

Adopting a Holiday Season is a commitment to Veterans from your service organization to brighten the holidays with thoughtfulness, joy and creativity.

Beginning Thanksgiving weekend, consider a trim-a-tree party. Caroling and other entertainment are always welcome and encouraged throughout the season. You can treat the Veterans to visits, gifts, and special traditions.

Be creative! Try a special theme. During the season we will host a "Holiday Stroll" where trees from each organization can be viewed and enjoyed.

Celebrations that lighten the dark days of winter include Advent, Chanukah, Christmas, Kwanza and Diwali! Find out what is most meaningful to the Veterans on the unit you sponsor during the season.

Adopt a Holiday Season ends by taking down decorations and storing them for next year. We recommend doing this New Year's Eve or on New Year's Day with one last celebration to bring in the new year!

Thank you for making our Veterans' holidays so special. Let us know how we can support your group!



Some Helpful Numbers

Voluntary Service 781-687-3076

North Pole 781-687-3074

Nutrition 781-687-2259

Recreation Therapy 781-687-3237

Nurse Manager _____



Adopt a Holiday Season Program

Bedford VA
200 Springs Road
Bedford, MA 01730
781-687-3076





SUPPLYING DECORATIONS

Voluntary Service will show you decorations we have inhouse. You are welcome to add to what we have in stock as long as it meets VA's safety standards and regulations.

HOW TO ADOPT A HOLIDAY SEASON

Call Voluntary Service to adopt a unit and to schedule a meeting or phone call to review your holiday plan. (Dates should be chosen by **October 25** in order to be posted in November calendar).

- Schedule your Trim-a-Tree party (Thanksgiving weekend) in coordination with your unit.
- Schedule other holidays the unit observes and/or entertainment desired.
- Attend the "Holiday Stroll" where groups can display their trees to Veterans and each other from different units.
- Schedule New Year's Eve or Day party to take down decorations and store for next year.

RULES FOR FOOD

The most critical detail for all food brought in to the Veterans is **SAFETY**. As much as we all love to cook and bake for the Veterans, home made foods are not allowed.

Many Veteran patients are at high risk for choking, have sugar intolerance or allergies, and therefore, food brought in for all events needs to be cleared with nutrition service or nursing to determine food safety for particular Veterans. They are always happy to advise and coordinate so that every Veteran may enjoy each activity as much as possible.

Food storage prior to events is an additional safety concern. Please work with Voluntary Service to make sure food is refrigerated properly before your event.



REMINDERS ABOUT GIFTS

We are overwhelmed by the generosity shown to our Veterans during the holiday season. Feel free to contact Voluntary Service to learn what current needs the Veterans may have. Keep in mind that gifts should not contain glass, sharp objects, hygiene products with alcohol, etc. While candy is often asked about, it is not always safe for our patients.

RULES FOR DECORATIONS

Basic Requirements:

- a. Decorations displayed at Bedford VA must be made of flame-retardant material or must be limited to photographs, paintings and similar wall decorations in limited quantities that don't create a risk of fire development or spread.
- b. Decorations will not be placed in any location that interferes with access to fire exits, fire alarm pull stations, fire extinguishers, or other safety-related equipment.
- c. Only artificial, flame-retardant Christmas trees are permitted within buildings. "Flock" (fake snow) is not allowed.
- d. Only Underwriters Laboratory (UL) approved light bulb strings may be used on interior decorations and/or trees. Pre-lit trees not allowed.
- e. Only electrical items intended for interior decoration with a UL label will be used.

Special Requirements

- a. All doors/doorways will only be decorated with flame-retardant material
- b. Any area larger than 10 square feet to be decorated requires approval from the Safety Service.

Prohibited Decorations:

- The following decoration items are prohibited from use at this Medical Center:
- a. Live Christmas trees.
 - b. Spotlights/floodlights for interior decorations.
 - c. Candles or other flame-producing items.
 - d. Use of extension cords for holiday displays.
 - e. Paper, crepe paper, or cardboard displays that are non-flame resistant.