; and the hard work of the Veterans in their rehabilitation process demonstrates their “special worth.” Bottom line: GCBRC is Excellent!

Excellence is also synonymous with virtue; therefore, every Veteran and every staff member by their commitment to Integrity, Commitment, Advocacy, Respect, and Excellence have proven themselves to be virtuous people. This is a great accomplishment.

The striving for Excellence reminds me of Art Briles, Baylor

University head football coach. He said, “The simple truth about human behavior is that nobody wants to copy some ordinary program; they want to follow people and programs who have achieved something great.” The GCBRC helps our Veterans accomplish something great and, I would say, something virtuous, because there is nothing ordinary about what takes place at the GCBRC every day.

Now, how do you and I begin this journey to Excellence? The first step to being Excellent is to start. Mark Twain said, “The secret of getting ahead is getting started.” Let each of us get started by striving for excellence in everything we do.

Good News-Netflix

*Susan M. Guillory, LCSW, MVF-
CSW, VHA-CM
VIST Coordinator, GCVHCS*

GOOD NEWS, Netflix users!

An announcement came out of Berkeley, Calif., on April 14, 2016, stating Netflix to Enhance Access for Customers Who Are Blind. Following are excerpts from the announcement:

In a first-of-its-kind settlement, advocates for people who are blind have reached an agreement with Netflix to make accessible the movies and videos offered through Netflix video streaming and DVD rental subscriptions. The settlement provides that Netflix will make its video content accessible by adding a new technology called “audio description” as a feature blind customers can activate so they can more fully understand and enjoy the movie and video experience.

Netflix provides one of the nation’s most popular online streaming and DVD rental services, offering convenient and affordable video entertainment, including original content, to millions of Americans.

Under the agreement, Netflix will provide audio description for many popular titles in its streaming and disc rental libraries. Audio description technology lets blind people know what is happening in scenes without dialogue or scenes with significant visual elements via an audio description track that contains narration of the visual elements that is synchronized with the show or movie. Television and movie studios will create the audio description tracks and provide them to Netflix. Under the settlement, Netflix will also provide audio description for the “Netflix Original” shows that Netflix has begun distributing such as House of Cards and Orange is the New Black.

Under the agreement, Netflix will also make its website and mobile applications accessible to individuals who are blind and use screen-reading software to navigate websites and apps. Screen-reading software is an interface between people who are blind or low vision and computers and/or mobile applications. The software creates an audio version of text and images that appear on a screen that it reads aloud to a user. The user then controls the computer or mobile device by pressing keys or tapping on a mobile application. With the

changes Netflix is making, users who are blind or low vision will be able to independently use the Netflix website and mobile applications. These improvements will provide people who are blind or low vision with unparalleled access to online video entertainment services currently enjoyed by millions of Americans.

To view the settlement go to:
<http://dralegal.org/case/netflix-settlement/>

VIST Support Groups

Pensacola VIST Support Group

1 p.m. on the first Tuesday of each month. For additional information contact Scott Turner, VIST Coordinator, at (850) 912-2552.

Biloxi, Miss., VIST Support Group

10 a.m. on the third Thursday of each month in the GCBRC Dining Room.

Mobile, Ala., VIST Support Group

10 a.m. on the second Wednesday of each month in the 6th floor group room. For additional information on the Biloxi and Mobile support groups, contact Susan Guillory, VIST Coordinator, at (228) 385-6762.

Know Your VIST Coordinator

The Visual Impairment Service Team Coordinators are your case managers for blind rehabilitation care and services and your first contact when you need to enroll or apply for a program. Whether it be your first admission to the BRC, a special program to meet unique needs or a refresher program, these representatives are important to your success. The following is the current updated list for the South Central VA Health Care Network VIST Coordinators.

VIST COORDINATOR	LOCATION
Adrienne Thompson (713) 791-1414 ext. 25398	Michael E. DeBakey VAMC 2002 Holcombe Blvd. (580/112-C VISOR) Houston, TX 77030
Marcia Harris (713)791-1414 ext. 25327	Michael E. DeBakey VAMC 2002 Holcombe Blvd. (580/112-C VISOR) Houston, TX 77030
Harold Miller (601) 364-1551	G.V. (Sonny) Montgomery VA Medical Center 1500 E. Woodrow Wilson Dr. Jackson, MS 39216
John Laakman (retiring-May 1st) (405) 456-3915	Oklahoma City VA Medical Center 921 N.E. 13th St. Oklahoma City, OK 73104
Kara Aaron (501) 257-5070	John L. McClellan Memorial Veterans Hospital Central Arkansas Veterans Health Care System 4300 West 7th St. Little Rock, AR 72205-5484
Latrice Reaves 1-800-935-8387 ext. 7214 or 2671	Southeast Louisiana Veterans Health Care System 1515 Poydras St., Suite 650 New Orleans, LA 70112

Scott Turner (850) 912-2552 ext. 32552	Gulf Coast Veterans Health Care System 400 Veterans Ave. Biloxi, MS 39531
Susan Guillory (228) 385-6762	Gulf Coast Veterans Health Care System 400 Veterans Ave. Biloxi, MS 39531
Marilyn Murray (318) 473-0010 ext. 1+2047	Alexandria VA Medical Center P. O. Box 69004 Alexandria, LA 71306
Melanie Shurden (601) 362-4471 ext. 5078	G.V. (Sonny) Montgomery VAMC 1500 E. Woodrow Wilson Dr. Jackson, MS 39216
Kanyin Bodeharrison (918) 577-3666	Jack C. Montgomery VA Medical Center 1011 Honor Heights Dr. Muskogee, OK 74401
Paula Ellington (479) 443-4301 ext. 65364	Fayetteville VAMC 1100 N. College Ave. Fayetteville, AR 72703
Broderick Burks (318) 990-4839	Overton Brooks VAMC 510 E. Stoner Ave. Shreveport, LA 71101



GCBRC Biloxi Breeze

Gulf Coast Veterans Health Care System
400 Veterans Ave. (124)
Biloxi, MS 39531

**FREE MATTER FOR
THE BLIND & PHYSICALLY
HANDICAPPED
POSTAL MANUAL
PART 135**