



Press Release

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Community Tree Donation and Planting Project Offers Living Legacy to Veterans

WASHINGTON, DC— On Saturday, April 16, the Washington DC Veterans Affairs Medical Center joins forces with Casey Trees, volunteers and community partners to plant 50 trees on the medical center's Irving Street campus. The trees will commemorate the hospital's 50 years of service to Veterans and will provide a living legacy for the community for many years to come.

The medical center's 50th Anniversary Activities Committee launched the idea which will provide a place of healing and much-needed green space for the hospital's urban environment. Two trees were planted in late summer 2015 as part of the formal anniversary celebration which commemorated the medical center's grand opening in 1965.

Casey Trees is donating various types of shade and evergreen trees which will line the perimeter of the medical center. With VA caregivers, Veterans, active duty service members, Red Cross volunteers and others joining in, the endeavor represents a true community effort. More than 100 volunteers have already signed up to take part in the tree planting project. "This is an engaging opportunity to bring the community together; a true community effort that has been months in the planning," said Medical Center Director Brian A. Hawkins, MHA.

The committee worked for eight months to coordinate the logistics and numerous details for this large-scale project. Local community groups are providing breakfast, lunch and beverages for the volunteers. According to Dr. Behram Pastakia, the DC VA Medical Center radiologist who helped spearhead the planting of the saplings, the campus will become a therapeutic walkway. "Healing is more than just medication; the trees will allow Veteran-patients to get close to nature and will have a positive effect on their outlook."

To learn more about the tree-planting project or to cover this community event that will provide a living legacy for Veterans and the DC community, contact the Office of Public Affairs, 202-745-4037.

About the Washington DC Veterans Affairs Medical Center:

Located within sight of the Nation's Capitol, the medical center has 175 acute care beds, 30 psychosocial residential beds, and a 120- bed Community Living Center. The 2,300 member staff is dedicated to providing world-class comprehensive primary and specialty care to DC-area Veterans at the medical center and its four community clinics located in DC, Maryland and Virginia as well as the VA Community Resource and Referral Center.

About Casey Trees:

The non-profit organization is dedicated to restoring and protecting the tree canopy of the nation's capital. Since 2002, Casey Trees has planted over 20,000 trees and educated thousands of DC-area residents about the importance of the urban tree canopy.

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