Your gift
to our veterans.
Serving those who served us.
Dear Friends,

The last 18 years mark the longest period in our nation’s history that we’ve been at war. And for the first time ever, our children are fighting the same war that their parents fought. Our 2019 high school graduates went out into the world this year without ever knowing a single day of peacetime. Sadly, our involvement in the Middle East conflicts has lasted so long that many Americans don’t even remember we’re still at war.

To make matters worse, we’re fighting these wars on multiple fronts on the other side of the globe with the smallest fighting force in history. The result? Today’s men and women are spending years in a combat zone. They’re separated from families, they live in a prolonged state of hypervigilance, and they wrestle with moral injury. Our service members sacrifice their comforts, health, and even their lives over and over again.

So, it comes as no surprise that the impact of military service on individuals and their families is often chronic stress, sometimes exacerbated by PTSD, depression, traumatic brain injury and other conditions prevalent among returning veterans. Many veterans become homeless due to mental health or substance abuse issues, and many more threaten or attempt suicide.

Thankfully, when Rochester’s veterans come home from duty, they have a unique resource: Veterans Outreach Center.

Veterans Outreach Center (VOC) is a community-based organization dedicated solely to stabilizing and strengthening the lives of veterans. Opened in 1973 to help returning Vietnam Veterans cope with wartime experiences, VOC is still a beacon to local veterans every day.

Our goal is to ensure each veteran has the support they need to meet any challenge. To do this most efficiently, VOC combines on-site services with hundreds of community partnerships throughout Monroe County. Longstanding relationships, together with careful service coordination, ensure a high-level of success in meeting the vocational, mental health, wellness, and social needs vital for veterans assimilating successfully into civilian life.

But steep challenges remain, for the homeless veteran in particular. We know from experience that even the best services may be futile until a veteran has a safe, comfortable, stable place to live. Because VOC’s South Avenue housing facilities have not been renovated or updated for years, we need your help. Both emergency shelters and our transitional apartments need complete renovations from top to bottom – from roofing and plumbing to carpets and paint.

Please consider supporting this special effort. Your gift will help provide a safe haven for Rochester’s veterans. Together, we will be able to provide a warm, clean purposeful space where veterans are proud to live.

To answer three immediate questions:

Yes

Housing renovations and suicide prevention programs will require significant resources.

Yes

Rochester’s local veterans are very deserving of our support.

As we move forward into this phase of fulfilling our mission through this effort it’s exciting to imagine the strides that will be made in veteran’s lives. And a final answer?

Yes

There is a place where veterans can ask for the much-deserved help they need. Not only can they ask for help, but it is freely given, without judgement. It is a place where friends wait with open arms and welcome hearts – Veterans Outreach Center of Rochester.

Thank you for considering an investment in veterans through this unique request. Your heartfelt support will mean life gets better for these great Americans and their families, a commitment we make in direct gratitude for defending our freedom.

Ellen Adams
Chairman
U.S.A.F. Major (Retired)

Laura Stradley
Executive Director
U.S. Army Veteran
For nearly half a century, Veterans Outreach Center has been Serving Those Who Served US. We are anchored in the Western NY community and deliver life-saving services to thousands of veterans each year. Through a combination of direct service, community collaboration, and advocacy, we provide for veterans the most basic (and more complex) needs. We offer social and emotional support, as well as opportunities for professional and economic advancement. VOC has demonstrated the value of cost effective, community-based services over the past 46 years, and we’ve been recognized as one of the nation’s most effective homeless veteran employment assistance programs through the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans’ “Best Practice Profiles of Employment Assistance Programs.”

“As Lake Beverage Corporation celebrates 75 years in the beer & beverage distribution business, we wanted to thank our employees, customers, suppliers and the community at large for their support. Knowing the valuable work that the VOC does on behalf of veterans in our community, we chose to make our most impactful gift to the VOC capital campaign.”

Bernie Schroeder - President, Lake Beverage Corporation

“Every year we go to the golf tournament and Stars and Stripes. For our family the time was right to make a bigger impact. The challenges for today’s returning veterans may be a little different, but VOC is the same. Supporting the VOC Capital Campaign is hands-down our favorite gift and perhaps the most important gift we’ve ever made.”

Don Reeve - retired Wegmans Food Markets
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VOC’s programs continuously evolve to meet changing needs, including the depth and breadth of our residential services. With a plethora of options available, VOC provides extensive emergency and transitional housing to male veterans, as well as unique services and facilities for female veterans with (or without) children. We also offer substance abuse counseling and suicide prevention / awareness programs, because the unfortunate reality is that alcohol and prescription drug abuse rates are higher among service members and veterans than the civilian population. Knowing this and the underlying reasons for such figures, VOC joins the entire nation in battling the unrelenting tide of suicides among veterans. At a catastrophic rate of more than 20 deaths by suicide each day (one and half more times than those who have not served in the military), it is our duty and our honor to care for those who have borne the battle.

More than 200,000 veterans have visited VOC over the last four decades. Our model is inclusive and welcoming to veterans of all eras and branches of service, regardless of discharge type. In 2018 alone, more than 1000 military families were helped through housing searches and placements, employment and training, and wellness services.

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Counting on you.

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A place to call home.

Critical renovations at VOC’s two South Wedge shelters, when completed, will assist local Veterans in their transition to civilian life. The updated buildings will impact the long and short-term success for Veterans returning home from service.

Richards House, an emergency shelter, has been home to thousands of veterans since it’s opening in 2000.

And right next door is Otto House, which includes eight transitional apartments for veterans to move into as they progress towards securing their own, permanent housing.

Daily wear and tear on the buildings now demands more than cosmetic fixes: badly needed comprehensive renovations are planned and underway at both locations. New roofs, kitchens, bathrooms, electrical / plumbing / HVAC and so much more is necessary for these homes to be functional and welcoming. New space for confidential counseling meetings and therapy programs will also be an integral component of the new design, supporting the full well-being of our Veterans.

Now more than ever.

The need for services to support our veterans is greater than ever. The urgent issues facing today’s veterans and service members include engagement in the longest war in our nation’s history, repeated combat deployments, high rates of sexual assault for our female veterans, the Opioid addiction crises, the Agent Orange epidemic, shifting demographics and more. Here are just a few ways that these challenges are mitigated by compassionate, supportive services at Veterans Outreach Center:

We support Veterans Treatment Court. Judges call on VOC more often to provide support to veterans in need of addiction and substance abuse programs. Housing for these veterans often goes hand-in-hand with treatment. Safe, clean, convenient housing is critical to give veterans in recovery the best chance to thrive.

We offer unique programs to Female Veterans. More women are serving in the US military than ever before. Services for women upon discharge—particularly emergency housing options for female veterans with children—is extremely limited in our community. VOC opened Priscilla’s House in 2017, the first of its kind in Monroe County, to provide a place for women veterans with children to live.

We are raising awareness of the suicide epidemic and doing all we can to help veterans in crisis. Our hearts go out to any family affected by this crisis and the crushing grief that ensues. We are committed to making an impact in our community as it relates to education, awareness, support, and (ideally) a reduction in the rate of suicide among local veterans. VOC is furthering the development of a multi-tiered approach to focus all staff efforts on this issue, while simultaneously collaborating with community partners to support at-risk veterans and their families in this region.

We coordinate with hundreds of community partners so that every program is personalized. This approach connects veterans with vocational services, family supports, transportation, healthcare, and wellness services. Because community and government agencies refer a higher number of veterans to VOC each day, service coordination is in higher demand than any time before in the history of the organization.

We welcome all veterans into VOC without judgment. An increasing number of Veterans identify as LGBTQ. These men and women require more protection and support in order to find gainful employment, and to live life free of stigma or violence. We offer services to all veterans without discrimination and often provide assistance to correct wrongful separation documents from service.

We care for every generation of veteran and tailor services to meet their needs. Many veterans who served in Vietnam are still plagued horrifically by that war, both in terms of Post-Traumatic Stress and the gravity of health issues related to Agent Orange exposure. Agent Orange chemicals used during the war affect thousands of veterans in this region alone with cancers, heart disease and much more. Likewise, recent admissions from the US government reveal that the drinking water at Camp Lejeune—one of the largest Marine Corps bases in our nation—was contaminated for more than thirty years. The result is catastrophic health effects similar to those associated with Agent Orange. VOC is here to assist with benefits information, support, and access to healthcare services for every generation of veteran in need.

Often, the VOC is not only the one-stop veterans need. It may be the ONE AND ONLY stop they feel they can make. It is critical that when veterans turn to VOC for help, we are here for them.
Serving those whose serve us.

We ask for your help to immediately renovate our emergency and transitional housing buildings. We humbly request your support for select programs and services that are specifically designed for local veterans. And we invite your investment in VOC’s future as we build an endowment that will ensure financial viability, regardless of ever-changing government funding priorities. When complete, the Campaign will enhance our ability to serve veterans with compassion and dignity. Your gift will save lives and change lives.

$4 Million Dollars

- **Otto House renovations: $700,000**
  - Transitional Housing for Veterans in Treatment Programs Battling Substance Abuse, Addiction, and /or Homelessness.

- **Richards House renovations: $2,000,000**
  - Emergency Housing for Veterans in Need of a Place to Live Out of the Cold and Off the Street, including expansion of Programs and Number of Veterans to be Housed.

- **Programs and Services: $300,000**
  - Suicide Prevention and Awareness, Substance Abuse and Addiction Treatment Programs; Coordinated Services including Peer Support, Various Therapeutic Modalities, and Provision of Food, Clothing, Toiletries, Employment Development and Placement, Career Counseling, Job Readiness Training and Occupational Skills Training.

- **Endowment: $1,000,000**
  - For the Financial Health and Stability of the VOC as we move into the Next 50 Years of Lifesaving Services for our Warfighters.

“The brightest future for local veterans possible through your generous gift.”

Your support ensures the men and women who have risked their lives to protect our freedom have a place to call home.
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Bernard Schroeder, Lake Beverage Corporation

“As a retired Major General of the US Army as well as a former Board member of Veterans Outreach Center, I believe wholeheartedly in this agency’s mission and their ability to accomplish it. I also believe that all of our veterans deserve a safe, comfortable place to sleep at night and call home. VOC is that place for hundreds of Rochester-area veterans each year. I trust the leadership at Veterans Outreach Center to ensure their facilities meet the needs of the people living in them, and I’m confident that the funds raised during this campaign will be some of the best-spent dollars this community has seen in recent years.”

Major General John Batiste
Mission and History

Our mission is to serve veterans with compassion and advocate for all who have worn our nation’s uniform so they can rise and live life to the fullest.

Founded locally in 1973 by returning Vietnam Veterans, today’s Veterans Outreach Center remains steadfast in the Western NY community and committed to Serving Those Who Serve Us. We offer a comprehensive portfolio of supportive services designed to meet the needs of veterans and their families. Through the generosity of our community, all of these programs and services are provided free of charge.

Values

Respect
We treat everyone with dignity and compassion, and we show appreciation for strengths as well as vulnerabilities.

Integrity
We are trustworthy, honorable, and professional. Taking ownership of our actions and communication is a top priority; we do this by conveying honesty and respect through tone, verbal, and non-verbal interactions. We demonstrate fiscal responsibility with all resources.

Service
We believe that service is a part of the American fabric, and recognize the great sacrifices that are made by all who have worn our nation’s uniform. We are committed to serving our veterans and their families with passion and deep appreciation for their service.

Excellence
We are hard-working, innovative, and creative; we strive for continuous improvement. Our goal is to consistently grow the quality and scope of our services, to better meet the needs of our veterans and their families.