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REGION 10 VETERANS COMMUNITY ACTION TEAM

FEBRUARY 2016

NEWSLETTER



The Region 10 Veterans Community Action Team is a community-based collaboration. Our community partners offer support services, resources and programs to veterans and their families. As a part of the Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency's Veterans Community Action Team program, our role is to identify solutions for gaps in Veteran services, reduce duplication of efforts and make it easier for Veterans to connect with local opportunities in education, employment, healthcare and quality of life.



Click here to become a member of the VCAT!

VCAT Meeting January 22, 2016

Thank you to the 65 Community Partners that joined together on January 21st to share information and resources in order to better assist Veterans and their families. The strength of the **Region 10 VCAT** comes from the willingness of our community partners to collaborate and support one another. And, many, many thanks to Kara Fields and Carey Wellhausen for hosting the meeting at Macomb Community College.

HIGHLIGHTS

Sandy Hudson, CEO, **Wins for Warriors Foundation**, shared copies of the recently released Rand Corp study, Supporting the Mental Health Needs of Veterans in the Metro Detroit Area.

The study can be found at:

http://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR1346.html

We also had the opportunity to hear presentations on the success of the **Veteran Employability Boot Camp** which is offered monthly by the Macomb/St. Clair Michigan Works office and on an amazing organization Humble Design; a local non-profit helping families transitioning out of homeless shelters by providing furnishings and design services.

Marcie Burt and John Babcock proudly explained how the Veteran Employability Boot camp is one-of-a-kind in the State of Michigan. Over 70% of the Veterans that complete the five-day program find employment within 90 days and average over \$15.50 an hour. More information on the program can be found in the Employment Section.

Treger Strasberg, Co-Founder & CEO of **Humble Design**, shared why she began her organization and shared a few of the personal stories of the over 500 families impacted by their services. Humble Design's mission is to turn four bare walls into a clean, dignified and welcoming home by repurposing gently used household goods. That vision was born out of a belief that decent families emerging from homelessness deserve to come home each day to a clean, friendly, and dignified home. All family members would have more time, effort and resources to focus on education, home life, employment and building a better future.



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[Click](http://www.humbledesign.org/) or to learn more about Humble Design visit:
<http://www.humbledesign.org/>

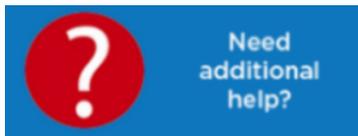
FUTURE ACTIVITIES

A new Board of Directors will be formed in the Spring and the focus will remain on growing the Region 10 VCAT and forming partnerships with federal, state, and county agencies, and national and local non-profits. The Region 10 VCAT mission also remains: remove obstacles to Veterans care and support and promote our community partners.

Click our state to find a
Veterans Benefit
Counselor



The next Region 10 VCAT meeting is tentatively scheduled for Late April/Early May. The hope is to hold the meeting in **Oakland County**. If any community partner is interested in hosting the meeting, please contact [Dave Thomas](#) through Podio. The meeting invitation will be sent out as soon as the new Board of Directors decides on a firm date/time/place.



Michigan Veteran-Friendly School Program

The Michigan Veteran-Friendly School Program recognizes academic institutions of higher learning committed to supporting the needs of student veterans and dependents. The program awards Gold-, Silver- and Bronze-level status to institutions that offer veteran-centric services and programs.

For a complete list of Veteran-Friendly Schools, visit:
<http://www.michiganveterans.com/Home/Educator-Summary/Become-a-Veteran-Friendly-Campus>



Veteran Employability Boot Camp

Macomb/St. Clair Michigan Works offers a new and innovative Job Seeker training session for all Veterans and Spouses of Veterans. The **Veteran Employability Boot Camp** is offered every full first week of the month, Monday through Friday, 9:00 am - 3:00 pm. The program is designed to build resumes, build an online presence, build Cover and Thank You letters and Interview skills. A bi-product of the week-long session is that the Veteran develops relationships, comradery, basic computer skills, confidence, determination to find suitable employment.....and most of all HOPE.

For more information, contact Marcie Burt at (586) 783-8710 or John Babcock at (586) 783-1392.



Volunteers and Participants needed!

Detroit is hosting the 2016 National Veterans Golden Age Games; the premier senior adaptive rehabilitation program in the United States, and the only national multi-event sports and recreational seniors' competition program designed to improve the quality of life for all older Veterans, including those with a wide range of abilities and disabilities.

The games are open to Veterans, ages 55 or older, who receive health care from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

[CLICK](#) to register as a **participant** or visit:

<https://goldenagegames.fusesport.com/registration/407/website/>

[CLICK](#) to register as a **volunteer** or visit:

<https://www.volgistics.com/ex/portal.dll/ap?ap=1726633920>



The Mission Continues Deploying to Detroit

The Mission Continues is a national non-profit organization whose mission is to empower veterans who are adjusting to life at home to find purpose through community impact.

The Mission Continues is deploying Veterans from across the country to report for duty in Detroit in June of 2016, and together with local partners, will concentrate their efforts to help revitalize neighborhoods, parks and schools. Over the course of a week, volunteers will be deployed in teams and execute a variety of high-impact missions including construction, landscaping, painting, and public arts projects.

[Click](#) to learn more about Operation Motown Muster or visit:

<https://www.missioncontinues.org/deployments/>



MVAA: Removing barriers for Michigan Veterans in 2016

The Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency was created in 2013 to connect those who have served in the U.S. Armed Forces and their families to the benefits they've earned. Over the course of the past three years, the agency has strived to do just that by breaking down the barriers they face in four main areas – education, employment, health care and quality of life. Much has been accomplished in each area, but there is still much to do in 2016 and beyond.

Education

Last year, MVAA teamed up with the Michigan College Access Network to create the [Veteran Education Initiative](#). The partnership places veteran resource representatives on 15 college campuses throughout the state, helping student veterans succeed as they pursue a higher education. The goal for this year is to extend the program to additional college campuses – allowing more VRRs to provide one-on-one support to thousands of student veterans.

Employment

Since the creation of the [Veteran-Friendly Employer program](#), more than 40 organizations have committed to recruiting, hiring and training veteran talent. MVAA supports these efforts by sharing best practices after a veteran is hired – such as mentorship and rotation programs to help veterans identify where they would best fit in a company – and going forward, the agency will also help these organizations develop better recruiting strategies and HR trainings.

MVAA will also work with colleges and universities to identify in-demand skills and experience companies will be seeking in years to come.

Health Care

In support of the Mental Health Commission Report, a mental health screening tool was created to encourage veterans to start a conversation about their own mental health and how they can seek help. Business cards with information about the [online mental health screening](#) were provided to benefits counselors and Veterans Treatment Court personnel to distribute to local veterans and their families. The card lists the screening tool website in addition to the veterans' crisis line number.

In the coming year, MVAA will continue to address mental health challenges – working with college counselors to prepare them for student veterans experiencing post-traumatic stress, traumatic brain injuries or military sexual trauma.

Quality of Life

Gov. Rick Snyder created the Interagency Council on Homelessness last year and tasked it with developing a 10-year plan to end homelessness in the state. By summer 2016, the council – which includes representatives from MVAA, the Michigan State Housing Development Authority and the Department of Health and Human Services – will deliver that plan to the governor, and efforts will begin to end veteran and general homelessness.

To accomplish this goal, MVAA will work alongside MSHDA and DHHS to secure federal and state funding and identify other federal, state, local and non-profit partners.

Many veterans who call 800-MICH-VET (800-642-4838) request housing and homelessness assistance, and MVAA often relies on MSHDA and community partners identified through the VCAT to assist these callers. Once veterans have secured stable housing, VCATs can also step in to connect them with a local network of service providers, employers, educators and health care providers.

Ending veteran homelessness is a task that will require cooperation on every level – but through our VCATs and their networks of local service organizations, MVAA will work to house those Michigan veterans experiencing or on the brink of homelessness in 2016.

The Region 10 Veterans Community Action Team falls within the Detroit Metro Prosperity Region, created as a part of Gov. Rick Snyder's Regional Prosperity Initiative, which includes Macomb, Oakland & Wayne Counties.

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