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# Veterans' organization honors East Bay contributors in Danville

## Individuals, groups recognized during gala at Crow Canyon Country Club

by [Amanda Aguilar](#)



Ryan Sykes received an Honorary Life Membership in VNVDV. (Photo courtesy of VNVDV)



The VietNam Veterans of Diablo Valley (VNVDV) held its Appreciation and Recognition Dinner Gala in Danville on Dec. 4 to honor dedicated and supportive contributors throughout the East Bay who provide services to those who served in the military.

Various levels of recognition were given by the organization, with the highest honor as the Gary Villalba Dedicated Service Award -- which is a tribute award named in honor of Contra Costa County veteran service officer Gary Villalba, who served local veterans and their families for over 20 years.

David E. Behring, president of the Wheelchair Foundation and an honorary life member of the VNVDV, was the 2014 recipient of the service award.

Behring has supported VNVDV with his time, energy and resources -- which have enhanced veteran activities in the Diablo Valley community and beyond, said organization representatives.

He was presented with a plaque recognizing his service, and a plaque also hangs in the lobby of the Contra Costa County Veterans Service Office with the names of all the award recipients. Villalba has the same plaque in his Santa Barbara home.

Other award recipients included:

**\* Veteran of the Year, Bob Musor**

Musor, a dedicated veteran member, has used watercraft resources to support "Take the Rock" -- a veteran swim challenge from Alcatraz to Aquatic Park in San Francisco. He made sure other boaters provided required safety for the swimmers and donated his boat for additional fundraising. Although he has moved out-of-state, Musor will be given a plaque recognizing him as Veteran of the Year.

**\* Volunteer of the Year, Bryan Welden and Christopher Behring**

Welden, a non-veteran who co-founded the Diablo Valley Flag Brigade (DVFB), organized "Operation Welcome Home" events for returning veterans in the East Bay. He received a plaque and a contribution from the VNVDV to help support DVFB.

Christopher Behring, a 16-year-old Boy Scout, raised over \$12,000 to purchase sleeping bags needed for the homeless veteran program, East Bay Stand Down. His fundraising efforts of speaking to rotary clubs allowed East Bay Stand Down to purchase other items needed for the event.

Christopher Behring also volunteered at East Bay Stand Down and interviewed veterans for his oral history project for the Library of Congress. He was presented with an American flag flown over the Capitol on 9/11 in an engraved case along with a plaque.

**\* Honorary Life Membership, Ryan Sykes**

Sykes is a U.S. Navy veteran in the "Sentinel of Freedom" Wounded Warrior Program in San Ramon. He suffered severe injuries during his military service and is "an inspiration and role model for all veterans," said VNVDV representatives.

Sykes was recently recognized by the Sam Ramon Police Department for his outstanding volunteerism.

"Disabilities and limitations are something Ryan ignores and sets an example for everyone in the community with his 'can-do' attitude. The VNVDV is proud to have Ryan among our members," according to the organization.

In addition, the VNVDV provided contributions to the Concord Vet Center, Contra Costa County Veterans Service Office, Gold Star Mothers and Phillips 66 SFR & Carbon Plant for their support and service for veterans.

Danville Town Council members Robert Storer, Newell Arnerich and Renee Morgan as well as other guests joined in the VNVDV celebration this year along with over 130 members, friends and patriotic supporters at the Crow Canyon Country Club in Danville.