



UNK Big Event

May 2026

In April we had University of Nebraska, Kearney (UNK) students come to Central Nebraska Veterans' Home for the UNK Big Event, an annual country wide opportunity for students to give back to their community. This year we had 30 students that joined us on a Saturday morning. The students arrived with smiles on their faces and were ready to get to work and help here at CNVH with getting the patio areas ready for the members to enjoy.

The groups split up into two groups. One set went on the west side of campus, and the other group went to the east side of campus. The students weren't shy about getting their hands dirty. All the students jumped right in and started on the patios with getting the patio furniture pulled out of winter storage, and the garden tubs placed in the proper locations. The students also washed all the chairs, the cushions, and the tables so they were clean for the members to use. Garden tubs were cleaned out of dead plants so that they are ready in May for members to replant.

This is a great opportunity for the UNK students to come out and see our Veterans' Home and to give back to the ones that gave so much for the freedom we have every day. This was a great opportunity as well to get these quality-of-life areas ready for the members to enjoy in the nice weather we are already having this year.



Message From the Administrator



*By Dorin C. Vaipan,
CNVH Administrator*

You all know the saying “April showers bring May flowers.” Unfortunately we didn’t have much rain in April, so the fields that I see daily on my commuting route are so dry. On the other hand, taking advantage of warm and sunny days, we managed to complete the repainting of all parking lots stripes around Central Nebraska Veterans’ Home (CNVH). It looks so beautiful!

At the beginning of April, we conducted our CNVH tornado drill right at the beginning of the Midwest tornado season. These types of drills are made with the purpose of reminding our employees and our members the correct steps that need to be taken in case of a tornado watch or a tornado warning, as well as to inspect the needed equipment and tools designated to be used during a real situation.

To conduct many recreational activities for our members, besides the activity employees, we use many volunteers from our community. We couldn’t make it without them! Therefore, it is important to recognize their support and dedication to our members, which was done on April 21st during the Volunteer Recognition Dinner, when 28 of our volunteers attended.

I would like to recognize our Admission Team, as well as all our employees, for the constant growth in our census in 2026. Back in January we averaged around 132 members. Today our census is 153! Thank you all for serving more veterans!

I don’t know if you know that, the call light equipment that we have allows us to track the volume of call lights per neighborhood as well as the average time of staff response to the call lights. Here they are for the month of April:

- Alpha: 1720 calls with an average response time of 3.24 minutes
- Bravo: 2292 calls with an average response time of 3.58 minutes
- Delta: 750 calls with an average response time of 1.55 minutes
- Echo: 570 calls with an average response time of 2.38 minutes
- Foxtrot: 8 calls with an average response time of 1.17 minutes

These responses are fantastic considering that many nursing homes have a hard time lowering their average response time to under 10 minutes!

At the end of April, the Nebraska Department of Veterans’ Affairs (NDVA) team met with the Administrators of all four State Veterans’ Homes (SVH) at CNVH for the quarterly meetings as well as the Veteran Homes Board meeting. During these meetings, policies were reviewed and updated, the status of the existing projects were presented as well as future needs for the buildings, staffing, or care needs. During the Board meeting, the Board Members focused and decided upon the new applications submitted by the veterans living in the community for admission in one of the four SVHs.

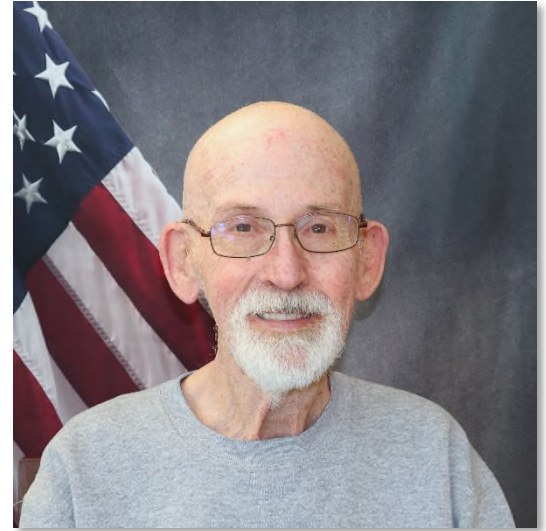
If you have questions, feel free to contact me at your earliest convenience. Thank you!

Dorin C. Vaipan, CNVH Administrator

Member Council: Member of the Month – Don Duffie

Don Duffie has been selected as the Member Council's Member of the Month. Don was born and raised in Canton, Illinois which is West of Peoria, Illinois. He also spent time living in Iowa and Kearney NE. Don married Linda and has a daughter Barbara, who he feels raising successfully has been a greatest and happiest accomplishment in life.

Don served in the Navy for two years and then continued to do drills with them for a while after. Later he went to the University of Illinois and earned his degree in Business Management. After school and the military, Don worked as an engineer for a coal mining company.



In his down time, he likes to read Stephen King novels, exercise, watch TV, being a part of First Lutheran church, and sports. Don spent time on the Cuba, Illinois school board for a while, and was involved with the American Legion. Don has enjoyed his time at Central Nebraska Veterans' Home and particularly likes the good people and the fun activities in which he chooses to participate.

Congratulations to Don for being the Member Council's Member of the Month!

Member Council: Employee of the Month Michelle Millsap in Transportation



Michelle Millsap has been selected as this month's Member Council Employee of the Month. Michelle has been with CNVH since January of 2020 working as a Staff Care Technician until 2023 when she transferred to the Transportation department. Michelle takes great pride in her job and responsibilities. She enjoys visiting with the members while waiting to be seen at their Dr. appointments. Safe vehicles and safe transport are always a priority for her. Michelle is married and has 3 children, and 2 granddaughters. When she isn't at work she enjoys yard work, gardening, scrap booking, camping, boating, and fishing. She has been in the customer service industry for over 32 years most of that time as a cosmetologist, before joining us at CNVH. Thank you Michelle for all the positivity you bring to the members and getting them to their appointments on time.

Merrymakers Concert Presented by Dreamweaver Foundation

The members enjoyed a morning of music with our Merrymakers Concert for the month of April. Our performer for the month was Billy Troy. There was a lot of singing along to the songs that Billy played for us. Throughout the performance Billy shared stories about growing up.

Billy grew up going to Johnny Cash's house on the weekends and spending time on the Grand Ole Opry stage. He shared very fond memories of his time spent on that stage. One of the stories that he shared was that when he was 12 years old, Billy was hired to sing a commercial for the game Rook, and the mom in the commercial was played by June Carter.

Throughout the morning Billy played many old-time favorites of the members such as Ring of Fire, and Fishing in the Dark which resulted in a lot of finger and toe tapping to the beat. Billy sang a very special song to many of our members, *God Bless the USA* by Lee Greenwood. When Billy performed this song many of the members that were able, stood up for the song. The members enjoyed their morning with Billy.



In Memoriam

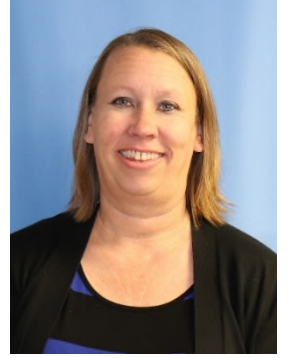
Catherine Straka

Donald Jares



Meet the Leadership – Jana Nuzum

This month we will be learning more about a member of our leadership team that works behind the scenes most of the time. Jana Nuzum is our Human Resource (HR) Manager. Jana was born and grew up in Guymon which a small town in the Oklahoma panhandle. She then spent time in Stillwater Oklahoma and Oklahoma City.

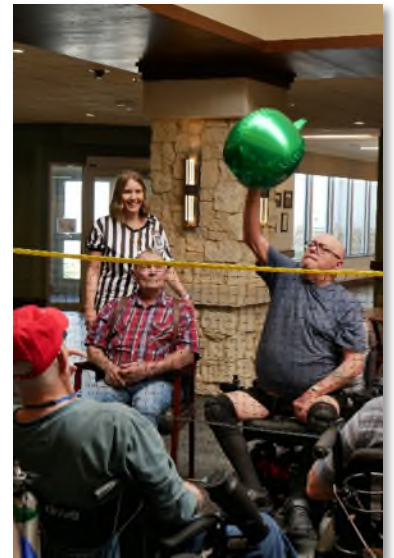


Jana may have grown up in Oklahoma, but both of her parents went to university here in Nebraska, so she grew up as a Husker fan. During this time, she started working at a restaurant when she was 19 years old before working her way up into management, running restaurants for ten years. She then moved her way into Nebraska and Jana has been working with the home since 2012.

She started as an SOS Temp in the Human Resources department. She enjoyed this and moved into a permanent role as an HR Assistant. She then kept moving up and became the HR Officer before being promoted one more time to the HR Manager role in 2023 which she considers one of her favorite accomplishments. Jana is married and has three children and three grandchildren. During her free time Jana enjoys reading psychological thrillers, watching romantic comedy movies, and spending time with family and her pets (one dog and two cats). Jana enjoys working for the members, even if it is behind the scenes, helping make their quality of life better. Jana enjoys working with the staff too.

Battle of the Coasts Volleyball Game

The members from Alpha and Echo enjoyed the afternoon having the Battle of Coasts Volleyball Game. The Alpha and Echo neighborhoods play balloon volleyball on a regular basis in their homes, and the members thought it would be fun to play each other. This resulted in the creation of the Battle of Coasts Volleyball Game. The Alpha and Echo members gathered in the Hearth Room for the event, which was the perfect set-up. The referees showed up on time to officiate the game to make sure everything was fair with an official coin toss at the beginning of the game! The members had a great time with lots of laughter. The members were netting all the compliments as staff stayed to cheer on the members! Both coasts had set goals, and were determined to smash them, but in the end, it was a tie game!



Celebrating Volunteers!

By Charlene Allen, Volunteer Coordinator

We celebrated our volunteers on Tuesday, April 22nd with an appreciation dinner. Our volunteers are very special to us at Central Nebraska Veterans' Home. I have noticed over the past year how volunteers have filled many roles as leaders, teachers, and companions to make a difference in the lives of our members.

The volunteers set the tone for our program through their enthusiasm and dedication. For example, when I let the volunteers know we needed bags for wheelchairs, the response was just heartwarming. It was just amazing the way the volunteers collaborated with each other. This is just one of the many examples of the way volunteers work together to make our volunteer program a success.

We see all the volunteers in different roles through the various activities and projects making life better for the members who live here. The volunteers have helped promote a positive outlook for our members and our volunteer program. The dinner and gift are just a small way we recognize our volunteers for their dedication to our members and staff.

We catered a meal of pulled pork and BBQ chicken sliders, potato salad, a pasta salad, cookies, and brownies for dessert. We had a gift for them to take before the evening ended. The gifts this year are a stars and stripes tote bag or a hat. Both gifts had the CNVH logo and the Nebraska 250 years celebration logo. The evening had a patriotic theme, celebrating all they do for us.

Our heartfelt thanks goes out to all our volunteers. You help make our member activities extra special!



Titanic Bingo

The members enjoyed the afternoon of April 15th with America's favorite ship playing Titanic Bingo, themed by boarding the ship in the decked-out room. April 15th was the anniversary of the Titanic sinking in 1912. As the members boarded the ship, they were given the name of someone who



was on the Titanic. When the members got a bingo we checked the master boarding list from the Titanic in 1912, to see if the Titanic passenger name the member was given, happened to be a survivor. If they were, they received an extra bingo coupon. The members enjoyed their afternoon on the ship. When bingo was over the members had an opportunity to take a picture by the grand staircase backdrop. The event was sponsored by the America Legion Auxiliary.

Ice Cream and Pie Social with Custer County American Legion Auxiliary

The members enjoyed a beautiful afternoon in April with the Custer County American Legion Auxiliary enjoying pie and ice cream!

The members had different kinds of pies to pick from. The selections this time included many favorites such as apple, caramel apple, and cherry pie. The pie was warm and the members had the option to add ice cream to the top if they wanted their pie ala mode!

The members enjoyed the afternoon having a delicious treat, visiting with their friends, and listening to music!

This activity was sponsored by the Custer County American Legion Auxiliary.





Special Points of Interest Next Month:

- Mother's Day Bingo
- Memorial Day Ceremonies

*The Liberty Express is published monthly
by Central Nebraska Veterans' Home.*

Administrator: Dorin C. Vaipan

Editor: Ralph Healey



GOVERNOR
JIM PILLEN

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS DIRECTOR
JOHN HILGERT

CENTRAL NEBRASKA VETERANS' HOME ADMINISTRATOR
DORIN C. VAIPAN

Central Nebraska Veterans' Home

4510 E. 56th Street
Kearney, NE 68847
Phone: 308-865-6000