

Blue Star Mothers NY8



We are mothers, stepmothers, grandmothers, foster mothers and female legal guardians who have children serving in the military, guard or reserves, or children who are veterans. We support each other and our children while promoting patriotism. Our organization focuses on our mission every single day and will never, ever, forsake our troops, our veterans or the families of our Fallen Heroes.

July 2026 Newsletter

Care Packages Packed

On Saturday, June 27th nearly 150 care packages were filled with snacks, hygiene supplies, magazines, puzzle books, and socks to be sent to service



members deployed overseas. We are so thankful for the volunteers that helped to pack and for the donors that helped us fill the boxes, Many thanks to BSM Debbie T and Kathy D for organizing the supplies and getting the custom form information entered and labels printed.



Meetings & Events

* Chapter Meeting

July 18th @9:30am
Henrietta Ely Fagan
American Legion 260
Middle Rd Henrietta NY

* Future Strong Stars

Aug 3rd @7-8pm
Panera Bread 1501
Howard Rd, Gates

* Women Veterans'

Coffee House August
14th @5:30pm

New Location:
Gates Town Hall,
Annex Rm
1605 Buffalo Rd,
14624

RSVP to 585-210-9779
See page 4 for the
2026 schedule.

Upcoming Events

Gold Star Mother's and Family Day

Sunday, Sept 27th
2pm at White Haven
Memorial Park, 210
Marsh Rd, Pittsford, NY
14534

Webster Garlic Fest

Sept 12-13th, Webster
Rec Center, 1350
Chiyoda Dr

Webster Celebrates America's 250th

The Rochester Blue Star Mothers along Gold Star Mothers celebrated with Webster on June 24th honoring our nation's 250th birthday. There were food trucks, crafts, honor guard, and musket firing.



2026 VA Women Veterans Health & Wellness Fair

The Rochester Blue Star Mothers had a vendor table at the Chalkins Rd VA Outpatient Clinic Wellness Fair. There were number of VA programs and community partners there with information about services and programs for women veterans. Thanks to BSM Dory B, Lynn M, & Mary Jean C for staffing the BSM table



Rochester Honor Flight 95

On May 16th the first female veteran Honor Flight left Rochester, NY for Washington DC. Many of the women veterans from the Coffee House, a group sponsored by the Rochester Blue Star Mothers were on that flight. Several BSM from NY8 had the honor of being guardians on this emotional once in a lifetime experience. This historic flight brought 59 local women veterans from the Cold War, Vietnam, and post-1975 eras to visit war memorials in Washington, D.C. The 59 veterans included 24 from the Army, 17 from the Navy, 14 from the Air Force, and 4 from the Marines (including 9 nurses!!!).



SAVE THE DATE

Lights of Honor

Sunday, December 6th

Army Navy Game

Saturday, December 12th

Wreaths Across America

Saturday, December 19th

Volunteers Need

Garlic Fest Sept 12-13th

A variety of opportunities to support the event: registration, support for vendors, directing the public to various vendor areas. Email BlueStarMothersroc@gmail.com or call 585-210-9881 to see how you can help.

Blue Star Mothers of America Membership

Membership renews in August for mothers and grandmothers. Dues is \$30 with \$15 going to National and \$15 stays with the chapter. Being an active paid member allows you to vote on various chapter issues. You can renew on-line at www.bluestarmothers.org or pay the \$30 at a chapter meeting. Associate members do not need to renew their membership.

VA Information and News

All Blue Star Mother chapters are encouraged by our national Blue Star Mothers of America (BSMA) program to support a VA facility. The Veterans Health Administration operates 170 main VA Medical Centers alongside over 1,100 outpatient clinics nationwide. The Rochester Blue Star Mothers support the Canandaigua VA Medical Center facility located at 400 Fort Hill Ave in Canandaigua and Chalkins Rd Outpatient Clinic at 260 Chalkins Rd in Henrietta. The Canandaigua VA is part of the Finger Lakes VA system which includes the Bath VA Medical Center and six clinics. Along with primary care, the VA offers mental health services (substance abuse/addiction, PTSD, military sexual trauma care), a women’s health program, specialty care (cardiology, podiatry, GI, neurology, etc.) and social programs and services like the Homeless Vet, caregiver support, food pantry, and the Connection Cafe.

It is through the VA’s CDCE (Center of Development & Civic Engagement) office (585-393-7757) that our chapter can assist VA veterans, connect and support programs, and become aware of specific veteran needs at the VA. There are 16 specific accounts at the CDCE that can use donated money to support veterans, areas like Recreation Supplies, Holiday/Christmas, Women Veterans, Palliative/Hospice Care, Golden Games. There are ongoing needs for inpatient programs and the structured outpatient programs see page 4. The CDCE office puts out a whole list of needs for the holidays, see page 5 for the flyer.

There is an ongoing need by the Homeless Vet program (585-373-8692) for basic household items to help homeless veterans going into housing. The Homeless Vet program helps veterans who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless due to financial hardship, unemployment, addiction, depression, or transition from jail. See page 4 for Homeless Program needs.

VA volunteer opportunities include;

- Red Vest Ambassadors at all VA sites, a greeter that directs veterans to various provider offices,
- Drivers to help veterans get to VA appointments, using DAV vehicles,
- Community Living Center 1:1 visits, escorting veterans to areas at the Canandaigua VA like the barber shop and canteen.

All donations (money and in-kind items) made to the VA need to be accompanied by a VA donation form. All volunteer hours are tracked and reported as BSMA donated time. This information is then shared with the Nation BSMA VA Representative Anne Parker.

The VA food pantry at Canandaigua and Chalkins Rd is always in need of shelf stable food items. These items can be brought to our monthly meetings.

Pantry List

- | | |
|---|---|
| Canned chicken | Canned Tuna |
| Pasta | Pasta Sauce (glass/plastic jar or cans) |
| Rice-A-Roni Meals | Peanut Butter |
| Oatmeal | Cereal |
| Canned Fruit | Canned Vegetables |
| Personal care items (soap, toothpaste, shampoo) | |
| Shelf stable milk or juice | |
| Reusable Shopping Bags | |

Contact Sue Louis at seabeemom2003@gmail.com or leave a message on the BSM voicemail 585-210-9881 if you would like to volunteer at the VA or make a donation.

Inpatient and Structured Outpatient Program Needs & Homeless Vet Program Needs

Item and Material Donation Needs and Procedure

A donation sheet must accompany all donations. Donation forms are available in the CDCE Office in Canandaigua, the Welcome Area at the Rochester Calkins VA Clinic, or on the last page of these Guidelines. All forms need to be legible and include complete donor information.

All Item and Material donations must be NEW! Many of our Veteran programs share the same needs for donated items, while others have more specific needs, or needs only in limited quantity, or at specific times of the year. If you are unsure of the acceptability, need, or quantity of an item you intend to donate, please call the CDCE Office in advance at 585-393-7757.

<u>Inpatient Programs, Structured Outpatient Programs</u>	<u>Homeless Program Specific Donation Needs</u>
Gift Cards: ➤ VISA, Prepaid Phone Cards ➤ Wal-Mart, Dollar General, Goodwill ➤ Wegmans, Tops, Aldis ➤ I-Tunes ➤ Amazon ➤ Ube ➤ Pre-Paid Gas Cards Personal Care Items:(NO SAMPLES) ➤ Lotion, Deodorant ➤ Body Wash, Shampoo, or 2 in1 Combos ➤ Shaving Cream, Multi-Blade Razors* ➤ Denture Grip, Denture Cleaner ➤ Toothpaste, Toothbrushes ➤ Electric Razors* ➤ Lip Balm (Chapstick)* Men's Clothing Items* : (NEW ONLY) ➤ Clothing Sizes L – 4XL ➤ Socks ➤ Knit Hats, Winter Gloves ➤ Sweatpants, Sweatshirts Other Miscellaneous Items:* ➤ Puzzle Books, Craft Kits, Models ➤ Adult Coloring Books/Watercolors, Colored Pencils ➤ Canteen Books (contact Canteen or CDCE) ➤ Baby Diapers, Diaper Bags, Baby Clothes ➤ Holiday or event greeting cards/messages designated for Veterans. *Indicates Only Minimum Quantities Needed For donations of Holiday or other greeting cards, we must receive them no later than 5 days prior to the Holiday or event to facilitate distribution.	Household Essentials: ➤ Queen-size bedding and Blankets ➤ Bed Pillows ➤ Air Mattresses with built-in-air pump ➤ Bath Towels, Hand Towels ➤ Shower Curtains, Shower Hooks ➤ Brooms, Mops ➤ Trash Cans, Trash Bags Household Appliances: ➤ Vacuum Cleaner ➤ Coffee Makers ➤ Can Openers Kitchen Items: ➤ Dishes, Bowls, Cups, Glasses ➤ Dish Soap, Dish Towels ➤ Pots, Pans ➤ Silverware, Utensils ➤ Paper Plates, Napkins Home Cleaning Supplies: ➤ Laundry Detergent ➤ Bathroom Cleaners, Lysol ➤ Toilet Paper, Paper Towels WE DO NOT ACCEPT DONATIONS OF USED CLOTHING, BOOKS, MAGAZINES, PUZZLES, OR ANY ITEMS THAT ARE HANDMADE. All In-Person deliveries of donations MUST BE scheduled in advance. Call 585-393-7757 for arrangement and delivery instructions. We do have a population of women in our Women's Veteran Program, but few that are In-Patient Residents. If you have an interest in a donation specific to Women Veterans, please contact us for current information and specific needs.

2026 Holidays Needs at the Canandaigua VA

VA Finger Lakes Healthcare System @ Canandaigua VA

HOLIDAY 2026 GIVING PROGRAMS

Holiday Gift Cards for Veterans:

The major focus of our gift giving to Outpatient Veterans in structured programs will be by Gift Card. This is a useful gift for the majority of Veterans, and to be consistent, we are asking for **Walmart Gift Cards in denominations of \$20**. When delivered or sent to us, please specify they are for "Holiday Gift Cards for Veterans." To allow us time to distribute, we need to receive all Gift Cards **no later than Friday, November 27, 2026**.



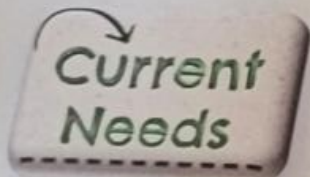
Operation: Making Spirits Bright (Adopt-A-Family)

Purchase gift cards and/or gifts requested by local Veterans and their families, identified by our Staff, to be in desperate need during the Holidays. **Contact CDCE** for details and information. Please specify "Adopt-A-Family" on donation form and return to CDCE.

Write a Check: A popular choice, as your monetary gift, written out to **CDCE**, can be earmarked for a specific VA need or program and can be made in memory or honor of a friend/loved one. A complete list of specific program fund designations is available in our Guidelines for Donations. To receive, contact our Office.



Sponsor a Musical Performance or Recreational Activity/Outing: For a gift of memory-making, contact CDCE to identify a recreational activity or outing desired for the Veterans to add to their inpatient Veteran (CLC) monthly calendar! Donor would pay vendor directly and may be able to participate (activity-dependent) alongside our Veterans!



General Gift Giving (not just during the Holidays):

ALL items must be NEW

Inpatient and Outpatient Veterans have ongoing needs for various items throughout the year. Below is a list of useful items:

All Programs

Gift cards: Amazon, VISA, prepaid Gas Cards, Uber, Grocery, Wal-Mart, restaurants, CVS, Patriot Bucks or Canteen gift cards (to be purchased/redeemed at VA Canteen)

Personal Care Items: 2-in-1 Body wash/shampoo, deodorant, shaving cream, denture adhesive

Cold Weather Gear: Fingerless winter gloves, heavy, insulated, waterproof men's winter gloves, hats, neck warmers/gators, NEW winter coats, sweatpants & sweatshirts (sizes L-4X), T-shirts (L-4X), men's Boxers (all sizes), neutral-colored women's sweatpants & sweatshirts, T-shirts (sizes M-4x)

Activities: Adult coloring books, colored pencils, craft kits, watercolor, canvas & art supplies, word search books (NO PUZZLES CDS OR DVDS)

Homeless Program

- Alarm clocks, laundry baskets, air mattresses with built-in air pump
- Pillows, bedding, blankets
- Brooms, mops & stick vacuum cleaners
- Kitchen items (dishes/utensils/pots/pans)
- Paper products (plates, napkins)
- Towels, shower curtains, shower hooks
- Laundry detergent
- Toilet paper, paper towels, cleaning items
- (NO HOTEL SAMPLES)

Women Veterans Program

Diapers, wipes, diaper bags, baby wash/lotions, baby monitors, assorted gift cards for formula and other high-need items

Contact CDCE for more information and to Schedule the Delivery of Donations: 585-393-7757 or E-mail: regina.deck@va.gov

**CDCE Office is located inside the Canandaigua Outpatient Clinic Entrance, Room 1E001*
VA Center For Development & Civic Engagement, Canandaigua VA Medical Center
400 Fort Hill Ave, Canandaigua, NY 14424



2026 FINGER LAKES VETERANS' MENTAL HEALTH SUMMIT

This year's summit will focus on Military Culture, Suicide Prevention, Aging Veterans, Women's Health, Whole Health and Caregiver Support.

Friday, August 21, 2026
08:00 a.m.- 3:30 p.m.

Finger Lakes Community College
Virtual Hybrid Option available

Page 1 / 1

-

🔍

+

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration

VA Finger Lakes Healthcare System

SAVE THE DATE

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Finger Lakes HCS Mental Health Summits 2026

Please see information listed below to register for the **2026 Finger Lakes Health Care System Mental Health Summit: Military Culture**. Our goal is to enhance awareness and understanding of Military Culture. Additionally, there will be four breakout sessions covering topics such as Suicide Prevention, Aging Veterans, Women's Health, and Caregiver Support/Whole Health Collaboration. This is an opportunity to share resources, promote collaboration, and strengthen partnerships between VA and key community stakeholders to support Veteran needs across the Finger Lakes Region.

Show your ongoing support for the mental health of Veterans and their families by attending the **2026 Finger Lakes HealthCare System Mental Health Summit: Military Culture**. The summit will focus on communication, collaboration, and a holistic approach to providing care.

Participants can join to learn from Subject Matter Experts, participate in group discussions during the Q & A portion, share information, and plan for ongoing collaboration.

If you have not yet registered, please do so at this time. If you are interested in CEU credits, there is more information to come before the MH Summit that will be dispersed to all registered attendees.

The goal of the free event is for health care providers, local stakeholders, current and former service members and their families, and others to exchange ideas about how best to provide Veterans and their families with information about mental health care. This year's summit will be held **both in-person and virtual attendance options**. Due to limited space capacity, we are only able to accommodate the **first 100 registrations for in-person attendance**. However, all participants are welcome to attend virtually.

Register ASAP to reserve your spot for this exchange of ideas!

Event:	2026 Finger Lakes HCS Mental Health Summit: Military Culture
Date:	August 21 st , 2026
Time:	8 am – 3:30 am
In-Person Location:	Finger Lakes Community College 3325 Marvin Sands Drive, Canandaigua, NY 14424
Virtual Location:	Microsoft Teams: 8:40 am – 3:30
Registration Deadline:	July 29 th , 2026, for in-person; Virtual: August 19 th , 2026
Cost:	Free

To reserve your spot and access additional information, please use this registration link <https://varedcap.rcp.vaec.va.gov/redcap/surveys/?s=84PA3PTCMK7MRYEY>.

6

iontact Nancy Lopez for more information about Pound the Ground



9th Annual Ride Against Suicide Poker Run

Saturday, September 19th, 2026

Registration 9:00am: Chili American Legion
450 Scottsville-Chili Rd
Scottsville, NY 14546



Kick Stands Up at 10:30am

\$25 per person

Price Includes: Ride, Food
and Non alcoholic Beverages

Cash Bar will be available

Food is provided by
Heintzelman's BBQ Pit

This will be about a 80 mile ride visiting various American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Affairs (VFW) Posts throughout 4 surrounding counties

Proceeds from the ride will be donated to the Genessee Valley NY Chapter of Heroes on the Water

For more information contact:
Kelly Mohrman
Rideagainstsuideny@gmail.com
585-734-1989



Contact Nancy Lopez at 585-355-7967 for more information about Pound the Ground