



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS  
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## Office of Public Affairs

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### NEWS RELEASE

#### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

#### **Celebration at the Farmhouse Thanks Veterans for their Service**

Coatesville, PA . December 17<sup>th</sup> . Veteran residents of the Community Living Center at Coatesville Veterans Affairs Medical Center (VAMC) enjoyed a very special luncheon Tuesday, courtesy of the Farmhouse at Loch Nairn Golf Club, owned by Hank and Gini Smedley, in Avondale, PA.

The event was coordinated largely by Frances or Sis Ennis, Mr. Smedley's sister and a volunteer at Coatesville VAMC, and Ellen Barnes, a recreation therapist at Coatesville VAMC. Charles Ennis, the late husband of Ms. Ennis, was a resident at the Coatesville VAMC for a time until he passed away in 1999. During that time, Ms. Ennis began hosting monthly sing-alongs at the medical center. For the last three years, she has organized the luncheon to thank veterans and also to remember her husband during this time of year.

Ms. Ennis explains, "Providing a lovely meal to our veterans shows the true spirit of Christmas. We're doing something special for the people that protected our freedom, and you know, we'd be up the creek if it weren't for the unselfish devotion of these men and women."

The meal began with an apple cider toast, and cream of mushroom soup as the first course. Guests chose from three delicious selections as a main course; crab cakes, salmon with dill or a

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two-egg omelette. All dishes were served with green beans, mashed potatoes and hot rolls. For dessert, everyone enjoyed brownie sundaes and delicious homemade cookies. The fun didn't end when the meal did. Santa stopped by for a visit and a local musician, John McCullough, played the piano while Sis led the group in singing Christmas carols.

Especially touched by the occasion was Colleen Fantini. Colleen's husband, Nick Fantini, is a resident at Coatesville VAMC's Community Living Center. Colleen came along to assist Nick with the meal. Says Colleen, "This outing has given me the opportunity to enjoy eating out and spending special time with my husband, something we can't do on our own anymore because he is sick. Ellen and the Coatesville VAMC staff plan the nicest activities and they treat the veterans with such respect and dignity. To do something this lovely and special underscores just how wonderful they are."

In all, Coatesville VAMC sent 14 Community Living Center residents, 3 outpatients, 3 staff members, and 5 volunteers to enjoy the special meal.

Anyone interested in finding out more about veterans benefits or enrollment should call 610-384-7711 extensions 5008 or 5034 or visit [www.coatesville.va.gov](http://www.coatesville.va.gov).

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Colleen and Nick Fantini