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A RESOLUTION TO BE SUBMITTED
BY LEGISLATOR GRANT

RE: Surplus Authorization for "Operation Independence" Social Day Program for Veterans with Traumatic Brian Injuries

WHEREAS, Operation Independence is a free Social Day Program for Veterans with a Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), and will be run by the "Venture Forthe" Foundation in partnership with the Veterans One Stop Center of WNY and the Veterans Housing Coalition of WNY, and is seeking authorization to release some of the County's surplus office items to be used to help set up program space; and

WHEREAS, the items requested will benefit the program participants directly and will help the program manager with day to day operations to meet the program's goal to provide support for the Veteran and respite for their family or caregiver, and will be located at 1125 Main Street, Buffalo, NY 14209 (at Main Street and Best Street), with the launch of the program slated for July 14, 2014; and

WHEREAS, Operation Independence's Social Day Program also will provide veterans with an opportunity – one that does not currently exist – to get out of their home, engage with peers, work on daily living skills and take part in community activities — in a comfortable, flexible and safe environment, one that encourages socialization and provides structure while remaining individualized to the person's needs and goals; and

WHEREAS, Erie County has an inventory of surplus items that are no longer required by various departments of Erie County government; and

WHEREAS, the reuse of office furniture and equipment by non-profit organizations based in Erie County is an effective strategy for County taxpayers' to maximize their return on investment; and

WHEREAS, authorization of the Erie County Legislature is necessary to effectuate the transfer of Erie County surplus property.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

RESOLVED, that the Erie County Legislature finds it cost-effective that the Division of Purchase and Operation Independence's free Social Day Program for Veterans have worked together to employ a reuse strategy for certain surplus property no longer needed by Erie County; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the following surplus property is hereby authorized by the County Legislature to be transferred (including delivery) to Operation Independence's free Social Day Program for Veterans, for their use:

Two (2) Folding Tables No control number available

Two-Drawer File Cabinet	Control #103038
Two-Drawer File Cabinet	Control #47160
Metal Shelf	Control #279361
Two (2) Book Shelves	No control number available
Wood Cabinet	No control number available
Computer Table	Control #470460
Computer Table	Control #470457
Computer Table	No control number available
Metal Shelf	No control number available
Coat Rack	Control #451031
Green Chair	Control #41595
Green Chair	Control #41598
Green Chair	Control #41596

and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Clerk of the Erie County Legislature is directed to forward certified copies of this resolution to the County Executive, the Director of the Division of Purchasing and to Operation Independence's free Social Day Program for Veterans (1125 Main Street, Buffalo, NY 14209).

FISCAL IMPACT: None for resolution.

Operation Independence:

Operation Independence is a Social Day Program for Veterans with a Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI). The goal of the program is to provide **support** for the Veteran and **respite** for the family or caregiver. The day program provides veterans with an opportunity, one that does not currently exist, to get out of their home, engage with peers, work on daily living skills and take part in community activities —in a comfortable, flexible and safe environment. The day program encourages socialization and provides structure while remaining individualized to the person's needs and goals.

A New Population of Veterans

Since 2000, nearly 300,000 service members have been diagnosed with a Traumatic Brain Injury. TBI has been called the "signature injury" of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. Thirty-three percent of all patients with combat-related injuries have sustained a TBI. The VA recognized that this population needed a specialized model of care coordination and implemented an integrated nationwide system of care for Veterans and active duty Service Members recovering from TBI and polytrauma. While the overall concept is great, the reality is the amount of care and access to services varies greatly depending on location.

In Erie County no Social Day Program exists for veterans who have sustained a TBI. Erie County does have an Adult Day Program for elderly veterans and a day program for veterans' diagnosed with mental health and substance abuse. However, neither of the programs are appropriate for the men and women returning home from Iraq and Afghanistan with a TBI.

Why is this Program Important?

According to a study released by the Department of Veteran Affairs, individuals who sustained a TBI and returned to their respective communities without adequate transitional preparation reveal progressive isolation due to inappropriate social skills, poor impulse control, disturbed sleep patterns that exacerbate inadequate decision making and problem solving, difficulties to form and maintain meaningful relationships, and pervasive inability to cope effectively. (Dikmen at al., 2003; Lew et al., 2006)

At the same time, ***community participation has been shown to promote continued gains in functional recovery and quality of life in individuals with TBI, and to reduce family/caregiver stress*** (Inzaghi et al., 2005).

Participation in recreation and leisure activities is an important part of recovery from TBI. Recreation and creative arts therapy can be especially meaningful for people with a brain injury who are unable to continue with work activities. Without adequate interventions that integrate Veterans who have TBI into their home communities, they are likely to become isolated from others avoiding many or all activities within or outside the home. Recreation therapy should be considered in order to promote community participation, life satisfaction and overall health and well-being of individuals with TBI. (Dept. of VA TBI Study, 2010)

Additionally, the cognitive, emotional, and physical changes in survivors of TBI can be quite significant, depending on the extent and severity of injury. As such, living with a family member who has sustained a TBI can be stressful and sometimes overwhelming for the family system as a whole. Having an option for respite can alleviate caregiver burnout.

Contact: Nichole Salva **Phone:**716.285.8070 ext.133 **Email:** nsalva@ventureforthe.com

Program Specifics

Mission: to support our veterans who return home from combat with a traumatic brain injury and help them live a more independent and higher quality life.

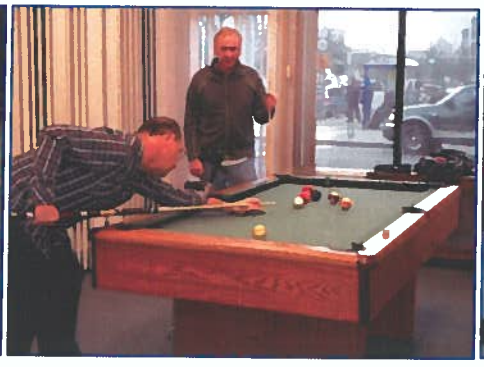
Program Name: Operation Independence

Program Structure: the program will be run by The Venture Forthe Foundation in partnership with the Veterans One Stop Center of WNY and the Veterans Housing Coalition of WNY.

- Enroll up to 50 veterans.
- Participants must be Veterans and be diagnosed with a TBI.
- The day-to-day operations will be managed by the Program Director. This individual will be a veteran, with a Masters Degree in Counseling and have previous experience working with individuals with TBI. An additional staff member will be employed to assist the participants; this individual will be a certified Personal Care Aide.
- Staff will provide personal care services, planned activities, and non-medical therapies. The activities will be based on research aimed at improving the lives of the participants and making them more independent. The Director will incorporate therapies that address the unique needs of the veterans.
- Hours of Operation, Monday-Friday from 9am-3pm.
- Location: 1125 Main Street, Buffalo, NY 14209 (At Main Street and Best Street)

Sample Calendar of Activities

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Current Events Discussion	Concert at M&T Plaza	Music Therapy	Cooking Lessons/Meal Planning	Niagara Falls Trip
Lunch in the Park	Budgeting Skills	Library Visi	Buffalo History Walking Tour	Support Group Discussion
Art Therapy	Popcorn & Movies	Computer Skills	Buffalo Bisons Game	Wii Tournament
Board Games	Work on Newsletter	Becker Farms	Arts & Crafts	Gardening
Albright Knox Trip	Canisius Basketball Game	Downtown Mall	Fishing Trip	Money Skills



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About the Partners

Venture Forthe Foundation

The Venture Forthe Foundation is dedicated to support our veterans who return home from combat with a traumatic brain injury and help them live a more independent and higher quality life. The Foundation was started by Jean Dziewit to honor her husband and give back to local veterans in need.

Venture Forthe Inc, a licensed home care services agency, was founded in 1997 by John and Jean Dziewit, John served in the United States Marine Corp from 1969 - 1971 and was honorably discharged by the USMC after serving a tour of duty in Vietnam. John is a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor, Credentialed Alcohol and Substance Abuse Counselor, Certified Dementia Practitioner and Trainer, and a Licensed Mental Health Counselor.

Venture Forthe provides care to an underserved population of individuals with a Traumatic Brain Injurythrough the NYS TBI Waiver Program. The business started with just a few clients and has grown to become the leading home care provider for individuals with a TBI; delivering a range of professional and paraprofessional services. Venture Forthe currently operates two social days programs, provides services for over 500 individuals in WNY. Venture Forthe is headquartered in Niagara Falls, with offices in Buffalo, Rochester, Jamestown, Belmont, Olean, and the Finger Lakes. For more information: www.ventureforthefoundation.org

Veterans One Stop Center of WNY

Veterans One-stop Center of Western New York, Inc. ("VOC of WNY"), WNY's premier, community-based, independent, nonprofit collaborative, offering U.S. veterans, service members, and their families, the convenience of a barrier-free One-stop Center in which to access a coordinated, individualized suite of services for veterans.

The VOC of WNY operates on the principle that services are provided by existing, independent Service Providers working together in a coordinated way to provide a seamless program that assists Veterans and their families in dealing with the various challenges they encounter. We provide a tailored community-based plan that leads to the successful achievement of their goals, realization of their full potential, and reintegration into our community. For more information: www.vocwny.org.

Veterans Housing Coalition of WNY

WNY Veterans Housing Coalition, Inc. (WNYVHC) was founded in 1987 to provide housing for homeless Veterans and Veterans with special needs. Since then the organization has expanded its focus by developing and managing residential housing for "low income" persons, severely disabled, homeless, and other persons who have "special needs". Our main focus has been and always will be Veterans first.

What separates us from other property development and management organizations is the "continuum of care" component that provides case management services. The focus is on creative problem solving; and homeless prevention and referring them to agencies that can meet their needs. WNYVHC is at the forefront of setting a national trend in providing Special Needs housing for Veterans while addressing the complex factors and issues facing Veterans today.

Celebrating our 25th year in 2012, WNYVHC has assisted well over 15,000 Veterans with housing, case management, homeless prevention, employment and referrals.
For more information: http://www.wnyvhc.org/

For Additional Information:
Contact: Nichole Salva, Communications Director
Email: nsalva@ventureforthe.com
Phone: (716) 285-8070 ext 133

Mission

To support veterans with a traumatic brain injury and help them live a more independent and higher quality life.

For more information or to participate contact :

Chris Roche,
Director of Clinical Services

(716) 285-8102
toll free: (800) 701-1233 ext 110

info@ventureforthefoundation.org

Program Hours:

Monday-Friday
9am-3pm

Location:

1125 Main St.
Buffalo, NY 14209

Directly across from the Metro Rail Station at Best Street.

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Program Partners

VENTURE FORTHE FOUNDATION

Veterans One-stop Center of Western New York, Inc.
www.VOCWNY.org

WESTERN NEW YORK VETERANS HOUSING COALITION INC.

www.ventureforthefoundation.org

Operation Independence

A Social Day Program for Veterans with TBI

Program Location

1125 Main Street
Buffalo, NY 14209
716-285-8102

The Day Program:

Operation Independence is a free social day program for veterans with a Traumatic Brain Injury.

The program provides a safe and comfortable place for veterans to get out of their home, socialize with peers, take part in community activities and work on daily skills.

Operation Independence is a veteran run program, the staff are trained on the specifics of working with individuals with TBIs, computer programs that help improve and track cognitive progress are offered and therapeutic activities such as music and art are central to the program.

We encourage social interaction and provide structure while remaining individualized to the person's needs and wants.

Sample Calendar of Activities

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Movie & Game Day	Bowling	Library Day Cooking Skills-Make a Snack	Niagara Falls Trip	Creative Activities Music, Art, Writing
Becker Farms Money Skills	Buffalo History Walking Tour	Discussion Current Events	Fishing Trip Popcorn & Movies	Bison's Game Board Games
Lunch in the Park	Art Activities Creative Skills	Computer Skills Game Day	Silo Tours Live Music	Movie Day Money Skills
Creative Activities Music, Art, Writing	Mayer Brothers Cider Mill	Concert in the Square	Dish to Pass Luncheon Cooking Skills	Library Day Money Skills

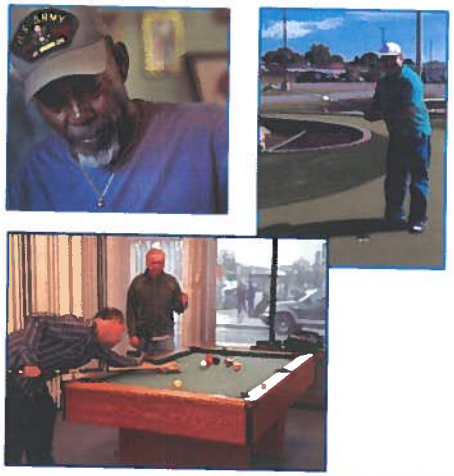
A daily calendar is set monthly and activities are driven by the participants.

Who Can Benefit?

Any veteran who has sustained a traumatic brain injury either during combat or in civilian life is encouraged to participate.

- Gain Support
- Develop New Friendships
- Work on Recovery
- Become More Independent
- Participate in Community Activities

**The program can accommodate individuals with mild to severe TBI .



Not sure if it's for you?
Contact Us!
(716) 285-8102
info@ventureforthefoundation.org