

Carroll County Veterans Coalition

Agenda September 26th, 2023

1. Welcome- Introductions:

Jennifer Thomas	Carroll County Coalition for Public Health- Substance Misuse Prevention Coordinator- jennifer.thomas@graniteuw.org
Emily McArdle	Carroll County Coalition for Public Health- Young Adult Outreach Consultant (taking meeting minutes)- u25carrollcounty@outlook.com
Soyla Hernandez	Carroll County Coalition for Public Health- Community Health Worker- soyla.hernandez@graniteuw.org
Eric Esty	LCSW at the Berlin Vet Center, (603) 752-2571
Gary Bent	Veterans Case Worker for ServiceLink in Carroll County and Belknap County, Veteran
Mark Allen	Commander of Ossipee VFW, Army Veteran- mgallen5180@gmail.com
Jennifer Walton	Retired Navy Chief and Hospital Corpsman, jendelion@gmail.com
Nona Alexander	Veterans Case Worker at Operation Delta Dog, Nalexander@operationdeltadog.org (603) 921-5253 https://operationdeltadog.org/
Donny Olsen	Director of TERRA Equine Therapy Center, Army Veteran- dolsen@terraetc.org (603) 487-6745, www.terraetc.org
Chris Lalmond	Northern Hub Developer at ApprenticeshipNH, clalmond@ccsnh.edu
Lindsay Pratt-Bluemle	LCSW for Conway and Tilton VA, military spouse, Lindsay.Pratt-bluemle@va.gov (603) 624-4366 x5320
Tom Southern	Wolfeboro American Legion Post 18
Justin Moeling	LICSW at Manchester VAMC
Selwa Yatim-Badra	National Veterans Services Coordinator at Summit Behavioral Health
Ryan Gould	Office of Apprenticeship- Department of Labor, Concord, NH Gould.Ryan.R@dol.gov (603) 225-1444 (direct line)
Ann Cady	Licensed mental health counselor in Conway, Army Veteran

2. Guest Speaker

a. **Nona Alexander**- Veteran Case worker at Operation Delta Dog

- i. Operation Delta Dog serves two missions; rescuing dogs from shelters and training them to be service dogs for area veterans that are living with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and/or

Military Sexual Trauma (MST). Expanding to Franklin, NH area (home base in Hollis, NH), will service areas within an hour of Franklin (or further if someone is committed to coming in).

- ii. Veterans come in 1-2 times a week for classes for 5-6 months at the start. Then matches are made between the right dog and the veteran. When ready, the dog starts being integrated into the home (starting with one day, then the weekend, etc.). Then when the dog is home, veterans are trained on how to train their dog and they graduate a year after taking their dog home. Delta Dog will continue to offer support as back up.
- iii. In total: veterans commit 18 months of their time coming to class 1-2x a week. The program is 100% free. Classes are with 3-4 veterans: offer support, help to get veterans out of the house. Taking care of their dog is motivating, gets people up and about, gives people a purpose.
- iv. The dogs are trained to help with many tasks, e.g., hitting handicap buttons, picking up things, grounding technique for anxiety, acting as a barrier, helping with nightmares, and other things as needed depending on what the person's needs are.

b. Question and Answer

- i. **Jen T.-** Your services are usually for PTSD, TBI, MST- do you have plans to expand for other diagnoses?
 1. **Nona-** Those are the 3 base diagnoses they work with- if someone doesn't have any of those, it would depend on how things are registered with the state, etc. Many people have other diagnoses if they also have PTSD/TBI/MST, which they ask about to offer more support, but they focus on those three diagnoses.
- ii. **Jen T.-** Do you work with veterinarians in the area, how do you support that e.g., if someone doesn't have transportation, etc.
 1. **Nona-** They don't have partnerships with veterinarians, they ask people at the start if they can care for an animal (food, costs, etc.), they recommend pet insurance. Working on getting approved with Assistance Dogs International, which is recognized by the VA and

the VA will cover pet insurance for service dogs for any organization that is ADI certified (currently in the candidacy stage).

2. **Justin-** VA views Certified Service Dogs like “medical equipment,” will pay for food, supplies, etc. as part of managing a medical condition. Does not have to be only for physical conditions but must be a Certified Service Dog and connected to a diagnosed condition.
- iii. **Jen T.-** What do you need for training- brick and mortar space or can you use someone else’s space?
 1. **Nona-** Can use someone else’s space, what they need for the training is minimal- currently using a room at a VA in Jamaica Plains- but the need for staff is the hardest part.
- iv. **Soyla-** Where do you get your dogs, and do you use only a certain breed?
 1. **Nona-** Dogs from any shelter, usually down South, typically work with Lab mixes.
- v. **Mark-** Do you have service dogs for other conditions, e.g., Gulf War Syndrome?
 1. **Nona-** Not aware of their service dogs for that, Delta Dog training is focused on psychiatric and physical (balance, back issues, etc.). Not sure if that is possible, or what would go into that training, she’ll bring it up to the trainers.
- vi. **Donny-** Does the veteran need to have condition linked to a VA condition/disability?
 1. **Justin-** Probably yes (but not 100% sure). Veterans should reach out to Primary Care at VA, who will connect them to a social worker at VA who will help with the process.
 2. **Lindsay-** VA provides a list of organizations that are accredited, veterans can reach out to the organization and see if they’re a good fit with the organization, then come back and talk to social worker to get bills/paperwork taken care of.

3. Updates

a. Jen T.

- i. Spoke to Eric Eason - Carelon
 1. Holds the DHHS contract to manage the 988 data.
 2. Takes overflow call from Mobile Crisis unit.
 3. Separate from Veterans' Crisis Line
 4. 988 operators encouraged to ask about veteran status, but it is not protocol.
 5. General/gatekeeper training on veteran culture and needs.
 6. Data collected is not a good representation of veteran information.
 7. Approached VA to increase collaboration but there are barriers.
 - a. Inconsistent data because they're not required to ask if someone is a veteran, so they don't know the real numbers.
 - b. It's convoluted what the process is for someone to get from 988 to the Veteran Crisis Line.
- ii. ASIST training September 11/12
 1. Everybody liked it, very comprehensive, involved.
 2. Looking to see if we can get it back up here in January.
 3. Online trainings- E-connect gatekeeping trainings. Contact Jen T. if interested.
 4. VA SAVE training.
- iii. Logo design by youth at Kingswood Youth Center?
 1. Ideas?/Thoughts?
 2. Other Coalition uses their logo for merchandise, sells it on an online store and they receive money when people buy things, then use the money for funding.
 3. Everyone agreed the Kingswood Youth Center logo contest is a good idea and is on board with selling merchandise.
- iv. Guest speaker needed at Kingswood Youth Center?
 1. **Gary, Jen, and Mark** are interested in speaking.

2. **Justin**- Veterans Day is coming up, idea to have presentation from veterans and then have kids make thank you cards for veterans- common and well-received activity.
 3. Jen did reach out about parade, etc., haven't heard back yet.
 4. See how it goes first at Kingswood, then maybe talk to schools (schools would require background checks, etc.).
 - v. Reached out to Wolfeboro Legion about Veterans' Day Parade (**Tom**- there won't be a parade but there will be an event at the Wright Museum).
 1. Other ideas for activities?
 - a. Virtual 5k-entry fee- Can compete as a team.
 - i. [DAV 5K](#)
 - b. Wounded Warrior Project – organize a walk?
 - i. [1 Message! \(woundedwarriorproject.org\)](#)
 - vi. Trying to post our meeting on NH DMVAS Calendar
 1. **Justin**- reach out to him if having trouble getting meeting posted on the calendar.
 - vii. Reached out to NH Rapid Response
 1. Inquiring about veteran data.
 2. Possibly adding the Veterans Crisis Line to the cards.
 - a. Cards given out to law enforcement, waiting to hear back.
 - viii. Putting together resource packet for medical providers and community partners
 1. Ideas on what should be included?
 2. General resources, veteran-specific resources, if anyone has anything they want to add please email Jen T.
 - ix. Would like to connect to providers.
4. Open discussion-as time allows.
 - a. What specific goals/objectives would you like to see accomplished with this coalition?
 - b. What needs do you feel are the highest priority?

- i. Polling online or in person?
 - ii. Survey available
- c. Planning an event
 - i. “Open house” party or “Wellness fair” with vendors etc.?
 - ii. **Jen W.**- Ossipee VFW does flag raising at town hall, can get info, typically ~30 minutes or less.
 - iii. **Gary**- Madison Elementary School does an event with a presentation and guest speakers. Gary will be speaking, open to Veterans and veterans are encouraged to attend, Gary will get time and date, typically 1.5 hours long.
- d. Thoughts on ways to get information about events out to veteran population quickly?
 - i. Text blast services?
 - ii. Newspaper?
- e. **Chris Lalmond**- ApprenticeshipNH works to connect partners and employers, high schools/colleges to build apprenticeships or pre-apprenticeships. People can come to Chris if they are interested, and he can also connect them with Ryan.
- f. **Ryan Gould**- Part of the Department of Labor (federal side) Office of Apprenticeship- registering agency for NH for any apprenticeship programs. Ryan’s specialty is veteran employment, and he’s pushing to get veterans into apprenticeship programs. Working to change the mentality of apprenticeship program- have occupations from healthcare, schooling, plumbing, to electrical engineering, can work across borders depending on the company. Trying to get this news out and wants to connect with people and provide info.
- g. **Justin and Jen** will be at Fryeburg Fair on Friday Oct. 6 with info and flyers, anyone is welcome to stop by.
- h. **Eric Esty**- social worker from the Berlin Vet Center- the Vet Center is part of Department of Veteran Affairs- focuses on mental health counseling and readjustment counseling. They don’t diagnose or prescribe medication (work with VA for that). Eric comes down to Conway every Friday to meet with veterans at Conway Church of Christ (348 E Main St., Conway, NH 03818). Contact him for more info: (603) 752-2571. Their eligibility is always changing but please send

people to them for services. There is another Vet Center in Manchester/Hookset. It's free of charge and funded by the VA, wants to get the word out for their services.

- i. **Tom Southern**- from Wolfeboro American Legion Post 18- We meet every 3rd Monday at the Post, any Veterans/guests are welcome. There is no Wolfeboro Veterans Day parade, but there will be an event at Wright Museum on Veterans Day at 11am (~1.5 hours). There will be speakers, videos, etc., anyone welcome- boy/girl scouts, DAR, etc., the room holds about 100 people- contact him for more info.

5. Develop mission and vision statement

- a. Jen T. would like to do this with everyone.
- b. Mission
 - i. What we are
- c. Vision
 - i. Where we are going
 1. Include goals/objectives
- d. **Jen T.**- Can email everyone ideas, figure out what we want to do for the rest of the year, have goals to aim for and make this Coalition continue past the grant (ends June 30).
- e. **Mark**- We started with suicide prevention, could get broader?
 - i. **Jen T.**- Have a focus on suicide prevention/decreasing isolation, but can include other goals, would like some other input- email her ideas.
- f. **Jen W.**- Email out verbiage of grant proposals to help guide mission and goals?
 - i. **Jen T.**- The grant mostly just wants to see work towards reducing isolation and increasing mental health support. It's very vague.
- g. See what our priorities are for now and what we can address now, in 3 months, etc. We have funding until next June and we have to spend it.

6. Resources

- a. DMAVS

- i. [Welcome | Department of Military Affairs and Veterans Services \(nh.gov\)](#)
 - b. Easterseals Veterans Count
 - i. [Veteran Assistance Programs & Charities NH | VetsCount](#)
 - c. [VA Manchester Health Care | Veterans Affairs](#)
 - d. Care Coordination Program – NH
 - i. www.ccpnh.com
 - e. Send Jen resources and events to get everything together in one spot.
7. Events
- a. [Events - Vets Count New Hampshire](#)
 - b. [Community Calendar | Department of Military Affairs and Veterans Services \(nh.gov\)](#)
8. Thank you:
- a. Next meeting
 - i. October 24th, 2023, 1000 hrs
 - b. What to do for the next meeting?
 - i. Gary has many speakers who would like to speak, maybe do every other month with speakers? So, we can focus on other things/housekeeping.

To do: Compile list of services/events, Kingswood Youth Center Logo contest and have guest speakers, develop mission and goals, spread Veterans Day events (Madison Elementary School, Ossipee Flag Raising, Wolfeboro event at Wright Museum), add meeting to NH DMVAS calendar.