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Dublin VA celebrates National Hospice and Palliative Care Month

DUBLIN, GA. — In recognition of National Hospice and Palliative Care Month, Hospice Care staff at the Carl Vinson VA Medical Center in Dublin, Georgia recently planted a rose bush in front of their building and passed out mums to honor their female Veterans. In a ceremony at the Hospice Care Unit on Nov. 16 attended by patients, families, and staff, social worker and U.S. Marine Corps Veteran Greg Senters emceed a program honoring female veterans and highlighting the service of U.S. Navy veteran Rose Schrader, a resident of the unit.

After playing “Bring My Flowers” by Tanya Tucker to remind attendees to waste no time expressing their affection for their loved ones, Schrader, with her family by her side, was presented with a bouquet of mums and a remembrance pin. During the program, Medical Center Director Manuel Davila spoke about the unique—and too often unacknowledged—contributions of America’s female Veterans, acknowledging that, while VA had not historically been prepared to meet the needs of its women veterans, times had changed for the better.

“Women Veterans represent a significant and continually growing proportion of America’s heroes, and our improvements here at Carl Vinson VAMC reflect that fact. Each project and process now include the needs of female Veterans as an indispensable part of our decision-making. Programs like the one today affirms our commitment to our women Veterans, now and always,” Davila said.

Davila also said that the new Outpatient and Women’s Health Clinic under construction at the medical center and expected to open in April 2023 would offer significant enhancements for the care that middle Georgia’s women Veterans experience. The new free-standing facility will include a significant space expansion, new equipment, greater privacy, and more ease of access for Women’s Health Clinic patients.

“We are very excited about the new building and will be inviting our friends in the community to join us for the official opening,” Davila said.

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As part of the ceremony, Senters discussed cultural aversions to death and dying that many experience and how those affected tend to avoid addressing the final act of life. He noted that the purpose of hospice services is to encourage the emotional embrace of the transition that death brings to all and that embracing those feelings allows for emotional growth and a more peaceful passing for loved ones.

“Too many people think that hospice care is about dying, but that’s a serious misconception. Hospice is about celebrating life and extending quality of life as long as possible. It’s not about giving up, it’s about looking up,” Senters said.

Schrader’s family praised the Dublin VA and its Hospice team for the superior healthcare that Rose receives in an atmosphere of dignity and respect, saying that at the Dublin VA, Rose is “part of a family.”

Hospice RN Lisa Andreen, a nurse of over 20 years, said that serving on the Dublin Hospice team has been one of the most gratifying experiences of her life.

“Being here for Veterans like Ms. Rose and her family at this point of life is something we take very seriously at VA, and it motivates us to do our best for them every day. Caring for Veterans is a tremendous honor. I can’t imagine doing anything else.”

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