

Macomb Veterans Action Collaborative Minutes  
Monday, March 5, 2018  
Macomb Community Action Training Room  
21885 Dunham Road, Clinton Township, MI

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by Laura Rios at 9:00A.M.

**Attendees:**

A.C. Giles, Training and Treatment Innovations	Laura Rios (Co-Chair), Macomb Veteran Services
Bill Browning, Detroit VA Medical Center	Madeline Habib, MCCMH/HSBC
Chris Franklin, American Indian Vets of SE MI, Inc.	Mark Kilgore, Care of SE Michigan
Chris Golema, 127 WG/Family Readiness/ Selfridge ANG	Mark Meadows, VA Medical Center
Crystal Bersche, WD Veterans' Employment Services	Mary Beth Ryan, VCCF
Dawn Revyn, Volunteers of America	Mike Johnson, AFGE Vets Affairs
Dr. Rodney Tolbert	Monica Alderman, Macomb Community College
Ian Lucas, Helm & Associates Real Estate	Nick Chopp
Gary Purcell, VVA 154	Sama Harp, Macomb Community Action
Gerald Fisher-Curley, John D. Dingell VA Medical Center	Stephen Boegehold, DHHS
Joann Sterne, Macomb County Crisis Center	Shaun Taft, What Works LLC
Jonathan Drake, Simply Blessed Catering Veteran Owned	Susan Casadei, Harbor Health Home Care
Kathy Koths, Macomb Community Action	William Schranz, MCCMH
Lisa Marie Duncan-Edwards, Macomb Veteran Services	

**II. INTRODUCTIONS**

Attendees of the meeting introduced themselves and stated what agency or business they represent.

**III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

No proposed changes, the minutes were accepted and approved.

**IV. OLD BUSINESS**

The American Indian Veterans are moving on to the next phase of their smoking cessation program. They are able to refer veterans to smoking cessation services and is also open to the public.

**V. SPECIAL SPEAKER**

MARCH SPECIAL SPEAKER:

Trinity Lutheran was going to speak to the group about their clothing warehouse, however, they are unable to attend today's meeting. They are accepting referrals to the clothing warehouse and there are no income restrictions, they will serve anyone in need. Laura informed the group they are unable to store suits for veterans because their warehouse is full.

Since there is no special speaker, Laura shared a handout with the group on Robert's Rules of Order. The handout informs members on how a productive meeting should flow. When the rules are followed, meetings

run quickly and in a more productive manner. Laura touched on important tips from the handout. It was also noted that if something is tabled the topic will automatically be added to the agenda for the next meeting.

## **VI. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **Benefits/Communication Committee: Laura Rios/Mary Beth Ryan**

Laura informed the group that the Macomb County Economic Development have submitted proposals for a veteran's home and the former base housing on Sugarbush in Chesterfield was selected. They are moving on to the next step to secure the land for development. Laura also reported that her staff member Julie has retired and Joyce will be stepping into her position. Laura shared with the group an article in the Macomb Daily about connecting veterans through the No Wrong Door Veterans Navigator, MVAC and Macomb Community College. She reported that an ad was put in Sunday's Macomb Daily with an insert advertisement that she hoped would generate calls for volunteers. She received about a dozen calls for the red-carpet program and a couple for drivers. She reports that she has 12-15 volunteers signed up for training for the red-carpet program. They will train volunteers to help veterans navigate the registration process and services provided at the VA. Laura asks the group to help look for a permanent location to store clothing donations for veteran's programs. A member reports that VFW Post #6250 in Sterling Heights has a suit up program that provides clothing and suits to veterans may be able to store the donations. A member also suggested Vets Returning Home as they have a successful storage closet.

### **Jobs Committee: Crystal Bersche/Mark Meadows**

Mark Meadows reports the Hire our Heroes event is this Saturday from 10 A.M. to 2 P.M. at the VA Medical Center. They are looking for 10-15 volunteers for the event, contact Mark if you have leads. The newsletter went out this morning, there are a lot of job opportunities available to veterans. He also reports the employer in St. Clair Shores is still hiring veterans at \$10.00 an hour for warehousing, sorting and quality assurance. Rapid promotion opportunities are available; shifts are 6:30 A.M. to 4:30 P.M. and 4 P.M. to 2 AM. Interested veterans should email their contact information to Mark Meadows. No word on any hiring events for Ford, GM or Chrysler; veterans wishing to work at one these companies should check out the job postings on their websites. An eight-week food distribution program in partnership with Forgotten Harvest and MSU is starting April 9<sup>th</sup>. Orientation for that program will be soon and the information will be sent out in the newsletter. An electrical pre-apprenticeship program is available to veterans through the Macomb County Michigan Works office at the Electrical Industry Training Center. Classes are Monday through Friday full time and provides 300 hours of on the job training starting April 13<sup>th</sup>.

### **Services Committee: Madeline Habib**

The committee has been putting together a series of flow charts to direct veterans to services. The current flow chart being created will direct veterans in need of resources for legal services.

### **Membership Committee: Shaun Taft**

Laura advised the group that a welcome package is being developed. Shaun Taft advises that new attendees who wish to be members must complete a membership form to be added to the roster. Members will initial next to their name to sign in for the meeting and new attendees will add their name to a sign-in sheet. New members should fill out a blank name tent also. Any members not receiving emails should note the problem when they initial the roster.

### **Faith Based Committee:**

Rodney reports that he met with Bill at the Office of Community and Faith Engagement to create a strategic planning group for a collaborative with the military and faith-based community. This initiative will host a symposium of pastors and veterans experiencing PTSD and other challenges to be able to learn and provide spiritual support. Pastors want to talk with veterans openly and learn what they can do to provide them with the support they need to get through their trials and tribulations.

## **VII. NEW BUSINESS/IDEAS FOR FUTURE PRESENTATIONS**

APRIL SPEAKER: Nicole Stromberg, MD, Psychiatrist, ACOS, Mental Health Services

MAY SPEAKER: Kimberly Kemler, Suicide Prevention Coordinator

## **VIII. ROUND ROBIN**

Mary Beth from VCCF: this organization provides home care to veterans and they also operate a group home. The group home provides 24-hour care to veterans in the facility. The military provider that comes to the group home is also available to the community and can provide in home care and a visiting doctor. They will be licensed soon and also starting a day program that will be completely paid for by Medicaid and Medicare. The next project will be in Macomb.

VA has an internal measurement system and the Detroit VA was recently scored as a 3 out of 4 stars when compared to medical centers that serve a similar number of veterans. In 2016 they only received a 1-star rating and that was attributed to customer service. Red Coat Navigators was implemented in July and can provide registration navigation to veterans who need to sign up. They are recruiting new volunteers and have recently signed up four new drivers.

Macomb Community Action has funds available to assist those who are at risk of homelessness or homeless and bridge them to permanent housing. The agency has two pots of funding from HUD ESG to provide prevention and rapid rehousing services. The programs are open to all members of the community and clients can be referred through Laura Rios or Sama Harp.

The VA provides transitional housing and two programs are available in Macomb County to provide housing to veterans who are transitioning from homelessness. There are 20 beds available in Clinton Township and beds available to those who are chronically homeless at the facility in Warren.

John Drake reports that he is looking to secure a food truck/catering truck for his company Simply Blessed Catering.

Shaun Taft reports the Social Capital Collaborative will be hosting an organizational speed-networking event at the MISD on March 13<sup>th</sup> in partnership with One Macomb. Information is available on the Common Wealth website.

If a veteran wants to get started in commercial real estate there are free training scholarships available at Real Estate One Academy in Southfield, MI. The information is available on reoacademy.com. They also provide free training to veterans to secure a residential real estate license.

There is a free program available to students that are seniors in high school called Boys State Girls State, information is available on boysstate.org. It is about workshop on politics and they learn about negotiating laws and electing council, etc. It is a week-long program and people donate money to provide scholarships to participants. The American Legion is celebrating their 99<sup>th</sup> Anniversary on March 15th. Free communications training will be provided in Lansing to veterans either May 5 or May 12.

A yellow ribbon event is coming up March 24<sup>th</sup> and a venue has not been secured. The event is meant to provide resources for families and military members before they go on deployment.

The application process for DHHS benefits have been streamlined to make is easier for people to apply for assistance. Anyone who has had problems with the application process are encouraged to reapply either online or in person. State Emergency Relief is available for qualifying veterans or veteran families who is facing shut offs, eviction, household repairs to improve the safety of the family, wheel chair ramps, replacement of furnaces or hot water tanks, etc.

Gary Purcell reports VVA #154 is looking for volunteers to go visit veterans in the VA hospital every second Wednesday of the month. They visit certain wards they are assigned to, they leave the vet center at 8 A.M. and usually return by noon or 1 P.M. The vet center and food pantry are open 5 days a week and free tax preparation is available on Monday, veterans are served first. Anyone who needs help with food can be referred to them, they will refer anyone they cannot serve to a food pantry that can. Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day is March 29<sup>th</sup> and the vet center will be open all day and serving hot dogs, hamburgers and other refreshments.

Vocational Rehab in Macomb County continues to grow. Veterans with service connected disabilities can receive job re-training assistance.

Veteran Employment Boot Camp #48 is full and starting next week. Any interested veterans can sign up for the next boot camp that will begin the second week of April.

Chris Franklin reports that his group will be participating in a Pow Wow taking place in Ann Arbor on March 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>, all are welcome to attend. He informed the group that the veteran café has been started to reach out to veterans who are coming home. A Welcome Home Vietnam Vet event is being hosted at the American Indian Veterans of Southeastern Michigan and will start at 2 P.M. March 29<sup>th</sup>. Their food pantry is also open to serve veterans in the community.

The HSBC Traveling Tours are coming up May 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>. Registration will be available on the MISD website.

#### **IX. NEXT MEETING**

The next MVAC meeting will be begin at 9:00A.M. on April 2, 2018. The meeting will be in the Macomb Community Action Training Room at 21885 Dunham Road, Clinton Township, MI.

#### **X. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:24A.M. by Laura Rios.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ellen Palmer