

# The Desert Oracle



A Member Chapter of the Paralyzed Veterans of America

July-August 2009 Vol. 11 Issue 5

## The Arizona Monsoons



**During the Monsoon, or Summer Thunderstorm Season,** Arizona experiences more severe weather than many other states. On rare occasion, a severe storm may spawn a tornado. More often, high winds, dust and severe downpours resulting in flash floods are common monsoon occurrences.

Prior to 2008 the Phoenix area monsoon was considered to have started when there were three consecutive days when the dew point averaged 55 degrees or higher. In 2008 the National Weather Service decided to take the guesswork out of monsoon start and end dates. After all, monsoon is a season, and most people should not be concerned with whether or not a particular dust storm was defined as monsoon storm or not. Beginning in 2008, June 15 will be the first day of monsoon, and September 30 will be the last day. Now we can be more concerned with monsoon safety and less concerned with definitions.

Meteorologists still track and report dew points and study monsoon weather patterns. Here are some technical monsoon facts for our area. The average starting date of the monsoon in Phoenix is July 7. The average ending date of the monsoon is September 13. The earliest start date for the monsoon was June 16, 1925. The latest start date for the monsoon was July 25, 1987. The average date of the first break in the monsoon is August 16. The average total number of monsoon days (where a monsoon day is considered one with an average dewpoint of 55 degrees or higher) is 56. The greatest number of monsoon days was 99, recorded in 1984. The fewest number of monsoon days was 27, recorded in 1962. The greatest number of consecutive monsoon days was 72, from June 25 through September 4, 1984. This was also the greatest number of consecutive days with dew points of 60 degrees or higher. In Phoenix, normal rainfall during July, August and September is 2.65 inches. The wettest monsoon occurred in 1984 when we had 9.38 inches of rain. The driest monsoon occurred in 1924 with only 0.35 inches.

# Arizona Chapter, Paralyzed Veterans of America

## Officers

Benjamin Garcia, President  
Gordon H. Moye, Vice President  
Frank Rigo, Secretary  
Dianne Brunswick, Treasurer

## Board of Directors

Arthur Hardy, Sr.  
Dan Koston  
Larry Lattomus  
Diego Suazo  
John Tuzzolino / Sports Director  
Sue Wudy

## National Director

Arthur Hardy Sr.

## Hospital/ Services Coordinator/

Gordon H. Moye

## Executive Director

Peter R. Quinn

## Admin. Assistant/Office Manger

Patricia Beran

## PVA National Service Office

Michael A. Wilson, NSO  
Marco Rossi, NSO  
Jacqueline Berkshire, Admin Assistant

PVA National Service Office  
3333 N. Central Ave., Ste. 1055  
Phoenix, AZ 85012  
602-627-3311  
Fax- 602-627-3315  
800-795-3582

8126 North 23rd Avenue, Suite J  
Phoenix, AZ 85021  
Office: (602)-244-9168, Fax: (602) 244-0416  
1-800-621-9217 azpva@azpva.org  
Office Hours: M-TH 8:00 am – 4:00pm  
Friday 8:00am—3:pm  
Published 6 x per Year

## IN THIS ISSUE

- ◆ Board of Directors.....pg. 2
- ◆ Notes from the Executive Director.....pg. 3
- ◆ Letter from the Past President.....pg.4
- ◆ NSO Corner.....pg. 5
- ◆ Phoenix NASCA.....pg. 5
- ◆ Picnic in the Pines.....pg. 6-7
- ◆ Greetings from the PHX SCI Clinic.....pg.8
- ◆ Berkshires' Bits & Pieces.....pg. 9
- ◆ Classifieds.....pg. 9
- ◆ Calendar of Events.....pg. 10
- ◆ Birthdays.....pg.11

Back Page



The views expressed in the articles of the Desert Oracle are the opinions of the author and not necessarily the opinion of the AZPVA. Any article not attributed to an individual / group was compiled with available information by APVA staff/members. The Desert Oracle **does** encourage our readers to submit their articles, interests and/or rebuttals.



The Election Results were Announced at the Prescott Barbecue. The results are:  
Benjamin Garcia — President  
Gordon H. Moye -- Vice President

Frank Rigo -- Secretary, Dianne Brunswick -- Treasurer, Art Hardy -- Director, Dan Koston -- Director, Larry Lattomus -- Director, John Lawrence-- Director, Diego Suazo-- Director, John Tuzzolino -- Director, Sue Wudy-- Director

President Garcia has decided to finish out the 2007-2009 term and not accept a new term. Mr. Garcia will be the Immediate Past President and Mr. Moye will be the new President.

There are many different aspects of each of the three main hospitals in Arizona. During the year we occasionally hear from a veteran about such things as a problem with a policy or a department within our VA systems. (Each VA is unique) The NSO's travel to the hospitals/clinics each month; yet they do not get to speak to all the veterans who use these facilities. Therefore it is up to you the veteran to inform the NSO's or the Chapter if you are not getting what you believe you need. You would be surprised how many of you have the same legitimate issues; yet no one says anything for various reasons. No one at your VA will get in trouble unless they are intentionally denying you your rights. So if you get a pharmacy prescription from San Diego and your clinic says no because it is not on their formulary; call your NSO. If you run into other annoyances call the service officers.

Is your clinic moving; is it big enough? Do not wait; call the day you find out.

We would like to thank the members who recently responded to a letter from Walter Leys, an Arizona Chapter member by sending donations to the office. Your generosity was refreshing and appreciated.

The National Wheelchair Veterans Games are upon us again. There were very few athletes that reported volunteer hours. These hours are used to help the BOD determine who might qualify for re-imburements for game expenses. If you intend to go next year, the hours are compiled from August to July each year. The hours need to be reported correctly and earned in approved formats. Look for the Arizona Team's story in the next Desert Oracle.

The August meeting is our end of year budget meeting. All funding requests for the upcoming year are in as of June 1, 2009. We are not expecting PVA to restore funding above the final amount approved for 2009. The BOD has been exploring different venues to increase our cash flow on a regular basis. This should allow the APVA to continue providing service to our members without interruption. We look forward to a productive year.

All of you get PN Magazine, so I'd like to point out a few articles. The President's letter should be disturbing to us all. Are veterans going to be penalized for on the job injuries? The last page is an interesting view from our neighbors in New Mexico.

Last but not least are the candidates articles; our own Frank Rigo will not run unopposed as not all four Executive Committee members will be elected President and most will want to stay in office. There are times when attending the Annual Convention almost seems worth the trip. Good luck Frank.

Last year the VA announced that any veteran with ALS was eligible to be service connected. We have had many veterans 60+ apply through our NSO's since then. All of these claims have been fast tracked due to the short lifespan that is normally associated (3-5 yrs) with this diagnosis. On July 4<sup>th</sup> Frank Harmon a very funny and gifted member of the Chapter passed on. Frank was diagnosed with ALS on August 8, 1988. Frank was 71 years old and he attended our Prescott barbecue on June 20<sup>th</sup> of this year. Frank Harmon was a proud PVA member and was served with extraordinary care by the staff at the Prescott VA. We would like to thank them for this and all the great services provided for all our members.



Hello People,

And welcome to the new fiscal year of 2009. Thanks for allowing me to be your President for these last three years. It has been fun and a learning experience to boot.

Let this be a year of new beginnings, for your selves, your families and everyone all around us.

I took a copy from the Spinal Cord Injury/Disability (SCI\SCD) clinic at the Veteran’s Administration Medical Center (VAMC), a copy of MS Perspectives Magazine.

I promptly phoned the publisher of this MS Perspectives. Magazine, Joseph D’Onofrio. This article was published the Fall of 2008, but Mr. D’Onofrio instructed me to simply give credit where credit was due for the publication.

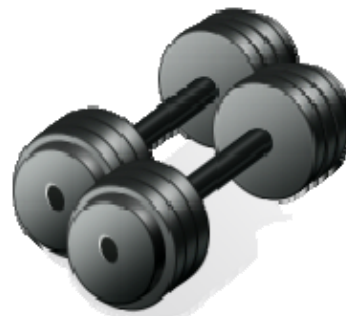
Therefore I give to you; **“Exercising Improves Quality of Life”**

For Mark Antal, 49, of Virginia Beach, Virginia, pain in his hips and back is a daily companion. First diagnosed with MS in 2002, with symptoms going back to 1988, Mark has trouble walking and is using crutches. After suffering from depression over his physical state—developing a “doom and gloom attitude,” as he calls it—he has made a big effort to get in better shape.

“My goal is to stay out of that wheelchair,” he says. Over several months; time, he has changed his diet so he is eating mostly fresh fruit and vegetables, cooked beans, and brown rice, but no dairy products, processed foods, red meat, or fish. He has also begun exercising on a regular basis. “I started by working out for 15-20 minutes a night,” he says, “with 3-5 minutes on an elliptical machine and weight light (5-lb to 10-lb) weights. I don’t break a sweat, and I, keep the air-conditioner on so I don’t get overheated.”He also does physical therapy for 45 minutes every morning at home based instructions from a physical therapist. As a result his regimen, he’s 17lbs. and in 2 months he is walking better, and has gained energy. “I’ve lost the gut, and my regimen has given me hope about my life,” Mark says.” I was very active from my teens until just a few years ago—I used to be able to bench press 240 lbs., but now I can only lift 40 lbs.—and I didn’t realize how depressed I was about that .Even though I can’t do the same things I could when I was 18, “I feels good to be active again.”

Sincerely yours

Benjamin Garcia  
Your Immediate Past President  
Paralyzed Veterans of America





## CHAMPVA

The Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs, otherwise

known as **CHAMPVA** is a federal health benefits program administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs. CHAMPVA provides reimbursement for most medical expenses – inpatient/outpatient, skilled nursing care, prescription medication, and **durable medical equipment (DME)**. To be eligible for CHAMPVA, you cannot be eligible for TRICARE. CHAMPVA provides coverage to the spouse or widow(er) and to the children of a veteran who is rated permanently and totally disabled due to a service-connected disability; was rated permanently and totally disabled due to a service connected condition at the time of death; died of a service-connected disability, or died on active duty and the dependents are not eligible for DoD TRICARE benefits. Beneficiaries age 65 and older must meet the following conditions to be eligible:

- if you **were** 65 or older prior to June 5, 2001, and were otherwise eligible for CHAMPVA, and were entitled to Medicare Part A coverage, then you will be eligible for CHAMPVA without having to have Medicare Part B coverage.
- if you **turned** 65 before June 5, 2001, and only have Medicare Part A, you will be eligible for CHAMPVA without having to have Medicare Part B coverage.
- if you **turned** 65 before June 5, 2001, and had Medicare Parts A and B on June 5, 2001, you must keep both Parts to be eligible.
- if you **turned** age 65 on or after June 5, 2001, you must be enrolled in Medicare Parts A and B to be eligible.

Beneficiaries under the age of 65 and entitled to Medicare must be enrolled in both Medicare Part A and Medicare Part B to be eligible for CHAMPVA. CHAMPVA will pay after Medicare, Medicare supplemental plans, Medicare HMO plans, and any **other health insurance (OHI)** coverage for health care services and supplies.

The veteran or sponsor must be permanently and totally disabled from a service-connected condition, died as a result of a service-connected condition, was rated permanently and totally disabled from a service-connected condition at the time of death, or died on active duty and whose dependents are not otherwise entitled to TRICARE benefits.

In most cases, CHAMPVA pays equivalent to Medicare/TRICARE rates. CHAMPVA has an outpatient deductible of \$50 per person up to \$100 per family per calendar year, and a cost share of 25% up to the catastrophic cap of up to \$3,000 per calendar year. You should collect the 25% allowable cost share from the patient except when the patient has other health insurance.

If the patient has OHI, then CHAMPVA pays the lesser of either 75% of the allowable amount after \$50 calendar year deductible, or the remainder of the charges and the beneficiary will normally have no cost share. If the beneficiary has OHI, they should be billed first. By law, CHAMPVA is always secondary payer except to Medicaid.

The CHAMPVA **In-house Treatment Initiative (CITI)** is a voluntary program that allows for the treatment of beneficiaries at participating VA Medical Centers. Not all VAMC's participate in the CITI program due to veterans need and population of the VAMC. In Arizona, Tucson VAMC is the only medical center that participates in the program. There are no cost shares or deductibles for covered services in the CITI program.

# Picnic in the

It was that time of year again , with June considered one of the hottest months of the year. The Chapter holds the Board of Directors Meeting and Picnic/BBQ in the Pines on the Prescott VA's Ramada. Allison Kitchens, social worker in the SCI Clinic at the VA has been a tremendous influence on our Members and has brought a more entertaining atmosphere to these yearly events. She also brings us the Band, Navatones, Medical professionals working within the VA hospital.



Pictured is Allison practicing her photography skills. Seated next to her is friend, Michael.

This year, we decided to do a little something different. We added a “home made pie” contest, with prizes up to 3rd place. Marco Rossi, Benjamin Garcia and Sue Wudy were the judges. We had six entries. Only three qualified as “made at home”. 1st Prize went to Allison Kitchens for her Pecan Pie. 2nd went to Dawn Samber for her Sweet Potato Pie. and 3rd to Karla Tuzzolino for her Chocolate Creation. Congratulations Ladies! None of these pies went to waste. The were all eaten by guests.



Judges Benjamin Garcia, with wife Olga, Sue Wudy, and not shown is Marco Rossi tasting and judging appearance and texture and, other things, before the final decision.

Every year we get to meet new people, enroll new members, and visit with old friends, catch up on the newest gossip, tell bad jokes, and just have a great time!



Clarence, our chief cook, making sure the local Police are well fed.

Meet the Eddie Alvarez family and hopefully new members to our group speaking with Peter Quinn and John Tuzzolino.



Frank Rigo and Dianne Brunswick.

We were also graced with a new self proclaimed "Princess". She wore her crown, brought her book, the Princess Collections. Meet again, Princess



Meghan Tuzzolino one fisting her watermelon. She also got to perform with the band singing the all time favorite, (her's anyway,) "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star" .





## Keeping Cool This Summer

Warm greetings from the Phoenix SCI Clinic!

By the time you are reading this, summer will be in full swing. For most of us, this means summer vacation, barbeques and visiting with friends. Often we get so

caught up in these activities we forget about keeping ourselves cool and hydrated. Keeping cool in the summer months can be particularly challenging, especially for someone with a spinal cord injury. Many persons with a SCI/D are heat sensitive, and becoming overheated could cause serious health problems that may warrant medical attention. Some people with a SCI/D cannot sweat below the level of their injury. This is caused by the inability of your sweat glands to expand and release sweat, this causes your body temperature to stay hot. Without the ability to sweat, the body's temperature continues to rise unless something is done to stop it, like cooling down. If you are outside for a prolonged period of time and experience symptoms such as cramps, dizziness, headaches, nausea, pale skin, or elevated body temperature, there is a good chance that you are overheated. It is important for you to cool your body down. If possible, get inside quickly and cool down, using cold packs or cold cloths to help cool your body. If this is not possible, find shade and use your garden hose, the water will also help to cool you down. If you know your going to be outside for any length of time, carry a spray bottle with you, that way you can squirt your body down to help keep yourself cool. It may be necessary for you to seek medical attention, have someone drive you to the nearest urgent care facility or dial 911.

By following a few simple rules, you can keep safe and still enjoy the Arizona sunshine.

- ◆ **AVOID THE HOTTEST PART OF THE DAY** (11am-4:00pm) *Try to plan your activities around the early morning or late afternoon hours.*
- ◆ **Dress for the weather** – *Try to wear light-weight loose fitting clothing, even long sleeves can help to keep you cool. Wear comfortable shoes.*

*Remember when wearing sandals, feet do sunburn, so exercise caution.*

- ◆ *Wear a hat (not a baseball cap) preferably with a wide brim, this will help block out the sun.*
- ◆ *Wear sunscreen everyday, this will help protect your skin from the harmful rays of the sun.*
- ◆ *Take plenty of water with you and be sure to drink adequate amounts.*
- ◆ *Remember to wear your cooling vest if you have one.*
- ◆ *Carry a squirt bottle with you, spray yourself as often as needed.*

## SAVE THE DATE!

**The Helen B. Remington SCI Workshop** is scheduled for Saturday December 5<sup>th</sup> 2009. This will be held at the VA from 9:00-3:00pm. Stay tuned for more information.

For those of you that like adventure, The AZ Spinal Cord Injury Association will be holding their annual *Spinal Cord Injury Retreat* on August 13<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup>, 2009. For more information call: 602-507-4209

Like Groups? Consider attending the *Men's Disability Issues Group*. This informative group meets the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday each month from 5:30-7:00pm at the Disability Empowerment Center located at 5025 E. Washington 2<sup>nd</sup> floor Classroom B. For more information call: 602-980-3232

**Have a safe and enjoyable summer.**



# CLASSIFIEDS

## ACCESSIBLE HOMES – BUY OR SELL

NEW OR PRE-OWNED.

SIXTEEN YEARS EXPERIENCE

SERVICING THE DISABILITY COMMUNITY.

I CAN HELP YOU BUY OR SELL

PROPERTIES IN ARIZONA AS WELL AS ANYWHERE IN THE CONTINENTAL U.S., CANADA

OR PUERTO RICO. I AM A

CERTIFIED CARTUS RELOCATION SPECIALIST AND A USAA CERTIFIED SPECIALIST.

**PATTY STELTON**, DISABILITIES SPECIALIST, COLDWELL BANKER RESIDENTIAL BROKERAGE, 480-951-1010(O); 480-540-6898 (C)

EMAIL: [patty@pattystelton.com](mailto:patty@pattystelton.com)

WEBSITE: [www.pattystelton.com](http://www.pattystelton.com)

## CHANGE Your Bowel Program NOW!

Enemeez® offers the confidence and independence to live a productive, active lifestyle

- In most cases, complete bowel evacuation in less than 15 minutes
- Twist off tip virtually eliminates rectal tears
- Non-irritating formula for safe, daily use
- No after-burn or discharge
- Designed specifically for Spinal Cord Injuries
- Fast, simple administration by caregiver or patient

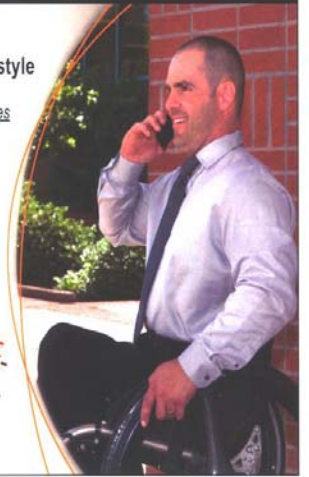
**Enemeez®**

Setting the standard for bowel training

For information on how you can obtain Enemeez® thru your local V.A. contact Julee at Alliance Labs (888) 273-9734

[www.enemeez.com](http://www.enemeez.com)

Consult your physician before starting any new bowel program. PN072007



## Berkshire's Bits & Pieces -----

**\*\*\*\*Please note** in last month's issue, it was stated incorrectly that service connected burial is \$1,200 plus \$300 for the plot. **The correct figure is \$2,000, which includes the amount for the plot\*\*\*\***

### Special Adaptive Housing (SAH)

SAH has been increased from \$50,000 to \$60,000. This awards can be used in increments of three (3). If you are entitled (in your rating decision) to SAH and you have already used the prior total amount of \$50,000, you are still eligible for \$10,000.

**Example:** You have used \$25,000, hence, you now have \$35,000 left to use in increments of three (3). You only need \$10,000 right now, so after using that \$10,000, you'll then have \$25,000 left to use in increments of two (2).

### Education Benefits (Chapter 35)

To **qualify** for education benefits you need to be either of the following:

- ◆ The child or spouse of a veteran who is permanently and totally disabled as a result of a service-connected disability.
- ◆ The child or spouse of a veteran who died from a service connected disability

The **period of eligibility** is:

- ◆ **Child**----between ages of 18 thru 26
- ◆ **Spouse**---within 10 years of eligibility or within 10 years after the veteran has died from a service connected disability

# 2009 Calendar of Events

When	What	Where	Who
July 13-18 2009	29th Annual Veterans Wheelchair Games	Spokane, Washington	
August 13 2009	BOD Meeting	8126 N 23rd Ave, Ste J Phoenix, AZ	Pat 602-244-9168
October 2009	BOD Meeting And BBQ & Pot Luck	Marana, AZ	Pat 602-244-9168
December 2009	APVA Holiday Party	Phoenix, AZ	Pat 602-244-9168
January 2010	The New Year	Happy New Year!	

Any questions, or if you would like to add to the calendar please call the office at  
602-244-9168

## This is Your Unique Opportunity

to acquire a 1991 Chevy Conversion Van with a Rebuilt Transmission.  
A/C has just been serviced. It has a Braun Lift with a new Motor  
Automatic Door Openers, Left mounted Hand Controls  
Electric Windows and Door Locks. Cruise Control, Tilt Wheel  
Fold Down Bed. Universal 'Slide & Click' Wheelchair Tie-down.  
New Battery. New Fuel Pump and Filters  
122,000 miles

**And Now only \$3,000.00 obo**

**Call your APVA Office for this Special Deal**

**602-244-9168 or 1-800-621-9217**

**Don't let this one get away!!**



# Happy Birthday

## July – August



Marco Rossi	Michael Moore	Gerald Bachman	Sandra Easterwood
Harold Frandsen	Raymond Zeravsky	Shawn Swartzmiller	Dale Pyle
Homer Townsend, Jr.	Harry Morgan	Nestor Chavez	Peter Quinn
William McCormack	William Harper	Bryan Tubbs	John Lain
Horace Ricks	Debra Garcia	Patricia Hardesty	Michael Ryan
Glenn Dunn	Thomas Nielson	James McDonald	Amina Kruck
Vicki Elder	Steve Hymers	Jesus Olivas	Diego Suazo
Steven Hardy	Bennie Houser	Joseph Barnett	Bridget Bauer
Jeffery Karry	Gordon Holway	Faith Smith	Timothy Adkins
Gilbert Portillo	Kenneth Rollins	Danny Kunkel	Beverly Hall
Harold Armentrout	Joseph Strifler	Paul Winger	Bruce Emeson
Harry Bell	Ronald Dufresne	Cullen Child	Paul Morrison
Kevin Finnegan	Ralph Sanchez	Thomas Collins	Jeffrey Odom
Thomas Martin	David Souther	Carl Kelly	John Gallegos
Alexander Bocz	Leonard Carter	George Clay	Larry Everett
Rudy Villanneal	Ken Hart, Jr	Gary Campbell	Carl Benda
James Huffstidler	Dennis Jett	Jacob Brookins	Peter Yampieri
Susan Wudy	SheriLynn Cavalieri	Carl Benda Jr.	Cheryl Henson
Leon Knox	Mark Ippolito	Perry Dahlgren	Derrell Austin
Raymond DeWolf	Samantha Shank	Christopher Rose	James Farnsworth
Thomas Otte	Robert Wiora	James Erlick	Louis Hoel Sr.
William Burns	Richard Fields	Lawrence Styden	Amy Rocker
David Jean Rodocker Jr		Robert Malone	Richard Dockstader
		Richard McCarthy	Donald Ferguson
		Richard Glen	Patrick Tee

**Wheelchair and transportation safety** – the following is a reminder to all of you who have wheelchairs (manual and/or power), on how to transport them safely. Once mounted, please make sure to take a second look on both sides of the wheelchair, to ensure it's securely mounted on the vehicle lift (additional tie down straps are a good idea if you have any concerns about the wheelchair not being secure). Unfortunately, there have been incidents in the past (thankfully this is the exception) when an expensive mobility device has come unhooked from the vehicle it was travelling on, and ended up on the street/highway. When this happens, the consequences can be financially painful because each veteran who receives a wheelchair signs an agreement to take care this does not happen, thus, the expense of fixing or replacing can become yours. So, please take that extra few moments to make sure your mobility device is secure before you set off on your next trip, and happy travelling!

**The Prescott VA** has add a new member to our SCI-D team as of 8 June, Dr. Kimberly Le, a Physiatrist, who has a background in our SCI-D system of care, and that we're very excited to have her, as well as have our team complete again!

Allison J. Kitchens, LMSW

# One I STOP Nutrition



**Sport Supplements - Vitamins - Herbs  
Coffee/Smoothie Bar - Free internet - Plasma TV  
Contest Preparation - Nutritional Consultation**

1126 N. Scottsdale Rd. Suite #9  
Tempe, AZ 85281  
(480) 894-5100

3202 E. Greenway Rd. Suite #1233  
Phoenix, AZ 85032  
(602) 992-6213

7366 E. Shea Blvd. Suite #107  
Scottsdale, AZ 85260  
(480) 609-5120

18295 N. 83rd Ave. - Shops A Suite #102  
Glendale, AZ 85249  
(623) 934-5550

**More Locations Coming Soon!**

**[www.onestopnutrition.com](http://www.onestopnutrition.com)  
[info@onestopnutrition.com](mailto:info@onestopnutrition.com)**



# One I STOP Nutrition

**BUY ONE SMOOTHIE,  
GET ONE FREE OF EQUAL  
OR LESSER VALUE**

**10% OFF  
PURCHASE OF  
\$100 OR MORE**

\*Restrictions Apply

Arizona Chapter  
**Paralyzed Veterans of America**  
8126 N 23rd Ave. Suite J  
Phoenix, AZ 85021

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Phoenix, AZ  
Permit No. 1600



.....still serving our Nation