The Wheeled Herald

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Great Plains Chapter

7612 Maple Street Omaha, NE 68134 tel.402.398.1422 fax: 402.398.1424 e-mail: pva@greatplainspva.org www.greatplainspva.org

<u>Nebraska Governor Signs Proclamation</u> <u>Recognizing Paralyzed Veterans of America Week</u>

by Amanda Vazquez, Government Relations Director

Thanks to efforts started by PVA volunteers Bill & Sue Dudzik, Great Plains PVA staff worked with Nebraska state Senator Brewer to pass a resolution recognizing May 8-13th as Paralyzed Veterans of America Week, in honor of Great Plains PVA hosting the 77th Annual PVA Convention in Omaha.

PVA members Randy Squier and John Scott had the opportunity to meet Senator Brewer, Governor Pillen, and other veteran members of the unicameral as the Governor gave an official Proclamation for Paralyzed Veterans of America Week. PVA members were then invited to the unicameral floor where they were recognized during the morning's legislative session. Great Plains PVA staff and volunteers also attended the Proclamation event.



We were proud to share a video of the Proclamation signing at the Opening Ceremonies at PVA's National Convention earlier this month.





President's Message by Randy Squier

During PVA's 77th Annual Convention, Great Plains hosted an open house at our chapter's building. It was an eye-opener for most that attended and an opportunity for us to show others this great asset we have in the city. The meal provided was fabulous along with the conversation.

Our upcoming annual golf tournament held at Tiburon golf course will be another day of renewed friendships and exciting golf shots. Every year our PVA staff, volunteers and members provide an exciting day to remember. We have so many returning golfers that patronize our event year after year. We'll be looking forward to the day and the social interaction with so many who support our program. It's an exciting day for all.

Our bowling league continues at Mockingbird Lanes and with the Thursday afternoon card games still being played, we will share some good company.

The summer will be on us in no time. Our bowling tournament will be in late July. You still have time to join us for that event as many bowlers from around the country will travel to participate. We always have a good time! You can find the entry forms on our website: www.greatplainspva.org or on pages 8-9 of this newsletter.

Chapter Officers

Randy Squier, President John Scott, Vice President Will Leavitt, Secretary Seth Kotouc, Treasurer

Chapter Directors

Dave Nelson, Director Dick Helvey, Director Tom Timmerman, Director

Immediate Past President Mark Linquist

> National Director Dave Nelson

National Service Officer Mike Sheets 402-420-4017 MikeS@pva.org LauraN@pva.org

Executive Director Mary Bushman bushman@greatplainspva.org

<u>Government Relations</u> <u>Director</u> Amanda Vazquez vazquez@greatplainspva.org

Sports Director Patrick Reynolds reynolds@greatplainspva.org I hope your summer activities treat you well. I feel that I am already behind on the list of things that I want to do this year. I hope you can join us for a few social events scheduled this summer. It's always a pleasure to talk with you all. Take care, and enjoy your summer...

Recognizing VA Staff During PVA Awareness Month

April was PVA Awareness Month and our chapter took the opportunity to express our gratitude to the incredible staff at the Omaha VA who care for our members and other veterans throughout Nebraska and Western Iowa. PVA staff assembled 12 large baskets filled to the brim with breakfast items and delivered them to 12 departments throughout the Omaha hospital. With each delivery, we could see the surprise and appreciation on the faces of the VA employees. We included informational materials about PVA and the programs and services available to veterans, so that VA staff is better informed about the support we provide for veterans in the community.





Executive Director's Report

by Mary Bushman



Dear Members,

Within this newsletter you will see photos and information from the Paralyzed Veterans of America 77th Annual Convention held in Omaha this past month. It was such an honor to be the host Chapter for the event and to welcome fellow PVA members from across the country to Nebraska. I want to take this opportunity to thank the Great Plains PVA members, auxiliary and friends who spent many volunteer hours helping the Chapter get ready for the week-long convention.

Thank you to Auxiliary members Tammy Squier and Peggy Moore for their work in making centerpieces, filling goody bags and candy dishes, and organizing the Chapter Open House dinner. Thank you also to Auxiliary Member Stephanie Bushman for her help in convention preparations. An additional thank you to Tammy and Peggy for volunteering at the convention to assist with the registration table and room set ups, and for acting as chapter hosts during the convention's spouse and caregiver activities. These ladies really pitched in and took so much

of the workload (and worry) off of chapter staff!

Thank you to PVA volunteers Bill and Sue Dudzik for spearheading the idea to have Nebraska Governor Pillen declare the week of the convention as Paralyzed Veterans of America Week throughout the state of Nebraska. Their inspiration and contacts within Senator Brewer's Office, made the Proclamation a very special part of the convention's Opening Ceremonies and was a wonderful way to begin convention week. Thank you to PVA members Randy Squier and John Scott for representing Great Plains PVA at the proclamation signing and on the floor of the Nebraska Legislature during its May 2nd session.



Thank you to photographer Nia Karmann of Nye Street Studio for coming to the convention's Opening Reception and displaying photos capturing the beauty of Nebraska. Her photographs were a wonderful addition to the reception's theme of "Nebraska - The Good Life".



On May 12th Great Plains PVA hosted an Open House dinner for convention attendees. Our chapter is very fortunate to have our beautiful facility and the impressive comments from our fellow PVA members made us feel even more grateful. A very special thank you to Randy and Tammy Squier and their friend Doug Dierks for the many volunteer hours spent prior to the convention doing building repairs and maintenance so our building would look its best. Thank you for replacing lightbulbs, ballasts and ceiling tiles, repairing doors and plumbing, touching up carpet and paint, hanging banners, and cleaning up the landscape. Your efforts gave the building the shining up it needed!

Our chapter has received so many thank yous and compliments for being such a gracious and wonderful convention host. From the beginning, it was our goal to give our fellow veterans the best Nebraska experience we could, and thanks to our members and volunteers we had a successful and very memorable convention week.

Ladies Auxiliary Hosts Wine & Roses Fundraiser

Great Plains PVA Ladies Auxiliary held its annual Wine & Roses fundraiser on Saturday, April 15th at our chapter building. We had The Music Bingo People entertain us with a fun 10 rounds of music bingo playing songs from multiple decades while guests enjoyed a variety of wines, heavy hors d'evrous, and specialty desserts. We also had a silent auction that guests could bid on throughout the evening. Congratulations to our blackout champion Jill Champley for winning our grand prize!

Proceeds from this event funded scholarships through the Auxiliary's McAleer/Pierce Memorial Scholarship program that the Auxiliary has been administering since 1988.







Great Plains PVA Ladies Auxiliary Awards 2 Scholarships

by Peggy Moore, Secretary

This Spring, the Great Plains Paralyzed Veterans Auxiliary awarded two scholarships to graduating seniors who have met our specific criteria. The \$500 scholarships were presented to Zack Kaluza and Natalie Zeitner.

Zack is a Senior at Papillion/LaVista High School and will graduate Cum Laude. His plan is to attend the University of Nebraska at Lincoln with a major in marketing. Zack hopes to get into sports marketing.

Natalie will graduate from Omaha Central this spring. She has been volunteering as a mentor at the Munroe Meyer Institute during summer camps for disabled youth for several years. Although Natalie has yet to determine what school she will attend, her plan is to work in the medical field as a nurse.

The Auxiliary has maintained and administered the McAleer/Pierce Memorial Scholarship since 1988. The scholarships honor Jay and Joan McAleer and their family members, Mr. and Mrs. Tom Pierce. Jay was a founding member of the Great Plains PVA Chapter and Joan was instrumental in developing the Auxiliary.

We are proud to provide financial assistance to these deserving young adults.







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Upcoming Events

<u>May</u> 8th-13th:	PVA National Convention, Omaha	
oui-15ui.	r vA National Convention, Onland	
18th:	BOD Meeting	1:00pm
29th:	Memorial Day	
<u>June</u>		
4th:	Tee Off & Support Wheelchair Sports Golf Tournamen at Tiburon	Golf Club
8th:	BOD Meeting	1:00pm
19th:	Happy Juneteenth!	
TBD	General Membership Meeting & Dinner	
<u>July</u>		
4th:	Happy Independence Day!	
13th:	BOD Meeting	1:00pm
27th-30th:	6th Annual Great Plains PVA Invitational at Mockingbird Lanes	

CHAPTER BIRTHDAYS

<u>May</u>

Alton Woolley * Richard Cover * Troy Peterson * Seth Kotouc * Brian Steere

<u>June</u>

John McPhatter * William Churchman * Versie Anding * James Beversdorf* William Stice * Daniel Griffin * Dean Nelson * Dennis Wagner * Gary Miles * John Weinburgh * Jessica Nutz * Joshue Ourada

<u>July</u>

Frank Kampovitz * Richard Mondragon * Harold Bartlett * John Owens * Garold Chalupa * Thomas Timmerman * Richard Conley * David Nelson * Tammy Squier * Paul VanCleave * Christina Caines



6th Annual Great Plains PVA Invitational July 27-30, 2023 <u>Singles Entry Closing Date - July 21, 2023</u>

Great Plains Chapter

4870 S. 96th St., Omah	WBA# a, NE 68127	USBO	C#	
<u>Mail Entry to:</u> Great Plains PVA 7612 Maple Street Omaha, NE 68134 402-398-1422			\$ 15.00	
	TOTAL:			
Phone#	Email			T-Shirt Size
Are you a veteran? _ Yes	_ No Branch of Ser	vice	PVA Cha	pter
CHECK DIVISION ENTE	RING: SCRATCH	_ HANDIO	CAP	
Doubles: Partner		Handi	.cap	Please Assign
<u>3-Person:</u> Partner	Handic	apPa	rtner	Handicap_
Maximum A	verage Cap is 475	Pl	ease Assign _	
		Handi		Please Assign

Entrants without qualified averages must bowl scratch. The AWBA adjusted tournament average designee will provide adjusted tournament average information. In all cases where the adjusted tournament average is higher than USBC book average, the adjusted tournament average will be the entrant's entering average. **USBC** member cards must be presented. For new bowlers, a league sheet will be accepted as long as 9 games have been bowled establishing the average. AWBA Average ______

Highest 2021-2022 USBC Sanctioned League Average	# Games	_
Highest Summer League 2022 Sanctioned League Average	# Games	_
League Sec. Verification	Phone#	

Please pay all fees with one check made payable to Great Plains PVA and mail to:

Great Plains PVA 7612 Maple Street

Omaha, NE 68134.



TOURNAMENT DIRECTOR: Dave Nelson 402-208-4841







6th Annual Great Plains PVA Invitational

Up/Down 9 Pin Tournament July 28, 2023 NEW LOCATION & TIME Mockingbird Lanes in Omaha

5:00 Registration 6:30 Tournament

\$1,500 Prize Fund- Payout to Top 5 Teams

Raffle & silent auction returns!

Featuring electronics, autographed memorabilia, bowling items, wine & spirits, jewelry & accessories, home & family items and dining & entertainment packages!

Bowl with a wheelchair bowler and support local paralyzed veterans. Sign up individually or as a team of 4. A wheelchair bowler will be paired with each team. Entry Fee is \$35 per person and includes a t-shirt. Registrations due by July 14th.

Please Print:					
Bowler #1					
Name		Average		T-shirt size	
Address			_ City	State	_ Zip _
Phone#	Email				
Bowler #2					
Name		Average		T-shirt size	
Address			_ City	State	_ Zip _
Phone#	Email				
Bowler #3					
Name		Average		T-shirt size	
Address			_ City	State	_ Zip _
Phone#	Email				
Bowler #4					
Name		Average		T-shirt size	
Address			_ City	State	_ Zip _
Phone#	Email				
	Please mail this registration for Great Plains PVA , 7				
	To pay by credit card, please ema			· · · ·	
	and contact Mary Bushman TOURNAMENT DIF				

Great Plains PVA Receives National PVA President's Award

by Mary Bushman

In 1975 the Paralyzed Veterans of America established the PVA President's Award to recognize a Chapter which ran either a new or an existing program in such innovative and successful a manner as to make that Chapter's program during that year stand out above all others. The award is presented yearly at the PVA Annual Convention brunch.

On May 13th at this year's convention, National PVA President Charles Brown presented the 2023 PVA President's Award to Great Plains PVA. The award recognizes the Chapter's Adaptive Fitness Program and its success at producing two of the Fittest Adaptive Athletes in the world.

The chapter has been successfully training athletes under a Crossfit methodology since 2011. In 2021 the program celebrated a monumental milestone when one of its athletes earned his place to compete at the world level at the annual WheelWOD Games. The WheelWOD Games are the pinnacle event for adaptive fitness. Athletes from all over the world go to battle for the title of the Fittest Adaptive Athlete in the World. In 2022 the Chapter further celebrated when two of its athletes qualified for WheelWOD and once again took our Great Plains PVA Adaptive Fitness Program to the world stage. Congratulations to Great Plains PVA trainer Patrick Reynolds for developing the Chapter's Crossfit program and for training two world class athletes.

This is the 5th time Great Plains PVA has received the prestigious PVA President's Award. Previous awards were received in 1981, 1992, 1999, and 2012. The award is on display at the Chapter office.

Pictured below from left to right: Tammy Squier, Mary Bushman, Dave Nelson, Charles Brown, Patrick Reynolds, Randy Squier, and John Scott.



77th Annual PVA Convention in Omaha: In Pictures

The Welcome Reception featured foods from Nebraska, including Runza, Valentino's, Ted & Wally's Ice Cream and Pettit's Bakery. Nia with Nye Street Studio had photos from across Nebraska on display to showcase the beauty of our state.



Great Plains was represented well throughout the convention with National Director Dave Nelson, President Randy Squier, Treasurer Seth Kotouc, Executive Director Mary Bushman, Vice President John Scott, and GRD Amanda Vazquez.



Great Plains held an Open House for all of the Convention attendees at our chapter building. We catered a barbeque dinner and our Sports Director had clients training to showcase our Adaptive Fitness Program.





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VETERANS' AFFAIRS





FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE APRIL 19, 2023

Contact:

Holden Armstrong, NDVA Communications Director 402-219-1704, <u>holden.armstrong@nebraska.gov</u>

NDVA Celebrates 50th Vets Get Pets Adoption

NEB. — On March 28, Army veteran Scott Henry adopted Chicken Alfredo (who now goes by Bear) from the Animal Shelter of Northeast Nebraska, making Bear the 50th adoption to be facilitated through the Nebraska Department of Veterans' Affairs (NDVA) *Vets Get Pets* program.

Henry, who served in the Military Police Corps in the late 90s, suffered a stroke in 2021, leading to stability issues. During a visit to the Bellevue University's Military and Veteran Services Center he learned about JAVELAN, a program that helps train and provide service dogs for veterans and retired first responders, and NDVA's *Vets Get Pets* program which could help cover his adoption fees.

"I love the *Vets Get Pets* program. There are a lot of veterans out there who just need a companion to help fight loneliness or give you something to do—a reason to get out of the house," Henry said. "Bear can help prevent falls or help me get up from falls, but he's also a great dog. He's great with my grandkids and a big fuzzy friend. I want there to be a thousand *Vets Get Pets* adoptions by the end of the year."



Army veteran Scott Henry with Bear, the 50th rescue animal to be adopted through NDVA's *Vets Get Pets* program. <u>More photos here</u>.

Helping Vets Get Pets

Vets Get Pets was created by the Nebraska Legislature in 2020. Senator Anna Wishart championed the program as well as a specialty license plate to provide necessary funding. Her bill was amended into LB 944, which was approved by the Legislature and signed by Governor Pete Ricketts on August 6, 2020. *Vets Get Pets* license plates went on sale January 1, 2021, and the first pet adoption, an Australian cattle dog/husky mix named Donatello, was finalized July 23, 2021.

Vets Get Pets continued...

"The response to *Vets Get Pets* has been overwhelmingly positive," said NDVA Director John Hilgert. "It's one of the more fun programs NDVA administers, but the impact is real and the feedback we've gotten from veterans who have utilized it is tremendous. Companion animals can do so much to enrich our lives, and we're excited to hear more stories like Private Henry's as we help more veterans get pets."

Through *Vets Get Pets*, Nebraska veterans can have up to \$350 in rescue pet adoption fees covered. To be eligible, they must apply to the Nebraska Veterans' Registry to verify their veteran status and adopt from an organization registered with the Nebraska Rescue Council. There is no requirement that the pet be a service animal.

Funding for the program comes from the purchase message. support the

Information license plat

A Second אין אין איי שימר



Pets license plates, which are available to ne alphanumeric version or \$40 for a custom n purchased by Nebraska drivers to help

fees, as well as details on purchasing a *getpets*.

The *Vets Get Pets* program has had support from a number of Nebraska animal rescues, including the Animal Shelter of Northeast Nebraska, where Henry adopted Bear. "This is one small thing we can do to recognize our veterans' sacrifices," said Lisa Doescher, the manager of the shelter, who is herself a veteran. "It may seem small to some, but it means the world to others. Everybody deserves a second chance. Every animal that comes here was unwanted and these animals deserve a second chance. In some ways it's a second chance for the veterans who adopt them, too."



Bear, a white, two-and-a-half-year-old Great Pyrenees, is one of those second chances. He was found as a stray in Texas and sent to a shelter there where he ended up on the euthanasia list. Luckily for Bear, the Animal Shelter of Northeast Nebraska has partnerships with several shelters and brings animals to Nebraska when it identifies a good match. When Henry visited the shelter and explained he was looking for a dog through the JAVELAN program, Doescher thought of Bear. She contacted the shelter in Texas, and volunteers drove Bear the 14 hours to Norfolk to meet Henry. They turned out to be a perfect match. Then, JAVELAN sent a trainer to do a behavioral assessment to determine if Bear was a good fit for its program. He was. Now, Henry and Bear are set to start the JAVELAN program in late April. Founded as a non-profit in 2017 and now part of First Responders Foundation, JAVELAN is focused on connecting veterans and retired first responders with service dogs and providing the necessary training to both the dog and the handler. The community-based training lasts between three and six months and comes with lifetime support, should the need for additional training or retraining arise.

"I've seen the difference these dogs can make in people's lives and have gone through that experience," said JAVELAN co-founder Bob Dean. "We recently trained our 100th team which is quite a milestone for us. We want to give back to the veterans and first responders who have done so much for us, so we'll do everything we can to connect and train them."

What Could Be Better?

Several studies have shown the health benefits of pet ownership, including studies done at the <u>U.S.</u> <u>Department of Veterans Affairs</u> and <u>Centers for Disease Control and Prevention</u>. These benefits can include reductions in depression, anxiety, and loneliness, as well as increased opportunities for exercise and social interaction.

"I want everyone to know about this program," Henry said. "There are people like me with a family and grandkids, and another grandkid on the way, but there are other veterans out there who don't have that. I want them to know about *Vets Get Pets* and that they can get a pet like Bear for free. What could be better?"

###

PVA MS Resources



Are you a PVA Member living with MS? Learn how PVA supports its members with MS and the resources available through our partnerships with other organizations. You can read the latest newsletter, specifically designed for PVA members with MS, on PVA's website. Scan the QR code to the left with your phone's camera and it will take you to PVA's webpage where you can learn more.

Great Plains PVA has a member who is designated as our chapter's MS Lead - Shayna Goerdt. If you have questions or concerns, you are welcome to reach her by email at shayna@greatplainspya.org!

PVAFit Journal

Adaptive Fitness

May 1, 2023

by Pat Reynolds, Sports Director

March Challenge Format and Results

Sandwich chippers are a workout design that begins and ends with the same movement, usually the same amount of work each time. It's no secret that I love a good sandwich chipper, and this one features the SkiErg and deadlift. Below is the format and results of the March Challenge:

- Format
 - *Seated Athletes*
 - For Time:
 - 500 Meter Ski
 - 25 Dumbbell Deadlifts
 - 500 Meter Ski
 - 25 Dumbbell Deadlifts
 - 500 Meter Ski
 - *Standing Athletes*
 - For Time:
 - 725 Meter Ski
 - 25 Barbell Deadlifts
 - 725 Meter Ski
 - 25 Barbell Deadlifts
 - 725 Meter Ski
- Results
 - 1. Travis Hasenkamp 11:45
 - o 2. Chris Parnell 12:54
 - 3. Barry Ridout 13:18
 - 4. Daniel Schmitt 13:42
 - o 5. Ethan Eckelbarger 13:52

April Challenge Format and Results

The April Challenge was a test of pressing overhead (as a buy-in) and getting up and over an obstacle. Our athletes completed fifteen rounds, at one-minute repeats, of a shoulder to overhead buy in (1 rep the 1st round/minute, 2 the 2nd, 3 the 3rd and so on) and as many up and over the obstacle as possible until the 60 seconds are up. Below are the format and results of the April Challenge:

- Format
 - Fifteen One-Minute Rounds for Max Reps of:
 - Shoulder to Overhead (1 the 1st minute, 2 the 2nd, etc)
 - Max Effort over Obstacle
 - *Shoulder to Overhead will include medball push press, Smith overhead press or medball wall walks depending on the athlete*
 - **Over Obstacle will include box jump overs, box step overs or curb hops depending on athlete**
- Results
 - 1. Ethan Eckelbarger 162
 - o 2. Travis Hasenkamp 131
 - o 3. Daniel Schmitt 130
 - 4. Tim Hobbs 100
 - o 5. Barry Ridout 96
 - 6. Chris Parnell 63

2023 WheelWod Season Begins

We only have one athlete competing for the title of fittest adaptive athlete in the world this year, as Travis Hasenkamp is nursing an injury and hoping to be healthy enough to give 2024 a go. Daniel Schmitt, however, is good to go and improve on his 3rd fittest worldwide result from last year. The Open has been completed and Daniel has qualified to move onto Stage 2, which starts June 19th. Things start getting real for Daniel now, because it's officially the "hammer your weaknesses" time in his training. Follow our YouTube page (Great Plains PVA Fitness) if you would like to follow along with Daniel's training journey to the 2023 WheelWod Games.





Want To Improve Your Bowel Function?

Recently published research reveals between 50 and 80% of participants reported improvements in bowel function and/or management after walking in an exoskeleton*

Did you know Paralyzed US Veterans May be Eligible for a ReWalk Personal Exoskeleton? Contact ReWalk for more Information: rewalk.com/contact or 508.251.1154 option 2

*Chun A, et al. Changes in bowel function following exoskeletal-assisted walking in persons with spinal cord injury: an observational pilot study. Spinal Cord. 2020;58(4):459-466.

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Grand Island Veteran Affairs Local

Veteran Creative Arts Competition

Top 3 finalists in each category will have the opportunity to compete in the **2023 National Veterans Competition & Festival**

The Local Competition

All visual and creative writing entries will be on display during the

Nebraska State Fair in Grand Island, NE August 25 - September 4, 2023

A panel of judges from the local creative arts community will determine the top three finalists during the first week of display.

Entry forms and all submissions are due: August 4, 2023

More information, including rules, regulations, and entry forms can be found at: Whole Health, Building 6, Primary Care Clerk Stations, or scan QR code.





Veterans Health Administration Nebraska-Western Iowa Health Care System

The National Competition

The top 3 finalists in each category at the local competition will be submitted to the National Creative Arts Competition in October. National winners are formally invited to attend the National Festival, a week-long celebration of learning, friendship, and celebration of the healing power of the creative arts, which culminates in an art exhibit, creative writers meet-and-greet, and live stage show, held in the Spring of 2024.

Art workshops, writing seminars, and excursions throughout the host city are also offered to participants during their week at the festival.

More information about the National competition can be found on The National Veterans Creative Arts Festival Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/NVCAF/



Creative Arts Competition Contact: Alicia Wicht (308) 395-3404 alicia.wicht@va.gov

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- Craft job search strategies to meet your employment goals.
- Create an effective LinkedIn profile.
- Identify and engage in networking opportunities.
- Build confidence in your career pursuits.
- And much more!

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- Assess your current abilities, training, and experience and help you identify career goals.
- Guide you through development and enhancement of your resume and cover letter.
- Teach you how to build an effective LinkedIn profile page.
- Practice mock interviews to hone your skills before you interact with employers.
- Regularly communicate with you to track progress and identify other resources to assist in the job search process.
- Be a **Partner for Life** to assist you for the duration of your career.

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Paralyzed Veterans of America

Great Plains Chapter



Great Plains PVA, 7612 Maple Street, Omaha, Nebraska 68134-6502 www.greatplainspva.org 402-398-1422



Paralyzed Veterans of America Great Plains Chapter (Great Plains PVA) is a non-profit organization that has dedicated over 50 years to helping veterans with spinal cord injuries, as well as other individuals living with disabilities across Nebraska, Western-Iowa, and Kansas. Great Plains PVA is dedicated to improving quality of life by providing education, promoting equal opportunities, encouraging independence, and enhancing lifetime health and fitness. PVA is at the forefront helping and advocating for the rights and benefits of veterans and all people living with disabilities.