

C.R. Lyons & Sons Funeral Directors, Danvers, MA

On Wednesday, May 22nd, the Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Celebration, co-hosted by C.R. Lyons & Sons Funeral Directors and Care Dimensions, a prominent hospice agency in Greater Boston, was held at 10 a.m. This heartfelt event aimed to recognize and honor the dedication and sacrifices of Vietnam veterans, who often returned home without the support and recognition given to other veterans. This celebration was a significant effort to provide Vietnam veterans with the acknowledgment and welcome they deserved but seldom received.

The event featured a series of thoughtful and poignant remarks from key speakers, each bringing a unique perspective to the celebration. Hospice Chaplain Sharon Dunbar-Link and Care Dimensions Vice President Lynne Skarmas offered insights into the importance of honoring these veterans. Funeral Director C.R. Lyons shared the funeral home's commitment to supporting veterans, and the keynote address by Danvers Veterans Service Officer Kelley Rayos-Teixeira provided a deep appreciation of the veterans' contributions and the need for continued support.

One of the central themes of the event was the stark contrast in the homecoming experiences of Vietnam veterans compared to those of previous generations. Unlike earlier veterans who often traveled home together on ships, allowing for a period of adjustment and camaraderie, Vietnam veterans were frequently sent home alone on planes, without the beneficial decompression time. This abrupt transition and the often hostile reception they faced upon returning home left many Vietnam veterans feeling isolated and unappreciated. The Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Celebration sought to address this historical oversight by providing a warm and respectful acknowledgment of their service.

The event was further enriched by live music, including a special piece performed by music therapists from Care Dimensions, highlighting the therapeutic power of music in healing and commemoration. The inclusion of music added a deeply emotional layer to the celebration, resonating with both veterans and attendees. Refreshments and fellowship provided a relaxed environment for veterans and their families to connect, share experiences, and support one another.

Additionally, the event included a question-and-answer period, allowing attendees to learn about the various veterans' services offered by both the funeral home and the hospice agency. This session was crucial in informing veterans and their families about the resources available to them, ensuring they receive the support they need.

The partnership between the funeral home and Care Dimensions was instrumental in the success of the event. Care Dimensions' extensive resources, including access to talented music therapists and a welcoming cafe space, significantly enhanced the celebration. C.R. Lyons & Sons's efforts in promoting the event through social media ensured a robust turnout, with dozens of people attending.

The overwhelming success of the Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Celebration has inspired hopes of making it an annual event. This celebration not only provided long-overdue recognition to Vietnam veterans but also fostered a sense of community and support among attendees. The collaboration between C.R. Lyons & Sons and Care Dimensions exemplifies the positive impact that such partnerships can have in honoring and supporting our veterans, ensuring they receive the gratitude and respect they so richly deserve.