



Out Front

Michael G. Negrete, Chapter President

The cooling weather reminds me Fall is upon us with winter just around the corner. Now is the time to get your Flu shot and start preparing yourself and home for the inevitable winter months ahead of us. We're all aware flu shots are available from the VA, but did you know you can receive a no-cost flu shot from one of your local community retail pharmacies or urgent care locations. Visit <https://www.va.gov/communitycare/flushot.asp> for details. Because of COVID limiting access to VA facilities, this might be a more convenient option for you to consider this year. In either case, with COVID still looming large, it's even more important to get your flu shot this year. As for prepping your home, the CDC has some great tips for home, car and emergencies on their website [HERE](#).

Speaking about health and circumstances at home, please remember, if you have somehow been negatively impacted by the current COVID-19 pandemic and in need of a little financial assistance, the Chapter is still providing member grants up to \$500. To date, we have granted a little over \$10,000 to assist 23 chapter members across each of our New England states. For details on how to apply, please visit the Chapter website at www.newenglandpva.org. Also available through our website, and free to our members, are Chapter branded face masks and neck gaiters. Turn to [page 7](#) for details.

At this month's Board meeting we approved the 2020 Chapter budget. Its important to know, key to funding a large part of this year's budget is the inclusion and implementation of the Strategic Fundraising plan our Executive Director and I created. The plan is somewhat aggressive, but the Board and I feel confident we have the people and resources to successfully execute it, netting approximately \$140,000 toward the budget. Please keep an eye on the Cord Word, Facebook and Chapter website for event and activity information, as well as, volunteering opportunities. Also important to mention, as part of this year's budget, is an increase in the Chapter member Individual Allotment program from \$500 to \$750. To read details about the program and how to apply, please turn to [page 22](#).

Government Relations Director Kristen McCone Gordon continues to foster new and productive relationships, both at the state and federal levels, proactively creating an awareness of our organization and mission. Through these relationships, Kristen has been very successful in getting the issues of our concern and supported legislation in front of key decision makers. To read more about the great work Kristen is doing on our behalf, or to get in touch with her, please turn to "From the Hill" on [page 6](#).

Continuing, I would be remiss to not recognized the events that occurred 19 years ago on September 11th. On that day, America saw firsthand terrorism taking place here at home, on our own soil, and against our own people! It was a day none of us will ever forget and more importantly, it was a day we as a nation must ensure is never forgotten by the generations to come! Let us never forget the innocent lives taken from us that day, the brave men and women who selflessly raced into the twin towers to save the lives of others and the heroes on United Flight 93 who unquestionably saved countless lives through their valiant actions. It was day that showed the world, even in our darkest hour, we as a nation stood united to fight and win against those who harbor evil in their hearts! This is America, the greatest country on earth, and we shall never forget those who gave their lives protecting our citizens and our way of life then and now!

Finally, with so much turmoil, uncertainty and fear surrounding our lives these days, how often do you think about those around you? Martin Luther King, Jr. once said "Life's most persistent and urgent question is, what are you doing for others?". I think we would all agree, yet in our everyday lives, most are increasingly becoming more and more concerned with their own self-interest and preservation first, with little thought for those around them. Albert Einstein once said, "Try not to become a man of success but rather try to become a man of value." Now, what is the difference between success and value? I believe it is service. Success is great, but being someone who reaches out and cares for others makes someone truly valuable. Many talk about the meaning of life, and really, what is the purpose of us being here if we don't take the opportunities to change things around us for the better? The meaning of life certainly isn't 'getting a job that pays an obscene salary so we can buy the next trendy gadget'. The people most admired for their value aren't those with unlimited wealth, they're selfless people like Mother Teresa and Martin Luther King. Yes, our world has problems, there's no denying that. Yet sadly people become so isolated in their own little worlds they forget there is a beyond out there. Service is part of life that gives meaning to everything we do. When we're gone, our good deeds will continue to have an impact on those around us. When we peer outside our own lives to open up and care for others, when we listen to truths that are so often hidden, when we spend some fraction of our lives changing things around us for the better, we fulfill life's most persistent and urgent question. So what will you do for others today?

Michael G. Negrete
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and Paralyzed Veteran