



BVL (BOWLERS TO VETERANS LINK) – Fact Sheet

Who: BVL is bowling’s own and oldest charity, raising more than \$56 million since 1942 to fund recreation therapy programs that address the emotional and physical needs of veterans and active-duty military, including sports, music, crafts, technology, and adaptive equipment for rehabilitation activities. BVL is a national nonprofit 501 (c) (3) charity that is consistently acknowledged for efficient and effective programming delivered with extremely low overhead. BVL has been recognized as one of “America’s Best Charities” by Independent Charities of America, earned a “Top-Rated” Nonprofit distinction from GreatNonprofits, and is also a member of the Combined Federal Campaign (#93325).

Mission: The mission of BVL is to brighten the lives of America’s veterans and active-duty men and women through recreation and therapeutic programs and services.

Benefitting: BVL is supported by fundraising events and donations from thousands of bowling associations, bowling centers, industry partners and bowlers throughout the U.S.

History: BVL was founded in 1942 (known then as the Bowlers Victory Legion) as a campaign from the entire bowling industry to support the U.S. troops. Those first projects during World War II focused on improving morale for troops overseas and insuring that wounded servicemen receive appropriate and timely healthcare. That mission continues today as the Bowlers to Veterans Link is bowling’s oldest and own charity, raising more than \$1 million annually and more than \$56 million since BVL was founded.

Recent Highlights:

- In 2023, BVL was named the Official Charity of the PBA Tour beginning with the 2024 PBA schedule. BVL’s fundraising efforts salute PBA Legend and Vietnam Veteran Johnny Petraglia, who has served as a BVL Ambassador for 50 years.
- In 2022, BVL celebrated the organization’s 80th year by asking the bowling community to “Go The Extra Mile for Veterans” during BVL Month in America in November by holding one extra fundraising event. That ask resulted in more than \$1.3 million raised during the 2022-23 fundraising cycle.
- In August 2022, BVL presented the organization’s largest ever donation - \$500,000 to be split between funding MyndVR virtual reality glasses for VR therapy programs in more than 50 hospitals & centers, and the remaining half funded therapy programs to veterans’ organizations through VET CENTER, a national community-based counseling center program that helps veterans transition from military to civilian life.
- In May 2020, BVL donated a \$100,000 grant to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to support two new programs – Compassionate Contact Corps and Tele-yoga therapy. These funds allow veterans to keep a virtual personal connection during the COVID-19 pandemic with programs that address essential ongoing physical therapy and mental health needs such as depression and suicide prevention.
- BVL fundraising efforts and donations are generated year-round by the bowling community through a wide range of events, many specifically targeted around Veterans Day and BVL Month in America in November.

Leadership: The BVL Board of Directors is comprised of representatives from the United States Bowling Congress (USBC), Bowling Proprietors’ Association of America (BPAA) and industry partners. Bowling proprietor John LaSpina of Long Beach, N.Y., is the current Board Chair. The Executive Director is Mary Harrar (mary@bvl.org) – PH: 703.934.6039

Website: For more information, visit www.BVL.org.



BVL FUNDS AT WORK: Military Mental Health Services

Mental Health Services for military:

- The need for funding of mental health services for veterans and active-duty military is more urgent than ever.
- There are more than 9 million veterans who use VA services each year, and nearly 4.9 million of those veterans have service-connected disabilities.
- At least 20 people in the military community – including veterans, reserves and active-duty military – commit suicide each day*... that's close to one person each hour. In the next hour – another member of the military community will have taken their life.
 - *Veterans are 1.5 times more likely to die by suicide than Americans who never served in the military... and for female veterans, the risk factor is 2.2 times more likely.**
- Based on their era of service, approximately 12 to 20% of our veterans and their families are impacted by PTSD (posttraumatic stress disorder) in their daily lives.[#]
 - **Operations Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Enduring Freedom (OEF):** *About 11-20 out of every 100 Veterans (or between 11-20%) who served in OIF or OEF have PTSD in a given year.*
 - **Gulf War (Desert Storm):** *About 12 out of every 100 Gulf War Veterans (or 12%) have PTSD in a given year.*
 - **Vietnam War:** *About 15 out of every 100 Vietnam Veterans (or 15%) were currently diagnosed with PTSD at the time of the most recent study in the late 1980s, the National Vietnam Veterans Readjustment Study (NVVRS). It is estimated that about 30 out of every 100 (or 30%) of Vietnam Veterans have had PTSD in their lifetime.*

How does BVL help? BVL steps in when the federal dollars end by funding dozens of diverse recreation therapy programs and services that address the emotional and physical needs of veterans and active-duty military, including indoor/outdoor sports, music, arts & crafts, bowling, adaptive equipment, virtual reality therapy and technology, and adaptive equipment for rehabilitation activities. Most of these activities take place at veterans' hospitals, clinics and community-based counseling centers.

Why is that important? Recreation therapy helps address isolation and the challenging transition back into everyday life.

**Information from the 2019 National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report*

#Information from the National Center for PTSD



BVL FUNDS AT WORK: Goods and Services that BVL grants have provided for veterans

Since 1942, BVL has worked to identify programs and services to brighten the days and boost the spirits of our recuperating service men and women. BVL provides the 'extras' not funded by the government which help speed recuperation and improve morale. These are a few of the recreation therapy programs and services that BVL frequently supports for veterans (*as of 11/1/2023*)

- Adaptive Archery Equipment
- Adaptive Bicycles for Exercise and Training
- Adaptive Wheelchair Bowling Equipment
- Adaptive Bowling Curriculum
- Aquariums and Supplies
- Art Room Furniture and Supplies
- Aviary Equipment
- Basketballs
- Bicycle Maintenance and Repair
- Bingo Equipment and Prizes
- Birthday Party Funds for Residents
- Board Games and Puzzles
- Books, Movies, CDs, DVDs
- Bowling Lane Renovation
- Bowling Prizes and Awards
- Bowling Program Funds (*Outings, Leagues*)
- Bowling Supplies – Balls, Shoes
- Bowling Tournament Entry Fees and Program Costs
- Bowling Lane Renovation
- Ceramics Supplies
- Checkbook Blanks and Billfolds
- Compassionate Contact Corps program
- Computer Software
- Cooking Program Supplies and Materials
- Craft Kits and Materials
- Dart Boards
- Decorations and Seasonal Materials
- Equine Therapy
- Exercise Videos
- Fish Shacks
- Fishing Outings and Equipment
- Footballs
- Gardening and Greenhouse Supplies
- Gardening – Raised Gardening Beds
- Golf Passes and Equipment
- Grill for Cookouts
- Handicapped Accessible Golf Carts
- Holiday Celebration Funds
- Horticultural Therapy Program Materials
- Keyboard and Musical Instruments
- Leathercraft Kits
- Movie Channel Subscriptions
- Musical / Entertainment Performances
- Participation Fees-VA Creative Arts Festival
- Participation Fees-VA Golden Age Games
- Participation Fees-VA Wheelchair Games
- Participation Fees-VA Winter Sports Clinic
- Participation Fees-VA Summer Sports Clinic
- Participation Fees-VA TEE Tournament
- Piano
- Ping Pong Tables
- Pool Tables
- Provide the Ride Programs
- Putt Putt/Miniature Golf Passes & Equipment
- Sensory & Cognitive Activities/Materials
- Sensory Stimulation & Bedside Activities
- Sewing Materials
- Shuffleboard Equipment
- Softball Equipment
- Sound System for Music Therapy Programs
- Sponsored Social Events and Outings
- Swimming Apparel
- Swimming Passes
- Televisions
- Tele-yoga
- Tennis Shoes/Sneakers
- Tickets to Sporting Events
- Transportation Fees
- Treadmill & Other Fitness Equipment
- T-Shirt Printing Costs
- Unfunded Physical Recreation Therapy Equipment
- Video Game Systems & Equipment (*such as Wii*)
- Virtual Reality Systems, Headsets and Consoles
- Woodworking Equipment & Supplies
- Wheelchairs – Heavy Duty
- Wheelchairs – Electric and Action Track