



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michelle Hinchey

Senator Michelle Hinchey Announces the Historic Expansion of the Joseph P. Dwyer Veteran Support Program to Greene County

MICHELLE HINCHEY September 12, 2022



GREENE COUNTY, NY – Senator Michelle Hinchey today announced that, due to her advocacy during FY'23 State Budget negotiations, alongside a broad coalition of veterans, a historic \$185,000 has been secured in this year's budget to bring the lauded PFC Joseph P. Dwyer Veteran Peer Support Program to Greene County for the first time and a total of \$7.7 million to expand the program statewide to ensure veterans throughout New York have access to this vital support.

In Greene County, the Dwyer Program will be administered by the Hudson Valley Center for Veteran Reintegration, in partnership with the Greene County Veterans Service Agency and Greene County Department of Mental Health, and is officially in operation as of today, September 12, 2022. Veterans in Greene County interested in joining the local PFC Joseph P. Dwyer Program chapter can contact Program Manager Arin VanDemark at arin.vandemark@hvncvr.org or by calling the office at (518) 719-0020. The Dwyer office is located at 905 Greene County Office Building, Cairo, NY 12413.

"I fought to bring the Joseph P. Dwyer Program to Greene County because this program is a model for veterans' assistance that saves lives. Our local veterans—no matter what war they served in or what stage they're at in their transition back into civilian life—deserve to have strong local connections to peer-to-peer support," **said Senator Michelle Hinchey.** "Our veterans have sacrificed everything for us, and it has been my honor to secure this vital program expansion so that Greene County, and communities statewide, have the resources to care for their veterans and work towards eliminating the stigma of veteran mental health at large. Supporting our veterans is some of the most important work we can do as a state, and I'll never stop fighting to expand veterans' services and advance legislation that uplifts them and their families."

Kevin Keaveny, President of the Hudson Valley Center for Veteran Reintegration, said, "We are extremely grateful to Senator Hinchey and everyone who advocated on our behalf to expand the Joseph Dwyer Peer Support Program statewide and to counties like Greene for the first time. This program literally saves the lives of veterans and their families and is needed now more than ever as veterans struggle with transitioning to civilian life during the pandemic. This funding will enable us to continue our essential work of outreach and support to serve veterans who have served our country."

Director of the Greene County Veterans Service Agency Michelle Romalin Deyo said, “We are very grateful to Senator Hinchey for all of her assistance in obtaining our PFC Joseph P. Dwyer Funding so that we can bring an actual program with peer support services to Greene County Veterans, after years of conceptualization.”

Created in 2012 as a pilot partnership between the Suffolk County United Veterans Program and Suffolk Veterans Agency, the Joseph P. Dwyer Program has steadily demonstrated the success of the peer-to-peer model in helping veterans transition from military service to civilian life and facing challenges with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), depression, and general reintegration support. The Dwyer Program is named to honor the memory of Joseph P. Dwyer, an Iraq War Veteran and U.S. Army Medic from Mount Sinai, New York, who lost his battle with PTSD in 2008.

To better support New York’s veterans, military members, and their families, Hinchey also fought to include a provision in the FY’23 State Budget, which successfully elevated New York’s Division of Veterans’ Services into a department-level state agency. The newly formed NYS Department of Veterans’ Services will provide enhanced access to benefits for veterans, help them address long-standing issues, and connect them to local-level support, such as the Dwyer Program.

###