

# PVA VETERANS CAREER PROGRAM UPDATE

September 2022

## Understanding Your Employment Options



Fay Smith is an Army Veteran with 100% disability, and a PVA Member. She initially reached out to the Veterans Career Program (VCP) at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Our Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, Genia Hachenberg, maintained contact with Fay over the next year as she

contemplated re-entering the work force; but Fay repeatedly felt overwhelmed by physical, mental and emotional strain. In October 2021, Fay reached back out to VCP after attending the PVA Women Veterans Empowerment Retreat in Tempe, AZ (where Genia had given a Zoom presentation on employment).

Fay indicated that she wanted training to update her work skills, and to pursue part-time work. She also indicated she had serious concerns about her SSDI benefits and the risk of losing them. They discussed work incentives such as Ticket to Work (TTW), and agreed to look at the impact of any earned income before pursuing employment opportunities. Fay began taking Saylor Academy courses and volunteering at Longleaf Hospice; and expressed plans to pursue part-time work from home in the New Year.

They revised her resume, explored local part-time opportunities and continued to discuss the TTW program. By mid-2022, Fay decided to pursue a caregiver position that was comparable to her volunteer work and allowed for a flexible, part-time schedule. She has been working since June, and they have tracked her earnings very carefully so she feels confident working and retaining needed benefits.

Fay attended WVER again this year in San Antonio, TX, and shared with other attendees how VCP has positively impacted her life. *"I don't want to live in fear. I don't want to be paralyzed by fear. I felt useless, discarded and betrayed by my body. Volunteering and working have helped me redefine my goals and helped me get in a more disciplined mode. It's creating a routine and balance in my life."*

## IMPACT + OPPORTUNITIES

### 14 Client Placements

- 10 Paid Employment
- 4 Education/Training
  - 13 Veterans
  - 5 PVA Members
  - 1 Family Member
- The average salary for the 10 clients placed in full-time employment was \$61,158.



## New Associate Director, VCP



PVA's Veterans Career Program (VCP) is excited to announce the promotion of Genia Hachenberg to Associate Director. Genia has been a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC) with VCP since 2018; and has been a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor for over 20 years -

excelling in private sector, federal, state, local government & non-profit environments. She has had the opportunity to work with individuals ages 13 to 80; with a wide variety of disabilities including intellectual, physical, sensory and psychological.

A native of Atlanta, GA, Genia had her first experience with individuals with spinal cord injuries (SCI) as an undergraduate recreation therapy intern at the Shepherd Center. She shared that her experience at PVA has been, "the purest rehabilitation counseling experience of (my) career." Genia notes that there is the freedom (within VCP) to pursue the goals and opportunities that offer the most happiness and health for our clients.

She has three (mostly) amazing children (joke) that teach her to appreciate her parents more and more every day.