



THURSDAY

SEPTEMBER 12

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## Just a little nudge

Navy Veteran Barbara Smith lived the first half-century of her life with the gift of sight. But when diabetes led to blindness 17 years ago, the second-year participant of the National Disabled Veterans TEE Tournament was confronted with obstacles she had never encountered.

However, none of them have stopped her from confronting them head-on.

"Each year I go through this adventure of being disabled and being blind I get stronger," said Smith. "And with the great help of the VA, I keep getting stronger."

The Maplewood, Minnesota, native first walked into the Minneapolis VA Medical Center seven years ago. It was there that one of her coordinators encouraged her to get involved in adaptive sports.

"She said I'd have fun doing it and that's all it took," Smith explained.

While she golfed previously in her life, last year's event was the first time she tried it since becoming visually impaired. She said the intimidation factor of taking it on led to an anxiety attack on the sixth tee.

"But one of the other ladies I was paired with was very patient and had a very calming effect on me," she

said. "It really helped."

And that's all it took for Smith to find her comfort.

"I was very quiet and timid and shy," she explained. "But once a sighted person comes and helps me—look out!"

Smith also rekindled an old passion for bowling and tried kayaking despite her fear of water. This year, she wants to continue trying new activities.

"The best part of the whole week was the camaraderie and feeling of complete acceptance again," she said. "I'm so looking forward to it again."

She credits the many volunteers and event organizers for making the TEE Tournament such a memorable and impactful event.

"How can you thank them enough for their warmth and generosity and time and patience and understanding?" Smith said. "I just wanted to take them all home."

"If I could shout it from the rooftops, I'd tell every Veteran to get involved and go to this tournament. It's such a tremendous gift that we're given for those five days. It's unbelievable."



Hosted by DAV (Disabled American Veterans)  
and the Department of Veterans Affairs



## MAKING A DIFFERENCE

So how does a blind guy who never golfed when he could see, actually golf now that he can't?

"Well, that just kind of depends," said Mike Glynn with a chuckle.

"There are some golfers who have played golf before and so they have been able to see and hit the ball and they just kind of transferred those muscle memory skills.

"For me, I have a golf buddy volunteer. When I get on the tee to hit my first shot, I put up my left arm and I ask them to point my hand toward the tee. Then I have them point my hand toward the flag. That way I can line myself up so that's the direction I want to hit. They put the ball on the tee, right in front of my club head, and from there I just wail away.

"Literally, I'm wailing," he said. "For someone who has played before, they usually always hit it. For me, for as many times as I make contact, I miss. I may go over the ball or shorten my swing, but every now and then, when I make a good solid connection, you know by the sound

and the feel, and I go, 'Oh, that was good.'"

Glynn said he only decided to go to his first event

because he was tired of

the blind rehabilitation therapist at the VA Central Iowa Health Care System from bugging him to go. Now, the guy who never golfed without a windmill in front of a hole said he was hooked after that first time. He brought home a set of donated clubs and has upgraded his drivers and irons since then.

"I actually look forward to it every year. It gives me an additional outlet. I'm meeting people, socializing with folks. You meet new people, it's Veterans playing cards, shooting the breeze. It shows you that you aren't alone, and you learn how to cope by talking to others going through it."



If you need a ride on Friday to the airport, please let us know before the banquet on Thursday evening. Stop by the transportation table in the hotel lobby or contact the Command Center.



**Veterans  
Crisis Line**

**1-800-273-8255 PRESS 1**

## Veterans Giving back to Veterans

DAV is an organization of veterans giving back to Veterans, and the DAV Auxiliary is made up of men and women whose loved ones have served. Together, these two organizations place stalwart support behind the overall DAV mission of helping our nation's Veterans lead fulfilling lives.

We are grateful for all the sponsors of the 2019 National Disabled Veterans TEE Tournament, including the 12 DAV and DAV Auxiliary state or local level sponsors. Their involvement is a true testament to how deeply these groups care for Veterans.

"I'd like to express my gratitude to all the sponsors this—and every—year, for helping us to put on such a great event and extend this opportunity to so many Veterans,"

said DAV National Voluntary Services Director John Kleindienst. "I know they work hard throughout the year to ensure they can support Veterans in their community and those who attend this tournament. They truly believe in our mission and are connected by a sense of duty and common purpose."

The DAV Auxiliary Department of Oklahoma Juniors—those members under 18 years of age—have earned recognition within their state over the years for their projects and support for adaptive sports.

"We're so pleased to see the next generation of support emerging with our Junior Auxiliary members," added Kleindienst. "These young men and women are some of the best and brightest our future has to offer."

### CHAMPION



### HOST



### NATIONAL



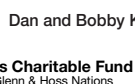
### GOLD



### SILVER



### BRONZE



### CONTRIBUTORS

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Veterans Casting Away  
Disabilities  
West Liberty Fire and  
Rescue  
West Liberty Golf &  
Country Club



## Today's Schedule

6 – 7:30 a.m.

**BREAKFAST BUFFET** at your hotel

7:30 a.m.

**LOAD BUSES** (Each team has the same bus all day)

8 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

**ALL TEAMS GOLF & COMPANION ACTIVITIES**

11 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. **LUNCH** – served at your event

3:30 – 6:30 p.m.

**AWARDS** – Event Tent

5:30 – 7 p.m.

**DINNER** – Riverside Event Center

7 p.m.

**CLOSING CEREMONIES** – Riverside Event Center

\*Shuttle between hotels run 3 p.m. – midnight (Shuttle pick ups on the hour)



**Get Social** Inspire other veterans, family, friends and people everywhere by sharing your experience through social media. Don't forget to use the hashtag **#TEE2019** when sharing photos and videos from this week.

VA

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