

On Thursday, November 12th, 2009, the Branch of Equal Opportunity and Diversity hosted the second annual Veterans Reception as part of the Veterans Day Holiday to honor and celebrate the Service's veterans.

The event was well attended by Service staff, including employees who are veterans as well as employees, speakers, recent hires, volunteers, and visiting veterans from Walter Reed Medical Center.

Inez Uhl, EEO Officer, Branch Chief, Equal Opportunity and Diversity Division of Human Capital opened the reception with a welcome and overview of veterans' activities and initiatives. "We are both proud and honored to pay tribute to our veterans," stated Uhl. "We will continue to work vigorously to recruit veterans into the Service and are grateful to all veterans who have worked vigorously to protect our freedom."

James P. Burke III, Employment Coordinator, VR&E Vet Success and Chris Rollins, Veterans Representative, District of Columbia, Franklin St. Career Ctr. Spoke on the Veterans Affairs Non Paid Work Experience Programs.

"We are here to help managers and supervisors who are interested in hiring veterans learn more about the hiring authorities and recruitment tools that are available to assist them in their efforts," said Jessie Cheek, Section Chief, Staffing and Recruitment for Division of Human Capital. Cheek provided attendees with information on hiring authorities for veterans and provided managers with an opportunity to ask questions.

The reception concluded with managers and recently hired veterans sharing their experience in the Veterans Non Paid Work Experience Program and how they were hired for permanent positions. Cyndi Perry gave an energizing and supportive talk on how she has worked with EOD and the veterans programs and encouraged other managers to participate and support these programs and our veterans. Candy Heigl, recently hired by Cyndi, spoke about her experience as a volunteer and how it helped her in eventually landing a permanent position in International Affairs. Joe Beimfohr with BMO spoke about how his work in BMO has helped him successfully transition from the military to the civilian work force. Samuel Fields also spoke about his current experience as a volunteer for International Affairs and how he first learned about the Service through the Veterans Affairs and is looking forward to a career with the Service.

A slideshow featuring photos submitted by Service veterans was shown during the reception. Veterans responded overwhelmingly to the request for photos and submitted over 60 photos in just two days.

For more information, please contact Julia Bumbaca, Branch of Equal Opportunity and Diversity at Julia_bumbaca@fws.gov.