

VA Manchester hosts warrior moms and dads at 7th Annual Baby Shower

Byline: Public Affairs Officer Lori Flynn, VA Manchester

MANCHESTER, N.H. – Surrounded by elephants, bears, bunny rabbits, giraffes, and yes, unicorns to name a few, the Women Veteran Program (WVP) staff turned a waiting room into a dream baby shower event at the Manchester VA Medical Center, June 1, 2024.

“It’s a wonderful opportunity for us to celebrate the new additions to our families—we do this for our female Veterans as well as our male Veterans—anyone who is expecting is eligible to participate as long as they are a Veteran and enrolled here at the VA,” shared Laura Caisse, women veteran program manager.

The annual baby shower brings together Veteran families who have had, or are expecting, a child in 2024.

“We play games, we do education, and it is a wonderful opportunity for our Veterans to connect, to get to know each other, meet other parents, their kids get to meet other kids, and really just have a ton of fun celebrating our togetherness and our new additions,” said Caisse.

This year 18 families attended the event and were greeted by welcoming staff and a room filled with baby essentials on the most wanted list. For the 10 Veteran families unable to participate in the baby shower, the WVP team still celebrates them ensuring they receive a warrior mom or baby essential bag, so no one is left out.

Navy Veteran Alycia Terese Gionet attended the baby shower and shared her appreciation for the event. “I just can’t believe the amount of people that came together to provide all these women Veterans with much needed items for their children and their babies, whether they have had their baby or are due this year.”

Every parent receives a large baby item such as a baby swing, highchair, stroller, or car seat, in addition to overflowing baby essential welcome bags and an opportunity to win additional gifts during the traditional baby shower games.

“Our donations are pouring in, from months before to the day before,” stated Caisse. “It is such an overwhelming response from our community that they want to be a part of this. We have thousands of dollars’ worth of items that are donated to us each year and we would not be able to make this happen without each and every one of them.”

Along with the traditional baby shower games, there was also an opportunity for Veterans to ‘Ask the Doctor’ with any questions, share information, and also take time to receive a car seat safety check or installation assistance provided by the Manchester Police Department.

“I think it is important for our community and also for our Veterans to know that we are here for them throughout their entire life cycle ... we want to celebrate with them, we want them to know not only do we do general health care, but we also do maternity care,” stated Caisse. “And we also want to engage our families and we also want our families to get to meet each other.”

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“We had a great time, and to me and my boyfriend it means the world,” said Army Veteran Madison Simard. “There are definitely some things we did not have access to that we do now.”

Simard added, “And, we are very much looking forward to giving back in the future to the next group. This has been awesome. We really appreciate it.”

Caisse shared, “We want every Veteran to know, VA is the place to be. If you are a Veteran and you are expecting, we want to hear from you—we want you to be a part of our maternity program. If you are an expecting parent, congratulations!”

For more information, please reach out to the VA Manchester Women Veteran Program team at (603) 624-4366 extension 5930.



Navy Veteran Alycia Terese Gionet decorates a onesie for her little one at the VA Manchester 7th Annual Baby Shower hosted by the Women Veteran Program team at the Manchester VA Medical Center, June 1, 2024, New Hampshire. (VA Manchester photo by Lori Flynn)



VA Manchester held its 7th Annual Baby Shower for over 18 Veteran families at the Manchester VA Medical Center, June 1, 2024, Manchester, New Hampshire. (VA Manchester photo by Lori Flynn)

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