

Giving Back to Those Who Gave So Much



When thinking of organizations for the individuals enrolled in [DDI's Adult Services Without Walls Program](#) to volunteer their time and talent, Curriculum and Training Coordinator Linda Hudson decided that giving back to those who have sacrificed so much would be the perfect choice.

She selected the [Northport Veterans Affairs Medical Center \(VAMC\)](#), a local center dedicated to always improving the health of the men and women who have proudly served our nation, and set upon developing a partnership.

The Northport VAMC was extremely welcome to the idea of our individuals performing meaningful tasks that would benefit both themselves and the veterans.

Now, six years later, we are still celebrating this wonderful partnership.

After beginning with one group performing one task an hour per week, the volunteer teams have progressed to three different groups volunteering two days per week for one hour. Each group has specific tasks to be completed, which include gardening (planting and weeding), organizing and straightening out the magazines in the outpatient clinics and keeping the announcement areas up to date, as well as cleaning off the trays and sorting the utensils and dishes after the veterans have finished their lunch.

Members of the volunteer teams take great pride in their efforts and are happy to be contributing members of the community. “Many of our individuals want to give back and be involved in the community, and it gives them a sense of satisfaction, gives them a sense of belonging and being appreciated,” commented Hudson.

Our individuals have gotten the opportunity to learn new skills while beautifying the grounds and facilities. They are also further improving their social skills and are encouraged to say, “*Thank you for your service,*” to the veterans they meet. That proper and important acknowledgment is always valued.

Northport VAMC Public Affairs Officer Levi Spellman commented, “We’re here to serve a special population of Americans who have made sacrifices in service to our country, and we are proud of the work we do with all of our volunteers in service to our veterans. It’s a mutually enriching experience, and we appreciate the opportunity to work together.”

In some ways our organizations are similar. Both DDI and the Northport VAMC exist to provide people with care, education, and guidance. It is an honor and a privilege to be able to offer some service to the brave men and women who fought for our country and our freedom.

We are grateful for this tremendous opportunity and look forward to continuing our special partnership for many more years to come.