Message from the Director

We hope that this finds you well. Considering current challenges, it’s been especially meaningful to UCLA and the VFWC to be a point of support to the community that we serve. To that goal, the VFWC has continued its operations virtually at full capacity in support and anticipation of current and immediate needs including providing all center services and moving forward with building out and providing innovative key programming to include our transition-resilience model Transition Engagement and Mentoring (TEAM) and Power Up Your Parenting classes.

The Center has been directly coordinating to ensure connectivity and referrals for Veterans and families within the VFWC’s 11 key pillar resource areas. This has included focusing on increasing impact via cross coordination, referrals and mutual support among the VFWC’s valued relationships with the VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System and other community veteran service organizations such as the LA Veterans Collaborative, local American Legion and VFW posts, Merging Vets and Players, Village for Vets, the Community Veteran Justice Project, the Los Angeles County Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, and the Mayor’s Office of Veteran Affairs to name just a few.

The VFWC is also currently supporting the newly forming LA County Department of Mental Health Veteran Peer Access Network (VPAN). VFWC staff is currently assisting with the build-out both of an online Learning Community for the VPAN and have created a family inclusive model of resilience-based wellness training that 55 County peers will receive, the Veteran Family Peer Navigator (VFVN) model. Finally, The VFWC recently trained 15 Veteran peer call center workers in Psychological First Aid for the new LA County Support After Service Veteran and Family Call Line that is part of the VPAN.

We’re proud to offer a myriad of different resilience resources, articles and support tools such as Veteran and Family Virtual Resources, a Care Guide for providers, plus other materials that are designed to offer support and facilitate access to assistance during this time and beyond. More information and features can be found by visiting vfwc.ucla.edu.

To Wellbeing, Family and Community,

Tess Banko
Executive Director

Tom Babayan,
Director of Veteran and Family Services
Tap, Rack, Resilience
Written by Jimmy Guevara, MSW

We all have the capacity to build resilience, but tapping into it may look different for everyone. Resilience refers to one’s ability to handle stressful situations. Over time, our experiences can help support our resilience as we learn new strategies and solve problems. I learned a lot about ways to support my own resilience from serving in the United States Marine Corps. Some of what I learned I have put into practice in my role as a Resilience Trainer at the UCLA/VA Veteran Family Wellness Center (VFWC) where I help other Veterans and their families build on the strengths and skills they have accumulated over the years. Below are three of my favorite strategies that support resilience.

- Check-in with each other
- Adapt to change
- Problem solve together

Read the full article on our website.

Explore, together!

Families that explore together, support their resilience together – that’s how the saying goes right? We are living in unique times, but that doesn’t mean we can’t still explore the world around us in a safe way. Here are some links to sites that will help you explore as a family, from home.

- **LA Parks and Recreation** LA Parks and Rec have put together virtual exercise, dance, cooking, art, and other classes. All of these classes are free of cost!
- **National Park Services** Tour any and all of the National Parks virtually!
- **National Geographic Kids** This one is a kid favorite! Play games, watch videos, and read articles. NatGeoKids’ content is kid friendly, educational, and a lot of fun.
- **Washington, DC museums** Why not jet off to Washington, DC from the comfort of your home? Tour all the major museums in our nation’s capital.
- **5 Egyptian Landmarks** Sit back and relax as you cyber-tour five of Egypt’s most fascinating landmarks.

Meet: Jimmy Guevara, MSW, USMC - Resilience Trainer

**What do you like best about working with Veterans?** The challenges are what drives me and to understand their experiences while they were serving.

**What is your favorite ‘Getting to Green’ strategy?** I usually go online and link up with my buddies in the evening to play some video games. This helps to connect with my social group during the pandemic and did require me to purchase headphones but worth the investment to be able to speak to my buddies. Also, I try to run every other day and on days I’m not running, I take the family for walks around the neighborhood and just talk about random things. I try to drink lots of water when I start getting anxious and find a hobby that I can learn slowly like learning about cars. The learning helps to rid my mind of negative thoughts because I’m so focused on the task at hand.

**Is there anything else you would like people to know?** That it takes time and practice to be aware of what works for each person. Be patient with yourself and don’t be afraid to try new concepts to help get to the green.
New at the VFWC: TEAM (Transition Education And Mentoring)

The UCLA/VA Veteran Family Wellness Center is proud to offer TEAM groups beginning this fall! TEAM (Transition, Education, And Mentoring) is our resilience-based transition model designed by and with the input of Veterans, families, service providers and the community. During sessions, we'll examine your unique needs and chart essential elements of transitions large and small (including identity, mission, meaning, and purpose) that are crucial to your wellbeing, success, and for activating family, peer and community strength, support and services!

For information about our next group, email info@vfwc.ucla.edu or visit https://vfwc.ucla.edu/TEAM.

Announcements

Holiday Lane Toy Giveaway: Sign up for the UCLA/VA Veteran Family Wellness Center (VFWC) Holiday Lane Toys for Tots Drive Thru Giveaway to pick a toy order up on December 19 from 800a-11a aboard the West Los Angeles VA Campus! Details will be emailed. Partners include VA Voluntary Services, Newmark Merrill, Brentwood Schools, American Legion Palisades Post 283 and Hollywood American Legion Post 43. https://forms.gle/p1bSDjtw2bMFtgwNA

The UCLA Division of Population Behavioral Health (DPBH) in partnership with the VFWC announced a grant opportunity for UCLA faculty, staff and students sponsored by the Tilley Family Foundation to catalyze and advance research designed to support wellbeing and resilience in military and Veteran families. The 2020-2021 Tilley Family Scholar Military and Veteran Family Wellbeing Project Grants will focus on innovative ways to support military and Veteran family wellbeing while leveraging community partnerships and addressing substance use, homelessness, health equity, mental health and resilience.

The VFWC is looking forward to participating in Families Tackling Tough Times Together. Join the VFWC Facebook group ( https://www.facebook.com/groups/450775839214296 ) and community of support helping families to strengthen their resilience while they cope with a multitude of challenges brought forth by the COVID-19 pandemic. Every week for nine weeks beginning Oct. 4, 2020, new materials and activities that focus on a specific aspect of resilience will be released. Families with children, youth, young adults and older adults will find materials tailored for them.

The Power of Partnership: The Hammer Museum's talented artists are partnering with the VFWC to offer unique "spooky-themed" original art at the Oct 31 VA Drive Thru Pantry. Project Giving Kids will be conducting a Veterans Day service project on November 7 in support of the VFWC, creating toiletry kits that will be distributed at the VA's Homeless Veteran Stand Out. Check it out here: https://lnkd.in/ghTH-Ds