



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Samra G. Brouk

Senator Samra Brouk Announces \$4.5 Million in State Aid for PFC Dwyer Veteran Support Program

SAMRA G. BROUK June 4, 2021

| ISSUE: **VETERANS SERVICES, ACCESS TO MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES, PFC JOSEPH P. DWYER VETERANS PEER SUPPORT PROJECT**



Rochester, NY - Veterans across New York State will have renewed access to additional mental health resources as a result of restored funding to the PFC Dwyer Program, thanks to Senator Samra Brouk's (SD-55) advocacy in Albany.

"As Chair of the Senate Committee on Mental Health, and as a tireless advocate for our veterans, I was proud to fight for this funding," **stated Senator Brouk.**

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Supporting the men and women who have served our nation means that we must ensure that there are resources available for those struggling with mental health as a result of their service.”

The Dwyer Program serves hundreds of veterans in Monroe County, as well as their families. Locally, state funds will be used to keep the program operational and to maximize its reach in our region. Dwyer Program resources include social events, ridesharing, and peer-to-peer support groups—all with the intention of creating a network that can understand and address the needs of returned service members.

“Advocating for this program to be reinstated in the New York State budget was a major priority for us here in Monroe County,” **said County Executive Adam Bello**. “We are incredibly grateful to Senator Brouk for advocating for our veterans in Albany.”

U.S. Navy Veteran and CompeerCORPS Program Manager Tracy LoTemple also recognized the value of this funding. “Losing this program would be devastating to the Veterans in Monroe County; the network of support that has been built for and by local veterans is priceless,” LoTemple said. “This program has created indestructible friendships, it has broken the chains of isolation for some, it is a network of learning how to navigate the VA system, it is a reason to get out of bed, it is a buddy check, it is no one left behind... This is the community we are able to provide for those who have sacrificed so much for our great country.”

“I truly feel that without my involvement I have with the PFC Dwyer Program of Monroe County powered by CompeerCorps and associated agencies/programs my forward movement in my recovery and my life would become stagnant,” **said Keith “Doc” Dawson, SSG (ret.), Flightmedic, US Army**. “I continue to enjoy all programs, events, and aspects of this

organization. I am always looking to involve my other Veteran Brothers and Sisters in [the Dwyer Program], it's what keeps me on the right track in life, as well as paying it forward!"

The Dwyer Program was established to honor and memorialize PFC Joseph P Dwyer who was diagnosed with PTSD related to his service in Iraq. The program seeks to end isolation among veterans, and build a community that creates both a support system and a network of resources. Since 2019, the PFC Dwyer Program has served nearly 400 veterans and 220 immediate family members in Monroe County. In that time, the program has hosted more than 400 events to serve as opportunities for veterans and loved ones to build a network. In fact, more than 1,500 rides have been given through their Vets Driving Vets program.

Senator Brouk looks forward to finding additional opportunities to support veterans, both in Monroe County and across New York State.