

Welcome Home, American Heroes!



Coatesville VA Medical Center hosted the 3rd Annual Welcome Home Celebration on Saturday August 29, 2009. Though the event was planned as an outdoor picnic and festival, it seemed that the weather wasn't going to cooperate. We decided to move the celebration indoors, and though the weather held out, the decision proved to be the best move as attendees moved freely between the activities inside and outside. More than 200 Veterans and 150 family members attended and about 75 volunteers ran the event with 42 exhibitors displaying information about their programs.

The celebration began with a moving rendition of the "Star Spangled Banner" by the Tiller Sisters and a heartfelt speech by Jason Nielson, US Army (Retired) and member of the Military Order of the Purple Heart. Mr. Gary W. Devansky, medical center director, Senator Andy Dinniman, Representative Tom Houghton, and Bill Walsh, representing Congressman Joseph Sestak, all addressed the crowd.

Once the program was complete, our hard-working volunteers served a delicious lunch of hamburgers, hot dogs, potato salad, chips, soda and cake. Many attendees enjoyed their meals inside while listening to live music by local artists "Quaker" Dave and Kevin Ferguson, as well as "Oldies" band, Threshold. Others enjoyed their lunches outside at the picnic tables.



At the center of the event were the many exhibitors who gathered in the Great Hall. These exhibitors provided valuable guidance and comprehensive information about VA benefits, eligibility and enrollment, health care services, veterans service organizations, outside programs and employment opportunities. Topics of particular interest included post traumatic stress disorder and women veterans health.



We also had a lot of fun! Between live music, face-painting, Arts & Crafts and a magic show by local performer, Kevin Joyce, a good time was had by all! The celebration would not have been possible without the hard work of the Welcome Home Celebration committee and many volunteers. Thanks to all and we hope to see you again next year!



When I was first discharged from Active Duty I knew I had sustained physical and emotional trauma as a result of service during Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. I knew little to nothing about VA health care. It wasn't until I talked with another Veteran that I knew about coverage. I was diagnosed with post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and an injury to the lumbar spine. I came to Coatesville VAMC for treatment and it has been nothing short of phenomenal. The doctors and staff treated me with care and professionalism that exceeded my expectations. The PTSD Program helped me put a lot of difficult issues into a coping perspective. I feel confident in my future endeavors. Thank you Coatesville VAMC!

Petty Officer 3rd Class Hangey

ENROLLMENT AND ELIGIBILITY

ENROLL NOW- IT ONLY TAKES A FEW MINUTES! You can inquire about your eligibility and enroll for benefits by visiting Room B10A in Building 2. You can also call 610-384-7711, extensions 5034 or 5008 if you have questions. Some of our clinics have evening hours on Wednesdays.

Check out these online resources:

www.oefoif.va.gov – A national resource for OEF/OIF Veterans.

www.paveterans.state.pa.us – A website that details what the state of Pennsylvania is doing for Veterans.

"New Enrollee Orientation"
You are invited to attend an orientation class
being held on:

DATE: 4th Thursday of every month

TIME: 1:30PM 3:00PM

WHERE: Building 2, room 107A

If you have any questions,
please call 610-384-7711, x6226.

Flu Season is Here, Protect Yourself

This year, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is preparing for an early and active flu season. It expects both 2009 H1N1 flu and seasonal influenza to cause illness, hospital stays and deaths this season. Coatesville VA Medical Center is currently offering flu shots to Veterans, volunteers and employees. They are available Monday through Friday from 8:30am until 3:30pm in Building 2, Room 115 and Building 57, Room 131 and on Mondays from 4pm until 7pm in Building 2, Urgent Care. Spring City and Springfield outpatient clinics offer the shots on Thursdays from 12:30pm until 3:30pm. Information about H1N1 flu shots is forthcoming.

OPERATION ENDURING/IRAQI FREEDOM

Quarterly Focus Group

The OEF/OIF Focus Group enables returning service members and their families to openly and honestly talk about their feelings and opinions pertaining to VA's health care services. The purpose is to get your opinion, rather than give you information. We would appreciate your involvement in this forum. Our next meeting is November 18th at 5:30pm in Building 57, Room 150. Refreshments will be served. Please call Alan Reiland at 610-384-7711, extension 6820 to register or if you have questions.

Help Is Only A Telephone Call Away!

It takes the courage and strength of a warrior to ask for help...If you're in an emotional crisis call 1-800-273-TALK and Press 1 for Veterans.

www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

EXTENDED HOURS OF OPERATION

We have extended our hours of operation in the Mental Health Clinic. For additional information on evening hour appointments please call: 610-384-7711, extension 6833.

COATESVILLE VAMC'S
OPERATION
ENDURING/IRAQI FREEDOM
STAFF

Stacey Castel, Program Manager

610-384-7711, extension 6817

Alan Reiland, Case Manager

610-384-7711, extension 6820

Schenay Miles, Case Manager

610-384-7711, extension 5125

Wendy Sherwin, Enrollment

610-384-7711, extension 5034

Bettye Thomas, Enrollment

610-384-7711, extension 5008

EXTENDED BENEFITS FOR COMBAT VETERANS

Currently enrolled Veterans who were discharged from active duty on or after January 28, 2003 are eligible for enhanced benefits for five years after discharge. If you would like more information, please call us at 610-384-7711, extension 5034 or 5008.

Outpatient Couples Support Group

Join other OEF/OIF Veterans and their spouses or significant others for couples support. Couples will share their experiences in adjusting to the Veteran's return home, learn more about post-deployment issues and post traumatic stress reactions, address difficult feelings, such as anger, guilt and grief, provide support to one another and increase coping skills.

The group will meet weekly from October 7th through November 18th. Meetings will take place Wednesdays from 6pm until 7pm in Building 57, Room 150. Please note, the group will be limited to Veterans who are outpatients. There is room for three to five couples so you must register

by calling Dr. Laura Hertz at 610-384-7711, extension 6821 or 6801.

OEF/OIF Veteran Support Group

This support group meets every Wednesday from 6pm to 7pm in the Mental Health Clinic in Building 57, Room 149. Topics of discussion include adjustment to civilian life, feelings of anger and managing them, sleep difficulty including nightmares, anxiety issues, feelings of isolation, safety concerns, combat experiences, and coping strategies. For more information or to join the group, please contact Dr. David Inman at extension 6833 or Dr. Leanne Valentine at extension 6831.

OEF/OIF Group Announcement:

There is an evening PTSD Group for OEF/OIF Veterans held Monday nights at 7:00p.m. at the Springfield Clinic in Springfield, Pa. All Veterans who want to attend should go through their outpatient therapist. For further information call Sandra Chierici, Ph.D. at 215-543-3246.