

Alton Memorial Hospital Hosts its 15th Annual Domestic Violence Memorial Service

by Chris Rhodes, Reporter
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ALTON - Alton Memorial Hospital hosted its 15th annual Domestic Violence Memorial Service Wednesday night in the healing garden.

The memorial service started with a prayer for the victims of domestic violence and it was given by Reverend George Humbert. After the prayer was over Bob Vandalia and Cindy Kirbach read the names and rang a bell for the victims that died this past year.

The names are Elizabeth Shipp (64), Brandy Novotny (38), Baby Boy Sieb (21), Katie Bunt (21), Emily Hampshire (14), Angel Syddall (31), Baby Boy Ellis (6 months), Austin Pierson (22), and Anthony Burgess (26). There were 9 victims that died this past year of domestic violence.

Alison Neace, Shawn Neace, and Audrey Neace sang a song called "Be Thou Near to Me."

After the song, Judge Maureen Schuette with the 3rd Judicial Circuit Court gave a speech and talked a little about Fitz the new facility dog that provides support and comfort for children and adults at the Madison County Courthouse. Fitz is a 2-year-old male Labrador retriever.

Alton Police Chief Jason Simmons spoke about parents needing to be in their kid's lives. In his speech, he said that kids that see domestic violence are more likely to commit domestic violence because it's what the kids see at home.

After Chief Simmons spoke Donna Clendenny gave a heartfelt speech about how she was in a domestic violence marriage for 35 years before she escaped. She said she was afraid to leave because she had nowhere to go and no money because her ex-husband wouldn't let her work. She spoke about on multiple occasions her ex-husband would point a shotgun at her. She talked about finally after 35 years she escaped and never went back. She said the Alton Oasis Center saved her life.

After her speech, Madison County Coroner Stephen Nonn spoke about how his team has to notify the family after someone is murdered because of domestic violence and how tough it is on his team.

A closing prayer was given by Minister Joyce Elliott. A reception followed in the lobby.





