

Hudson Valley Veteran Task Force Meeting

Minutes/Notes of November 14, 2018

FINAL

OPENING: The meeting of the Hudson Valley Veteran Task Force was called to order at 9:15 am on Wednesday, November 14, 2018 at the Orange County Department of Mental Health, 30 Harriman Drive, Goshen, NY by Larry Neumann. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Larry Neumann welcomed all present.

MISSION STATEMENT: The mission statement was recited by Larry Neumann.

The mission of the Hudson Valley Veteran Task Force is to address the needs of those who served by having relevant agencies meet collectively, regularly and cooperatively, to ensure the timely administration of services and referrals in order to achieve an end to Veteran homelessness and meet their immediate and long term needs.

PRESENT: Many veteran and human service agencies of Orange, Dutchess, Putnam, Rockland and Sullivan Counties were represented. The guests/presenters are listed below. There were a total of **41** in attendance.

INTRODUCTIONS, Opening Remarks and Review of last month's meeting:

Larry opened with explaining the change of location; gave the group an opportunity to see different areas and accommodated those travelling long distances. He recapped last month's meeting highlighting our speakers.

Special Announcements:

My Brother Vinny served 717 veterans this year.

Derek Brown, Sr. Veteran Mentor Coordinator for the Newburgh Drug Court was introduced and gave a description of his program. A group of veteran mentors receive training. The program is an alternative to jail time for veterans who have challenges with drug and alcohol. They received a high rating with Justice for Vets. There is a low relapse rate and veterans graduate from program with a sense of empowerment to move their lives forward. Larry Neumann shared a success story.

Towns for Troops: Provide events for veterans such as theater, football and baseball games. A new project, Stocking for Soldiers is underway. Their goal is to assemble 500 stockings for single soldiers in the Hudson Valley.

Rockland County Veteran Task force celebrated its first year anniversary.

Since We Last Met:

Joseph P. Dwyer Annual Conference – experienced an inspirational speaker, Bryan Anderson. He is the young man who lost 3 limbs in Iraq. Spoke of resilience and his 1 ½ year recovery.

Fundraiser in Westchester – **Jaymes Poling – “Modern Warrior Live”** – jazz band and singers. His performance is based on his experience and the transition when he returns. Larry will email the narrative to group.

Honor Flight – Bill Sestrom - the board is considering an all Vietnam Veteran flight and asked the group for their input.

GUEST SPEAKERS/PRESENTERS

Anthony Desjardin - Helping Homeless Heroes: Is a student at Chester Academy and as part of the National Honor Society, would like to provide care packages for homeless veterans. He will be requesting donations by placing boxes in local establishments. The project is in its early stages and hopes it will be continued by his fellow students after he graduates. The project was born out of a sense of gratitude towards our veterans and letting them know that they are not alone.

Kim Mahoney, Middletown Elks – Project Freedom Backpack: A new project by the Elks club and would like to join forces. The project would provide homeless veterans with a backpack full of necessities such as water bottle with a filter and a sleeping bag. They were awarded a grant of \$2,000. Suggestion: Point in Time

homeless count in January for distribution, but it was suggested to wait until spring/May when Orange County does another count.

Kevin Keaveny, Frank Reggero, Ray Cocks, Vets Wooden Boat Workshop: Kevin is an Afghanistan veteran whose experience on returning home was one full of challenges with anger and focusing. He found solace in creating something out of wood. He decided to build a boat. He went back to school for human services and decided to create this program. He launched his pilot program and found success in helping others with those challenges. They provide a 3 day retreat. The retreat allows the group to strengthen bonds. The purpose of the program is to enable the participants to move towards “A life with purpose, dignity and respect”

TASK FORCE HOMELESS CASES Status:

- **WestCOP SSVF: Open/New Case Report - Christine**
 - Last month's count was 14. This month is 9.
 - Dutchess – 4; 2 cars and 2 hotels
 - Orange County – 5; 4 hotels and 1 HONOR.

VETERAN SERVICE AND COUNTY UPDATES:

- **Dutchess County** – not in attendance
- **Orange County**
 - **VSO: Christian Farrell, Director - Orange County Veteran Services**
 - Wreaths Across America, Saturday, December 15 at noon
 - \$15 per wreath and \$30 for 3. Deadline – November 26.
 - **Vet2Vet: Larry Neumann, Program Coordinator –**
 - Veteran Art Showcase November 16-18
- **Putnam County**
 - **VSO: Karl Rohde, Director, Putnam County Veterans Service Agency**
 - Increase in veterans needing assistance.
 - Welcome to Meg Castellano
 - Veteran residence in Putnam
 - Currently 12 residents
 - Shared success story about veteran in car and now a resident
 - **Vet2Vet:**
 - Providing programs: equestrian, movies, chow down and art workshops.
- **Rockland County**
 - **Vet to Vet: Ismael (Izzy) Quintana Jr., Veteran Outreach Coordinator**
 - Highlights and events in the last month
 - Housing enrollment program through VSA
 - Shared success story – homeless vet came back from Tennessee
 - Veteran is very happy to be back in Suffern, his hometown
 - Veteran calls his place the “Taj Mah Small”.
- **Sullivan County**
 - **VSO: Howie Goldsmith, Coordinator, Sullivan County Veteran Service Agency and Sullivan County Veteran Alliance**
 - Holiday Food Projects for veterans for Thanksgiving and Christmas.
- **Office of US Representative Sean Patrick Maloney**
 - Cullen Lyons/Khristian Silvis, Veteran and Military Advocate
 - Senator glad to continue his work for 2 more years.
 - Service Academy Selections
 - 40 applicants with 20 from Orange County
 - Veteran Advisory Board – will start meeting with new projects.

UPCOMING EVENTS/ROUNDTABLE

My Brother Vinny Rep – Thank you to the Yorktown Elks for their coat drive and fundraiser
Dr. Frank Burke – VA has adopted his PTSD treatment.

Adjournment: meeting was adjourned at 11:35 am by Larry Neumann.

Next meeting: Wednesday, December 12, 2018, 9am

Location: Dept. of Mental Health, 30 Harriman Drive, Goshen

Minutes taken and typed by: Millie Rivera-Velez

Minutes reviewed and submitted by: Larry Neumann