

Carroll County Veterans Coalition

Meeting Minutes

August 22, 2023

1. 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
Caleb Gilbert	Carroll County Coalition for Public Health- Director of Public Health- caleb.gilbert@graniteuw.org
Don Olsen	Director of TERRA Equine Therapy Center, Army Veteran- info@terraetc.org , (603) 487-6745, www.terraetc.org
Ann Cady	Licensed mental health counselor in Conway, Army Veteran
Gary Bent	Veterans Case Worker for ServiceLink in Carroll County and Belknap County, Veteran
Jennifer Walton	Retired Navy Chief and Hospital Corpsman, jendelion@gmail.com
Mark Allen	Commander of local VFW, Army Veteran, mgallen5180@gmail.com
Lindsay Pratt	LCSW for Conway and Tilton VA, military spouse, Lindsay.Pratt-bluemle@va.gov (603) 624-4366 x5320
David Dube	Social services coordinator at Huggins Hospital, US Marine Corp., ddube@hugginshospital.org
Joe Vano	Partnership for Public Health, Prevention Program Manager

2. Brief overview of last meeting

- a. Introductions, needs that we're seeing for veterans in the community, overview of the Veterans Coalition

3. Updates

a. Jen T.

- i. Reach out attempts-
 1. To increase network
 2. To determine assets and gaps
 3. To determine what capacity is available
- ii. Research
- iii. Promoting Ask the Question
- iv. Spoke with Kera Favorite at Huggins Hospital
 1. Discussed policies/SOPs/Barriers to care per our meeting discussion
 - a. Social history is often first and only time veteran status is brought up, until there is a problem

- i. (Need some way to advocate or have question asked each visit)
 - 2. She is interested in being a resource for us
 - 3. Discussed possibility of flow chart cards for practitioners that can send veterans to the right resources
 - a. Do they exist already? What Capacity?
 - b. Thoughts? -Please reach out to Jen T.
- v. Planning suicide prevention course for September
 - 1. ASIST scheduled for September 11 and 12 0800-1530
 - a. At TriCap
 - b. All day in person, by Dale Garo
 - 2. VA SAVE or Connect for the gatekeeper introduction?
 - a. Anyone interested? Reach out to Jen T.
 - b. Quick gateway training for suicide training
 - c. Connect E-training suicide prevention online- not specific for veterans but a great resource
- vi. Reached out to Carla Taylor of Humble House
 - 1. Great conversation
 - 2. Many aligned objectives
 - 3. We can be a source of resources and networking
 - 4. They are looking for long term housing for veterans
- vii. Attended the Police Chiefs Meeting at Troop E
 - 1. Talked about the coalition and the goals of the coalition
 - 2. Answered questions
 - 3. Discussed Rapid Response Colombia scale cards and if there is info relevant to veterans?
 - a. Difficult to make responders aware?
 - b. Any specialized needed information or care?
 - c. **Caleb**- Reach out to crisis lines to see if they screen for veterans/service history: Reach out to Al Carbonneau, the director Headrest- national suicide prevention lifeline in NH/VA Crisis Line and Eric from Carelon/Rapid Response (988)- do they screen for veterans/service history and identify training for them specific for military populations.
 - d. **Jen T**- Talked with Police Chief about risk and protective factors- why don't they screen for those susceptible for mental health issues on the way into the branches?
 - i. **Don and Gary**- It is self-reported; many people don't disclose, people can be afraid it could end their career, etc.
 - ii. **Caleb**- onset can also happen later.

- viii. Started thinking about some sort of gathering or awareness event.
 - 1. What would be of interest or useful for everyone?
 - 2. For networking, socialization, resource sharing?
 - 3. Would like to do it before the snow flies!
 - 4. What would you like it to look like?
 - 5. Would anyone like to be involved in planning?
 - 6. Resource tables, BBQ, what are people interested in?
Socialization, networking, bring in other regions.
 - a. **Gary**- Veterans Day coming up- see if events are happening in the area. Easter Seals building campus in Franklin- Groundbreaking on Sept. 20. Delta Dogs will be there. Jen has info and contact- Amy Cook. More info on Easter Seals website:
<https://www.easterseals.com/nh/our-programs/military-veterans-campus/>
 - b. **Ann**- Tamworth usually does something for Veterans Day
 - c. **Caleb**- Legion 46 does various activities, ceremony, is there something happening where we could set up a presence for suicide prevention? C3PH has funding from Partnership for Public Health, could make banner or something for table for Wolfeboro parade, get materials.
 - d. **David**- Wolfeboro has a Veterans Day parade sponsored by the Legion post there.
 - i. Jen T. spoke to Tom Southern- still interested in joining this meeting, but he couldn't be here today, Jen will talk to him.
 - e. **Gary**- Delta Dog will come to the next meeting and do a presentation. Home Depot and Lowes do huge Veterans Day sales- set up a table there?
- b. Other updates of activities or networking or needs seen?
 - i. **Don**- TERRA Equine Therapy Center in Conway- will be opening once licensed, setting up clinics that are teaching based around the county, not veteran specific but will have veteran/first responder programs, interested in helping, finding out what the needs are in the community, and what are the barriers to getting people to their facility and getting services.
 - 1. **Caleb**- people like it here because it's rural but it's a challenge to get people connected, trying to find where Veterans "pockets" around the county.
 - 2. **Don**- trying to figure out how to find/reach the veterans, how to connect with them and find people who need the help. Get a

van? Bring people for a clinic and partner with hotels for a weekend, do clinics elsewhere, looking for more info about that.

3. Question about VA reimbursement for equine therapy- **Don**- working on it, **Caleb**- Adult day center got VA approval, took some time. **Don**- Center won't take insurance, do affordable rates- sliding scale, looking for funding to partially fund those in need and veterans, mostly funded through donations. Primarily mental health but partnering with the Laura Foundation. **Ann**- facilitates peer collaboration group- interested in reaching out to Don.
- ii. **Lindsay**- No changes here, Jen T. can email for more info.
 - iii. **Gary**-
 1. Blackhawk came to Madison- huge success, a couple hundred people came, 3 families from his program came, crew were great and impressed with how many people came, pilot was very happy with Madison, veterans loved it and working on it for next year.
 2. Talking with Richard Brown state rep- he said NH owns an old nursing home and they're renovating it, trying to find organizations to utilize that space, there are classrooms, kitchen, greenhouse, etc. unused. They want to have space for veteran use, Richard wants him to pitch something to committee for veterans. Hundreds of acres- dogs, horses, etc.?
 - a. **Ann**- Drop-in center? Vet center in Berlin, but no space for a drop-in center, plus lack of transportation in community
 - b. **Caleb**- Nursing home space seems to be moving forward. Lots of county space, has farm- County Farm Road. Get internet for people to use Wi-Fi, etc. Gary let us know if there's anything C3PH can do to help, Jen willing to come with him for the meeting.
 - c. **David**- group had tried to make transitional housing at the nursing home a few years ago but it didn't work, lack of support, etc.
 - d. Drop-in centers are usually at Vet Venters, have transition counselors, etc., **Ann**- Closest Vet Centers in Berlin and Somersworth.
 3. **Gary**- Centers for when you come home and you don't have someone to support you, Margaret interested in attending meetings, doing research study.

- iv. **Ann**- Several years ago there was a big Veteran event at the North Conway Grand Hotel, presentations, freebies, food, etc., VA sponsored. Invited Eric from Berlin to attend meeting, he may attend virtually.
 - v. **Jen T**- Conference in Portsmouth coming up on September 23, sponsored by Service Credit Union, Jen can give out info if people are interested. Jen will be there with NAMI NH.
 - vi. **Gary**- Pease Airshow on Sept 9 and 10, free but have to pay for parking.
 - vii. **Ann**- Camp Resilience retreats for veterans in Lakes Region: Sept. 14-17 couples' retreat.
4. Open discussion on Carroll County's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats as they pertain to veteran needs and wants.
- a. Strengths
 - i. **Jen T**- Legion events, other events, lots of interest, other events/activities going on? See if Lakes Region wants to partner in? Lakes Region Coalition is well established.
 - ii. Find ideas at the meeting with the state-wide Veterans Coalitions-meetings on the 4th Thursday of every month.
 - iii. **Gary**- Coffee Hour for Veterans on the 3rd Saturday of every month at Village Store in Madison (1808 Village Road, Madison).
 - b. Weaknesses
 - c. Opportunities
 - d. Threats
5. To think about for the next meeting:
- a. What goals or objectives would you like to achieve with this coalition?
 - i. Short term
 - ii. Long term
 - iii. **Caleb**- Make Veteran specific centralized list of services.
 - iv. **Gary**- Open Doors Outdoors in Connecticut organization- program to get veterans outside- Founder Davey Edwards, Gary and 14 other veterans hiked up Mt. Washington. The organization brings Veterans to the White Mountains from CT, they're interested in joining this meeting. Gary connected them with Delta Dogs and they're working on doing another hike up here with younger veterans and the service dogs. Get local veterans involved with the organization and the upcoming hike.
 - v. **Caleb**- Post 95- James LeFebvre- Christmas dinner? Look into Memorial Day activities next year.

- vi. **Ann-** is a trustee of cemeteries in Ossipee- had been approached by a group who wanted to research cemeteries to see who were veterans so they can ensure they have a flag, group working all over the area
 - 1. **Caleb-** Snowville did the same thing- makes sure all veterans graves have flags even if they don't have family around here
 - 2. **Mark-** In MA took digital photos of every veteran grave and made a book of them, so they knew where to place the flags, not too hard to do.
 - b. **Ann-** We need something like a USO along with drop-in center, e.g., in airports- they have games, TV, food, bunks, etc. The YMCA established USOs, but there are no YMCAs here, Ann will do more research.
 - c. **Caleb-** Group at USM established Vet Center through donations with TV, couch etc., so Veteran students could drop in- Veteran Resource Center, ROTC on campus. White Mountain Community College and Granite State College- **Jen T-** reach out to them to see if they have services for Veterans. Lots of online students in Carroll County
 - i. **Jennifer W-** contact colleges and ask about Yellow Ribbon Program to see what services they have for veterans.
 - d. **Caleb-** Bike Tech Program- Scott Boisvert from Tri-County Cap working on it, trying to get it started at Carroll County Adult Ed and County Jail, trying to set up at the nursing home location- veterans could be involved? The program teaches you how to put disassembled bikes together, ask about veterans attending for free?
 - e. **Jen-** Idea of apprenticeship NH for veterans? **Caleb-** talk to Chris Lalmond, connection between apprenticeships and veterans coming out of the military. Talk to him about things geared towards veterans. Apprenticeships for peer support, community health workers, etc.
6. To do before next meeting/Action items
- a. Jen
 - i. More information on Rapid Response cards for police
 - ii. Continued reach out
 - iii. Reach out to Veterans Crisis Line NH and 988 NH to see if they screen for veterans/service history or if there are trainings relevant for them.
 - iv. Look into events for veterans- See if there's a Veterans Day event in Tamworth, Veterans Day Parade in Wolfeboro, see if Legion 46 is doing something for Veterans Day that the Coalition could have a presence at, or a table at Lowes/Home Depot Veterans Day sales, Easter Seals groundbreaking event on September 20th.
 - v. Look into County Nursing Home space for veterans, look into drop-in centers for veterans.
 - vi. Work on veteran-specific list of services/events/etc. in Carroll County

- vii. Connect with Open Doors Outdoors/invite them to next meeting.
- viii. Talk to WMCC, Granite State College, Apprenticeship NH about their services/opportunities for veterans.

7. Next meeting

- a. September 26th at 10:00am
 - b. Tri-Cap and virtual options
8. Minutes and resources will be emailed out next week.
9. Reach out to Jen for anything, email her at jennifer.thomas@graniteuw.org if you're interested in participating in ASSIST suicide prevention training that will be at Tri-Cap on September 11 and 12.