



OPERATION VUB



National Association of Veterans Upward Bound Project Personnel Newsletter Winter 2006



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Next Conferences

2006-Washington, DC
2007-Reno, NV

www.veteransupwardbound.org



A Fifth NAVUBPP Scholarship, 2006 Competition, & 2005 Scholarship Winners

Don Campbell, Instructional Specialist with the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Veterans Upward Bound presented a \$500 scholarship at our 27th annual NAVUBPP conference in New Orleans. The scholarship was given by Combat Tracker Teams of the Vietnam War. Don, a member of this group, saw their number rise to 500 by the end of the Vietnam War. Forty-four were killed in action.

These highly trained units were made up of five men & a Labrador Retriever. It was evident during Don's presentation that team members still carry a deep connection to not only the men who served in these units, but the dogs as well. Twelve of the dogs gave their lives in service.

The teams' purpose placed them in harm's way daily: seeking contact with the elusive enemy, reconnaissance in areas of known enemy activity, & locating missing service

personnel. They were out far ahead of the main force & responsible for many lives by relaying tracking information & troop movements.

Don indicated that this will not be a one time donation, but an annual scholarship for VUB participants to apply for, in addition to the four already available. It was a memorable moment for everyone in attendance & represents a step forward in what NAVUBPP has identified as a top priority: the ability to assist more veterans in securing financial assistance to complete their college degrees.

NAVUBPP will again offer 4 to 5, \$500 scholarships to veterans for 2006-07. Qualified applicants are current or former members of a Veterans Upward Bound program. The applicant must be nominated by a staff member whose VUB maintains current NAVUBPP membership.

Applicants will be scored on

financial need, academics, VUB & community activities, honors, & other pertinent information. An essay & letter of recommendation are required. The deadline for applications is April 1, 2006. Winning students will be notified by June 1, 2005 & will receive their scholarships when proof of enrollment & attendance in postsecondary education is verified.

Application materials will soon be available online at: www.veteransupwardbound.org/Scholarships.html

Questions contact: Ce Merrigan, 308-635-6123; email: merrigan@wncc or Randy Wilson: 247-745-5008; email: randal.d.wilson@wku.edu

Many qualified applicants applied for the NAVUBPP 2005-06 scholarships, but only five participants could win these awards. Each is a VUB participant and has a story of his/her own. Here are their stories.

Priscilla Carter From University of Texas at Brownsville, TX

Priscilla Carter served in the U.S. Army from 1999-2004. Her husband is still serving in Iraq. She is the mother of three children and is not working while attending school full time, so her need is great. Mrs. Carter has been on the President's list at her college twice and is in the Honor Society. She has also been recognized as Miss National High Kick by the National Dance Team Association. She has also volunteered in numerous activities since 1997 such as Sombrero Festival, Good Neighbor Settlement Home, Valley Regional Medical Center and the US Custom Explorer. Beyond that she has been involved in several VUB activities.



(Continued on page 2)



(2005 Scholarship winners continued from page 1.)

Priscilla has been a high achieving student through her life and now maintains a 4.0 GPA after 28 hours of university work. She is striving to earn a B.S. in Computer Science by December 2008. Priscilla wrote in her essay "It (VUB) is a great learning environment which has helped me to be a 4.0 student, on the President's List, and a great role model for my children and others who are thinking about continuing their education after high school. Veterans Upward Bound has helped me to build a standard for those who come after me and has given me the tools that I need to get there."

Anthony Bullock From Texas College, TX



Anthony is a single father of three and has thus far earned 105 hours of college credit and holds a 3.27 GPA. He has done this while parenting children and experiencing the loss of both his parents. He had a good job where he was successful when he stopped to be with his mother in her final days who challenged him at that time to "be that living example of fatherhood and self-enlightenment." He intends to complete a Ph.D. program before his college work is done. In addition, he has earned the Andrew W. Mellon Undergraduate Fellowship and is on the Texas College Honor Roll.

Mr. Bullock is involved in the community through Model United Nations, Head Start/Day Care Advisory Committee, and Single Parent Support Group. He stated in his essay, "An investment in my education is an investment that will produce returns well worth the capital outlay because I am not a blank slate with no direction." He also stated that he was asking VUB to "help me change so that I may help my community change."

Deanna Mack From University of Pennsylvania, PA



Deanna Mack is a single mother who is taking care of her mother who recently had a stroke, her grandmother who has ongoing health problems, and her son who has a disability. As she does all this she will attend school and major in Electrical or Computer Engineering. She was an honor roll student in her high school in 1993.

Deanna is also involved in her community and has won several awards in the VUB program at the University of Pennsylvania. In her essay she stated, "Four years or so from now I'll have a degree in electrical engineering from Temple University. I will owe a lot of my success to this program (VUB)."

Kim Mack From Western Kentucky University, KY



Kim Mack is a veteran of the U.S. Army, having served from 1998 to 2002. Kim is a single parent with two children and falls within the Low Income and First Generation selection criteria for Veterans Upward Bound. She is pursuing a baccalaureate degree in English & Allied Language Arts where she has a 3.88 GPA on 25 hours of completed work. This qualifies her as a Dean's Scholar at WKU.

In 2004, Kim won the local VUB scholarship, and in 2005 she was selected as the Student of the Year in VUB. She has also been published in "Veterans Voices" the local VUB publication of outstanding student work. She is active as a Sunday School Teacher and in the Ladies Bible Class at her church.

In her application essay she stated, "Veterans Upward Bound helped me pursue a higher education because it helped me refresh academic skills that had gone unbearably stale.... I tested mathematically at an elementary level. Yet after twice a week night classes, numerous workbooks, and lots of support from God and the Veterans Upward Bound staff, I was able to bring my testing up to 12th grade level....Veterans Upward Bound has helped me in pursuit of a college education by helping me realize that doubtlessly, I can achieve all that I believe."



(2005 Scholarship winners continued from page 2.)

Michael Morgan

From East Tennessee State University, TN



Michael is the father of 5 children and has attended school while battling a rare form of cancer called Dermatofibrosarcoma. He is pursuing a B.S. in Psychology. He has completed 90 hours of course work with a 3.747 GPA. Michael has won scholarships at the state and regional levels and was named to the Dean's List in 2003 and 2004.

If not busy enough with school and 5 children, he has had time to volunteer with several human services organizations like Children's Wish Foundation, Collecting Funds for Impoverished with the Knights of Columbus and Home for Women and Children Escaping Abuse. He has also coached Little League Baseball and accepted requests by VUB to be a Financial Aid/College Success Workshop speaker.

In his essay he wrote, "Now that I have taken the time to seek assistance from the staff, my academic abilities have grown by leaps and bounds. Each time that I feel I am being more of a nuisance than I should, the staff here assures me that their goal is clear: we want all of our students to succeed."

(Adapted from www.veteransupwardbound.org)

Conference Highlights, February 2005, New Orleans, Louisiana



(Dr. Arnold Mitchem)

Dr. Arnold Mitchem, President of the Council for Opportunity in Education (COE) gave a rousing speech in New Orleans. He highlighted why it is vital for TRIO staffers, participants, and advocates to persuade Congress to restore full funding for all TRIO programs in the FY 2006 budget. In February, 2005, the proposed FY 2006 budget eliminated funding for Upward Bound, Upward Bound Math-Science, Veterans Upward Bound, and Educational Talent Search.

Funding for these programs was restored to the FY 2006 budget. However, in late December, 2005, a 1% across-the-board decrease was imposed on federal discretionary spending, costing the level-funded TRIO programs, a cut of 1%. That will mean an overall loss of \$8.3million from the current \$836.5 million budget. COE does not anticipate that any existing grants will be cut.



(NAVUBPP Executive Board)

Pictured at left is the NAVUBPP Executive Board. This picture was taken after the banquet at the 2005 NAVUBPP Conference. Back row, L to R, Parliamentarian Dwyane Woods, President James Kopecky, Vice President Mike Fisher. Front row, L to R, Immediate Past-President Chris Chalko, Former Secretary Ce Merrigan, Treasurer Julia O'Dell, Public Relations Officer Tracey Kirk, Conference Chair Leroy Chavez.



U. Mass-Boston Graduates Celebrate in Style

Submitted by Barry Brodsky



Nearly 100 people cheered and wept as twenty-three veterans graduated the Spring 2005 semester at Veterans Upward Bound at U. Mass-Boston. Many of the graduates will be attending U. Mass Boston in the fall, others will be enrolled in local community colleges, while still others will return to VUB for another semester of classes. All of them completed a rigorous 16-week course of study, with classes and tutoring four evenings per week for sixteen weeks.

UMB Chancellor Dr. Keith Motley hailed the graduates for continuing to serve their country: "You served us in uniform, and now you embark on a journey to serve us yet again as educated citizens participating in the process of democracy."

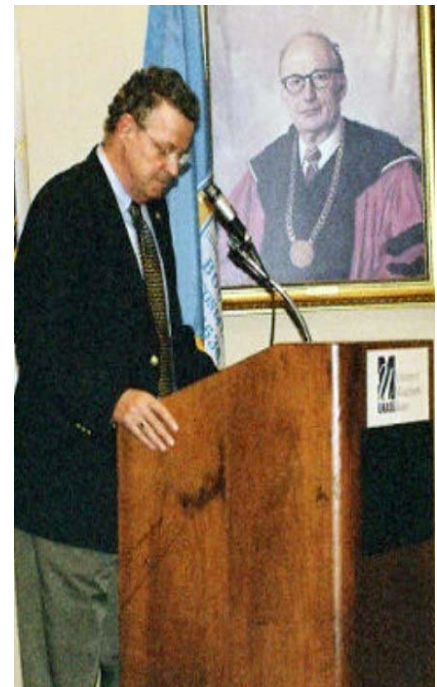
American Legion Post 120 in Hingham, MA presented its first Richard Sweeney Memorial Scholarship to VUB graduate Charles Rupp. Rupp, a veteran of the first Gulf War, will be attending UMB in the fall. The award was named for VUB graduate Richard Sweeney, who was pursuing his studies at U. Mass when he died of cancer in 2004. They presented Mr. Rupp with a handsome plaque and a check for two hundred dollars.

VUB student Jean-Pierre Coakley was among the graduates. Mr. Coakley suffered a severe spinal cord injury and is in a wheelchair. When his name was announced, his five year old son came to his

side, took his hand, and Mr. Coakley slowly rose and made his way to the podium. With the audience in a hushed silence, Mr. Coakley grasped his diploma, raised it over his head, and pumped his fist. The attendees leaped to their feet and cheered as Coakley's son led him back to his chair. After the ceremony Coakley said, "I wasn't planning to try to walk. I haven't taken more than three or four steps in a long time, but I just wanted to be on my feet for this honor. This program has made such a difference in my life." Mr. Coakley will be returning to VUB for one more semester before attending college in January, 2006.

The keynote address of the evening was delivered by Joseph Thurston. Mr. Thurston is a 1989 graduate of the VUB program. A Vietnam combat veteran, Thurston went from VUB to obtain an undergraduate degree at UMB and a Master's Degree in Counseling at Cambridge College. For the past 12 years he has worked as a counselor at the Brockton Vets Center in Brockton, MA, about 25 miles south of Boston. Thurston recently wrote his congressmen urging them to keep funding for the TRIO programs. "I sent a copy of the letter to Barry Brodsky, and the next thing I know he's asking me to speak at this graduation," Thurston joked. Thurston told the graduates "education is the most important thing you can do for yourself. It's the best guarantee for a happy and

fulfilling life. I don't ever want to stop learning and growing." He said VUB prepared him well for the rigors of a college life. "There were times when things got rough, but then I thought to myself that this still isn't as hard as the VUB program was for me to complete." Thurston said the country needs more VUB programs to give its veterans the needed preparation for college life. "Coming back from 'Nam, I didn't think I could ever sit in a college classroom. This program showed me that I could. And then I went ahead and did it."



(Joseph Thurston)



Minneapolis Graduate Receives TRIO Achievers' Award

Submitted by Jim Kilps

At the April MnAEOPP Conference, Minneapolis VUB graduate of the Class of '95, Les Howard, received a TRIO Achievers' Award at the Recognition Dinner. After completing VUB, Les received assistance from Minneapolis College's Starting Point (SSS) and EOC, as well as the McNair program at Augsburg College. We are extremely proud of Les's achievements and pleased that he has joined the ranks of our mental health professionals and is serving the needs of the community.



(Leslie D. Howard)



(From left to right, Jon Westby, TRIO Director; Les and Jackie Howard, Joy Kluttz, MnAEOPP, and Jim Kilps, VUB Director/Counselor.)

In Howard's own words: "After multiple jobs throughout my life, I was not fulfilled and had no sense of purpose or meaning. Equipped with a GED and a desire to make a difference, I entered the Veterans Upward Bound and Starting Point programs at Minneapolis Community College. I graduated in 1999 with a Liberal Arts degree. The following Fall, I was accepted in the Social Work Program at Augsburg College; while there I received the opportunity to become involved in the McNair Scholar Program; which included doing a research project. I graduated in 2002 with a Bachelors degree in Social Work. In December of 2003, I finished my academic career with a Masters in Social Work from the University of Minnesota. Currently, I am working with individuals in the community who suffer from serious persistent mental health illness."

WKU Honored By Past Participants!

Submitted by Randy Wilson

The VUB staff at Western Kentucky were recognized with a surprise award by former participants when it was announced that the U.S. House of Representatives awarded a Certificate of Special Recognition in recognition of the program's successes. Representative Ed Whitfield (1st District) was the contact point the students used to develop the award. Shown in the photo left to right are Front: Marlys Garman (recently retired) Back: Randy Wilson, Kevin Crum (DAV Work Study), Pat Ault, Davy Stone, Cassie Zippay, and Martha Kenney.





Rapid City Veteran Sets the Example

Submitted by Marcia Stuckey

James Wenzlick is the typical veteran. He spent his twenty years in the Air Force as a Flight Engineer and performed his duties in an honorable fashion. He did what was asked of him to “complete the Mission.” And then one day, he looked to the future and decided it was time to retire. Suddenly, his future was one of apprehension and questions. He kept asking himself, “What do I do now?”

Ten years after leaving the service, Jim turned to the Veteran’s Affairs (VA) Vocational Rehabilitation program to see if education was the answer to his question. After being told he was eligible for an education program, Jim turned to the local Veterans Upward Bound (VUB) program to prepare him for college.



Jim has been in VUB since September 2004. He has been active in Math, English, and Computers to prepare him towards his goal of a Bachelor of Science Degree in Radiology, with a background in Nuclear Medicine. “I started this education program to show my son the importance of education,” said Jim. “But, I also did it for my own self-esteem. This is something I wanted to do, not had to do.” He has a vision of being part of a radiology group in the Black Hills when he is done with his degree.

While going to school, Jim also serves as a VA work-study in the Vocational Rehab office, working 20 hours a week. Paul Barnes and Dan Byers, Vocational Rehab Counselors, describe Jim as a hard worker and quick learner. “Jim has grown in many ways since he has started school and working as work-study,” Paul said. Dan commented, “Jim has become very open to change and suggestions and is willing to make the changes to be successful.”

Jim’s growth has also been very apparent in his VUB classes. “He has become a mentor and class leader,” said Brett Distel, Rapid City VUB Program Advisor. “He is a shining example of what this program can do.” Jim’s comments about the program show his want in using education as way to a better life. “VUB is an excellent program. It prepares us going back to college and allows camaraderie building with other vets like we did in the service. Without VUB, I would never be ready for college.”



(Graduates from Veterans Upward Bound, May 14, 2005, Western Nebraska Community College.)



VETERAN WINS AWARD AND SCHOLARSHIP

Submitted by Marcia Stuckey

Lou Ann Conklin, a Veterans Upward Bound participant at Western Nebraska Community College in Scottsbluff, Nebraska recently won the International Soroptimist Women's Opportunity Award for the panhandle region along with a \$500 scholarship. Conklin's award makes her eligible for regional competition and a chance at one of three \$3,000 awards. If she would win at that level she would become a candidate for one of three first place awards of \$10,000. Lou Ann is the sole support for a family with four children, two who have graduated and two who are living at home. Her husband is disabled. She is an active member of Veterans Upward Bound and Y.E.S. TRIO programs, is a VUB work-study, a parent volunteer for Head Start, Parent's Advisory Council and is a drilling selective reservist in the U.S. Navy, having served for 20 years.



Lou Ann is enrolled for 12 credit hours this semester and is also employed in the evenings at a truck stop as a checker. She is seeking a two-year degree in business administration.

Scottsbluff Veteran Selected for Biomedical Research Program

Submitted by Marcia Stuckey

Scott Griffith, a member of Western Nebraska Community College's Veterans Upward Bound Program, was recently notified of his selection for the University of Nebraska Medical Center's Scholars Program. Only 52 students are selected each year for this program. He is one of 2 students selected from Western Nebraska Community College. Griffith will graduate on May 14 from WNCC with an Associate in Science, Pre-Med degree.



Griffith will start his studies this summer in Omaha and Lincoln and will be trained in lab work at the University of Nebraska – Kearney. He will then go on to continue his work at the Kearney, Lincoln or Creighton campus for two years. During this time he will be awarded a master's degree using his research studies for his dissertation followed by a doctorate in genetics, bio-medicine or chemistry.

Griffith has been an active participant in the Veterans Upward Bound program receiving assistance in math tutoring and academic advising throughout his enrollment at WNCC.



OPERATION VUB

WINTER 2006

Austin Peay State University VUB Alumni Selected for “Who’s Who”

by Tracey Kirk

Among 38 APSU students chosen for the 2006 edition of “Who’s Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges,” two are Veterans Upward Bound alumni: Dominick Aponte and Rhoan Campbell. Both Dominick and Rhoan graduated from VUB in 2003.

Dominick is majoring in Social Work and has a current GPA of 3.290. He is a senior and made the dean’s list in both

the spring and fall semesters of 2005.

Rhoan Campbell graduated with a Bachelor’s of Science in Health and Human Performance (HHP) in December 2005, with a GPA of 3.429. He was on the dean’s list in Spring 2003, Fall 2004, Spring 2005, and Summer 2005. He is pursuing a MS degree in HHP with a concentration in Health Services Administration Specialization. Rhoan

works for VUB as a tutor and is also a graduate assistant at APSU.

“Who’s Who” students are selected on academic achievement, service to the community, leadership in extracurricular activities, & potential for continued success. The list includes outstanding students from more than 2,000 higher learning institutions.

For more information about Veterans Upward Bound (VUB) or the National Association of Veterans Upward Bound Project Personnel (NAVUBPP), please visit our Web Page at www.veteransupwardbound.org.

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