



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## Ritchie Secures \$185,000 to Support Active Duty Troops, Veterans WITH Ptsd

PATTY RITCHIE August 26, 2014

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### **Funding Will Aid PFC Joseph Dwyer Peer Support Program for Veterans, River Community Wellness Program**

In an effort to support active duty military and veterans, State Senator Patty Ritchie has announced she has secured \$185,000 to aid men and women suffering with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and other combat related illnesses.

The special funding will be split between Watertown's VETS Peer to Peer Outreach Center—an organization running the PFC Joseph Dwyer Peer Support Program for Veterans, which was established in part through a grant secured by Senator Ritchie—and Alexandria Bay's River Community Wellness

Program, based at River Hospital.

“Our soldiers make the ultimate sacrifice, putting their lives on the line to protect our freedom,” said Senator Patty Ritchie. “Many troops who have served in combat zones return with wounds we cannot see and as a result, struggle with PTSD as they try to reacclimate themselves with life at home.”

“It’s critical that we provide support to those returning soldiers. I’m so pleased to be able to provide this funding, which will ensure our brave troops are given both a shoulder to lean on and peers to talk with who have shared in similar experiences.”

This most recent funding builds upon \$185,000 in aid secured last year by Senator Ritchie to support both the PFC Joseph Dwyer Peer Support Program for Veterans and the River Community Wellness Program. In addition, she has taken the lead at the State Capitol and in the community on veterans issues through the following efforts:

- Sponsoring a new law to help disabled veterans find employment by requiring state agencies to seek out veteran-owned businesses for government contracts;
- Serving on the Council of State Governments “Task Force on Military and Veterans Affairs; a nationwide group comprised of legislators and elected state leaders from across the country tasked with looking at ways to improve services and outreach to veterans and active members of America’s military;
- Sponsoring New York’s new “Hire-a-Vet” tax credit that rewards employers with tax credits when they employ recently returning veterans;

According to experts, PTSD is a mental health problem that can occur after someone goes through a traumatic event like war, assault, or disaster. Recent studies have shown that between 6 percent and 12.5 percent of returning Iraq and Afghanistan veterans suffer from PTSD, and 62 percent have received some level of mental health care after coming home.

*(Pictured in the above photo from left to right are Brad Frey, Director of River Community Wellness Program, Senator Ritchie, Marcia Graves, a River Community Wellness Program LPN and Andrea Pfeiffer, Director of Marketing and Community Relations at River Hospital)*

