



For Immediate Release

Contact: Mary Ann Sabo
Sabo Public Relations, 616.485.1432
maryann@sabo-pr.com
or
Erin Nemastil
Sabo Public Relations, 616.633.0642
erin@sabo-pr.com

Hospice of Michigan to Honor Michigan Veterans Living at Newly Opened American House

Grand Rapids, Michigan, May 19, 2014 – Hospice of Michigan and American House Senior Living Communities will honor veterans with a special pinning ceremony in Grand Rapids on Thursday, June 5.

The event will be held from 2-5:20 p.m. at the Wealthy Theatre in honor of veterans living at the newly opened American House Grand Rapids, 2619 Kalamazoo Ave. SE. Those who served will be presented a certificate reflecting their branch of military service and an American flag pin honoring and thanking them.

Reuben Smartt, longtime Grand Rapids educator and a former Montford Point Marine, is among those being honored. Poor health prevented Smartt from traveling to Washington, D.C. in June 2012 when the Montford Marines – the first African-American Marines in the United States – were honored by Pres. Barack Obama.

Rep. Winnie Brinks (D-Grand Rapids) is among the dignitaries expected to attend the pinning ceremony.

HOM and American House expect to pin more than 50 veterans. The ceremony is open to the public and **media are welcome to attend.**

“Many military veterans have never been formally thanked for their service to our country,” said Dr. Michael Paletta, executive director of the Maggie Allesee Center for Innovation within the Hospice of Michigan Institute. “Our pinning ceremonies not only bring dignity to this time of their lives by thanking them for serving their country, they also provide a good reminder for families and caregivers about how special these people are.”

The schedule of events is as follows:

- 2-3:30 p.m. – Introductions and pinning ceremony
- 3:30-4 p.m. – Intermission
- 4-5:20 p.m. – “Detroit, Our Greatest Generation,” a documentary on Detroit’s contributions to the World War II effort

Hospice of Michigan is a Level Four partner in the We Honor Veterans program, a partnership between the Veterans Administration and the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization, or NHPCO. The program was developed to enhance care for veterans at the end of life and includes both educational and ceremonial elements.

Participating hospices receive training to recognize and treat the unique issues facing military families, provide access to community resources, and facilitate cooperation between VA health agencies and hospice services. Level Four status signifies the organization has met the highest standards set by the VA and NHPCO for this national program. Paletta, who is also a retired Colonel and flight surgeon, serves as the executive champion of We Honor Vets for Hospice of Michigan.

About Hospice of Michigan

A nationally recognized leader in end-of-life care, Hospice of Michigan is the original – and largest – hospice in the state. The non-profit cares for more than 1,400 patients each day in 56 counties across Michigan, raising more than \$4 million each year to cover the cost of care for the uninsured and underinsured. HOM offers a broad range of services to enhance the quality of life at the end of life, including At Home Support™, our advanced illness management program, community-based palliative care and pediatric care programs. HOM provides grief support and counseling, caregiver education and support, and education programs for physicians and healthcare professionals through its research, training and education arm, the Hospice of Michigan Institute. For more information, call 888.247.5701 or visit www.hom.org.

About American House Senior Living Communities

Founded over 30 years ago, American House Senior Living Communities provides the most rewarding life experiences for each and every resident. By combining the independence senior citizens want with the assistance they may need, American House has helped thousands transition into the next phase of their lives with ease. American House operates 34 communities in Michigan and plans to expand into the Southeastern United States. For more information, please visit www.americanhouse.com or call 248-203-1800.

###