



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## Pfc Joseph Dwyer Peer Support Program Launches in Jefferson County

PATTY RITCHIE December 7, 2012

| ISSUE: **MILITARY AFFAIRS, MILITARY, TROOPS, VETERANS**

### **Veteran Outreach Made Possible Through Grant Secured by Senator Ritchie**

Returning veterans suffering with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and other combat related illnesses can now get care through a new peer-support program located in Jefferson County.

The PFC Joseph Dwyer Peer Support Program for Veterans—located at 247 State Street in Watertown—was made possible in part through a grant secured by State Senator Patty Ritchie.

“The soldiers of the 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division are our neighbors, our friends and such big parts of our communities,” said Senator Ritchie. “The North Country is their home, and that’s why it’s so important that we provide the necessary resources to support them.”

“Soldiers suffering with PTSD are casualties of war, and this program is special because it connects veterans with others who may have been through similar experiences.”

The PFC Joseph Dwyer Peer Support Program for Veterans is named for an Army soldier from New York who enlisted following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, and who took his own life after returning home from Iraq.

Dwyer, an Army medic with the 3rd Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment, was famously shown in an iconic Military Times photo carrying a 4-year-old Iraqi boy to safety during a raging battle in the early months of the war. While in Iraq, his unit was engaged in nearly daily gun battles over three weeks.

Senator Ritchie, whose district includes the largest US military post east of the Mississippi River; Senator Lee Zeldin, a combat veteran and captain in the US Army Reserves, and Senator Roy McDonald, a Vietnam War veteran, jointly secured funding in this year's state budget for the program.

Programs in four counties—Jefferson, Rensselaer, Saratoga and Suffolk—are each eligible to receive up to \$200,000 in state budget funds.

*(Pictured in the above photo from left to right are Mental Health Association in Jefferson County Executive Director Ted Stiles, Senator Ritchie, Peer to Peer Veteran Coordinator Gary Howell and Military, Veteran and Family Advocate Melissa Amos)*