



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

SC-VSA

August 31st, 2013

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

Subject: Events and Activities Summary for August 1st through August 31st, 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 Friday, August 23rd, 2013 at 3:00pm we conducted our planned meeting to discuss our recent activities.
 - 1) In attendance were:
 - Lisa Scaccia, Director, Saratoga County Employment and Training
 - Daniel Perkins, Veterans Employment Specialist, New York State Department of Labor
 - Noney M. Grier, HVSEP Vocational Rehab Specialist, Department of Veterans Affairs
 - 2) The group discussed the results from initial survey and follow up of the three course of action we developed from our survey data. The Task Force developed a survey targeting 770 Veterans specifically selected from data acquired from service agencies supporting Veterans within Saratoga County.
 - a) Out of the **86** completed surveys completed. **44** individuals stated they were in need of some type of service and **42** individuals said they were not.
 - b) September 6th Business 101 class. The invites never made it to the Veterans. The e-mail provider flagged the 400 messages as spam and deleted them. We found this out last week during a quick inquiry with our IT folks. We rescheduled the class for October 7th, and are resending the invites in bunches of 100.

- c) Veterans Employment Workshop. Four Veterans responded for assistance. Our folks at employment and training will contact the four individuals and assist them.
 - d) Training and Education Assistance. Two Veterans responded for assistance. Our folks at employment and training will contact the two individuals and assist them.
- 3) Discussion and assumptions.
- a) Both the One Stop Center and Veterans Service Agency have had leadership and service provider changes that may have affected outreach.
 - b) Veterans in our area are unaware or displeased with the services available to them.
 - c) Veterans in our area are not updating their contact information with the NYS DoL Unemployment Folks.
 - d) Veterans in our area are not familiarized with e-mail or social media.
 - e) Veterans in our area are less likely to respond to outreach aside of being mandated to attend employment workshops.
 - f) Veterans in our area are not aware that they qualify for employment assistance.
 - g) Veterans in our area may not recognize themselves as Veterans.
- 4) Tentative Action Items.
- a) Provide an update to the County Economic Development Committee.
 - b) Start informing and educating Veterans of those services they are eligible for.
 - c) Start informing and educating businesses in our area about the benefits of hiring a Veteran.
 - d) Re-send our Survey utilizing the “Return the Favor Card” Veteran contact list.
- 5) Upcoming Events.
- October 2nd, 2013 – Economic Development Committee Meeting
 - October 7th, 2013 – Business 101Class
 - October 17th, 2013 – Malta Job Fair
 - December 18th, 2013 - Capital Region Human Resource Association Webinar
- b. On August 15th, 2013, team members of RPC (VETHELP/Guardian House) and the Veterans Team were hosted by Michael Perez, HR/Recruiter, Angio Dynamics to a tour. This was a follow up to our initial meeting to develop a long term Veterans employment relationship between RPC and AngioDynamics.

- c. On Wednesday, August 7th, 2013 at 11:00am, we conducted a meeting Senator Kathleen Marchione, Assemblyman Daniel Stec's staff, and Assemblyman John McDonald's staff, Supervisor Mary Ann Johnson, Amy Amoroso and the Saratoga County Chamber of Commerce to discuss the feasibility of developing and proposing a bill 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 August we received 2 – 3 notices of Veterans being admitted into our County Jail.
 - b. On Wednesday, August 21st, 2013, Courtney (VA -VJO), Don (VETHELP), and I met in order to review and revise the current Veterans Referral Sheet in order to assist service providers in their initial screening for services.
 - c. On Monday, August 26th, 2013, the Saratoga County Sheriff mailed the team his revisions to the document for utilization.
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 offer 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, 15 trained mentors and seven mentors are ready to be trained.
 - b. We are partnering with our neighboring Peer to Peer Programs to plan, produce a Peer to Peer promotional video in order to attract and recruit Veterans to join our programs.
 - c. On Friday, August 9th, 2013, two mentors received a portion of their basic training.
 - d. On Thursday, August 22nd, 2013, we conducted a training session regarding Military Sexual Trauma. The Guest Speaker was Rebekah Havrilla, a highly acclaimed subject matter expert regarding military sexual violence. Nearly 50 representatives from the Capital Region Veterans service and advocacy groups attended, along with our mentors.
 - e. On Tuesday, August 27th, 2013, the RPC VET House hosted a dinner event with the Veterans of the House and members of our mentoring team. The Tuesday night dinner was a huge success. The food was great , but more importantly the Veterans really appreciated the opportunity to meet and have some conversation with the mentors. We really believe that having the mentors involved with them at the dinner table really convinced these Veterans that the program can be a great resource for them. The RPC (Guardian and Vet House) and the Peer to Peer Program are looking forward to working with one another to getting them started.
 - f. We are planning to conduct a tour of the Vet Center in order to familiarize our mentoring team, the staff and the capabilities of this incredible resource.

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

- a. On Tuesday, September 24th, 2013, we will conduct our first Veterans Benefits Outreach day in the Town of Corinth.
- b. In October our host will be the Town of Waterford.
- c. In November our host will be the Town of Saratoga (Shuylerville).
- d. In December our host will be the Town of Clifton Park.
- e. In January our host will be the Town of Galway.
- f. Please refer to figure below:



**SARATOGA COUNTY
VETERANS’ SERVICE AGENCY**

Who/What: Deploy our Veterans Service Officer throughout the towns within the County.

Intent:

- Provide services to Veterans in rural and urban areas.
- Reach handicapped and destitute Veterans unable to travel to Ballston Spa.
- Educate Veterans on their benefits and entitlements.

Why:

- Supervisor Lucia indicated he feels there would be a great response, and there are pockets of Veterans in Day, Edinburgh, Hadley, Corinth.
- Waterford Veterans reach out to other Counties (Albany and Rensselaer)
- Corinth/Hadley Veterans reach our Warren County.
- DAV Van indicates 10-15 claim engagements per day from Warren/Washington Counties. No Service to Saratoga County.

How: Frank will utilize a county vehicle, with office laptop and printer/scanner. We will communicate the plan to the community via Supervisors, American Legion, newspaper, and social media.

When: One day per month
Five month rotation to:

- Galway
- Corinth
- Waterford
- Clifton Park
- Schuylerville

Schedule

8:00am – Depart Ballston Spa
 9:00am – Veterans Benefits Briefing
 10:00am – Walk in
 11:30am – Lunch
 12:30pm – Appointments
 4:00pm – Return to Ballston Spa

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 9th, 2013 at 10:00AM in the vicinity of Hudson Crossings Park, The Town of Saratoga will host the 2nd Annual Saratoga County Veterans Trust Fund 5K Race and Children’s 1/2 Mile Nature Run.

- 1) Mary Ann Johnson (Town of Day/Chairman of the Saratoga County Veterans Committee).
 - a) Will coordinate for Veterans truck/float.
 - b) Coordinate with County Attorney for race liability insurance.
 - c) Serve as an awards presenter.
- 2) Tom Wood (Town of Saratoga).
 - a) Coordinate for NYS Trooper/Sherrif support at the intersection of Highway 32/4 at County Route 42, and County Route 42 at the Lock 5 entrance.
 - b) Coordinate for EMS Support for the Hudson Crossings Park/Saratoga County and along the race route/Washington County.
 - c) Coordinate for DPW support to block off necessary roads in order to allow the runners to have freedom of travel.
 - d) Serve as the Master of Ceremony
- 3) Patti Southworth (Town of Ballston/Lions Club).
 - a) In coordination with Lou Cook (American Legion); coordinate and secure water and Gatorade packets for aid stations and finish line.
 - b) In coordination with John Higgins (Saratoga Springs YMCA); plan, coordinate and facilitate traffic and parking activities within Hudson Crossings Park.
- 4) John Sherman (Village of Schuylerville). Coordinate for no parking signs along County Route 42 between the park entrance and Route 32/4.
- 5) County Treasurer's Office will provide volunteers to staff the registration table with our "Y" team.
- 6) Saratoga Springs YMCA will manage all volunteers in coordination with Patti Southworth (the Lions Club) and Lou Cook (American Legion).
 - 1) Provide a "guide" for the Children's Nature Run.
 - 2) Provide a guide for the 5K Run.
 - 3) Provide and staff two bounce houses.
 - 4) Provide face painting station.
 - 5) Along with the American Legion monitor the children's run route.
 - 6) Along with County employee volunteers staff support the "finish line."

- 7) Along with County employee volunteers staff the “Goodie Bag” (T-shirt) Table.
- 8) Coordinate for bibs from Road ID™
- 7) Kim Gamache (Cross Country Coach). Has developed relatively flat, fast trail/road mix course for the 5K. The Children’s run will be on a nice hard packed trail which will be safe for any weather condition.
- 8) Hudson Crossing Park. Has provided us with the park and facilities.
 - a) Contact the “porta potty” company and plan for 150 folks.
 - b) Provide “Trash Bags” for trash and recycling.
- 9) 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
- 10) Chuck Van Vorst (SUNY Empire State College). Will print out run flyers and Posters!
- 11) Lou Cook (Commander, American Legion Post #234).
 - a) Will provide aid station and route volunteers.
 - b) Secure food donations
 - c) Set up hydration stations
 - d) Set up refreshment station
- 12) On September 4th, 2013 at 10:00 the “Race Committee” will meet at Saratoga County Chamber of Commerce.
- 13) On September 5th, 2013 at 09:30 the “Race Committee” will meet at Hudson Crossings Park in order to conduct a “Route Reconnaissance” of the 5K and the Children’s Run. This will allow us to confirm/deny where we will need to staff volunteers, EMS, Aid Stations and Law Enforcement.
- 14) On October 2nd, 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 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. We are planning for our next meeting in September to carve out our mission statement and vision.
- b. Members of the council are planning to support our Veterans Trust Fund.

7. Veterans Service Operational Update.

- a. September's 2013 Honor our Deceased Veterans Ceremony will take place on the 17th at 2:30 in the Board Room. The honoree will be Carl E. Hunter from the Town of Providence.
- b. The Saratoga County Veterans Service Agency van transported 133 Veterans to the VA hospital this month. Ridership derived from the following towns:

- Saratoga Springs – 40
- Ballston Spa – 23
- Stillwater – 24
- Clifton Park – 4
- Milton – 11
- South Glens Falls (Moreau) - 5
- Halfmoon – 7
- Hadley – 1
- Wilton – 6
- Mechanicville – 7
- Malta – 3
- Corinth – 2

8. Veterans Service Officer Actions

- a. Frank processed 10 new claims at an average of 1.5 hours per claim.
- b. Frank conducted 20 open claims follow up engagements at an average of 1 hours per engagement.
- c. Frank scheduled 15 claim appointments at an average of 1.25 hours per scheduling.
- d. The team served 15 walk-in clients at an average of 20 minutes per visit.
- e. The team processed 363 phone call inquiries at an average of 8 minutes per inquiry.
- f. The team received 4 referrals from within from County DSS resulting in 1 scheduled appointment.
- g. Frank had a walk-in from the spouse of a Veteran. She is essentially homeless with 4 children; staying with friends since November. The Veteran, who suffered from mental illness, has been missing since

June 2012. She is not working, and has been living off the generosity of her friends. Frank was able to assist her in obtaining copies of vital documents such as her marriage certificate as she claims to have lost all her belongings when she was evicted from their trailer home. Frank also walked her to Employment One-Stop and DSS and encouraged her to apply for assistance with medical coverage, Food Stamps, etc. He encouraged her to meet with staff at the One-Stop for employment assistance. He also provided her with contact information to Saratoga County EOC and Captain Youth and Family services. The spouse said she will follow up with Frank next week to let him know how things are going and if he needs to assist her further.

Upcoming Events:

September 3rd, 2013

- Meeting with Amy Clinton, United Way, to discuss ways to partner in order to care for our Veterans.
- Meeting with VA Homeless Team and RPC in order to develop ways to maintain both RPC houses.
- Meeting with the Southern Saratoga County Chamber of Commerce to plan Fall Fund Drive.

September 4th, 2013.

- 2nd Annual Saratoga County Veterans Trust Fund 5K Committee Meeting.
- Monthly American Legion Meeting

September 5th, 2013.

- 5K Route Recon.
- Meeting with NYS Department of Corrections and VETHELP.
- Meeting with Marcy McNamara, Saratoga County HR.

September 6th, 2013.

- Meeting with Charlie Bearce, Clinical Social Worker with the Vet Center.

September 9th, 2013.

- Veterans Committee Meeting

September 13^h, 2013.

- Peer to Peer Board Meeting.

September 17^h, 2013.

- Honor Deceased Veterans Ceremony
- County Board Meeting

September 20^h, 2013.

- POW/MIA Remembrance Day Ceremony

September 24^h, 2013.

- Veterans Benefit Outreach in the Town of Corinth

September 30th, 2013.

- Meeting with NYS Legislators at the Saratoga County Chamber of Commerce.

Conclusion: Through our deliberate effort in recruiting sponsors; we have raised enough money to pay for our 2nd Annual Saratoga County Veterans Trust Fund 5K run. We hope that all of you are planning to either run or volunteer.

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