

Macomb Veterans Action Collaborative Minutes  
Monday, May 1 2017  
Macomb Community Action Training Room  
21885 Dunham Rd, Clinton Township, MI

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

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

**Attendees:**

Gary Purcell, VVA 154	Ellen Palmer, Macomb Homeless Coalition
Randy Whitmire, Veterans in Business - AFA	Steve Bago, VVA 154
Sally Adams, Citizen	Jonathan Drake, Simply Blessed Catering
Courtney Reid, Sanilac County CMH	Gabriella Barthlow, AFSC/CFPB
Wendy Martindale, St. Clair County CMH William Jackson, Citizen	Zachery Dieck, Training and Treatment Innovations
Kate Logan, MVAA	Kara Fields, Macomb Community College
Lisa Marie Duncan-Edwards, Macomb Veteran Serves`	Gerald Fisher-Curly, John D. Dingell VA Medical Center
Basil Forrest, Army Community Service Survivor Outreach	Crystal Kinsman (Co-Chair), SOM Veteran Employment Services
Joyce Schleicher, MCCMH/UBHC	Joann Sterne, MCCMH/Crisis Center
Charlene Myers, NCOA/DAV	Dean Shunk, Macomb Veteran Services
Laura Rios (Co-Chair), Macomb Veteran Services	Chris Reilly, Macomb/St. Clair Michigan Works
Mary Beth Ryan, Vets Constructing Communities Foundation	Tammy Hubble, The Salvation Army, DHQ Heather Whited, Macomb Community Action
Kayla Dadswell, CARE of Southeastern Michigan	Althea Kyles, Volunteers of America-Warren
Madeline Habib, MCCMH/HSCB	

**II. INTRODUCTIONS**

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

**III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Laura Rios made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from April 3, 2017; AIF.

**IV. OLD BUSINESS**

None

**V. SPECIAL SPEAKER**

Randy Whitmire, Veterans in Business: Mr. Whitmire is retired from the Air Force and is dedicated to helping Veterans start their own businesses and empower them to be as successful as possible. He creates a safe zone for Veterans who are starting businesses to collaborate and avoid being exploited. Guest presenters are brought in to present information to the groups and it is free for Veterans to participate. Mr. Whitmire works with Veterans to develop business plans, financial reports, they work out partnerships and even help secure funding for the business. CPAs and financial planners are also available to Veterans that participate. These services are available to Veterans only, this allows for Veterans to mentor and share information with each other. Veterans in Business currently has 60 members. Any Veterans interested in starting a business can be put in touch with Mr. Whitmire to start the process (business cards were distributed to MVAC members).

## **VI. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

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

Laura Rios sent an email blast about the Fisher House, they are breaking ground next year and will be located next door to the VA in Ann Arbor. They are working on funding and a family has pledged to match donations dollar for dollar up to \$300,000.00. Rios also passed around a handout with a list of agent orange and exposure and Camp Lejeune.

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

Mark Meadows reports that the job market in the Metro area is hot. The big three has been in contact with Meadows to secure Veterans as employees. Meadows is currently working on a referral list of Veterans who want to work in production to give to Ford Motor Company. Ford has two testing days scheduled for May and each testing day usually has about 200 participants and the test runs can take 6-9 hours. Chrysler is hiring for their Sterling Heights location; they are mostly looking for supervisor and team lead positions and requires a degree for their application to be considered. Beaumont is also hiring and has numerous positions available in all areas. JVS Job Fair is scheduled for the 10<sup>th</sup> in Southfield; May 19<sup>th</sup> is when the Logistics Expo is being held in Dearborn at MTEC on Shaefer. Flyers for these events were sent out in the newsletter.

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

Madeline was contacted by someone in St. Clair who is using the flowcharts to make them specific for their county. Habib is working with CMH and Veterans Groups to create a flow chart for mental health services available in Macomb County. Habib asks that anyone who has information about mental health services get in touch with her.

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

Laura Rios advised that Membership is free; new members should be sure to complete the membership application to ensure that they are included on the email list and so MVAC can have contact information on file. A new membership info packet is in the works.

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

John Drake reports no new information but is scheduling a meeting with MVAC members who are interested in participating. The purpose of the committee is to share information with faith based groups so they can be informed on where to refer Veterans who are in need.

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

JUNE SPECIAL SPEAKER: Howard Miller, Blind Vision

## **VIII. ROUND ROBIN**

Katie Page from Macomb Vet Center: the center provides mental health services to combat Veterans and their families.

Daryl Johnson from Marines on Selfridge and Region Chair for Michigan Employment Support for the Guard and Reserves: A family event is being planned for May 20<sup>th</sup> with a focus on employment. Marine week is coming up in September and is taking place in Downtown Detroit on the River Front. The Air Show at Selfridge will take place on the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> of August. August 18<sup>th</sup> is day with a preview of the air show.

CARE is hiring, any Veterans who are interested in working in Human Service should be referred.

Kate Logan with Michigan Veteran Affairs Agency: VCAT is taking place in Region 10, a meeting is coming up on June 16<sup>th</sup> with Region 9. Lunch will be provided and an invitation will be sent out from Eventbrite.

VVA is open 10am-4pm Monday-Friday to help Veterans. They are working with a major hospital to get a mini clinic in the facility to provide wellness checks and diagnosis as most of their clients are weary of or unwilling to sign up for VA services. There is a stigma about the Detroit VA and Veterans and providers should be positive and link people with patient advocates if they are experiencing issues.

Kyle Pollet with Congressman Levin's office: Works as a liaison between Veterans, the VA and the Congressman's office. Any Veterans who are experiencing issues with the VA can report them to Sander Levin's office.

Dean Shunk from Vocational Rehab: Dean advised that he was happy to hear from Mr. Whitmire as they also try to help Veterans compile resources to start their own business.

Macomb County NAACP is being reactivated after May 13<sup>th</sup>, a membership drive is planned for that day at the Clinton Township Library.

Pathway to Hope, Salvation Army: They are working on a new approach to serving families with children through case management. They began noticing young adults seeking services that they already received when they were a child and a part of a family. Rather than putting a band aid on the situation they will provide case management for up to a year to empower their clients to become self-sufficient.

Kara Fields, Macomb Community College: Department of Labor grant ended, the last group of manufacturing students are going through the program. The college is working on finding other funding to help cover the costs to educate and train Veterans for manufacturing careers.

Gerald Curley, VA: Veterans in need of transitional housing can be referred to the Volunteers of America Safe Haven or the Salvation Army Harbor Light Grant Per Diem program.

State of Michigan Veteran Services: They partner with MI Works! to provide personalized case management services to Veterans who are seeking employment. Veteran Employability Boot Camp continues to be successful, they currently have a 75% employment rate and the average wage is \$16.64/hr.

Heather Whited, Macomb Community Action: Funding available to assist with move in costs for people who are homeless, being a Veteran is not a requirement. Utility assistance is also available. Clients can be referred to any three action centers in Macomb County.

William Jackson, Aftershock Ministries: They work to get Oakland County Veterans reestablished into stable housing as well as meeting other needs like employment referrals. They are trying to spread out to the tri-county area and are in need of volunteers and storage space.

Wendy Martindale, Veteran Navigator at CMH: The program is available to help Vets who are not able to make it to the VA or CBOT clinic to receive mental health services. She is also able to provide additional services like housing resources and education.

Madeline Habib, MCCMH: Traveling Tours will take place May 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>, can register online at the MISD website. So far 10 tours are closed because they are at capacity. The Right Connection is also available online, it has been reformatted to make navigation of the site easier.

Chris Reilly, MI Works!: Boot camp #38 is running this week. The program continues to be a great success. MI Works! also has funding available that can pay for tuition assistance and on the job training, there are no income or residency requirements for Veterans.

John Drake, Veteran and owner of Simply Blessed Catering & Event Services: Mr. Drake advised the group that it is a challenge to reacclimate to civilian life and find your mission after leaving the Military. He admitted that he had some challenges with the VA but you must push through to get things done. Mr. Drake announced that his catering services are available and can accommodate groups up to 1,000 people, but he is also available to the membership to talk and share his experiences.

Randy Whitmire, Veterans in Business: The Airforce Association, Selfridge Chapter 179, is going through a recruiting drive. This group is open to the general public and anyone who wants to support the Airforce can join.

Sean Green, Vets Returning Home: Mr. Green is a new member of MVAC. He helped Sandy with Vets Returning Home and is currently working there. Vets Returning Home is committed to providing transitional housing for Veterans and to help them become self-sufficient. They have a fundraising event on Saturday at the Emerald Theatre, tickets are \$20/person.

Mark Meadows, VA: Mr. Meadows provided his email address to new members to be able to refer Veterans for employment services, [mark.meadows@va.gov](mailto:mark.meadows@va.gov).

Marybeth Ryan VCCF: Working to expand in Macomb County.

TTI SSVF: Has Rapid Rehousing and Homeless Prevention funding available to Veterans.

Veteran Town Hall in Macomb County being planned for the first week on August. Another Town Hall is being hosted at the VA on the 13<sup>th</sup>.

**IX. NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be Monday, June 5, 2017 starting at 9:00 A.M. in the Verkuilen Building Training & Conference Center, 21885 Dunham Clinton Township, MI 48036

**X. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:30am by Laura Rios.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ellen Palmer