



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Susan Serino

## SENATOR SUE SERINO AND VET2VET PARTNER TO SEND SPECIAL 'THANK YOU' TO LOCAL VETERANS

SUSAN SERINO | October 27, 2021

| ISSUE: **VETERANS APPRECIATION**



**POUGHKEEPSIE, NY** – Hundreds of local veterans and their guests recently received a free pasta dinner and access to important community resources at a series of drive-thru appreciation events hosted by Senator Sue Serino and Mental Health America of Dutchess County's Vet2Vet Program. This year's dinners were served at the American Legion Post 178 in Millerton and VFW Post 170 in Poughkeepsie. In total, over 375 meals were served between the two events to veterans and their guests.

*“Our veterans have made tremendous sacrifices for our country, and our community, and these dinners have always been a small way for us to say ‘thank you,’ and remind them that they are a part of an incredibly grateful community” said Senator Sue Serino. “These pasta dinners also give us the opportunity to connect veterans from across Dutchess with the local Vet2Vet Program and introduce them to the many resources available to help them thrive here in our community. I thank both the American Legion in Millerton and the VFW in Poughkeepsie for generously hosting these events, and I extend the same to our team of dedicated volunteers for all that they do to make these events a success, and for joining us in showing our full gratitude and support for our local heroes.”*

*Adam Roche, Director of the Dutchess County Division of Veterans Services said, “Senator Serino has greatly impacted the lives of local veterans, particularly through her continued support of the Joseph P. Dwyer Veterans Peer-to-Peer Support Program. This great event allows our office to interact with local veterans and inform them on all the resources and services Dutchess County has to offer them due to their service. These veterans have sacrificed so much for the residents of this Country, and it is our duty to make sure they are taken care of in return.”*

*Anthony Kavouras, Program Manager of Mental Health America of Dutchess County Vet2Vet said, “I am proud to be a part of these Veteran Appreciation Pasta Dinners. The response for this year’s events have been amazing. It shows that Dutchess County Veterans are engaged with the community. This is just a little “thank you” for their service and a chance for the Senator, myself and the County’s VSO to meet and greet our wonderful Dutchess County Veterans.”*

Carl LoFaro, Community Engagement and Partnership Coordinator for Suicide Prevention at the Veterans Affairs (VA) Hudson Valley Health Care System was also present on Sunday, October 24th’s dinner to discuss resources and services offered through the VA and the work they are doing to decrease veteran suicide rates across the local community. Adam Nowik and Bob Monaco, both retired members of the Dutchess County Sheriff’s Office, once again brought together their team of community volunteers to generously prepare the dinners, as they have done each year in support of these important events.

These dinners are made possible through the Mental Health America of Dutchess County Vet2Vet Program, which was established locally after Senator Serino secured funding in the state’s budget to expand the Joseph P. Dwyer Veterans Peer Support Program. Through a unique peer-to-peer model, the Vet2Vet Program offers a non-clinical approach to helping

veterans struggling with PTSD, TBI, or other mental health issues. Those who were unable to attend the dinners, but are interested in learning more about the program, can contact Anthony Kavouras, Program Manager, at 845-473-2500 ext. 1364. A more in depth look at the program can be viewed by visiting their website or by [clicking here](#). Senator Serino and Vet2Vet have partnered to host at least two of these appreciation dinners each year since 2015.

**Putnam County Veterans can look forward to their own appreciation event, the “2021 Drive-Thru Chow Down: Salute to Veterans,” which is being held on Sunday, November 7<sup>th</sup>, at the Putnam County Golf Course (187 Hill Street, Mahopac, NY 10541). Veterans and their guests can drive-thru at an assigned time between 11:00 a.m. and 2:00pm. An RSVP is required by Monday, November 1<sup>st</sup>, and veterans can call 845-528-0417 to reserve their meals.**

To learn more about these events, or to find out how to volunteer in the future, please contact Senator Serino’s Hyde Park Office at 845-229-0106 or [serino@nysenate.gov](mailto:serino@nysenate.gov).

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