

Salvation Army Greater Valley in Ansonia holds food distribution



ANSONIA - The Salvation Army Greater Valley Monday distributed Thanksgiving food for needy residents..



A total of 150 families were provided turkeys, groceries and fresh produce for their holiday meals.

The distribution is the culmination of the efforts that began [last Friday](#) at 26 Lester St.

The Ansonia High School football team, community leaders and other volunteers started to prepare the many bags of food to be distributed.

The motto of the Salvation Army is 'Doing the Most Good', and in the Lower Naugatuck Valley, this event put those words into action.



Ansonia veteran thankful for Veterans Administration care

By Robert C. Pollack
Special to the Valley-Voice

Almost five years ago, I walked through the rotating doors of the Veterans Administration Campus in West Haven for the first time full of fear I would never get out alive.

That terror was due to the volumes of negative publicity generated over the years in places like Seattle and Phoenix that, quite simply, indicated in too many instances, the VA kills people due to sloppiness of care and less than ideal medical procedures.

For the uninitiated, those fears were reinforced last week by a VA Inspector General's report that "a number of process and protocol shortcomings in the West Haven residential rehab program" were present during the period of the 2015 death of a veteran from an overdose of heroin.

While the veteran -- who was free to come and go at will and who obtained the drug outside of the VA campus -- did not lose his life due to an action by a VA staff member, the Inspector General's report said the process and protocol shortcomings cited have not yet been totally corrected.

I cannot speak to the VA's rehab program -- but I can say in the strongest possible terms that the health care I have received at the West Haven campus is --by far -- the best health care I have ever received.



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I applied for care at the VA only because I have diabetes and was in the dreaded Medicare "donut hole" which meant I could not afford the insulin I needed and found I could get it for at the VA for a small fee -- a fee that was less than it was under Medicare.

But from the moment I walked into the VA campus, I was overwhelmed by the care, skill, and devotion of everyone I encountered. Not only the doctors and nurses, but the technicians, receptionists and clerical staff.

When you walk into a private doctor's office, the only thing most staffs seem interested in is your medical insurance.

Not at the VA. They show a genuine concern for you -- not only as a patient, but as a person. They just can't do enough for you -- even when they are extremely busy.

I have undergone treatment in the VA Neurology, Urology, Optical and Dermatology Departments -- among others. I have been assigned a General Practitioner for my overall health and have only one complaint: Because doctors from Yale rotate in and out of the facility, you might find a doctor you really like who will be gone in a year or so.

But in my experience, their replacements have been equally skillful, warm and caring.

I have written several letters to supervisors raving about the specific care I got from a nurse or nurse practitioner and wish I could do more to give them and the entire staff the praise they deserve.

When you leave a VA office, the last person to see you inevitably says: Thank you for your service. My reply is always, "No, thank you for yours." And I have spoken to dozens of veterans during my frequent visits there who echo my feelings.

Is the medical care provided by the VA in West Haven perfect? Of course not. Perfection eludes us all. But its quality is far beyond its present image.

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I was an information specialist in the Air Force for seven years and almost made a career of it.

I was stationed for four of those years in Tripoli, Libya and learned a lot about the world in general. I never served in combat but befriended many who did.

If you are a veteran or know a friend or family member who has served, I urge you to ignore the bad VA publicity. Go to the West Haven campus or urge a veteran of your acquaintance to do so. Enroll in the program.

From the valet parking to the way you will be treated, you will be just as amazed as I have been and the present VA image will be shattered forever.



Ansonia resident Robert C. Pollack was Managing Editor of the former *Evening Sentinel*