For Immediate Release
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James J. Peters VA Hosts Valentines for Veterans 2011

During the week of February 13-19, the James J. Peters VA Medical Center celebrated the 33rd Annual National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans. The National Salute is a week-long celebration of special thanks that occurs during the week marked by Valentine’s Day. During this time, VA Medical Centers across the country invite local celebrities, elected officials and school children to visit veterans and to bring them some Valentine’s Day cheer. This year, the Medical Center hosted Miss New York 2010, Claire Buffie; Miss Teen USA 2010, Kamie Crawford; the Children’s Chorus of PS 83; along with State Senator Jeff Klein; members of the NYPD Emerald Society Pipes and Drums; and the SUNY Maritime Color Guard.

"The National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans gives everyone a chance to let our veterans know just how very much they are appreciated," said Medical Center Director, MaryAnn Musumeci, "We’re excited to welcome Miss Buffie, Ms. Crawford and Senator Klein. Their participation just heightens the celebration and brings a special note of cheer to our veterans."

Musumeci said she hopes visitors will also learn more about the important roles volunteers play at the medical center throughout the year and perhaps pursue volunteer opportunities.

"Our medical center’s 464 volunteers are an important part of our health care team and donate over 85,000 hours of their precious time to our veterans. The National Salute program is a
great way for people to learn more about helping the veterans we serve,” Musumeci said. “Visitors are surprised at how varied our volunteer opportunities are.”

Individuals interested in learning more about volunteer opportunities within VA are encouraged to call the office of Voluntary Services at 718.584.9000, ext. 5473 or 5474.

For more information related to this story or the James J. Peters VA Medical Center, please contact Jim Connell, Public Affairs Officer, at 718.584.9000, Ext. 6620.

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Photos follow:

L-R Veteran Candido Matta enjoys a friendly chat with Miss New York, Claire Buffie
Students of PS 83 deliver cards and gifts to Veteran, George McGinnis

The SUNY Maritime Color Guard presents the National Ensign
NYPD Emerald Society Pipes and Drums tour the wards in the Medical Center
L-R, Veteran Jim Mullarkey, Miss New York, Veteran Harry Reid and Miss Teen USA
Miss New York, Claire Buffie greets Veteran Townsend Troland