

Macomb Veterans Action Collaborative Minutes  
Monday, November 6, 2017  
Macomb Community Action Training Room  
21885 Dunham Road, Clinton Township, MI

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by Crystal Bersche at 9:05A.M.

**Attendees:**

Brian Webb, MDHHS	Jonathan Drake, Simply Blessed Catering Veteran Owned
Carl M. Lopez, Veterans Treatment Court	Joseph Rogers, Volunteers of America
Chae Williams, MyCare Health Center	Katie Page, Macomb County Vet Center
Charlene Myers, NCOA/DAV	Laura Rios (Co-Chair), Macomb Veteran Services
Chris Franklin, American Indian Vets of MI, Inc.	Madeline Habib, MCCMH/HSBC
Chris Reilly, Macomb/St. Clair MI Works	Mark Kilgore, CARE of Southeastern Michigan
Christopher Golema, 127 W61 FRG	Michael Gruber, Team Rubicon
Crystal Bersche, SOM Veterans Employment Services	Mike Johnson, AFGE Vets Affairs
Gabriella Barthlow, AFCS/Magellan Health	Paulus Obey, Selfridge Family Support Center
Gary Purcell, VVA 154	Sian Washington, Disability Network of Oakland and Macomb
Joe McClellan, American Legion	Stephen Boegehold, Department of Health and Human Services
John Babcock, MSCMW Bootcamp	Sue Walker, Salvation Army Harbor Light
	Zachery Dieck, Training and Treatment Innovations

**II. INTRODUCTIONS**

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

**III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Proposed changes: Joe McClellan is with the American Legion. Motion to approve the minutes: Charlene, 1<sup>st</sup>, John, 2<sup>nd</sup>, AIF.

**IV. OLD BUSINESS**

No old business discussed.

**V. SPECIAL SPEAKER**

NOVEMBER SPECIAL SPEAKER: Michael Gruber – Team Rubicon. Team Rubicon is a veteran lead disaster relief organization. The organization was founded in 2010 by a Marine Corps veteran. A group of eight people partnered with a priest and went to administer healthcare to victims of the earthquake in Haiti. After that, Team Rubicon assisted in disaster relief efforts internationally. After a co-founder committed suicide, Team Rubicon decided to direct some of the operations to domestic responses. The organization grew tremendously and was staffed by region, then state, and now they are opening individual city chapters. Detroit is the first city chapter for Team Rubicon. They have 65,000 volunteers and active chapters in seven countries. After hurricane harvey, Team Rubicon organized a major funding drive and used to proceeds to expedite their five-year plan and begin organizing city chapters now. The organization follows FEMA guidelines and a local volunteer leader will contact an emergency manager to be invited to help after a disaster. They usually assist with debris management as well as mapping to provide a heat map to the

emergency managers to focus relief efforts. The group is veteran lead, however being a veteran is not required to volunteer. Team Rubicon assists communities with managing spontaneous volunteers to give them assignments and ensure they are all using proper equipment and safety gear. When Team Rubicon is not responding to disasters, they participate in rebuilding efforts as well as mitigation projects. These projects can range from cleaning up a shoreline to organizing a disaster response plan with local leaders. Another thing the organization does is allows communities to use the value of volunteer labor as matching funds for FEMA grant programs. Communities will then be able to use the FEMA grants to begin rebuilding after a disaster rather than cleaning up. Every dollar donated to Team Rubicon is turned around into twenty-eight dollars in direct community aid. Team Rubicon has 80 members in Macomb County. The organization is a 501 (C) 3 non-profit and they are recruiting volunteers and donors in the Macomb, Oakland and Wayne county areas. Anyone interested in learning more, volunteering or donating can visit [teamrubiconusa.org](http://teamrubiconusa.org).

## **VI. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

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

The Veteran's Day photo exhibit is November 6<sup>th</sup> through the 10<sup>th</sup> at Macomb Community College.

An information card for MVAC was created and a draft was shared with the group.

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

November 10<sup>th</sup> is Hoops for Troops Job Fair at the Little Ceasars Arena. All participants must have valid ID.

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

Madeline is working with the Warming Center to offer fingerprinting services for their guests. They are working together to create a script for informing clients of the service and it's purpose.

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

All members should initial the roster to ensure they are reflected in attendance on the meeting minutes. New members should sign in.

### **Faith Based Committee: John Drake**

No new information.

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

The steering committee has new speakers lined up to present at the upcoming MVAC meetings. December's presentation will be on Red Carpet Volunteer Registration.

## **VIII. ROUND ROBIN**

Crystal Bersche: The next Region 10 VCAT meeting is scheduled for December 8<sup>th</sup> at Macomb Community College. There will also be a March event featuring storytelling from Veterans.

Chris Franklin: The AMC and Multi-cultural network is doing a presentation in Lansing on veterans and smoking cessation on the 9<sup>th</sup>. Chris will also do another presentation to veterans in Lansing on Veteran's day.

The Macomb County Vet Center is having a potluck for the Army Navy football game on the 9<sup>th</sup> at 2:30P.M. All are welcome to attend and may bring a dish to pass if possible. Red Carpet VA registration is seeking volunteers and packets have been sent to Laura's office. There will be a presentation on the process at the next MVAC meeting.

Macomb Community College has established a student organization for students who are in recovery from addiction. It is not a twelve-step program but more of a support group that makes participants aware of resources that can help them in recovery and stay successful in life.

Stephen Boegehold, DHHS: Crisis season for state emergency relief is open, DHHS will now accept past due notices as well as shut off notices. For veterans and families who are homeowners, now is the time to apply for state emergency relief if they have a faulty furnace. DHHS will pay up to \$4,000 for the repair or replacement of a furnace with an estimate from a licensed HVAC contractor.

Carl Lopez: Graduation from district court 41B veteran's court is on November 9<sup>th</sup> at 9:30A.M.; graduation from circuit court veteran's court is on November 16<sup>th</sup> at 1:30P.M.

32 different apprenticeship programs are available in the metro Detroit area. Mustcareers.org has the information on construction apprenticeship programs.

Gary Purcell, VVA 154: Operation Christmas Dance is a fundraiser to help veteran families with food and gifts for Christmas, the event will take place on December 2<sup>nd</sup>. The Vet Center will be open for Veteran's day and refreshments will be served, normal hours are Monday through Friday, 10A.M. to 4P.M.

Joe McLellan, American Legion: new email account, josephmclellan43@yahoo.com. There are many scholarships available through the American Legion. Joe reported to the group that he went to an agent orange presentation and he hopes the speaker can be invited to MVAC.

Joseph Rogers, Volunteers of America: Joe is a veteran employment specialist with Volunteers of America and came to MVAC to introduce himself to the group.

Paulus Obey: his volunteer group is doing their annual adopt a military family for Christmas. Paulus can provide a donor form for anyone interested in sponsoring a family.

Brian Webb, CMH: There are veteran navigators available in the Community Mental Health systems that are doing amazing work in their communities. This includes trainings within the system on cultivating relationships with veteran clients.

The 44<sup>th</sup> veteran boot camp wrapped up last week; there were seven participants and two had jobs upon program completion. This week is also National Apprenticeship Week and there will be a ton of information available on the MI Works! Facebook page.

Tomorrow morning at Macomb Community College south campus s building, there will be an information session on apprenticeship programs. This Thursday at 2pm there will be a recognition for veterans event at the Macomb county administration building.

Gabriella Bartlow: She is now the only veteran financial coach in the state and she urged providers to send referrals for clients who are truly ready to make a change.

Rachel Price, Voc Rehab: this program helps service connected veterans who are transitioning from military life to civilian life with resources including housing, counseling, substance abuse and employment.

John Drake, Simply Blessed Catering, DAV: Running specials on turkey dinners for the holiday season. John also urged members to keep in touch with their loved ones especially during this time of the year as suicides rise during the holiday months.

MyCare has locations throughout Macomb county and offers primary care, some specialized care, dental, integrated behavioral services and other healthcare services to low income residents.

Sian Washington, DNOM: The grant was renewed for homeless prevention and rapid rehousing for veterans.

### **NEXT MEETING**

The next MVAC meeting will be begin at 9:00A.M. on December 4, 2017. The meeting will be in the Macomb Community Action Training Room at 21885 Dunham Road, Clinton Township, MI.

### **IX. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:50A.M. by Laura Rios.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ellen Palmer