Mundelein Park District earns grant for veterans program

Submitted by Deb Engdahl

Mundelein Park & Recreation District has been selected to receive a grant for its Healthy Minds Healthy Bodies program for veterans.

The Lake County Community Crisis Relief Fund will be awarding $10,000 to the district to support an alternative delivery system by making disabled veteran support services accessible through online meetings, teleconferencing and video chat.

Visit www.lakecountycf.org/lake-county-community-crisis-relief-fund.

With the onset of the coronavirus pandemic, the issues prevalent in the veteran community have become more pronounced.

According to the Bob Woodruff Foundation's research, April 2020, "While social distancing, self-quarantining, and isolation are all necessary to help control the spread of COVID-19, all can increase social isolation (a lack of interactions with others) and loneliness (a feeling of the lack of a social network or companion)." Visit bobwoodrufffoundation.org/veterans-and-covid19.



COURTESY OF THE MUNDELEIN PARK & RECREATION DISTRICT

Personal trainer Kwame Dupree works with veteran Arnie Gorospe at NovaCare Fitness Center in the Healthy Minds Healthy Bodies program.

The Healthy Minds, Healthy Bodies Program serves wounded, ill or injured military personnel. Mundelein Park & Recreation District offers two free, one-year NovaCare Fitness Center memberships (one for the veteran and one for a workout partner).

Also included are up to 15 free personal training sessions and monthly networking opportunities. Qualifications to participate in the HMHB program include:

- Honorable/medical discharge on DD214;
- 10 percent disability rating or higher assigned by the VA;
- Disability rating applied for, in medical review or under appeal;
- Non-service-connected injury, note from your civilian doctor, or a general endorsement from a VA counselor, VOC/PVA representative.

HMHB members represent all branches of the United States Armed Forces and have served in such conflicts as World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the Gulf War, the War in Afghanistan, and the War in Iraq.

"We are honored to be awarded this grant, which will allow us to expand our remote services for our veteran community," Mundelein Park & Recreation District Superintendent of Recreation Matt LaPorte said.

Those services include individualized personal training sessions, case management and monthly networking sessions to learn about resources within the community.

It will also include engagement with fellow HMHB members and their families to build a personal support system.

"Our goal is to serve those who served — and their families — by offering a variety of delivery formats for mind-body fitness classes and networking programs to ensure social connectedness during this trying time for our country," HMHB Coordinator Christine M. López said.

For more information on Friday Hero Workouts or the Healthy Minds/Healthy Bodies program at Mundelein Park & Recreation District, contact López at clopez@mundeleinparks.org.

Healthy Minds Healthy Bodies is a trademarked program of AllenForce, implemented by licensed fitness centers throughout the country. It is offered free to qualified veterans.

Each facility and fitness professional completes specific training on veteran culture, PSTD, MST, injuries, and illness specific to veterans and adaptive equipment.

For more information, visit allenforce.org/healthy_minds_healthy_bodies.html.