



## Community Care Ministries Newsletter

*There are no limits to show care & compassion. It is simply caring for one another in very practical ways.*

### More love to Veterans

**NORTHAMPTON**, [April 7, 2016]- Patients at the Northampton Veterans Administration Medical Center received an unexpected surprise Wednesday when volunteers from The Salvation Army arrived with a gift. Through a partnership with Songs and Stories for Soldiers, each of the veterans received an mp3 player, pre-loaded with audio books and music.

“We know the price every active duty member of the armed forces pays. We want them to know we are working to do something for them,” said Dan Perkins, who launched the project. “By providing this customizable mp3 player, veterans wounded on duty will have soothing songs, stories, and their own type of music that they enjoy. While not an answer to all their needs, it is something we can do to remind them that someone cares.”

A group of volunteers with the Northampton Salvation Army Service Unit helped to distribute packages to the veterans, which included ear buds, a charger and a USB device which will allow them to download additional audio files from [songsandstoriesforsoldiers.us](http://songsandstoriesforsoldiers.us). In total, 250 mp3 players were provided for the patients served at the hospital complex. In total, Songs and Stories for Soldiers distributed over 4,000 mp3 players last year at 25 medical facilities that serve active duty military and veterans.

The veterans in Northampton varied in age and familiarity with mp3 players. Robert Guyette was a machine gunner with the Marine Delta Company First Battallion in Vietnam. “My kids all have them. My grandchildren have mp3 players. I think even my great granddaughter has one, but this if my first.”

Another Marine veteran, Don Fortin, chimes in, “Don’t worry old-timer. We will help you figure it out. It’s really easy.” Fortin serves as the Ward 8 president at the Medical Center after two tours and extensive travel in the 31<sup>st</sup> Marines fighting piracy and human trafficking. “Music can remind you of a lot of pain, but can also remind you of the good feelings that come along with that too.” Fortin continued, “It’s going to touch the guys. We appreciate all of the support.”

Salvation Army volunteer, Michael Mew served in Vietnam himself. When he surmised that one of the mp3 recipients was about the same age, he asked if he had served in Vietnam, too. Billy said “Yes. And welcome home.” Mew and Billy chatted about their experiences and the connection was immediate between these two veterans who had never previously met.

Nurse Executive Maria Robinson-McLaughlin is still on active duty as a reservist. “I’ll be taking this with me when I fly out tonight to Charleston.” Robinson-McLaughlin has been serving for decades. “I remember in desert storm, we were given Walkmans that we could listen to. Having that comfort when you’re so far from home was wonderful.”

The Salvation Army plans to distribute an additional 250 mp3 players at the Brockton Campus of the Veterans Administration Boston Healthcare System. **(News release submitted by Drew Forster)**

### WORDS OF FAREWELL

This will be my last Community Care Ministries Newsletter as the Territorial Community Care Ministries Secretary. July will bring my transfer to a new responsibility. I can’t believe that it has been already two years that I have had the joy and pleasure of working with all of the Divisional Community Care Ministry Secretaries, Corps Officers and Community Care Members.

I want to take this opportunity to welcome our new Community Care Ministries Secretary, Major Elizabeth Deming. I know that you will appreciate her dedication to this ministry and to helping and supporting each of you. Thank you, as always, for all you do and keep up the awesome work!

### Ideas

- ◆ Picnic with a nursing home resident or Senior Citizen. It can be as simple of having lunch on the patio or in the yard or going to the local park.
- ◆ Escorting a nursing home resident to the outdoor area such as the patio and conducting your visit there, Doing yard work for an elderly neighbor or washing their windows.

### Announcements

- ◆ We welcome pictures & reports about Community Care Ministries where you are!

