

**January 2026**

## ★ **Blue Star Mothers ROC** ★

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.



### Meetings & Events

- \* **January 17th, 2026**  
@9:30am Henrietta Ely  
Fagan American Legion  
260 Middle Rd Henrietta NY
- \* **Future Strong Stars**  
Feb 2nd @7-8pm Panera  
Bread 1501 Howard Rd  
Gates See page10 for the  
2026 schedule
- \* **Women Veterans' Coffee**  
House Jan16th and Feb  
11th @5:30pm Ely Fagan  
American Legion. RSVP to  
585-210-9779

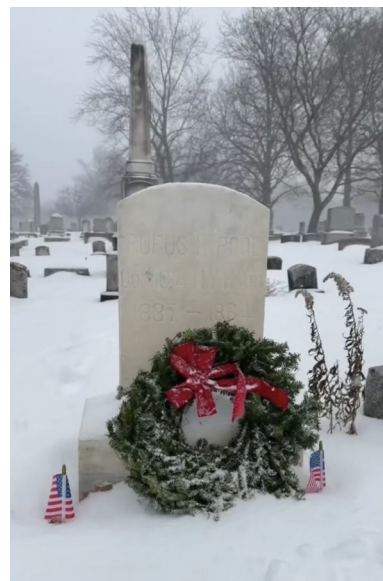
### Upcoming Events

**Baby Shower**  
Sunday, May 17th 2026  
from 11am-1pm



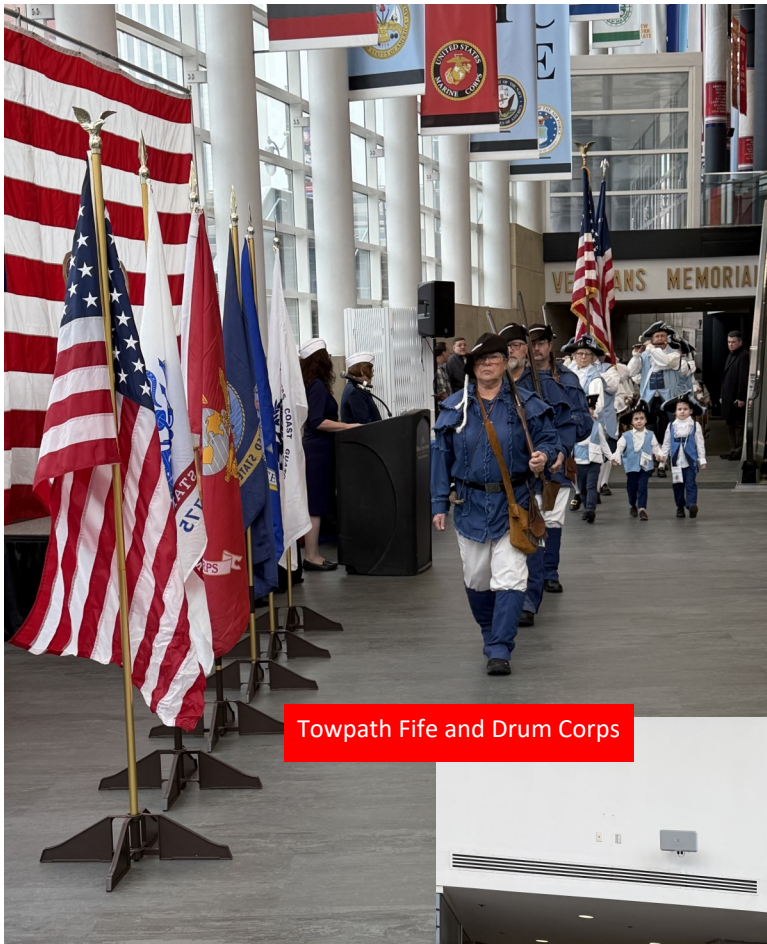
## **Wreaths Across America** **Webster NY**

The Rochester Blue Star Mothers participated in Wreaths Across America at the Webster Union Cemetery on Sunday, December 13th where over 2100 Veterans were honored and remembered with wreaths on their graves.



## Lights of Honor

On Sunday, December 7th the Rochester Blue Star Mothers hosted the annual Lights of Honor event at the Blue Cross Arena in downtown Rochester. This event honors service members past and present with the hanging of an ornament containing their picture and name. The ornaments hung honor the military branches, remembering wars and conflicts, and military medals and awards. What started as one tree eight years ago has grown to **FIVE** trees to hold the nearly 1100 ornaments. This truly is a community event with a local high school choir, Fife and Drum Corps and a junior cadet group lead by veteran and BSM Kathy Quiñones with a welcome by NY8 President, Amy VanDerwerken.





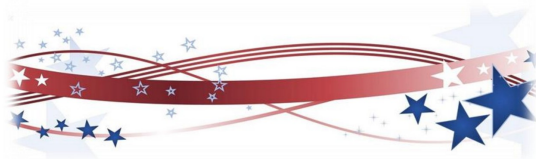
# Lights of Honor





**Blue Star Mothers NY 8** wish to recognize the following for their dedication and unwavering support of today's military, veterans and their families which makes our mission easier to sustain (in alphabetical order).

American Red Cross  
 Blue Cross Arena at the War Memorial  
 Compeer Corps  
 Disabled American Veterans New York 15  
 Ely Fagan Stevens Connors American Legion #1151  
 Mission BBQ  
 Panera Bread  
 Stokoe Farms  
 Veterans Outreach Center  
 Whitehaven Memorial  
 Greg Wilkes, Wilkes Engraving  
 Debby Tellier



**Blue Star Mothers ROC NY8**  
 1335 Jefferson Road #93272 Rochester, New York 14692  
 Web: [www.bluestarmomsroc.com](http://www.bluestarmomsroc.com)  
 Facebook: Blue Star Mothers ROC  
 Phone: (585) 210-9881

A poster for the Annual Lights of Honor event. It features a blue background with a white border decorated with green pine branches and yellow lights. The text is in blue and white. At the bottom, there is a graphic of a blue map of New York with a red star and a large blue number 8 with a white star inside a red square.

**ANNUAL  
 LIGHTS OF HONOR**  
**Blue Star Mothers  
 Rochester NY8**

**Honoring our Military Past & Present**

**Sunday, December 7, 2025  
 2:00 P.M.**  
**Blue Cross Arena at the War Memorial**



Pittsford Sutherland  
 Concert Choir



Jeanne Ristau  
 L OH  
 Organizer

A poster for the Lights of Honor event. It features a dark background with a large American flag on the left. The text is in white and gold. At the bottom, there are several circular logos and a QR code.

**Lights Of Honor**  
*Presented by  
 Blue Star Mothers of Rochester*

These trees are a tribute to the brave men and women who faithfully serve or have served.  
*May we always remember their sacrifices.*



## Welcome to the Lights of Honor Ceremony

**Presentation of Colors** – Towpath Volunteers, Fife and Drum Corps, and Rochester Early College International HS JR ROTC

**National Anthem** – Pittsford Sutherland Concert Choir

**Pledge of Allegiance** – Women Veterans Coffee House

**Blue Star Mothers' Preamble** – Blue Star Mothers/Associate Members

**Invocation** – Rev. Susan Shafer

**Welcome** – Amy VanDerwerken, President Blue Star Mothers NY8

**Introduction of Distinguished Guests**

**Master of Ceremonies** – Eric Wheeler, United States Army and Navy Veteran

**Keynote Speaker** – Lt. Col. Michael Sim, United States Army

**Armed Forces Medley** – 198th Army Brass Band Quintet

**Presentation of Branch Ornaments**

**Song for the Unsung Hero** – Pittsford Sutherland Concert Choir

**Presentation of Era/Conflict Ornaments**

**American Medley** – Towpath Volunteers, Fife and Drum Corp

**Honorable Military Career** – United States Navy Captain Russ Sanchez

**Presentation of Medals**

**Lighting of the Trees** – Pedro D. Quinones IV (PJ)

**Benediction** – Rev. Susan Shafer

**Retiring the Colors** – Rochester JR ROTC and Towpath Volunteers, Fife & Drum Corps.

**Closing Remarks** – Amy VanDerwerken, President Blue Star Mothers NY8



### BLUE STAR MOTHERS PREAMBLE

We the Mothers of members of the Armed Forces of the United States of America do unite to establish a permanent organization.

Desiring to continue to be of service to our nation, we dedicate our time and our lives, if necessary, to the perpetuation of democratic government and are proud and honored that our sons and daughters have chosen to serve their country.



209th Regiment of Cadets



198th Army Brass  
Band Quintet



Patriot Guard



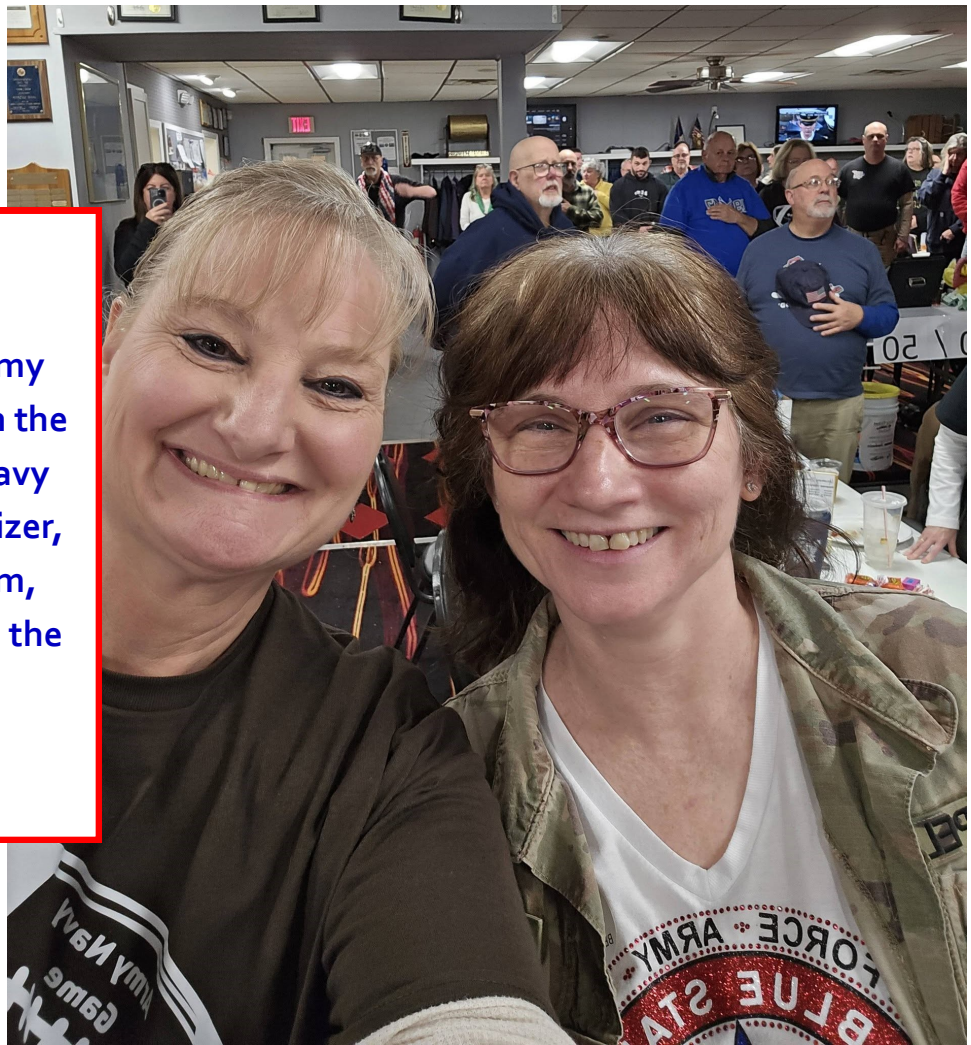
# Army Navy Game Fundraiser

The Spencerport Legion again graciously opened their doors to the Rochester Blue Star Mothers for our annual Army Navy Game Fundraiser. The Army Navy Game provides a lot of opportunities for bragging rights and pushups when touchdowns are scored. Celebration is free and open to the community with free food and snacks throughout the game by generous local restaurants. With raffle baskets and 50/50 raffles our chapter raises money to support care packages, military baby showers, holiday food for veterans, and veteran standdowns. Thank you Spencerport Hots, Mission BBQ, DJ's Pizzeria, Salvatore's, Pontillo's Pizza, Subway, Slayton Place and Chef King for your very generous donations.





**NY8 President, Amy VanDerwerken on the right and Army Navy Fundraiser Organizer, Proud Marine Mom, Nancy General on the left.**





# When times are hard, it helps to have someone to talk to.



Dial 988 then **Press 1**



Chat at  
[VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat](https://VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat)



Text 838255



## Supporting the VA Food Pantry For Veterans

Support the Canandaigua and Rochester VA Food Pantry by bringing something for the Pantry to our monthly Blue Star Mothers meeting.

### 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	



# Holiday Sandwich Platters for Veteran Facilities

Once again the Rochester Blue Star Mothers were able to provide sandwich platters, cookies and chips for a holiday meal to over 150 veterans at eight different veteran housing facilities in the Monroe County and the Batavia area. The facilities include the Warrior Salute program's Nucor House, Veteran Outreach Center's Richards House, Otto Phoenix House and Liberty Landing, Eagle Star House facilities at 270 East Ave and City Center Court in Rochester, Eagle Star Housing facilities in Spencerport NY and Liberty Square in Batavia NY. This has been a holiday tradition since 2019. Again this year the BSM elves delivering the meals and thanking the veterans for their service and wishing them all the best were Lara Whitney, Nancy Lopez, and Sue Louis.



## Vets with Pets

The Veterans Outreach Center (VOC) has a new program that supports veterans with pets. Vets With Pets (VWP) is designed to support the incredible bond veterans have with their animal. VOC help keep local veterans and their pets healthy and happy together through fun community outings, access to supplies, educational events, and connections to veterinary care. VWP is an all-encompassing program designed to enhance wellness for both the veteran and the pet. Veterans can register for services for their pets on the VOC website.

<https://veteransoutreachcenter.org/vets-with-pets/>



# DONATIONS MAKE A DIFFERENCE.



**Three Non-Profits coming together to help the Veteran Community! Call the ReStore nearest you to arrange for a pickup of your furniture and/or appliance donation. Tell them the Sunny Mike Foundation or the Marine Corps Coordinating Council of Greater Rochester sent you. These organizations will receive a discount when purchasing items for in-need Veterans. It's that easy!**

## LOCATIONS

**BayTowne ReStore**  
1900 Empire Blvd  
Webster, NY 14580  
**(585) 697-2012**

**Henrietta ReStore**  
2199 E Henrietta Rd,  
Rochester, NY 14623  
**(585) 444-9588**

**Canandaigua ReStore**  
3040 County Road 10,  
Canandaigua, NY 14424  
**(585) 396-3040**

**People who donate to ReStore will get 20% off same day purchases.**



**Military discount is 10% daily, with the exception of Thursdays which is 15%. The coupon can't be used in conjunction with either of the daily discounts.**

# Volunteer Opportunities

Our chapter grows and is able to help more service members, veterans and military families because of volunteers. We need the support of all members, associate members, and those thankful for our military to have successful events like The Veteran Stand Down, Lights of Honor, Care Packages etc. Please look at the opportunities below, see how you can help. Our kids stood up and volunteered, now we need YOU to do the same.

**Military Baby Shower:** Annual in April, a community baby shower for military and veteran families expecting a child or have an infant less than 6 months old. Help needed: collect shower gifts, ask for donations, create baskets, support at event: decorating, picking up food items, welcoming moms, serving food, set-up/clean-up. Contact Amy VanDerwerken at [president.ny8@bluestarmothers.us](mailto:president.ny8@bluestarmothers.us) or Jill Harris at [1vp.ny8@bluestarmothers.us](mailto:1vp.ny8@bluestarmothers.us) to volunteer.

**Care Packages:** Boxes packed/mailed in June & November to service members deployed overseas. Help needed: solicit postal addresses for deployed service members, collect care package items, promote our Amazon gift list for needed care package items. Friday night before packing: set-up of donated items. Saturday morning: put together mailing boxes, fill boxes, seal boxes. Contact Debbie Trevett at [treas.ny8@bluestarmothers.us](mailto:treas.ny8@bluestarmothers.us) or Kathy Dodsworth at [kdodsworth@frontiernet.net](mailto:kdodsworth@frontiernet.net) to volunteer.

**Veteran Women's Coffee House:** Monthly get-together for veteran women. Dinner is served. Help needed: preparing food for dinner, set-up/clean-up. CoChairs are Nancy Bird and Dory Braun. Contact Dory Braun at [dbraun4@gmail.com](mailto:dbraun4@gmail.com) to volunteer.

**Webster Garlic Fest** Annual in September. Contact Cherie Wood at [WebsterGarlicFest@gmail.com](mailto:WebsterGarlicFest@gmail.com) to get involved in this stinkin good time.

**Veteran Stand Down:** Organized annually by Veteran Outreach Center in September for area veterans with information on community services, employment and support. Held during the day on Friday at the Public Market in Rochester. Help needed: serving lunch to veterans, staffing BSM table and handing out hygiene supplies, set-up/clean-up. Contact Amy VanDerwerken at [president.ny8@bluestarmothers.us](mailto:president.ny8@bluestarmothers.us) to volunteer.





# 2026 Future Strong Stars



**Come dine with us at Panera Bread locations, 7-8 p.m.**

**Help us in building bridges with the Families of all Branches of the Armed Forces.**

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05 JAN	Henrietta	795 Jefferson Road
02 FEB	Gates	1501 Howard Road
02 MAR	Brighton	1902 Monroe Avenue
06 APR	Greece	800 Greece Ridge Center Drive
04 MAY	Fairport	16 Courtney Drive
01 JUN	Webster	935 Holt Road
06 JUL	Henrietta	795 Jefferson Road
03 AUG	Gates	1501 Howard Road
07 SEP (Labor Day)	Brighton	1902 Monroe Avenue
05 OCT	Greece	800 Greece Ridge Center Drive
02 NOV	Fairport	16 Courtney Drive
07 DEC	Webster	935 Holt Road

**Blue Star Mothers: 585-210-9881 or [bluestarmomsroc.com](http://bluestarmomsroc.com)**

VA FINGER LAKES PRESENTS  
WITH THE PARTNERSHIP CCICM & CDCE



# FINGER LAKES VETERAN *Connection Cafe*

Come connect with other local Veterans,  
build VA connections, and learn about  
resources available to you.



Rochester Calkins VA Clinic

260 Calkins Rd

Rochester, NY 14623

Susan B. Anthony Conference Room



Third Friday of Every Month

Beginning October 17<sup>th</sup>, 2025

8:30am - 10:30am



Open to all Veterans enrolled in VA Finger Lakes Healthcare

FREE COFFEE & TEA WILL BE AVAILABLE



**No RSVP Required**

For question contact Gillian Olson 585-463-2608

MADE POSSIBLE BY



**VA**



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
Veterans Health Administration  
VA Finger Lakes Healthcare System

