



Stanford United Students for Veterans' Health Newsletter

USVH Quick Facts

 Serves long-term care patients in Veterans Affairs (VA) Hospitals

 Founded in 1994

 Headquartered in the Haas Center for Public Service

 5 chapters nationwide in:
Santa Clara University
Stanford University
San Francisco State University
University of Southern California
University of Alabama at Birmingham

 Over 62 active volunteers in the Stanford chapter

 Volunteering shifts happening every day of the week

USVH National Board 2016-2017

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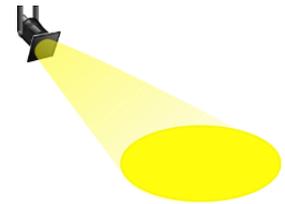
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Fisher House Manager,
VA Palo Alto Healthcare System



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Join Stanford USVH!

Interview with James Crabtree, Fisher House Manager, VA Palo Alto Healthcare System



When and why was the Fisher House Palo Alto built?

The Fisher House in Palo Alto was built in April 2006. The Fisher House is donated by the Fisher House Foundation. The decision is based on the need of the facility and after thorough research to determine the impact the house will have at that location. The funding for the Fisher House was provided by the Fisher House Foundation.

How does the Fisher House fit into the VA Palo Alto Health Care System?

The Fisher House supports a multi-disciplinary team of clinical staff and Social Workers. The VA in Palo Alto is one of 5 Polytrauma centers and the only one that offers Polytrauma, Spinal Cord Injury, and Blind Rehabilitation services. As a result, there is an increasing need to provide housing for the families of our Veterans and/or Active Duty Members.

How many veterans does the Fisher House serve? Which veterans are eligible to stay at the Fisher House?

The number of Veterans' families that the Fisher House serves varies depending on the need. The Fisher House has 21 suites and can house up to three people in each room. The occupancy levels for this year and in years past are typically at 98 percent. Since April 2006, the Fisher House has served over 7000 families at a significant cost savings for our Veterans' lives. I think the relationships with the patients is the biggest reward, and I didn't want to give that up. I also think it really helps me have a perspective of what it means to help run clinical programs within the

hospital. It's also kind of a break. When I do my clinic, I like to be in the moment of feeling

In order to be eligible to stay at the Fisher House, the Veteran must be an inpatient at the VA; and the Veterans family must live at least 50 miles or 2 hrs. driving time away. The Veterans family must also be independent in the activities of daily living as there is no nursing assistance on-site.

"As a former Military Officer and combat Veteran I met so many brave men and women who proudly serve this country... There's a unique bond between members of the military community that continues to drive me to give back.

- James Crabtree, Fisher House Manager, VA Palo Alto Healthcare System

What do you most enjoy about managing the Fisher House? What is the most challenging aspect?

What I enjoy most about managing at the Fisher House is the day to day interactions with the Families. The ability to assist the Veteran or Active Duty member's family brings joy to the entire staff. This job requires not only compassion but an unwavering dedication to support the needs of our guests.

Is there any one particular experience you've had while working at the Fisher House that resonated with you?

I've only been here for a few weeks, but my fondest memory is watching the children dress up for Halloween. One family in particular took her children to our Polytrauma area and passed out candy. While they passed out candy they received some in return. After spending some time



Fisher House Manager James Crabtree, left, with Assistant Manager Tracy Hicks, in front of the Fisher House Palo Alto

passing out candy, they unfortunately ran out. What did they do? They passed out the candy they received for trick or treating to the rest of the Veterans in the ward. The families at the Fisher House and especially the ones with children display a strength that is awe inspiring. Makes you think "What the heck I'm I complaining about".

What made you want to have a career involved with veterans?

As a former Military Officer and combat Veteran I met so many brave men and women who proudly serve this country. Along with these true Americans, I also realized without the support of family and friends this wouldn't be possible. To be able to support these families during some very challenging times is a rewarding experience. There's a unique bond between members of the military community that continues to drive me to give back.

What can the local community do to support the Fisher House?

The local community has been fabulous. The amount of support that's provided either through volunteer work or in the form of donations is a testament to the true generosity of Americans. If you want to support the Palo Alto Fisher House please reach out to our staff, we would love to talk to you.

Spotlights

History: The Memorial Rose Garden of the Palo Alto VA

The Palo Alto VA Memorial Rose Garden is located outside the main hospital. The garden was started in 2001 by Chief Chaplain Ed Bastille to memorialize the victims of 9/11. It has since developed into a memorial to former VA patients, friends and family of staff, or employees who have served in the military and since passed away. The blessing of the rose garden occurred on April 16, 2012.



The garden is 14,000 square feet and has seating areas for reflection. The greenery includes hybrid teas, floribundas, grandifloras, tree roses, climbers, and roses with a patriotic theme like the Peace rose, Veterans' Honor rose, and roses named after the Fourth of July, Memorial Day, World War II Memorial, Stars and Stripes, and Presidents Lincoln, and Kennedy. Metal signs in front of the flowers pay tribute to commemorate the service and sacrifice of loved ones.

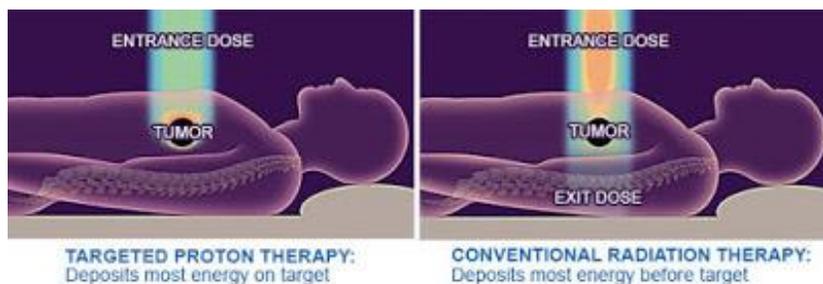


VA volunteers, members of the Peninsula Rose Society, and master gardeners from Santa Clara help with the pruning and maintenance of the rose garden. The memorial garden is often visited by staff, long-time patients of the Palo Alto VA, and Fisher House families. The garden has also been the location of special Memorial Day events and a wedding.

Sources:
http://www.paloalto.va.gov/construction_rosegarden.asp
<http://www.mercurynews.com/2009/03/24/rose-garden-offers-peaceful-retreat-for-va-palo-alto-staff-and-patients/>
 Photos taken by Kelly Chen.



Health: Stanford Medicine and Palo Alto VA to collaborate on nation's first hadron therapy center



Conventional radiation therapy uses electron beams to kill cancer cells, but these photon beams deposit energy along their path to the tumor which can damage normal tissue. These adverse effects limit the dose and size of tumor that can be treated through radiation therapy. In contrast, hadron therapy uses charged particles such as protons and carbon to treat cancer. These particles release most of their energy only after reaching the targeted tumor, limiting adverse side effects.

Hadron therapy can treat larger tumors or those which have not responded to radiation therapy.

Stanford Medicine and the Veterans Affairs Palo Alto Health Care System will work together to establish the first hadron therapy center in the United States. This collaboration is part of Vice President Joseph Biden's Cancer Moonshot initiative. Dr. Quynh Le, professor and chair of radiation oncology at the Stanford School of Medicine, believes "particle beam therapy will transform the care of cancer in this country." The new center will treat veterans and non-veterans with cancer and hopes to treat its first patients within four years.

Sources
<https://med.stanford.edu/news/all-news/2016/10/stanford-va-to-collaborate-on-nations-first-hadron-therapy-center.html>
<https://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=2827>
 Image taken from: <http://www.research.ufl.edu/publications/explore/v11n3/story3.html>

Want to Get Involved with Stanford USVH?

Hey guys! We're looking for as many new recruits as possible right now to help support and better the lives of our veterans.

- * We volunteer 2 hours per week.
- * We provide carpools for getting to and from the VA.
- * The timing is very flexible (14 different times are offered per week).
- * Leadership positions are available.
- * It's a great way to give back to the community and do something positive!
- * It's an opportunity for hands-on experience with veterans suffering from PTSD, Alzheimer's, Dementia, and Parkinson's.
- * It's meaningful clinical experience.

The USVH is a truly amazing program, and it brightens the days of everyone involved. The veterans light up the moment they see us walk through the door, and volunteers always leave with smiles on their faces.

If you are at all interested in applying or have any questions at all, please email Wes Dixon at wesdixon@stanford.edu . Applications will be released during the first week of winter quarter!

Thanks for reading!

