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#### (S.D.)-VA BHHCS Veterans' Loved Ones Share Memories of Those Who Passed



By: Chris Fankhauser Posted at: 05/23/2013 09:24 AM

(Hot Springs)-VA Black Hills Health Care System (BHHCS) observed the 11th annual "Celebration of Life" Memorial Service at the Fort Meade VA Medical Center on May 16. The ceremony allowed family members and staff to honor Veterans who passed away during the past year.

"We came together today to share our memories and to share our tears," said Dr. Sheila Eckrich, Associate Chief of Extended Care and Rehab. "We get to take a couple hours to reflect back over the year and to remember those heroes."

Families were offered the opportunity to commemorate their loved ones by making a symbolic bell, with a picture and quote, which was presented during a roll call of the Veterans that have passed. The symbolic bell was then placed in a permanent "In Memoriam" display case.

This year's ceremony included 104 Veterans who passed between April 2012 and March 2013. More than 60 family members and friends attended the ceremony.

"Some of these Veterans were longtime residents of our community. They became well known to the staff – like family to us. And their family – you – are like our extended family," said Eckrich. "This day gives us a chance to see you again and reminisce with you about your loved one. We love seeing you again and we are grateful for the opportunity to smile one more time, about a memory of your loved one."

The memorial concluded with a bell tolling ceremony to show respect for those who have passed.

(Story courtesy of VA, Hot Springs)