



## HUDSON VALLEY VETERAN TASK FORCE

Meeting Minutes of February 8, 2017



**OPENING** The meeting of the Hudson Valley Veteran Task Force was called to order at 9:08 on Wednesday, February 8, 2017 at the Orange County Chamber of Commerce, Crossroads Corporate Park, 30 Scotts Corners Drive, Montgomery, NY 12549 by Larry Neumann. The meeting began with Larry highlighting the new Quick Response Force (QRF) for 2017, and a special thank you for Joe Keenan for his work with Task Force and veterans. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Introductions were made first of all the guest speakers and all those 'around the room.' The sign-in sheet was passed around. **MISSION STATEMENT** The mission statement was read.

**PRESENT** Many veteran and human service agencies of Orange, Dutchess, Putnam, Rockland and Sullivan Counties were represented. Also in attendance were the guests/presenters; Shari Seidule of Mount Saint Mary College; Melissa Clark of United Way RFP for Veteran Initiative; Christine Bruckner of Squirrelwood Equine Sanctuary; Eugene Parotta with Purple Heart Homes USA. There were a total of 35 in attendance.

### GUEST SPEAKERS

**Shari Seidule - Mount Saint Mary College Veteran Student Program** - Shari introduced herself and described the programs offered at the college, West Point and Stewart National Guard. Her office is located in West Point together with representation of other colleges that provided class for veterans and armed forces members. Classes offered at West Point mirror classes at the college but are offered at a discount. Currently, the cost is \$250 per credit. The Army provides office and other needs of the program. A highlight of the program is the full-time education counselors. They are proficient in education benefits and also rehabilitation issues. Classes are also offered at Stewart National Guard and are tailor made for them. Mount Saint Mary has veteran housing - 1 specific building.

Questions - If there are more than 2 veterans in a household could they both attend? The veterans and their children can attend. Classes are geared to adult learning. Open veterans who served and their dependents. The scope of classes are primarily business and beginner college classes. Classes are accelerated 8 week sessions and are given year round.

**Melissa Clark - RFP Orange Ulster United Way** - National United Way kicked off a new initiative called "Mission United". It would begin with community assessments and serve the primary needs. The process began as a event with panelists of community organizations. Some highlighted community concerns were legal services, education and housing. On February 9th, there is a mandatory information workshop for applicants for grants. A follow up to the initial event will be in May with an emphasis on growing the initiative.

Questions - May multiple agencies apply together? Yes. If attending for more than one agency, please sign in for each agency. Will Sullivan County be involved? Sullivan County will be starting their RFP initiative in March. Their initiative will emphasize Children of Veterans.

**Christine Bruckner - Squirrelwood Equine Sanctuary** - Christine introduced herself and the work she does as a Clinical Social Worker and with equine therapy for veterans. The program is government recognized and certified. It is 12 week program, but it may be catered to the veteran's need. It can be introductory and uses a team approach. Horse skills are not the priority. The priority is self discovery and companionship. All the horses are rescue horses. She showed a video of the location and some of the team and veterans.  
[www.squirrelwood.org](http://www.squirrelwood.org)

**Eugene Parotta - Purple Heart Homes USA** - Eugene shared his program as a veteran homeowner repair assistance. Lorraine comes to their agency with her vast knowledge of behavioral issues effecting veterans. She assists with some root issues such as PTSD or mental trauma. The program assists veterans that are living in homes in disrepair, or are not functional for their needs. Requirements for assistance are service related injuries/disability; own their home and live in home.

He shared a story of one veteran who went through his floor and needed many repairs to his home and together with many community members and local businesses were able to refurbish the complete home at cost of \$160,000 which is not a typical situation. Another veteran, had not been to the 2nd floor of his home in 8 years. The group provided a chair lift to get him up to his bedroom, and much needed outside railing to get in and out of his home.

The program came to New York 3 years ago. Their major fundraiser is a golf outing in November. The fundraising information will be available.

**Barbara Allen - American Snippets** - Barbara introduced herself and her history as a veteran's spouse and Gold Star family. She shared of a major tragedy in her life that motivated her starting this movement towards sharing positive life stories and celebrations. She felt with all of the division in our country as of late, she wanted a spotlight to focus on the positive. The web site does this for many. Many stories are for and about veterans, but are not exclusive to veterans.

## **REPORT OUT**

**Vet2Vet Movie Night: Joe's War - Bryan Abrams** - Vet2Vet Films for Vets movie nights to be held the 5th Mondays. On Monday, January 30, the movie "Joe's War" was screened. The director and two of the actors were in attendance and discussed the movie afterwards. The next movie will be on Memorial day and it will be the Honor Flight documentary.

Discussion - The movie was not liked by some. Some participants were left feeling hopeless, and felt cautious about showing this movie to veterans suffering from PTSD. Larry and Bryan assured those concerned that Mobile Mental Health was on site. The organizers felt that it was mostly a positive experience. It also opened the opportunity for immediate treatment for any who may have not addressed these challenges. A positive role: Dr. Burke has had a 93% success rate in treating PTSD. A suggestion was made to check-in with viewers that might have had to deal with issues/triggers.

**Point in Time Homeless Count - Kim Brink** - Teams were organized for a twenty four hour count. Sights in Port Jervis were visited a few teams. Larry was lead a team close to the waterfront. A preliminary report shows that numbers are down from 2016 count. There were some challenges. The primary objective was to get advocacy information to the homeless. A report should be available for the next Task Force meeting.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

**"Hire Vets First" Employment Initiative; "Hall of Honor" at HONORehg; 2017 Veteran Appreciation Day at Renegades Dutchess Stadium; QRF: Quick Reaction Force** - Tentative subcommittees lists have been formed and selected and will be emailed to all. Larry requested the group review, find their participation and to let him know if it is acceptable.

**HV Task Force Website - Pat Fayo** - Creating a website as an avenue to communicate events and other information in a timely manner.

### **Paintball Competition/Trophy Event - Bryan Abrams/Adam Roche**

- A six county veteran competition
- Awards and bragging rights
- Met with Chris at the paintball facility
- Cost \$37 a person
- Promote event at their website
- Suggested 10-14 person teams

### **TASK FORCE HOMELESS CASES/REFERRALS/NEW CASES**

6 Veterans: Action plans in place for all six.

5 Orange; 1 Sullivan (3 - HONOR (1 MAC, 1 VA, 1 to be housed shortly); 2 - Hotels; 1 - Application)

### **Special Announcements**

Catholic Charities - has coats for kids.

United Way - For Central Hudson Customers, light bulb initiative for Vets.

Middletown Community Health Center - Friday, February 10, Paint Party Fundraiser, 6pm to 9pm

### **UPCOMING EVENTS**

- 2/09: United Way Mandatory Meeting for RFP on Veteran Issues
- 2/11: 105<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing Yellow Ribbon Event (Loc: TBD)
- 2/13: Valentines for Veterans: US Rep. Sean Patrick Maloney
- 2/26: HERoes In Deed: Winter Fun Fest '17 fundraiser
- 2/28: OUREx 20217 Point of Dispensing Full Scale Exercise
- 2/28: Boots to Business Reboot (Intro to Entrepreneurship) +8 week online course
- 3/08: Play For Your Freedom Event: 3:30-6:30pm @ Newburgh Armory
- 3/21: Walk for Women Veterans: Pace Univ. – Pleasantville Campus
- 4/08: Hudson Valley Honor Flight (hvhonorflight.com) Mission #15
- 6/04: Dover 400 NASCAR Trip

### **Adjournment**

Meeting was adjourned at 11:20am by Larry Neumann.

The next general meeting will be at 9:00am on March 8, 2017, at Orange County Chamber of Commerce, Larkin Conference Room, Crossroads Corporate Park, 30 Scotts Corners Drive, Montgomery, NY 12549.

Minutes taken and typed by: Millie Rivera-Velez . Minutes reviewed and submitted by: Larry Neumann