



VA BUTLER HEALTHCARE
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News Release

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VA BUTLER HOSTS A WILD GAME FEST FOR VETERANS

(BUTLER COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA) - - Veteran residents at VA Butler Healthcare were treated to an afternoon of tall tales and grand adventures of hunting and fishing during the facility's first "Wild Game Fest" held Friday, May 7, 2010.

Kicking off the festivities, students from the Laurel High School Conservation Group met with the Veterans and gave a presentation on conservation and discussed some of the activities they are doing. Following the presentation, residents were treated to a special "wild game" lunch consisting of breaded frog legs, venison and buffalo burgers, and turtle soup along with other traditional lunch entrees.

Former Pittsburgh Steeler and Vietnam Veteran Rocky Bleier made a special visit and sampled some of the wild game fare with the Veterans. "I haven't had frog legs since I was a kid," said Bleier. "I am sure for a lot of guys here this was like bringing a bit of home to them."

"It cheered up a lot of the older guys," said Dan Kazmierczak. Dan is a Slippery Rock resident and Vietnam Era Marine. "I think events like this are interesting and it certainly beats bingo."

"We have a lot of residents that do, or did, hunt and fish and we wanted to bring that experience back to them or have them relive some of their most memorable outdoor moments," comments Tim Evanoff, Manager, Nutrition and Food Services. "The guiding principle for this activity, and similar programs, is to become more culturally diverse in the programs and services we offer in order to meet the unique needs of the Veterans. This guiding principle is called Cultural Transformation."

The concept of Cultural Transformation is not a new idea. For many years now, companies, organizations and individuals have been rethinking the way they interact with others and the way services are delivered to their customers (or consumers, residents, patients,

constituents, etc.). Cultural Transformation is about making changes that focus on the needs/preferences of the individual or resident, not the organization.

Following lunch, Veterans had an opportunity to view the private hunting collections of several staff members. Bill Kunst, Recreation, and Jessica Price, LPN, displayed some of their hunting pieces and discussed some of their memorable hunting exploits. “This is from an elk,” states Kunst. “This is what every hunter dreams of getting.” Randy Pilarcik from the PA Game Commission closed out the Wild Game Fest with an overview of the Pennsylvania Game Commission and a discussion about some of the rules and regulations of hunting and fishing.

“Our Veterans greatly enjoyed the Wild Game Fest and seemed very interested in the information,” said Barb Taylor, Recreation Therapist, who helped plan the event. “Some even shared some of their stories. We hope to do it again next year.”

VA Butler Healthcare, located on a scenic wooded 88-acre campus in the heart of Butler County, Pennsylvania, is the provider of choice for over 17,000 Veterans throughout Western Pennsylvania and parts of Ohio. VA Butler, a member of VA Healthcare-VISN 4, provides primary care, specialty care, mental health and social support services to Veterans at its main campus and serves a rural Veteran population through community based outpatient clinics (CBOCs) in Armstrong County, southern Butler County (Cranberry Township), Clarion County, Lawrence County, and Mercer County. VA Butler Healthcare has over 600 employees and volunteers dedicated to meeting the diverse needs of America’s heroes, now and in the future. For more information about VA Butler Healthcare, and links to special programs and initiatives, interested persons can log onto <http://www.butler.va.gov>. Media queries and requests should be directed to David Virag at (724)-285-2576 or David.Virag@va.gov.

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