

# **VETERANS' VOICES**

## **Hospitalized Veterans**

### **Writing Project**

**Help support our veterans and the Hospitalized Veterans Writing Project (HVWP) – it's a patriotic cause!**

It can mean so much to a hospitalized veteran when a story, poem or artwork is published in *Veterans' Voices* magazine, proving again that love (and writing) is still the best medicine. Hospitalized veterans are looking for a helping hand like you to bolster their self-esteem, to make them proud to have served our country. These veterans, whatever their disabilities, need to know that while their service is interrupted, they are not forgotten. HVWP has gone to great lengths to instill in the hearts of veterans a pride of accomplishment, a reward for an endeavor well done. For many veterans, seeing their poetry or prose in print is the boost that they need to get over depression. At least one veteran author has gone on to have several books published – and he still regularly contributes to the magazine. To this day, Van Garner is encouraged when he sees his writing in print. Read his testimonial: As a former mental patient, veteran Van Garner knows the value of a friend..... someone who is there in bad times as well as good times. Van believes, in a way, HVWP saved his life, lifted him up from the bottom when he needed it. "HVWP is that friend that guided me from the darkness of myself into a light of trust for tomorrow," writes Van.

Every issue of *Veterans' Voices* contains the writing and artwork of hundreds of veterans from nearly every state. Manuscripts and letters from veterans express how thrilled the veterans are to see their remembrances and compositions in print. You can help this long-standing American tradition to carry on by volunteering your time, your skill, and your energy to this most patriotic cause, the HVWP and Veterans' Voices!

### **TEN HELPFUL TIPS for VOLUNTEER WRITING AIDES!**

Are you considering volunteering as a writing aide for the Hospitalized Veterans Writing Project (HVWP)? Here are a few tips to help you get started!

- 1.** Your interest in our writing project is a great beginning!
- 2.** You must be a good listener, be compassionate and always be ready with a pen and paper (or a tape recorder) for whenever a patient has a story or poem to relate.
- 3.** Find a regular meeting place. Many times the patio just outside the VA Canteen is an excellent area...and those wheelchairs can pull right up to the tables. The fresh air and light-hearted talk encourages participants to share experiences and a bond is formed. Time always goes too fast, but many patients begin to write about their memories or dreams to bring to the next time meeting.
- 4.** You'll be provided with any information you need to get started. If you have any questions, simply contact the HVWP office. Networking with other HVWP volunteers

is also a good resource. Since 1952, HVWP volunteers have been supporting each other in this nationwide endeavor to assist our veterans.

**5.** A good tip to remember is that it's perfectly all right to have the meeting even if there has been no writing at all! When the patients realize that there is no pressure, it is then that they know they can relax and talk on many subjects. Invariably someone will say, "Hey, that's a title," or "Why don't you write about that?" Then, at the next meeting someone will bring a poem or a story or a drawing on the subject covered at the previous gathering.

**6.** We do not collect any dues or monies at any of our meetings. Often service organizations and/or individuals will generously donate writing materials (pens, pads, pencils, calendars and even envelopes and stamps).

**7.** With special people donating to the local VA writing group, a little bit of magic begins to happen! A sense of family develops and the staff and volunteers begin to send "referrals" to the group. They may call us at home or leave notes at the VA, telling that a new patient wants a visit or that he/she has some writings to submit. When you get a call, take writing materials and a copy of *Veterans' Voices*. You may want to take a tape recorder to get "instant" stories which you can have typed later.

**8.** Also, keep in touch with outpatients who want to write. Mail them a newsletter. They may either bring or mail their writings and artwork to you. Every veteran has a style of writing and drawing that is entirely his/her own. Encourage patients to express themselves.

**9.** There is never a dull moment in being a writing aide. The rewards are seeing the patients' happy faces when they see their work in print. It is one of the happiest sights in the world! We also realize that a little bit of caring...and a little bit of sharing has made a big difference in the patients' program of healing therapy.

**10.** Being a volunteer writing aide is worthwhile, exciting and a different kind of volunteer experience. Your talents are needed in this vital writing therapy. Contact your local VA to volunteer your help.

## **IMPORTANT MANUSCRIPT SUBMISSION GUIDELINES**

Only the original, unpublished creative work of inpatient or outpatient veterans may be submitted to *Veterans' Voices*. Material previously published in a VAMC publication IS ACCEPTABLE. However, copyrighted materials are NOT ACCEPTABLE. Writers may submit up to three typed poems, each no longer than 24 lines with a 60 character width. Prose should be no longer than 10 pages, typed using double spacing. Artists can submit up to 10 drawings and photographs. For more information, visit the website at [www.veteransvoices.org](http://www.veteransvoices.org).

### **Instructions for Manuscript Submissions:**

1. Type with Helvetica or Times font using upper and lower case letters and double line spacing.
2. Provide four copies of each manuscript submitted.  
Two copies of each typed manuscript are to be mailed to the HVWP headquarters. The third one is for your records and the fourth goes to your VAMC.

3. All creative works considered for publications must be mailed by a VAMC staff member.

Therefore, give your submission copies to the Recreation Therapy, Library, Volunteer, or Social Service office and request that the submission(s) be mailed to HVWP headquarters.

4. A VA medical staff member should mail the two copies of each manuscript(s) to:

Hospitalized Veterans Writing Project  
5920 Nall Ave., Suite 101  
Mission, KS 66202-3456

## **A SAMPLE SUBMISSION**

All creative work must be submitted with this information TYPED AT THE TOP OF THE FIRST PAGE OF EACH MANUSCRIPT as follows:

Author Name: \_\_\_\_\_

VAMC Name: \_\_\_\_\_

VAMC City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number and/or E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Author's Permanent Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Branch of Service: \_\_\_\_\_

Serial Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Submitted to *Veterans' Voices*: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: (Example: What America Means to Me)

*Text*

(Example: I consider the United States of America "My Country." This is because I have spent at least 14 years in Europe and in the Far East.)

Writing Aide: \_\_\_\_\_

Typist: \_\_\_\_\_

# **HVWP Volunteer Information:**

Yes, your volunteer efforts can show appreciation and pay tribute to those who served our great nation!

Volunteers support the HVWP mission by...

- assisting veterans with their writing and by typing their manuscripts (writing aides);
- serving on the Board of Directors;
- representing HVWP to the Veterans Administration and its Voluntary Service Committees
- mailing the magazine, and
- assisting in fund-raising activities

Persons wanting to get involved with the project are urged to contact the HVWP office at (913) 432-1214.

Or send an email to [volunteer@veteransvoices.org](mailto:volunteer@veteransvoices.org)

You may also contact your nearest Veterans Administration facility and visit with the volunteer services director and/or the recreation therapy director.

The information in this document was obtained from the Veterans' Voices website at: <http://www.veteransvoices.org/> or <http://www.veteransvoices.com/history-of-hospitalized-veterans-writing-project-hvwp/>