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Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
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VA Black Hills Health Care System observes Celebration of Life Memorial Service

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Black Hills Health Care System observed their 8th Annual “Celebration of Life” Memorial Service at the Fort Meade VA Medical Center on Thursday, May 27th.

The ceremony, which has been held annually at Fort Meade, and includes the families of Veterans from the Hot Springs VAMC, allows family members and staff the opportunity to honor Veterans who passed away during the past year. Families are offered the opportunity to commemorate their loved ones by making a symbolic balloon that is presented during a roll call of the names of the Veterans that have passed on in the previous year.

This year’s ceremony included 111 Veterans who passed between April 2009 and March 2010. Over 85 family members and friends attended the ceremony. Their loved one is presented with a pin “United We Stand” that symbolizes the close bond that the loved ones and caregivers develop during this important event in the veteran’s life cycle. The symbolic balloon is placed in a permanent *In Memoriam* display case.



The ceremony concluded with the TREA Honor Guard escorting participants to an outdoor area where a circle is formed and helium filled balloons are released while the Honor Guard played taps. The release of the helium filled balloons symbolizes a “letting go” and an uplifting of spirit as the ceremony concludes. Refreshments and tours of the Community Living Center (CLC) units were also available.

