



**SARATOGA COUNTY**  
VETERANS SERVICE AGENCY  
152 WEST HIGH ST., BALLSTON SPA, NY 12020

SC-VSA

September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2013

Executive Summary, Saratoga County, Veterans' Service Agency (VSA)

Subject: Events and Activities Summary for September 1<sup>st</sup> through September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2013.

Executive Summary Intent: The purpose of this document is to provide situational awareness and understanding to subordinate and adjacent leaders and staff of the Veterans' Service Agency (VSA). This document does not by itself dictate official policy or decision.

Mission: To fulfill President Lincoln's promise "To care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan" by serving and honoring the men and women who are America's veterans.

Vision: We will accomplish this by providing quality service, advocacy and counseling for the Veterans of Saratoga County Veteran and their families. In coordination with, other Saratoga county departments, non-government organizations, community based partners and affiliates will make sure our Veterans receive the right services, external assistance and benefits through outreach. The most essential portion of our charter is to ensure that our Veterans, especially those we come in contact with, are treated professionally with dignity and respect.

Summary:

1. Veterans Self Sufficiency. Develop sustainable initiatives where Veterans are able to become self sufficient through the collaborative effort of the Saratoga County Veterans Employment Task Force.

a. On Thursday, September 19<sup>th</sup>, 2013 at 9:00am the Task Force met to discuss our recent activities and planned future actions.

1) In attendance were:

- Peter Bardunias, President, Southern Saratoga County Chamber of Commerce
- Amy Amoroso, Veterans Business Advisor, Veterans Business Outreach Center (VBOC)
- Lisa Scaccia, Director, Saratoga County Employment and Training
- Noney M. Grier, HVSEP Vocational Rehab Specialist, Department of Veterans Affairs

2) The group discussed the results from our follow up actions we developed from our survey data. The group discussed several assumptions and ideas. After assessing the outcome of our previous survey results – we agreed that we need to develop a new contact list of our Veterans.

a) The VSA has partnered with the County Clerk's Office in order to utilize the "Return the Favor" contact list as a tool to "bridge the gap" between the VSA and our registered Veterans. We may be able to reach out to our Veterans through this method but it is believed that many of the Veterans who have the "Favor" card may not be interested in receiving a survey regarding employment/training versus a survey to gauge their opinion on VA Health Care.

- b) October 8<sup>th</sup> Business 101 class. We rescheduled the previous class from September, and are resending the invites in bunches of 100.
- c) October 24<sup>th</sup>, 2013 – Malta Career Expo and Job Fair. Members of Task Force will be setting up display booths and tables in area designated for Veterans Services. The team agreed that this event will provide us the opportunity to inform/teach the public about what benefits are available for our Veterans and for businesses that hire Veterans. Select members of the TF will be asked to present and speak during the Expo. We will reach out to Veterans at events like these to build our contact data base.

b. On September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2013, the RPC (VETHELP/Guardian House), Michael Perez, HR/Recruiter, Angio Dynamics and the Veterans Team were able to place a Veteran with AngioDynamics.

c. On September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2013 at 10:00am, we conducted a meeting Senator Kathleen Marchione, Assemblyman Daniel Stec's staff, and Assemblyman John McDonald's staff, Supervisor Mary Ann Johnson, Amy Amoroso (Veterans Business Advisor) and Denise Romeo (Vice President of the Saratoga County Chamber of Commerce) to discuss the potential bill proposal to grant Veteran Owned Businesses preferential treatment. We would like to make it so that Veterans receive the same certification through NYS that Women and Minorities receive.

2. Veterans Justice Outreach (VJO). Develop a program in support of the VA Veterans Justice Outreach in order to provide advocacy and assistance to Veterans in lieu of incarceration or upon release.

a. During the month of September we received 5 notices of Veterans being admitted into our County Jail. One Veteran was identified as a possible candidate for programs.

b. On September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2013, the Saratoga County Sheriff informed us that the jail will begin to utilize the new Veterans Referral Sheet in order to assist service providers in their initial screening for services. This new referral form was developed as a collaborative effort between the Don Little (RPC), Courtney Slade (VJO Coordinator) and Sheriff Bowen's team. Please refer to figure below.



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**VETERANS JUSTICE OUTREACH REFERRAL QUESTIONNAIRE**

Please be advised that the following Veteran is currently incarcerated in the Saratoga County Correctional Facility:

Date of Referral: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Arrest: \_\_\_\_\_

Veteran's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_ SS#: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_

Employer: \_\_\_\_\_ Marital Status: \_\_\_\_\_

Branch of Service: \_\_\_\_\_ Time of Service: \_\_\_\_\_

Discharge Status: \_\_\_\_\_ Combat: \_\_\_\_\_

Does the veteran have any service connected disabilities? \_\_\_\_\_

Pending Charges: \_\_\_\_\_ Bail/ROR Status: \_\_\_\_\_

Court(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Next Court Appearance: \_\_\_\_\_ Judge(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Pending charges/holds from other jurisdictions: \_\_\_\_\_

Does veteran have access to DD-214 (discharge) papers? \_\_\_\_\_

Is the veteran enrolled in VA Healthcare? \_\_\_\_\_

Current VA Treatment Provider(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Comments:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Fax Correspondence:**

Courtney Slade, Veterans Justice Outreach Coordinator, Stratton VA Medical Center 518-626-5383

Felipe Moon, Director, Saratoga County Veteran Service Agency 518-884-4290

Don Little, Director, Veterans Housing, Employment & Life Skills Programs 518-490-2246

- c. As we begin to strengthen our partnerships and build our mentor program – we will be able to witness a decrease in the amount of recidivism of our Veterans. Here is a link to a nice article regarding a program in New York State:

[http://www.claytodayonline.com/ee/claytoday/en/component/fullstory/20130926\\_002\\_art\\_0/new-court-program-aims-to-help-veterans](http://www.claytodayonline.com/ee/claytoday/en/component/fullstory/20130926_002_art_0/new-court-program-aims-to-help-veterans)

3. Veterans Peer to Peer Support Program. Develop a cadre of veterans who understand coping with and overcoming the psychological trauma experienced during intense armed conflict. The Veteran lead program will provide training and guidance by professional therapists and facilitators. The Veteran mentors are dedicated to helping their fellow veterans make the necessary adjustments back to day-to-day life.

- a. We currently have 4 peer teams, 20 trained mentors and six mentors are ready to be trained.
- b. We are preparing to move forward in selecting a vendor to produce a Peer to Peer promotional video and radio in order to attract and recruit Veterans to join our programs.
- c. On September 5<sup>th</sup>, 2013, Don Little (RPC), Janet Reeves (NYS Department of Corrections and Community Supervision) met with the Veterans Team to discuss how we can collaborate to connect eligible veterans under parole supervision to the mentoring program. We are going to meet in October to begin developing some plans and goals.
- d. On September 12<sup>th</sup>, 2013, Eric R. Hardiman (SUNY, University at Albany) met with the Peer to Peer team to discuss Saratoga County's Progress and the State Evaluation Process.
  - 1) The evaluation will be conducted through interviewing the staff, participants, and through anonymous surveys. Eric was impressed with what the program has accomplished thus far. He mentioned that every program was in different stages of success and that the programs were not being evaluated against each other or an "unfair model."
  - 2) An area of emphasis in the evaluation will be our ability to develop a Mentor training program. If the training program is found viable it may be adopted by the other New York State programs. Our mentors have the necessary skills and background to "befriend" their Veterans to success. The training they receive will enable the mentor to help their Veteran navigate through the re-integration process.
- e. On September 26<sup>th</sup>, 2013, Don Little (RPC) advised the team that he would like to move ahead and develop a plan to set up each RPC Resident with a Mentor. We will meet to develop a plan.

4. Veterans Benefits Outreach Initiative. Develop a program where a Veteran's Service Officer deploys to the cities and towns of Veterans who are unable to travel to the VSA in order to help our Veterans reduce the risk of not receiving their deserved services and benefits.

- a. On Tuesday, September 24<sup>th</sup>, 2013, we conducted our first Veterans Benefits Outreach day in the Town of Corinth.
  - 1) Highlights:
    - a) We provided a benefits briefing to three Veterans and family members.
    - b) A Vietnam Veteran (Town of Hadley) previously scheduled an appointment for this day. He inquired regarding assistance for his mother, a WWII Veteran's widow. We discussed available benefits and also assisted with a records request for the WWII Veteran. We will be filing a Pension w/ Aid & Attendance claim for the widow of the WWII Veteran in the near future.

- c) Two OIF/OEF Veterans from Corinth (one current NYNG member, and one retiree) received a benefits review resulting in an appointment for a disability compensation claim.
- 2) Lessons Learned:
- a) The American Legion was instrumental during this event by referring Veterans to the event.
  - b) In the future will publicize the event through the local newspaper, and the Town Supervisors.
  - c) We will design a flyer to share with the local Community Organizations, Veteran Organizations and the Town Supervisors.
  - d) We will reach out to the VFW, and American Legion to provide refreshments in order increase participation and support from the service organizations.
- 3) In October our host will be the Town of Waterford. Please refer to figure below for future dates.



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Veteran's Benefits Outreach Program	
Date	Location
September 24th, 2013	Corinth EMS Building
October 29th, 2013	Waterford Town Hall
November 26th, 2013	Schuylerville Town Hall
December 31st, 2013	Clifton Park Town Hall
January 28th, 2014	Galway Town Hall
February 25th 2014	Corinth EMS Building
March 25th, 2014	Waterford Town Hall
April 29th, 2014	Schuylerville Town Hall
May 27th, 2014	Clifton Park Town Hall
June 24th, 2014	GalwayTown Hall
July 29th, 2014	Corinth EMS Building
August 26th, 2014	Waterford Town Hall
September 30th, 2014	Schuylerville Town Hall
October 28th, 2014	Clifton Park Town Hall
November 25th, 2014	Galway Town Hall
December 30th, 2014	Corinth EMS Building



5. Veterans Trust Fund Initiative. Plan, coordinate and execute social events in order to promote our Veterans and raise money for our Veterans Trust fund.
- a. On Saturday, November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2013 at 10:00AM in the vicinity of Hudson Crossings Park, The Town of Saratoga will host the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Saratoga County Veterans Trust Fund 5K Race and Children's 1/2 Mile Nature Run.

1) On September 5<sup>th</sup>, 2013 at 09:30 the “Race Committee” met at Hudson Crossings Park in order to conduct a “Route Reconnaissance” of the 5K and the Children’s Run. This allowed us to confirm/deny where we will need to staff volunteers, EMS, Aid Stations and Law Enforcement.

2) Denise Romeo (Saratoga Chamber of Commerce) has done a great job finding sponsors.

- ✓ AngioDynamics
- ✓ SEFCU
- ✓ Adirondack Trust
- ✓ DeCrscente
- ✓ Bond, Schoeneck and King
- ✓ Balston Spa National Bank
- ✓ Irving Bath Tissue Company
- ✓ Brookfield Power

3) On October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2013 at 10:15 the “Race Committee” will meet at Saratoga County Chamber of Commerce. We will develop a time line in coordination with the committee and supporting agencies.

b. Fall Fund Drive. Peter Bardunias, (President/CEO) and the Chamber of Commerce of Southern Saratoga County will conduct a Fund Drive to kick off on Veterans Day and end on Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day. The intent is to reach out and inform the County Vendors that are supporting the “Return the Favor” Card of the County’s Veteran’s Trust Fund. We will coordinate this effort with the County Clerk’s Office.

6. Saratoga County Veteran’s Business Council. Establish an Alliance of Veterans that are business or community leaders in order to mass our collective resources and abilities on targeted veterans issues introduced to the Alliance.

a. The “Council” carved out our mission statement and vision.

*The mission of the Veterans Business Council of the Saratoga County Chamber of Commerce, in conjunction with the Saratoga County Veterans Services Agency, is to facilitate opportunities for our military veterans residing in Saratoga County. Efforts will be to connect them with the business community to enhance their knowledge of employment opportunities, job or entrepreneurial training, and new business development. The Council will also seek additional opportunities in support of our local veterans.*

b. The council will have its next meeting on Wednesday, October 30<sup>th</sup>, 2013 at 3:00 p.m. at the Saratoga County Chamber of Commerce.

7. Veterans Outreach.

a. On September 6<sup>th</sup>, 2013 our network of Veteran service providers and advocates responded upon notification of a homeless female veteran who had been living in a car with her 10 year old daughter for several weeks in Saratoga County. On September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2013 “our” Veteran and her daughter started their new life in a new home, and school in Saratoga County and a nice job with AngioDynamics.

b. On September 25<sup>th</sup>, 2013, we conducted our first Veterans Homeless Outreach Mission. We plan to conduct this mission on the last Wednesday of every month. We traveled over forty miles throughout the

surrounding area to known “encampment areas” of homeless people. We found several small camps, and found one homeless Veteran. We arranged for him to be picked up the following morning and he was a “no-show.”

- c. On September 26<sup>th</sup>, 2013 we attended the American Legion Annual Dinner in Mechanicville. Special guest included the New York State Commander, President and other officers of the organization.

Speaker Highlights:

- “Re-Branding” Campaign. The Legion needs to find ways to appeal to the new generation of Veterans and share the services that they offer.
- Social Media. The Legion is considering utilizing Skype™, Facebook, Twitter and possibly creating the “Virtual Legion Post”
- Outreach. This is a key action that the posts need to embrace. The membership of the Legion will increase once our folks walk up and reach out to the younger Veterans with relevant support.

8. Veterans Service Operational Update.

- a. September’s 2013 Honor our Deceased Veterans Ceremony took place on the 17<sup>th</sup> at 2:30 in the Board Room. The honoree was Carl E. Hunter from the Town of Providence.
- b. October’s 2013 Honor our Deceased Veterans Ceremony will take place on the 15<sup>th</sup> of October at 2:30 in the Board Room. The honoree will be James Cutbush who is a Civil War Veteran from the Town of Milton.
- c. On September 14<sup>th</sup>, 2013, we supported the Leatherstocking Honor Flight by transporting three of Saratoga County WWII Veterans and their escorts to Albany International Airport in order for them to visit the WWII memorial. This initiative was coordinated by Josie in partnership with the Patriot Guard Riders.
- d. On September 16<sup>th</sup>, 2013, the Vet Center and the Town of Saratoga finalized the lease in order for the Vet Center to establish a satellite office in the Town of Saratoga Town Hall. This will allow combat Veterans to access to a broad range of counseling, outreach, and referral services to.  
[http://www.vetcenter.va.gov/About\\_US.asp](http://www.vetcenter.va.gov/About_US.asp)
- e. On September 28<sup>th</sup>, 2013, we supported the 2013 Stand Down by transporting three Homeless Veterans and five needy Veterans to the event. We also provided information regarding our Peer to Peer Program along with our other initiatives. It was great to see our partners and friends from VetHelp, [American Red Cross](#), VA Homeless, United Way, Vet Center, [Albany Medical Center](#), Soldier On, Albany Law, and everyone else. It was a humbling honor to serve those who have served Doug and the Elks Club were a great host. Breakfast, lunch, medical services, legal services, dental services, clothing, immunizations, and so much more were offered. We cared for 400 Veterans and family members.

- f. On September 29<sup>th</sup>, 2013, we supported the Saratoga County Rural Preservation Company (RPC) in hosting their first 5k run for Homeless Veterans. We had 83 runners from throughout the Capital Region. We also promoted our 2nd Annual Saratoga County Veterans Trust Fund 5K on November 9<sup>th</sup>.
- g. The Saratoga County Veterans Service Agency van transported 127 Veterans to the VA hospital this month. Ridership derived from the following towns:
- Saratoga Springs – 46
  - Ballston Spa – 19
  - Stillwater – 12
  - Clifton Park – 1
  - Milton – 10
  - South Glens Falls (Moreau) - 1
  - Halfmoon – 13
  - Hadley – 2
  - Wilton – 9
  - Mechanicville – 13
  - Malta – 1
- h. Veterans Service Officer Actions.
- 1) Frank processed 12 new claims at an average of 1.25 hours per claim.
  - 2) Frank conducted 15 open claims follow up engagements at an average of 1 hours per engagement.
  - 3) Frank scheduled 12 claim appointments at an average of 1.25 hours per scheduling.
  - 4) The team served 35 walk-in clients at an average of 20 minutes per visit.
  - 5) The team processed 618 phone call inquiries at an average of 8 minutes per inquiry.
  - 6) The team received 12 referrals from within the County DSS resulting in 2 scheduled appointments.

9. Upcoming Events:

October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2013 – 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Saratoga County Veterans Trust Fund 5K Committee Meeting

October 8<sup>th</sup>, 2013 – North East Parent and Child Meeting

October 9<sup>th</sup>, 2013 – Business 101Class

October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2013 – Town of Malta, Veterans Luncheon

October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2013 – Honor Deceased Veterans Ceremony - Milton

October 22<sup>th</sup>, 2013 – Veterans Job Fair at Stratton VA Campus

October 24<sup>th</sup>, 2013 – Malta Career Expo and Job Fair  
– NYS Veterans Small Business Bill Proposal Meeting

December 18<sup>th</sup>, 2013 - Capital Region Human Resource Association Webinar

Conclusion: Our 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Saratoga County Veterans Trust Fund 5K run is around the corner and we hope that all of you are planning to either run or volunteer.

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