

ABOUT THE CO-SPONSORING AGENCIES



Headway of WNY, an affiliate of People Inc., is a non-profit support and advocacy agency whose mission is to ensure that individuals in Western New York with brain injuries, other disabilities and seniors have access to advocacy, resources and support systems to enable them to live as independently as possible. Headway is the local Regional Resource Development Center/Single Point of Entry for the Department of Health's Nursing Home Transition (NHTD) Waiver and the Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Waiver. Headway is committed to providing services for veterans and their families, particularly those with traumatic brain injuries. For more information, call 716.408.3100.

2635 Delaware Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14216
headwayofwny.org



People Inc. provides programs and services to more than 10,000 people with special needs, their families and older adults throughout Western New York and the Greater Rochester region. Since 1970, People Inc. has assisted people to achieve greater degrees of independence and productivity. For more information, call 716.817.7400.

1219 North Forest Road, Williamsville, NY 14221
people-inc.org



Catholic Charities programs offers support and services to veterans and military families through direct services and collaboration with local agencies throughout Western New York. We can assist with emergency food, clothing and housing services along with food pantries and dignity items.

We offer an array of counseling services including mental health substance abuse and financial. Catholic Charities has always been proud to serve our military and their families any way we can. For more information, call 716.877.8822.

Catholic Charities Vision Military Program
Kenmore-Tonawanda Office
3370 Delaware Avenue, Kenmore, NY 14217
ccwny.org



★ ★ ★ ★ ★ 4th Annual ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

WNY in Support of Veterans Symposium

BE THERE, BE PROUD – HELPING CURRENT AND FORMER SERVICE MEMBERS AND THEIR FAMILIES FIND PEACE

Wednesday, October 2, 2019
9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Pvt. Leonard Post, Jr. #6251 Veterans of Foreign Wars
2450 Walden Avenue, Cheektowaga, NY 14225



WELCOME TO THE 4TH ANNUAL VETERANS SYMPOSIUM

This symposium has been designed to encourage feedback and discussion between veterans and community providers.

Goals of the symposium are to:

- Help participants gain a better understand of obtaining community services for veterans and their families.
- Identify resources to better link veterans and their families with appropriate community services.
- Recognize ways to improve access to these services.

We are pleased to have a variety of distinguished speakers with us today to offer their unique perspectives on these goals.

Our hope is to further these discussions and address current community needs.

FEATURED SPEAKERS AND PANELISTS

Sgt. Max Donatelli, MS served in the USAF from 1968-1972, served in Vietnam, and attained the rank of Sargent was Honorably Discharged. He received a BA and MS degrees from Canisius College, worked at Baker Victory Services with high-risk adolescents and families, in a variety of direct care, supervisory and clinical leadership positions. He retired 2016 after 42 years. Max helped restart Parent Network of WNY and served as Executive Director for seven years; he currently remains an advocate for individuals with developmental disabilities and mental health issues. He also helped start and chaired the Erie County Anti-Stigma Coalition on mental illness and was a founding member of the DDAWNY Family Committee and on the Core team. He is a family advocate and member of the Community Veterans Engagement Board.

Alyssa Danniele Vasquez is the program manager for the PFC Joseph P. Dwyer Veteran Peer Support Program, in both Erie and Niagara County. She is also the proud mother of three children, and is an Army Veteran. Alyssa served in the Active Duty Army, from October 2003 to March of 2017. While serving as a Geospatial Engineer, Alyssa deployed twice to Iraq, and once to Afghanistan, in support of the Global War on Terrorism. Additionally, she served as a Drill Sergeant in a Combat Engineer One Station Unit Training (OSUT) unit in Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, and also as both the Academics, and Quality Assurance, Noncommissioned Officer In Charge (NCOIC) for the U.S. Army S.E.R.E. (Survival, Evasion, Resistance, and Escape) School, in Fort Rucker, Alabama. Upon exiting the Military, Alyssa was hired as a Veteran Advocate, at the Veterans One-stop Center of WNY, Inc., and ultimately transitioned to the role of program manager in May of 2018.

MSGt. Delcey Pulvino, LMSW has served 30 years in the United States Army Reserves and is currently a Master Sergeant and licensed practical nurse for the 865th Combat Support Hospital in Niagara Falls, NY. She was assigned as the chief wardmaster for her unit when they were deployed to Kuwait in 2003, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. She was later mobilized to Fort Dix, NJ in support of Operation

Enduring Freedom assigned to a Warrior Transition Unit working with combat Veterans who were Injured in Iraq and Afghanistan. She has functioned in a variety of roles throughout her career to include First Sergeant/Detachment NCO for her current unit and NCOIC of humanitarian medical missions in Haiti, Nicaragua and Bolivia. Other past positions include squad leader, platoon sergeant, wardmaster, unit victim advocate, unit prevention leader, family readiness liaison, equal opportunity NCO, and 68W Medic Instructor. In the civilian sector she holds certifications in substance and alcohol abuse counseling and emergency medical technician. She earned her associate's degree in Alcohol and Substance Abuse Counseling in 1999 from Erie Community College, bachelor's degree in Interdisciplinary Sciences from the University of Buffalo in 2005 and master's degree in Social Work in 2007 from the University of Buffalo.

Tracy Schmidt, LMSW is currently a Sr. Counselor II at Freedom Village, a residential substance use facility at Horizon Village in Sanborn, NY. She is also a per diem crisis counselor at Erie County Crisis Services on their 24-hour crisis line. Tracy received her bachelor of social work at Niagara University and her masters of social work at the University at Buffalo where she interned at the Veterans Administration, specifically with the HUDVASH program. Tracy currently coordinates the majority of the veterans programming at Freedom Village, as well as actively works with community partners to raise awareness of Freedom Village's services for substance use and mental health treatment and link veterans with relevant services beyond those at Freedom Village.

Bonnie M. Vest, PhD is a research associate professor in the Department of Family Medicine at the University of Buffalo. Dr. Vest is a medical anthropologist, and the spouse of a former Army and Army National Guard soldier. Over the past 10 years, Dr. Vest has conducted multiple research projects with military populations, examining the experiences of military members, and seeking to understand how social-environmental factors, military identity, and military culture relate to mental health, substance use, and overall health and well-being among military members and veterans. Her work has particularly been focused on Reserve and National Guard populations and their unique challenges and experiences. Dr. Vest also conducts research on the provision of healthcare for veterans in non-VA settings, examining primary care providers' knowledge and attitudes and veterans' preferences for care. Dr. Vest currently serves as Co-Director of Joining Forces-UB, a program based in the Schools of Social Work and Nursing, which provides training to students in the service professions specific to working with military populations and is an affiliated investigator with the Center for Integrated Health at the Buffalo VA. Dr. Vest received funding from the American Academy of Family Physicians Foundation to examine non-VA primary care providers' knowledge and attitudes around providing care for military populations. She is currently funded by the Clinical and Translational Science Institute and the Buffalo Translational Consortium to conduct research with student veterans, examining factors that impact veterans' success in higher education. Finally, she is a Co-Investigator on a longitudinal project funded by the National Institutes of Health (PI: Gregory Homish), which studies social and environmental factors related to health outcomes among National Guard and Reserve soldiers and their spouses.

4th Annual Veterans Symposium

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

8:30 - 9 a.m.

Check-In
Coffee and Tea

9 - 9:15 a.m.

Welcome Introduction
Ron Fernandez, RRDS, CRC, LMHC
Director, Headway of WNY, Inc.

9:15 - 9:30 a.m.

Sgt. Max Donatelli, MS
Erie County Anti-Stigma Coalition on
mental illness

9:30 - 10:15 a.m.

Alyssa Vasquez, Veteran's One Stop
Center of WNY, Inc.

10:15 - 11 a.m.

MSgt. Delcey Pulvino, LMSW
Buffalo Vet Center

11 - 11:45 a.m.

Tracy Schmidt, LMSW, Horizon Village

Noon - 1 p.m.

Buffet Lunch (provided by David's
Kitchen, Leonard Post) & opportunity
for guests to complete question cards
to ignite afternoon panel discussion.

1 - 1:30 p.m.

Bonnie Vest, Ph.D. University at
Buffalo, Primary Care Research
Institute, Dept. of Family Medicine

1:30 - 2:45 p.m.

Panel Discussion

2:45 - 3 p.m.

Wrap Up

PLANNING COMMITTEE

Joe Chudoba, Veteran, Domestic Violence Advocate, Erie County Government

Ron Fernandez, Director, Headway of WNY, Inc.

Ginny Haynes, Advocate and Support Specialist, Headway of WNY, Inc.

Anna Korus, Senior Vice President, People Inc.

Pam Kwiatkowski, Financial Literacy Counselor, Catholic Charities of Buffalo

Stephen McCloskey, Veteran, WNY Community Veteran Advocate

Christine Melchiorre, Funding Resource and Outreach Specialist, Headway of WNY, Inc.

Lesley Pyjas, Veteran, RN, Headway of WNY, Inc.

Jeff Sanderson, Vice President, People Inc.



4th Annual Veterans Symposium

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

8:30 - 9 a.m.

Check-In
Coffee and Tea

9 - 9:15 a.m.

Welcome Introduction
Ron Fernandez, RRDS, CRC, LMHC
Director, Headway of WNY, Inc.

9:15 - 9:30 a.m.

Sgt. Max Donatelli, MS
Erie County Anti-Stigma Coalition on
mental illness

9:30 - 10:15 a.m.

Alyssa Vasquez, Veteran's One Stop
Center of WNY, Inc.

10:15 - 11 a.m.

MSgt. Delcey Pulvino, LMSW
Buffalo Vet Center

11 - 11:45 a.m.

Tracy Schmidt, LMSW, Horizon Village

Noon - 1 p.m.

Buffet Lunch (provided by David's
Kitchen, Leonard Post) & opportunity
for guests to complete question cards
to ignite afternoon panel discussion.

1 - 1:30 p.m.

Bonnie Vest, Ph.D. University at
Buffalo, Primary Care Research
Institute, Dept. of Family Medicine

1:30 - 2:45 p.m.

Panel Discussion

2:45 - 3 p.m.

Wrap Up

PLANNING COMMITTEE

Joe Chudoba, Veteran, Domestic Violence Advocate, Erie County Government

Ron Fernandez, Director, Headway of WNY, Inc.

Ginny Haynes, Advocate and Support Specialist, Headway of WNY, Inc.

Anna Korus, Senior Vice President, People Inc.

Pam Kwiatkowski, Financial Literacy Counselor, Catholic Charities of Buffalo

Stephen McCloskey, Veteran, WNY Community Veteran Advocate

Christine Melchiorre, Funding Resource and Outreach Specialist, Headway of WNY, Inc.

Lesley Pyjas, Veteran, RN, Headway of WNY, Inc.

Jeff Sanderson, Vice President, People Inc.

