

The Official USU Newsletter

the pulse

Volume 9, Issue 21 • December 12, 2014

www.usuhs.edu

John P. Murtha Cancer Center

Walter Reed Bethesda
HOPE ★ CARING

DISCOVERY

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Editorial content is edited, prepared and provided by the USU Office of External Affairs unless otherwise indicated. The Pulse staff may include or exclude articles based upon news value, impact on the university and space availability.

Submissions

The Pulse is published biweekly on Mondays. The deadline for submissions is at 4 p.m. Tuesday prior to the publication date. Submissions can be sent to christopher.austin@usuhs.edu or by calling 301-295-3338.

**On the cover**

The official John P. Murtha Cancer Center logo. Read about the signing of a new agreement between the Uniformed Services University and the center on page 5.

New Junior, Senior Employees of the Quarter

by Gwendolyn R. Smalls, chief, Media Affairs



Sandra Hofmann



Patricia Grant

Photos by Thomas Balfour

Sandra Hofmann and Patricia Grant were selected as the Junior and Senior Employees of the Quarter at the Uniformed Services University, respectively. Their nominations were based on each employee's commitment to excellence of service to the university.

Hofmann, who has been a program support assistant in the F. Edward Hébert School of Medicine for the past four years, is responsible for administrative duties for USU third- and fourth-year student rotations at the Washington DC VA Medical Center and Washington Hospital Center.

"At both sites, where other DC-area medical students rotate, USU stands out from other medical schools for its well-organized, proactive approach to clerkship execution," said Navy Cmdr. (Dr.) Todd Gleeson, associate clerkship director, Department of Medicine. "This is all attributable to Mrs. Hofmann's constant attention and inspired work. Her presence as the "face of USUHS" to the DC VAMC and WHC secures the presence of USU students at both sites," he added.

Similar accolades were echoed for Patricia Grant, a program administrative specialist in the Department of Microbiology and Immunology and the Emerging Infectious Diseases Graduate Program.

In his nomination, Dr. Christopher C. Broder lauded Grant for her continuous outstanding, efficient and proactive service. She is responsible for a myriad of tasks for the department to include room scheduling, overseeing travel for faculty as well as visiting seminar and class instructors. Grant also manages the EID program budget and oversees all allocations and expenditures while consulting with Broder.

"Ms. Grant has always been able to continue this outstanding performance because of her ability to multitask, maintain her own schedules and records of the academic year and also because of her dedication and superior work ethic," said Broder. "Ms. Grant is one of the most pleasant, good-natured, conscientious, dedicated and efficient fellow employees that I have known during my tenure at USU."

Giving Tuesday Brings Charities to USU

by Christopher Austin, writer-editor

The Uniformed Services University Combined Federal Campaign provided an opportunity for students, staff and faculty to meet the charities that were benefitting from their donations at Giving Tuesday, located in the Hall of Flags in Hall B on Tuesday, Dec. 3.

Community members walked among some of the 22,000 charities that rely on CFC assistance. Campaign Manager Army Master Sgt. Celecia Kalili mingled with the crowd along with Deputy Campaign Manager Laquetta Robinson and other campaign staff to encourage USU members to meet with the charities that their money helps support.

“We appreciate [the community support] but we know the people who are receiving, I guess you could say the end-users, definitely appreciate it much more,” Robinson said.

United Cerebral Palsy, a charity focused on advancing the independence and productivity of those with the disease, was one of the charities present.

“It’s a good turnout,” Michele Levy of the UPC said. “I’m excited to see so many people dedicated to changing lives. Every person makes a difference.”

Local charities that attended included Bethesda Cares, a community outreach program that services the Lower Montgomery County area homeless. The organization also works with USU staff and first- and second-year medical students to provide medical services to those in need. The organization provides shelter as well as follow-up care for any situations that might arise while staying in the shelter.

“Our goal is to work with the homeless community so that we are accepted and that they know that they can come to us for help,” said Susan Kirk, a Bethesda Cares volunteer. “It’s a great opportunity for students looking to get involved.”

“One of our faculty is a doctor who works with them and has always talked about them,” Army Sgt. Ian Spears said. “It’s interesting to learn more about them.”

Another charity present at the event was the American Dance Institute, which provides dance classes and holds performances for the Washington area.

“We offer classes from age 4 to adult, and college scholarships for those without the means to attend on their own,” School Director Erin Du said. “We also perform an annual mini-Nutcracker at NIH for those who are unable



Uniformed Services University faculty, staff and students participate in the USU charity drive during Giving Tuesday on campus, Dec. 3, 2014.

to leave the hospital.”

In addition, ADI offers the Incubator Program, which looks to give up-and-coming choreographers the means to start their careers.

“I’m impressed by the Dance Institute,” Air Force Tech Sgt. Davina Esparza said. “My brother is autistic and having a way for him to vent through dance helps. I want to help give that to him.”

“Most of the time I just give my donations to my airmen, but it’s nice to come out and see the actual charities,” she continued.

Other charities present included Christian Services Charities, A Wider Circle, and Hope Connection.

Giving Tuesday is part of a series of events that began in October hosted by the USU’s CFC team. Past events

include a costume contest, a bake sale, and a donation competition between the service branches called Penny Wars. Each event is meant to raise awareness and money for the campaign while helping to build the community.

“People are getting involved, people are helping out,” Robinson said. “People who aren’t keyworkers are volunteering to do things.”

“The bake sale was a blast!” she continued. “Who would have known that food would attract so many people?”

“Or even that we had so many bakers in the university,” Kalili added.

“A lot of people who are not even CFC keyworkers turned out and brought in baked goods,” Robinson said. “Some people offered to even bring in dog biscuits!”

The CFC is working to raise \$135,000 this year, of which they have already raised \$55,000. Donations have accumulated from the previously mentioned events, but there are a variety of ways that community members can donate both online and through paper submissions. Any questions should be directed to your department keyworker. For a list of keyworkers, visit www.usuhs.edu/CFC/keyworkers.html.

The closing event for the CFC will be Dec. 15 in the Hall of Flags from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. and all of the USU community is invited. Refreshments will be served with University President Charles Rice in attendance.

USU Student Leads AAMC Education Workshop

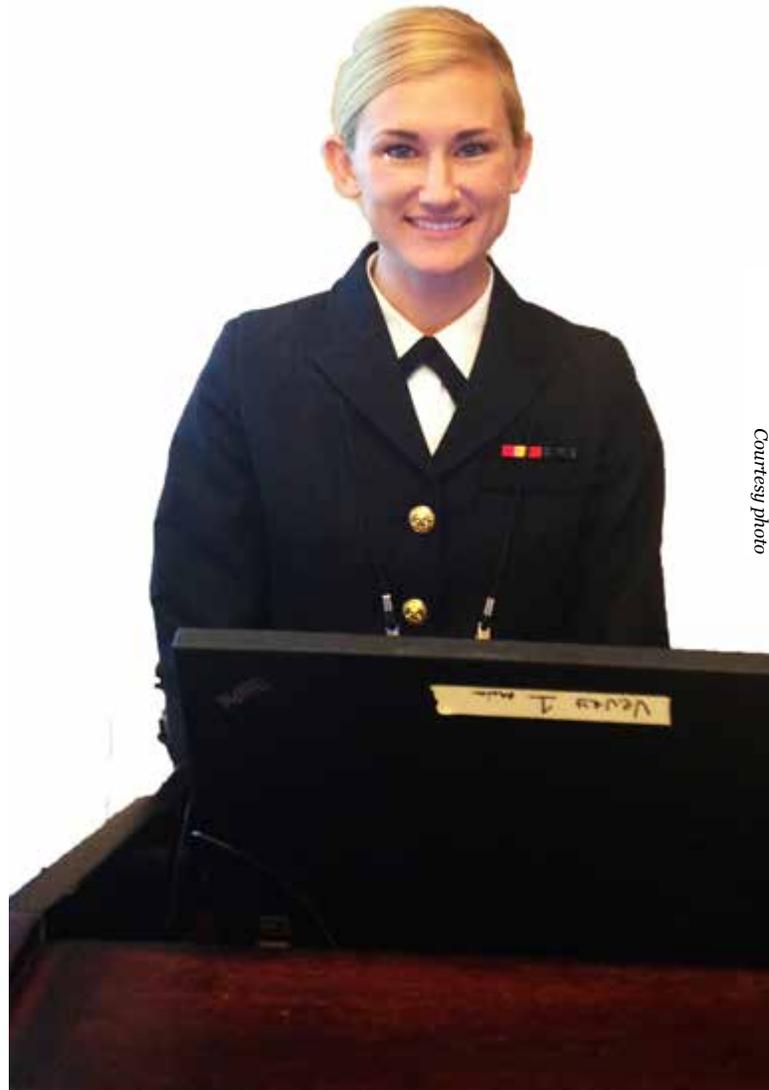
by Martin Ottolini, MD, Capstone Program director, F. Edward Hébert School of Medicine, USU

Navy Ensign Lyndsey Kiss, a fourth-year medical student, had no idea how quickly she would be propelled to lead at a national level while fulfilling her work as a senior capstone student in the Department of Military and Emergency Medicine's Leadership Development curriculum.

Three students from the Class of 2015, including Kiss, Navy Ensign Jessica Winters, and Army 2nd Lt. John Green, worked in collaboration with the Duke University Feagin Leadership Program throughout this past summer to pilot the curriculum. At the recent AAMC Medical Education Meeting in Chicago, Kiss presented an overview of the curriculum and focused on the development of new assessment tools to evaluate USU students' progress and military leadership training. She also teamed with medical students from Duke to run a leadership curriculum development exercise and administer a research survey among the medical school faculty who participated in their workshop.

"I believe strongly in what USU represents and felt privileged to have the opportunity to share this with other distinguished medical educators and leaders," said Kiss.

The new USU leadership development curriculum will be contrasted with application of similar evaluations in a civilian environment



Courtesy photo

Ens. Lindsey Kiss

at Duke, and both programs hope to improve their methods after comparing the results in these parallel populations. The multi-faceted program at USU is emerging as a cornerstone of the commitment to developing the nation's future military medical leaders.

While most components will be shared as universal experiences for future physicians, advanced practice nurses, and graduate dental students, a smaller number of students are offered the opportunity to spend up to three months in concentrated research and education projects as

part of the School of Medicine's Capstone Program. These actually fulfill dual purposes, allowing the students to develop their own skills in building and assessing new curriculum elements, while simultaneously expanding the capacity and breadth of the overall program.

"We chose students who clearly demonstrated the capability and enthusiasm to pilot these critical projects," said Army Col. (Dr.) Francis O'Connor, Military and Emergency Medicine department chair.

"We are very proud of Lyndsey's presentation at AAMC in Chicago, as well as the research projects she, Jessica and John are involved in as our leadership program continues to move forward. The MEM leadership effort, directed by our new

vice chair, ret. Lt. Gen (Dr.) Eric Schoomaker, and led by Dr. Neil Grunberg, is very exciting for our USU community. Lyndsey's success is the first of many good things to come," O'Connor said. "Developing leaders is one of the five mission domains of strategic framework for the school. Empowering students to research and design meaningful leadership evaluation tools is just one of the many things that sets the Hébert School of Medicine at USU apart and allows us to lead from the front as 'America's Medical School.'"

University Signs Collaborative Agreement to Further Cancer Research

by Christopher Austin, writer-editor

The Uniformed Services University signed an agreement to further collaboration with the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center's John P. Murtha Cancer Center and the National Cancer Institute at a ceremony celebrating the second anniversary of the MCC, Dec. 3.

"WRNMMC, NCI, and USU are all unique in capability and expertise, but united against the common foe of cancer," stated Army Col. (Dr.) Craig Shriver, director of the cancer center and chief of the general surgery service at WRNMMC. "By leveraging the assets of these three federal health organizations, we are increasing the research and clinical capabilities for the military and civilian patients, while decreasing costs to the government."

The document signed during the ceremony by the three federal entities will reflect their past and present accomplishments, and increase their future partnership against cancer, said Shriver. Additionally, this collaboration will continue enhancing the readiness of the military, its families, and beneficiaries.

Named for the U.S. Pennsylvania

congressman who was a lifelong supporter of America's armed forces, the MCC's main elements include Medical Oncology, the Center for Prostate Disease Research, the Gynecological Cancer Center of Excellence, Breast Care and Imaging Center, Surgical Oncology, and Pediatric Hematology, and Oncology. Among their many achievements, the Breast Care Center became the first in the DoD to achieve full accreditation.

"Approximately 30 to 40 percent of care delivered at the WRNMMC is associated with cancer screening, prevention, or the cure of patients with cancer, Shriver said. "All departments are involved, from radiology to internal medicine. These people are the best and highly trained."

Cancer strikes military members at least as often as civilians, and for some cancers, it is striking at younger ages, Shriver stated. Complex, rare cancers must be treated at a specialty center and for the military that is the MCC.

The partnership with nearby NCI and USU brings added benefit.

"There are many faculty members at the university, the medical school,

and the nursing school who have significant expertise in cancer research – pre-clinical and clinical studies that can be and are applied to topics in cancer research," said Dr. Mary Lou Cutler, PhD, director of the Molecular and Cellular Biology program at USU.

"The cancer center brings together superb clinicians and basic researchers to address the unanswered questions in combatting cancers of all types, and thus provides the next generation the hope that many cancers can be prevented and those that cannot be prevented can be successfully treated," said University President (Dr.) Charles Rice of USU during the ceremony. "I am proud of our partnership with Walter Reed-Bethesda, the National Cancer Institute, and the NIH Clinical Center in this important effort and am grateful to the Congress for its sustained support."

Rice was joined by Brig. Gen. (Dr.) Jeffrey Clark, director of the WRNMMC, and Dr. Harold Varmus, director of the NCI, in signing the agreement.

New Leaders Selected to Lead Graduate Education

by Sharon Holland, managing editor



photo by Thomas Balfour

(From left to right), R. David Cruess, Dr. Greg Mueller, Ryan Johnson, and Dr. Brian Cox. Cruess, Mueller and Cox are the newest additions to the Uniformed Services University's F. Edward Hébert School of Medicine Graduate Education Office. Johnson is president of the USU graduate student council.

Dr. Art Kellermann, dean of USU's F. Edward Hébert School of Medicine, recently announced the appointment of Dr. Gregory Muller, professor of Anatomy, Physiology and Genetics, as the new Associate

Dean for Graduate Education.

Mueller had been serving as the acting associate dean since Spring 2014, following the departure of Dr. Eleanor Metcalf from the position.

Kellermann also appointed Dr. Brian Cox, professor and former chair of the Department of Pharmacology, and Dr. David Cruess, professor and principal vice chair of the Department of Preventive Medicine and Biometrics, as assistant deans in the Graduate Education Office.

"Working together, these three have managed several challenging issues, and advocated for our graduate students," said Kellermann. "They are the ideal individuals to lead GEO on an ongoing basis."

Kellermann also established a position for an assistant dean for Graduate Student Affairs which will be filled through an internal search.

"The work of GEO is central to the mission of the School of Medicine and the university we serve. Our research is well aligned to address the needs of the MHS, the health security of the United States, and global health. The high quality of this work is increasingly recognized by the DoD, the NIH, and other sponsors," said Kellermann. "I am confident that Drs. Mueller, Cox and Cruess, and a fourth colleague to be named, will take graduate education at USU to new heights of excellence and achievement."

Soldiers at Elevated Risk for Suicide

Courtesy Article



Dr. Robert J. Ursano

Soldiers hospitalized with a psychiatric disorder have a significantly elevated risk for suicide in the year following hospital discharge, according to findings published in *JAMA Psychiatry*, Nov. 12, 2014. Although this has long been known in the civilian sector, it has never before been studied in the military population.

The study used data from the Army Study to Assess Risk and Resilience in Service members, the largest study of mental health risk and resilience ever conducted among U.S. Army personnel. Robert J. Ursano, MD, chair of the Department of Psychiatry at the Uniformed Services University, Murray B. Stein, MD, MPH, professor of Psychiatry and Family and Preventive Medicine at the University of California, San Diego, both co-principal investigators for Army STARRS, and a team of Army STARRS researchers looked at data from the 12 months following a hospital discharge for more than 40,000 regular Army soldiers (excluding National Guard and Reserve) who served on active duty from 2004 through 2009.

The Army's suicide rate began increasing in 2004, exceeded the rate among U.S. civilians (adjusted to match the sex and age distribution of the Army) in 2009, and has remained high through 2014. This study of administrative data shows that 40,820 soldiers (0.8 percent of all regular Army soldiers who served from 2004-2009) were hospitalized with a psychiatric disorder. Suicides occurring in this group during the year after a hospital discharge accounted for 12 percent of all Army suicides during this period.

"The application of big data methods to target soldiers at high risk of rare, but important, outcomes like suicide is an exciting development because it gives us a way forward in focusing prevention efforts on an ongoing basis," said Ursano.

Researchers also found that it was possible to identify smaller, higher-risk groups within this at-risk population. Analyzing soldiers' characteristics and experiences prior to and during hospitalization, researchers identified the 5 percent of soldiers with the highest predicted risk of suicide after leaving the hospital. This top 5 percent accounted for 52.9 percent of the post-hospital suicides. Soldiers in this top 5 percent also accounted for a greater proportion of accident deaths, suicide attempts, and re-hospitalizations, compared to other previously hospitalized soldiers.

The researchers report that within this group of hospitalized soldiers, those at higher risk of suicide include: 1) males, 2) those who enlisted at an older age, 3) those with a history of criminal offenses during Army service, 4) those who had prior suicidal thoughts or actions, 5) and those with disorders diagnosed during hospitalization and aspects of prior psychiatric treatment.

However, researchers found that many different factors contributed to predicting suicide risk in this group, both individually and in combination. This fact underscores the complexity of assessing suicide risk and the added value of developing new approaches to better predict very challenging events.

Researchers concluded that the high concentration of suicide risk among this study group, and particularly the smaller highest-risk groups, might justify targeting expanded post-hospital interventions for such individuals. Researchers continue to develop and refine computer models to help the Army predict suicide risk among soldiers and prevent self-harm.

USU Graduate Named CEO

by PSV Communications



Photo courtesy of PSV Communications

Dr. Leon Moores
Pediatric Specialists of Virginia announced that Dr. Leon E. Moores, a 1990 graduate of USU's F. Edward Hébert School of Medicine, assumed duties as its first Chief Executive Officer.

Moores is a practicing pediatric neurosurgeon and the Medical Director of Pediatric Neurosciences for the Inova Health System. He has spent the majority of his career in a combination of clinical and leadership positions from Infantry lieutenant in the 82nd Airborne Division to chief of Neurosurgery at Walter Reed, chief of the Department of Surgery at Walter Reed, deputy commander for Integration at the National Naval Medical Center during the Walter Reed/Bethesda

merger, and commander of the Fort Meade Medical Activity – a healthcare system comprised of 14 facilities across a four state region. Moores has deployed twice to combat zones to care for our Nation's service members in battle abroad.

"It's truly an honor to take on the role of CEO at PSV. We are a growing organization with talented physicians and staff who are dedicated to the mission of providing superb specialty care to our region's children.

Moores is a Fellow of the American College of Surgeons and the American Association of Neurological Surgeons, a Professor of Neurosurgery at the Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine, a Professor of Surgery and Pediatrics at the USU School of Medicine, and the recipient of honor leadership awards from West Point, the US Army Infantry Officer Basic Course, the USU, and the Eisenhower School for National Security.

Dental Officers Showcase Education, Research, Treatment at Ft. Sam Houston

by Stacie Crozier, American Dental Association



courtesy photo

Col. Arthur C. Scott, chief, Office of the Dental Corps, second from left, and Col. Donn Grimes, DENCOM commander, right, present the Army Dental Corps Medallion to Dr. Gary MacDonald, president, Canadian Dental Association, left, and Dr. Charles Norman, ADA president, second from right, during a tour at Fort Sam Houston.

Bringing a spirit of cooperation to postgraduate dental education, treatment and research, officers from the U.S. Army, Navy and Air Force Dental Corps welcomed leaders from the American Dental Association and the Canadian Dental Association to Fort Sam Houston, Oct. 8, for a tour of some of the fort's key dental operations.

ADA President Charles

Norman and his wife, Sharon, President-elect Maxine Feinberg and her husband, John Wynne, Executive Director Kathleen O'Loughlin and her husband, Stephen, and Dr. Marshall Gallant of the VA Medical Center in Orlando, Fla., joined several leaders from the Canadian Dental Association and the Canadian Forces Dental Services for the four-hour tour on the day before the opening of ADA 2014-America's Dental Meeting.

Col. Arthur C. Scott, chief of the Office of Army Dental Corps, led the delegation welcoming the visitors at Brooke Army Medical Center. The group heard presentations by representatives of each branch's postgraduate education on the array of postgraduate dental

education and continuing education programs they offer.

Then they proceeded to the BAMC Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery Dental Clinic, where staff led them through the reception and patient treatment areas that log some 19,000 patient visits a year. They also toured two fully equipped operating and recovery rooms that are used for about 500 general anesthesia cases a year. Nancy Hansen, a certified clinical anaplastologist, showed them examples of craniofacial prostheses the clinic fabricates for wounded warriors.

Army, Air Force and Navy officers showcased some of the innovative research underway at the Institute for Surgical Research. Visitors learned about the U.S. Air Force Dental Evaluation and

Consultation Service and its role in materials evaluation, equipment evaluation, facility standards and design and infection control and safety. Other projects highlighted included development of antimicrobial peptides for use in chewing gum to control caries, and studies on biofilm, drug delivery and bone regeneration. Several research projects involve cooperative work among military branches.

At the conclusion of the tour, Col. Scott presented an Army Dental Corps Medallion to Dr. Norman and to Dr. Gary MacDonald, CDA president.

Crozier-S. Dental corps officers showcase education, research, treatment at Fort Sam Houston. ADA News Convention Daily; 124(2):4 Copyright © 2014 American Dental Association. All rights reserved. Reproduced with permission.

Meet Your New Brigade Chaplain

by Christopher Austin, writer-editor



Lt. Cmdr. Pratik Ray

Lt. Cmdr. Pratik Ray joined the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences as its new Brigade Chaplain this past fall. A Navy Veteran, Ray said he hopes to offer confidential and non-judgmental direction to the university's members.

"The most rewarding aspect of being a chaplain is the unique opportunity to provide a safe and confidential space for people to open up and discuss what is important to them without fear of judgment," Chaplain Ray said in an email. "It could be faith, family, career issues—whatever. I would like the students, faculty, and staff to know that I am here for them. I hope all will feel welcome to stop by my office any time or make an appointment to see me."

A native of St. Louis, Ray was set on his career path after his positive experience with the Navy chaplains while attending the Coast Guard Academy.

"When I felt called to the ministry, I already had a link to the

sea services through the Coast Guard Academy," he said. "After I finished my education, I came back as a Navy chaplain."

Ray was commissioned in 1997 in the Naval Reserve and transitioned to active duty in 1999. He has served both active and reserve duty on and off over the course of his 17-year career. He credits his most notable assignments as being six months of ministry at Recruit Training Command at Great Lakes, Ill., and two months of ministry aboard destroyers in the 5th Fleet.

On board the ships,

Ray taught classes on relationship management and communication along with his traditional religious services, attributing the close-quarters of the ship to being able to participate in "deck-plate" ministry.

"Sometimes when you're [on land], [the sailors] want to do their work, or go home, or study, or whatever. But when you're out there and forward-deployed then you're with the people all the time so you can catch them on downtime and share meals together." Ray said. "When they have downtime and are away from home they'll tell you about their families and experiences."

In addition to his work in helping the military community, Ray has another crucial role at the university as a primary voting member of the Institutional Review Board, Infectious Diseases Institutional Review Board, and Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee.

"They're heavily populated with scientists so I, and the previous chaplain, [are] the non-scientist

members and provide the different perspective – the community perspective versus the 'this-is-what-we're-getting-out-of-the-research' perspective," Ray said.

There are many opportunities Ray wants to take advantage of while working at the university, including being fully integrated into Operation Bushmaster and becoming a Myers-Briggs trainer.

Much like with his time on the destroyers, Ray hopes to be there for the students and staff as a confidential mentor.

"Confidentiality for the chaplain is unique in that I'm not a mandatory reporter," he said. "The chaplain stands outside of the chain of command, and outside of someone's normal circle of peers, if they want to get a fresh perspective or sounding board and don't want to share with their circle of peers. That would be my biggest role in a university setting."

"I provide non-judgmental and confidential listening and direction. Some styles are more proclamational or are heavy-handed as you go and tell your counselor, your chaplain, or whoever, 'Hey, I got these problems,' and the chaplain says 'okay, well you need to do A, B, C.' My style's more listening and reflecting so that the person can get to know themselves better and the solutions and ideas that they have are on the inside already."

Ray also brings experience in providing training topics such as suicide prevention, core values, family readiness and marriage enrichment.

His office is located in C-1099.

Final Frame



photo by Sgt. Jeffrey Dillon, Combat Documentary Specialist

Above: Laura Lee, a service dog, participates in the Combined Federal Campaign bake sale at the Uniformed Services University, Nov. 25.



photo by MC3 Laura Batley

A medical simulator for ophthalmology is on display during the Specialty Night at the Uniformed services University, Dec. 3.

