

News and information from the nation's oldest community-based nonprofit organization serving veterans and their families.



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A Message From the Executive Director

Dear Friends:

I love how many new services we implemented this year in DIRECT response to what our veterans asked for! We listened and we took action. Consequently, 2019 has been a year

of exploding growth in almost every one of our service areas, including the following:

- Growth in the Employment and Training program is expansive with the increase in our HVRP grant. Stay tuned for a host of new training opportunities and certifications, all free of charge!
- Growth in the Female vet program has increased exponentially, due largely to our team of focused case managers who specialize in the unique issues and challenges faced by female veterans.
- Growth in residential services is exploding as our transitional apartments have been completely renovated and rebuilt with all new mechanicals, studs, flooring, space layouts, kitchens, baths and more. Planning is also well underway for Richards House renovations and expansions, and our brand new permanent housing complex at Liberty Landing will be open in just a few short months!
- Growth in our wellness and morale services is incredible with new service offerings like chiropractic care and massage therapy, barber and salon services, and laundry facilities—all free of charge located in a beautifully renovated facility, thanks to our friends at Home Depot Foundation! And we continue to offer art groups on Saturdays, the “hangout” with music, food and peer support, and so much more!
- Growth in our Quartermaster, providing food and clothing to veteran families, has exploded with more vets using it during the past year than ever before!

- Growth in our Administrative department has been phenomenal as we accomplish the objectives outlined in our three-year Strategic Plan, implement new software for our finance team, execute exciting employee programs focused on staff appreciation and development, streamline and apply cost saving measures in our facilities department, enhance IT infrastructure and cybersecurity, and more! We are also pleased to announce the creation of a brand new position at VOC called Director of Risk Management, which is designed primarily to help staff with crisis mitigation efforts and suicide prevention for our veterans.
- Growth in our Advancement team is remarkable with goals being met or surpassed on our fundraising efforts, the rollout of a capital campaign, more targeted marketing efforts, an improved social media presence and more!
- New Flag store merchandise, a focus on reducing the cost of goods sold, and building our ecommerce abilities has resulted in terrific growth for our retail operation (which is designed such that all proceeds support our veteran programs).

Everywhere I look, I am seeing forward progress at VOC. And that is exactly where we want to be because without progress, we are either stagnant or irrelevant. I couldn't be more proud of our staff and the veterans we serve who are determined to move their lives forward, and I couldn't be more appreciative of our donors and stakeholders who help make it all possible.

Sincerely,

Laura A. Stradley

Laura Stradley
Executive Director
Veterans Outreach Center
U.S. Army Veteran



Dressed in Blue: A Final Wish Comes True

Corporal Fred M. Loret's greatest desire, is to be buried in his dress blues. Having served in the United States Marine Corps from 1960-1964, his time in service to his country had a profound impact on his life. He spends much of his time regaling his family and friends about his service time in Okinawa Japan, where he served as an infantry soldier starting at the age of seventeen.

Diagnosed with advanced stomach cancer, and his health deteriorating, Corporal Loret's son Brian Loret and grandson Christian Loret, turned to the VOC for assistance in fulfilling this soldier's final wish- to be buried in his military uniform.



VOC staff called on community partners to assist. Our gratitude goes to the Pallbearers Motorcycle Club, who donated the money for the uniform and Paratrooper Army Navy, which ensured that the dress blues reflected the appropriate rank and insignia. Corporal Loret was surrounded by his children and grandchildren on Friday September 27th, as he was presented his dress blues by VOC staff member Richard Gray and members of the Pallbearers MC.

"He's a fighter" stated Christian, "His fighting spirit keeps him going, I am so proud of my grandfather."

As the Marine Corps Ball celebrates the 244th anniversary, seventy-six year old Corporal Loret is hoping to attend. "I'll do what I can to be there."

VOC serves about 2,000 veterans each year. For more information on the programs and services of Veterans Outreach Center, please visit our website at vocroc.org or call 585.586.1081.

Welcome to the Board of Directors!



Originally from Marcellus, New York, Dylan Potter is a 2010 graduate of West Point where he was commissioned as an infantry officer. During his time on active duty, Dylan served in a variety of leadership roles in the 10th Mountain Division and 2nd Ranger Battalion. During his tenure, Dylan deployed three times to Afghanistan and once to Iraq. After completing company command, Dylan transitioned to the New York National Guard where he currently serves as the Battalion Operations Officer (S3) of the 2-108th Infantry Battalion. Dylan currently works as a financial planner at Howe & Rusling in downtown Rochester where he focuses on helping clients achieve their long-term financial goals while also adhering to their unique time horizons and investment priorities. Dylan's wife Holly is a chiropractor, and they enjoy spending as much time as possible with their Great Dane, Darby, and one-year-old son, Graham.



We remember. We honor. We celebrate. Join us at our annual Stars and Stripes Celebration, presented by Bank of America and hosted by radio talk show host Bob Lonsberry on Friday, November 8th at the Rochester Riverside Convention Center. Help us honor the brave men and women who served our country and those who made the ultimate sacrifice. The evening begins with a 5:30 p.m. reception, then program and dinner. New this year is dessert and dancing starting at 8:30 p.m. Sponsorships are still available or buy an ad in our program. On line ticket purchasing using a credit card is at vocroc.org or call Special Events Coordinator, Kim Osur at 585.295.7824. Help us make this night a fitting tribute to those who have served U.S.



Shop Local at the Stars & Stripes Flag Store - Help Veterans in Need

For more than 20 years, the Stars & Stripes Flag Store at Veterans Outreach Center has been providing the Greater Rochester community with American-made flags of all types and sizes. We are proud to serve the men and women and their families who have fought for our freedoms, the wonderfully supportive community around us, and many local schools, businesses, and municipal offices. All the proceeds from our sales go right back into VOC to provide the free services that we offer to our veterans and their families. Shop the options for apparel supporting our military branches, as well as law enforcement and first responders; locally made gifts such as wooden engraved plaques and ornaments, decals, coffee mugs, and even pet collars and leashes! Whomever is on your gift list this holiday season, the Stars & Stripes Flag Store has what you need to show your support and gratitude for the heroes in your life! Please visit us at eflagstore.com where you can shop 24/7, or come in and see us at our store at 455 South Avenue, Rochester, NY where we are honored and thrilled to serve you!

Your Giving Spirit in Action

The VOC Quartermaster program provides food and clothing to local veterans and their families. The need is great, and requests for donations by veterans have tripled in the last two years. With the approach of the **holiday season**, we ask that you include the men and women who have served our country in your gift giving. Hats, gloves, warm socks, personal hygiene products, toys for children and non-perishable food items are needed. If you do your shopping online, order your items through Amazon Smile and know that each purchase includes an automatic donation to local veterans. For more information on our Holidays for Veterans efforts, please contact Kevin Gross at Kevin.Gross@vocroc.org or call 585.295.7833.

VOC Combats Suicide

One Veteran At A Time

John arrived at the Veterans Outreach Center without a residence of record. He was reserved and withdrawn, struggling to sustain employment, keep doctor's appointments, connect with his peers, etc. VOC staff immediately went to work. After getting John settled with food, clothing and shelter at Richards House, Case Managers soon shifted their focus to begin unraveling the myriad of issues John faced which kept him from moving his life forward.

Yet despite the team's best efforts, it seemed like no one was really getting through to John. He continued to stay withdrawn. VOC staff remained undeterred and maintained daily engagements with him, working together with community partners to try and identify the best way to help him.

And then one day out of the blue, John told his case manager, "I don't think I want to be here anymore."

In that single moment of vulnerability and poignant truth, John stopped being isolated. He chose to share the awful thought that had been plaguing him with someone he knew he could trust. Someone he knew would care.

John's VOC Case Manager (together with VA mental health practitioners) was finally able to get John the help he needed. Within a few months, John's life was headed in a much brighter direction. Today, he lives independently in an apartment in the South Wedge, knowing that he has an army of supporters at VOC ready to step in if and when they are needed.

Suicide is a complex, public health issue that affects every community across our nation. More than 6,000 Veterans die every year by suicide. But it is preventable. Everyone can play a role by learning to recognize warning signs, showing compassion to Veterans in need and offering support. If you know of a veteran in crisis, call the **Veterans Crisis Line at 1.800.273.8255**.

With a focus on this epidemic, Veterans Outreach Center continues to move forward with dedicated staffing, training and a community-wide awareness campaign. This campaign will be collaborative in nature, coinciding with efforts already in place by the local VA office and other community partners. For more information, please contact Chris Durkin, Director of Risk Management, at Chris.Durkin@vocroc.org or 585.295.7803.



Community Events Support VOC

- **11/2/19:** Guitars for Heroes hosted by the Ancient Order of Hibernians, 1:00 p.m. - 11:30 p.m. **Location:** Photo City Improv and Lost Borough Brewing Company, 543 Atlantic Avenue. **What:** Two stages of live music and special guests. Proceeds will benefit an array of VOC programs.
- **12/14/19:** Army-Navy game Fundraiser, 2:30 p.m. **Location:** Irondequoit Bay Fish and Game Club, 658 Bay Front South in Rochester. **What:** Mark Wingate is a huge Navy fan. Everyone is invited to attend this event to honor the memory of his brother-in-law, a Navy veteran who served on the Theodore Roosevelt ship.

Veterans Outreach Center has been the beneficiary of more than 50 such fundraising events so far this year. Whether it's an organized golf tournament or a family picnic with donations collected to benefit area veterans, these community events are a vital part of the circle of support for VOC and the men and women who have served our country.

Visit our website events calendar at vocroc.org, to keep tabs on all of the great community activities. For more information on how you can hold a supporting event, contact Kim Osur at Kim.Osur@vocroc.org or call 585.295.7824.



A Day for Old Glory

Each year, VOC volunteers hit the streets for our Flag Day fundraiser. With over 30,000 free flags to distribute, we are grateful to the 200+ volunteers who help us get the job done each year. And on June 14, 2020, we'll do it again! VOC is committed to ensuring the symbol of our nation and our freedom is given the recognition it deserves. Gather your friends and

family and make it a team effort or get your company involved. Visit our website vocroc.org in January for more information.

Pound the Ground 2019



There was intense anticipation over whether the Army team would finally beat the Navy at the 2019 Pound the Ground 5k walk/run, Mendon Ponds Park, in August. Navy won again and was awarded the

coveted Golden Boot for the third year in a row! With over 400 walkers, runners, pets and babies in strollers, it was a great day to get out and support Veterans Outreach Center and those who have served our country. Details are in the works for our 2020 event. Visit our website at vocroc.org in January for details but start getting your corporate team together now. For more information, contact Kim Osur at Kim.Osur@vocroc.org or 585.295.7824.

Mission:

Our mission is to serve veterans with compassion and advocate for all who have worn our nation's uniform so they can RISE and live life to the fullest.



VOC Golf Tournament

The 13th Annual VOC Golf Tournament at Midvale Country Club sold out early. With 144 players in attendance, we all enjoyed a beautiful sun-filled day on

the course, auctions, raffles, and a delicious steak dinner to conclude the event. Sign-up and sponsorship information for July 27, 2020 will be available in January. Make sure you visit our website at vocroc.org for more information.

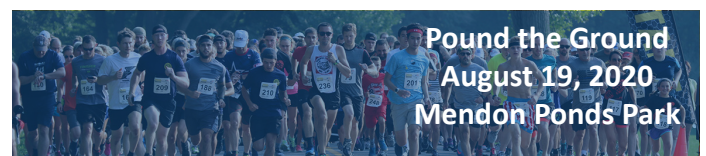
Our Morale Center is Open!

Our Morale Center offers a place of comfort and restoration for veterans and their families, all free of charge.

- Chiropractic Services
- Art Groups
- Barber/Stylist Services
- Massage Therapy
- Laundry Services

Contact Robin Gore at Robin.Gore@vocroc.org or 585.295.7804 for more information.

Save the Date 2020



For more information, contact Kim Osur at 585.295.7824, Kim.Osur@vocroc.org, or visit vocroc.org.

Thank you for your support! Our 2018 Annual Report is available on our website at vocroc.org and includes a list of the names of more than 2,000 investors in our mission. We are so very grateful!