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NFDA Pursuit of Excellence 2013
Best of the Best Award

Here at Brunswick Memorial Home we take great pride in honoring our service members and each year we actively seek ways to show our appreciation to the men and women who so proudly served and continue to serve this great nation.

When looking for a Veteran's Group that we could be of service to, it came to our attention to visit the State of New Jersey Veterans Memorial Home at Menlo Park in Edison, NJ.

One of the owners, Diane Kulbacki, and a staff member from Brunswick Memorial Home, Janice Grosholz, visited the veteran's home and inquired about the needs of the home and its veterans. When they met with the Directors of Recreation, they toured the 332 bed facility and were given a firsthand look at the long term nursing care facility and were given the history of the facility.

As they toured the facility and met with some of its residents, it was apparent the pride and honor that these service members carry with them as they continue out the last of their days here in a home that continues to support them and their families. While thinking of ways to continue to support them and their families, we decided to hold a "Couples Luncheon" for the residents and their life partners. We liked to think of it as a "Prom" for the residents.

We wanted the Prom to be a special event not only for the service members who resided at the facility, but also for their significant others. While some of the couples both reside in the facility, most times one of the couple lives apart from their significant other and this was an opportunity to provide support to the care-giver as well as to the resident.

We planned a sit-down catered meal, a decorated dining room to resemble a dance hall, corsages for the ladies, live music to dance to (or to listen to for those of us without rhythm!), "champagne" to toast the event, and a photographer to capture the couples as they entered the ballroom. When the word spread to the funeral home staff about the project, the outpouring of support from the staff was overwhelming! Fourteen members of our staff and their families made time to volunteer the day of the event.

When the day arrived, the Brunswick Memorial Home staff decorated the dining room, flowers adorned each table, the catered lunch filled the room with delicious aromas, and you could see couples lining up to enter the room. It was a special opportunity for them to “dress up” and it was a joy to see the men and women looking forward to having a good time.

As each couple entered the room, our professional photographer took their picture, and the emotion of the event was evident on all of their faces. They were then escorted to their table by one of the volunteers. All the while the music played and the singer serenaded the couples at each table. After serving the guests lunch, our staff guided some of the residents out onto the dance floor, while those that were unable to dance enjoyed the music and singing from their table.

The atmosphere was profound and you only had to look on the faces of not only the residents and their spouses, but also the staff members from Brunswick Memorial Home to see the emotional impact of the event. These were service men and women who served to protect our freedom and it was an honor for us to serve them.

As the event came to a close, we had one last gift for the guests: during the event, we had the photographs that were taken as they entered developed, and each couple was given a framed copy of the photograph, a small token of appreciation from all of us for all that they’ve sacrificed for us.