MHA PUTNAM
Mental Health Association in Putnam County

The Mindful Messenger: November 2021 The Veteran Issue

A Salute to Veterans and their Families

November is a busy month for our PFC Joseph P. Dwyer Vet2Vet Program.
Join us, and our community partners, in support of those who have served

The PFC Joseph P. Dwyer Vet2Vet Program of Putnam County

proudly invites you to their

VETERANS APPRECIATION CHOW DOWN

"A Salute to Veterans and their Families"

Sunday, November 7th-seatings start at 11am and 1pm

out of an abundance of caution, the event will again be held as a drive-thru

at the Putnam County Golf Course, 187 Hill Street, Mahopac, NY 10541

FREE FOR EACH VETERAN, and a guest

(a boxed meal, "swag"/goodie bag, and DVD/link for the Chow Down program)

RESERVATIONS ARE REQUIRED BY NOVEMBER 5th

Please call our event partners to make a reservation for your pick-up time:

NYS Senator Sue Serino's office: 845-528-0417 or

NYS Senator Peter Harckham's office: 845-225-3025

For questions, or more information, please call Vet2Vet at 845-278-VETS (8387)

We wish you a Happy Thanksgiving.

Celebrate with gratitude

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In 2012, towards the end of my Army career, I was selected to join a week-long dog sledding expedition with Outward Bound for Veterans in Minnesota. We became a team of 9, mostly veterans, exploring the frozen lakes and land that is winter in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area. The week I spent with this small group of veterans in the wilderness is where I first began to process my own experiences from multiple combat deployments without fear of repercussions to my military career. What I did not know at that time is that I would soon retire from military service to begin working professionally in the veteran and military outdoors field myself, eventually leading me to volunteer as the Program Director for Another Summit in Putnam County, NY.

Another Summit is a free therapeutic outdoor adventure program designed for veterans and first responders in and around Putnam County, NY. Members of Another Summit who join our outings a minimum of once per month see a decrease in their sense of loneliness and an overall increase in their sense of belonging, health, and wellbeing. In 2021 our team of volunteer outdoor leaders provided over 50 guided hikes exploring local trails, and in 2022 we will continue to offer 2-3 local hikes (snowshoeing included) each week. In Spring 2022 we are introducing paddling and backpacking to our schedule as well as an outdoor leader training program. To learn more, and to register with Another Summit, go to https://guardianrevival.org/another-summit/ or contact Elena Leonard, Another Summit Operations, at elenaleonard@guardianrevival.org.

Lt. Col. Aaron Leonard, USA (Ret)
Director, Veteran and Military Outdoors Coalition | Sierra Club
Program Director | Another Summit

Sunday, November 28th through
Monday, December 6th 2021

Veterans Day

Photo courtesy of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
http://www1.va.gov/opa/vetsday/vetdayhistory.asp

- On June 1, 1954, President Dwight Eisenhower signed legislation changing Armistice Day to Veterans Day
- This day would now honor American veterans of all wars
- On October 8, 1954, the President issued a proclamation for all organizations to work together "in order to insure proper and widespread observance of this anniversary"

Find your local Veterans Day ceremony by contacting your local VFW- traditionally held on the 11th day, of the 11th month at the 11th hour

VFW Carmel– 845-225-2972

VFW Putnam Valley—845-528-5484

VFW Brewster—845-279-6969

VFW Mahopac—845-628-9798

Honor those who have sacrificed for our country and our freedom

PFC Joseph P. Dwyer Vet 2 Vet Program of Putnam County

The Soldier

The Program is named in honor of Joseph P. Dwyer, a US Army Medic in the Iraq War who, in the earliest days of the invasion in 2003, was pictured cradling a wounded boy while his unit was fighting its way up the Euphrates to Baghdad. PFC Dwyer's post-war struggles with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) resulted in his untimely and tragic death in 2008.

The Joseph P. Dwyer Program was created by then-New York State Senator, Lee Zeldin, now a congressman representing New York State's 1st District. Zeldin served four years in the Army active duty, having been deployed in 2006 to Tikrit, Iraq. Beginning in 2012, the Program now offers peer-to-peer counseling for Veterans suffering from PTSD, Traumatic Brain Injury and any Veteran looking to reintegrate into civilian society. It began in Suffolk County and quickly expanded to almost half the counties in the state.

The Program

The Dwyer Program provides non-clinical support by Veterans to Veterans. Many Veterans are often reluctant to speak with anyone who is unable to understand the mental and physical challenges they face daily. Trained to keep doubts and vulnerabilities to themselves, Veterans are hesitant to discuss issues such as mental health, relationships with family and friends, and barriers to regain sustainability. This can lead to a destructive and devastating journey when arriving back home; including substance use, domestic violence, sexual assault, homelessness, chronic unemployment, and suicide. Support Veterans are trained in military behavioral health and they personally understand the effects of PTSD, TBI and the challenges of reintegrating into civilian society.

The Dwyer Program is available to all Veterans, members of the Armed Forces, National Guard, Army Reserve, and their families. All are welcome regardless of service dates, discharge status or dependency status. The Program is free and confidential.

Call us at 845-278-VETS (8387) for more information or visit our website: www.dwyervet2vetputnam.org

Reach out to a Veteran and ask them. "are you okay?" Isolation and loss of sense of purpose are two major risk factors for suicide that can be reduced through connection….reach out!