



Navy Marine Coast Guard Residence Foundation

May 2024 Foundation Update

May Is All About New Beginnings

Spring always brings new beginnings, and at the Navy Marine Coast Guard Residence Foundation, our month of May has been filled with many of those! Our Annual Membership Appeal campaign began in May, when we mailed out over 1,500 letters asking for your membership support for 2024, and we are humbled by your generous response. Read all about how your donations are making a difference in the lives of our residents and staff! This month, we also began a new relationship with the latest warrior to join the Foundation's Wounded Warrior program – welcome, Tairique! – and we celebrated our long-standing relationship with our friends at the Navy Officers' Spouses' Club, who brought flowers in honor of our military spouses. Thanks to one resident's generous gift to the Innovation & Enhancement Fund, we were also pleased to be able to purchase a new automatic door to provide easier access to Vinson Hall. Last but not least, we put out a new issue of *Campus News & Views*, the literary magazine we publish – don't miss this Spring issue, it's chock full of our residents' amazing stories! Read all about these May new beginnings and other Foundation news in the articles below!

Calling All 2024 Foundation Members!

The annual Membership Appeal campaign — is off and running! About 1,500 letters went out this month to VHRC residents, family, friends and staff, inviting our supporters to become 2024 members of the Foundation. We are delighted with the response so far, and thank you all for your support! Our largest source of revenue each year comes from our Annual Membership campaign, so your membership contribution truly makes a difference.

This year's campaign included two new stories in our **The Difference You Make** series. One is about a resident who was able to continue to live at VHRC thanks to the Resident Assistance Fund, and the other highlighted a staff member who surmounted a medical crisis with the help of the Employee Caring Fund. Please click [here](#) to read these stories and see the difference that your generosity makes to our community!



**Donate to NMCGRF
Today**

NMCGRF Partners with NOSC To Honor Military Spouses

On May 16, we were delighted to welcome to campus our friends at Navy Officers' Spouses' Club of Washington, D.C. (NOSC-DC) – the organization responsible for fundraising and lobbying to create VHRC a half century ago. Several members of the club stopped by to distribute sunflowers to VHRC's military spouses in honor of Military



Spouse Appreciation day, which was May 10. About 200 flowers were distributed to VHRC residents whose husbands had served in the Navy, Marines, Coast Guard, Army or Air Force. At NMCGRF, we are thankful to our residents for their service to our country, and it was our pleasure to help facilitate this generous gesture by our friends at NOSC!

Wounded Warrior Program Welcomes A New Warrior to Campus

This month, NMCGRF welcomed our most recent participant in our

Wounded Warrior program: Tairique Whittaker, 25. Tairique is enthusiastic about living in one of Vinson Hall's two wounded warrior apartments and joining the VHRC community. "I love it here," he says. "Everyone is so nice. This just feels homey – and I don't ever use words like homey! But it already feels like home to me."



Born in Jamaica in the countryside – "as country as country gets" – Tairique and his mother moved to the U.S. when he was nine. He vividly remembers his first impressions of moving from his modest life in Jamaica to the U.S. "I'm walking through this huge airport, and then I see all these fancy cars and I'm thinking, 'Where am I?'" says Tairique, who is grateful for how the move changed his life. "It humbles me to know I came such a long way." Tairique ended up attending a high school in East Orange, New Jersey, specializing in performing arts, where he played the harp, then after graduation, he decided to join the military. He and his best friend were on their way to submit applications to the Coast Guard Academy when a Navy recruiter called and persuaded them to stop by her office first. "Long story short, he and I both joined the Navy that day!"



Tairique entered the Navy in 2016 and went through training to become an Information Systems Administrator. While waiting for his security clearance to come through, he was sent to Hawaii for three years, where he served in the honor guard, doing burials and repatriations for fallen service members. "I sent the flag to half mast on the morning of December 7 at the USS Arizona Memorial," he says with pride. Then in 2021, he was sent to Bahrain as a Systems

Administrator in the Secure Operations Center, providing communications for assets in the 5th Fleet. It was a post that had a dramatic impact on his life. "For one thing, I realized how thankful I should be to live in the U.S. where there are so many opportunities – and freedom of speech. A lot of people don't realize how much that means."

While there, Tairique had an accident that put everything else on hold. "I was riding my motorcycle to base, when another driver suddenly

pulled into my lane and cut me off. I flew off my motorcycle and was found unconscious," says Tairique, who recounts what a witness told him, as he has no memory of the accident. "The sailor who pulled me out of the road told me, 'Spiderman would not have had the reflexes to avoid that accident.'" His injuries were massive: a broken pelvis, separated shoulder, and a traumatic brain injury that led to severe memory loss, slurred speech and dizziness. After surgery in Bahrain followed by 45 days of complete bedrest, Tairique returned to Walter Reed to begin physical therapy to re-learn to walk. "I remember the first day they gave me a walker and told me I could walk, I was so excited to be on my feet again! The first thing I did was take a nice hot shower!"



Rehabilitation has been a slow process – a year and a half, and counting – and marked with pain. Despite the doctors' prediction that he will never recover more than 55 percent of his initial capacity, Tairique is focused on how far he has already come. "I can now walk 15 to 20 minutes without much pain, and that's so much better than it was!" His focus stays on the future: "I just live for tomorrow."

The future for Tairique also includes taking college classes at the University of Maryland, where he already has 63 credits and expects to complete his degree in Computer Science in about a year and a half. While he takes classes and transitions out of the Navy, Tairique will be living at VHRC for the next six months to a year, much to his relief. "Before this came through, I was so worried. I was thinking, 'Do I have a safe place to live once I get out? Honestly, I felt like I didn't know what I was going to do.'" Now he does, and he is very grateful to be part of VHRC's Wounded Warrior program. "I'd say it's a blessing – that's the first word that comes to mind."

The Wounded Warrior program —
at VHRC celebrates our rich
military heritage, and to our
knowledge there is no other
program quite like it in the
nation. It was started more than

a decade ago when VHRC's former CEO, Admiral Kathy Martin – who had previously served as Commander of Bethesda Naval Hospital (now Walter Reed National Military Medical Center) – helped establish a partnership between VHRC and the hospital. Two apartments in Vinson Hall were set aside for injured or ill sailors awaiting discharge or medical retirement from service, or for those who had retired and were transitioning to a new career. NMCGRF raises money through its Warrior Transition Fund to subsidize participants' stay in the apartments. Applicants are recommended by Navy Wounded Warrior, our partner organization based at Walter Reed that coordinates the non-medical care of wounded sailors and transitions them through recovery, rehabilitation and reintegration. Since 2013, a total of 25 warriors have temporarily called VHRC home.



Welcome, Tairique!

The Gift of a New Automatic Door

Vinson Hall has a new automatic door, thanks to a gift to the Innovation & Enhancement Fund from resident Rooney Peck. The door is located on the ground floor and leads to the parking area near the loading dock where many residents park their cars. Navigating your way through the door if you use a walker or have a load of groceries in your arms had been a tricky proposition. Now with the new door, residents simply tap their fob on the sensor pad, press the push plate and the door swings open automatically, hands free.



Rooney asked the Foundation if she could make a donation specifically to equip this door with an automatic opener, and we were delighted to help. Denese Arnold, Senior Director of Property Management, stepped in to order the door and have it installed. Rooney is thrilled with the new automatic opener. "Bringing in packages is so much easier now that the handicapped door opener has been installed," she says. Many

thanks for your generous donation, Rooney!

Spring Issue of Literary Magazine is Here!

Don't miss our latest issue of *Campus News & Views*, Vinson Hall and Willow Oak's literary magazine! It is full of wonderful stories, remembrances and poems written by our residents – and boy, do they have some fascinating stories to tell! Highlights include a diplomat's tale of serving twice in turbulent times in Czechoslovakia during the Prague Spring and the Velvet Revolution, an endearing account of the special bond shared between a resident and her rescue Chihuahua, one woman's memories of being a child with special color-related super powers, and a naval officer's ode to his three best bosses.

Adventure abounds, from a Peace Corps worker's near miss with rebels in the jungles of Colombia, to a young woman's South American adventures in a single engine plane.

This issue has it all, from history (ever wondered how the VHRC Hobby Shop got its name?) to campus news from CEO Chip Warner and Senior Director of Philanthropy & Engagement Michelle Crone.

It is our pleasure in the Office of Philanthropy & Engagement to edit and publish this magazine in support of the remarkable residents of VHRC! Please click [here](#) to read the Spring 2024 issue of *Campus News & Views*.



NMCGRF's Annual Gala – Tickets Go on Sale in July!



NMCGRF's Annual Gala is coming soon! Mark your calendars for Saturday, October 5, 2024! Tickets go on sale in July, which is also when we will reveal the theme of this year's event. We can't wait to tell you about it! One thing's for sure: the Foundation's 28th Gala will be a night to remember. Stay tuned!

Your Planned Gift Today Can Make a Difference Tomorrow

You can leave a legacy that will last for years to come by designating Navy Marine Coast Guard Residence Foundation in your will or by making a planned gift. Some types of planned gifts can support our community and provide you with a charitable income tax deduction, minimize capital gains taxes, reduce estate taxes or provide you or others with an annual income for life. To learn more about these types of gifts, please see our [website](#) or contact Michelle Crone at michellec@vinsonhall.org or 703-538-3068.

Learn More about Planned
Giving

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