

**STATE OF NEW YORK**  
**LEGISLATURE OF ERIE COUNTY**  
**BUFFALO, N.Y., OCTOBER 16TH, 2014 A.D.**

**I HEREBY CERTIFY**, *That at a regular session of the Legislature of Erie County, held in the County Hall, in the City of Buffalo, on the 16th day of October, 2014, A.D., a resolution was adopted, of which the following is a true copy:*

**WHEREAS**, *The Erie County Legislature's Citizen of the Month Award recognizes outstanding members of the community and among this distinguished group is **Joseph Ruszala**, and;*

**WHEREAS**, ***Joseph Ruszala** was born in Buffalo, raised in Cheektowaga and settled in the Town of Hamburg; and is married to Marilyn Militello and has 3 grown stepsons and one grandson; and*

**WHEREAS**, ***Joseph Ruszala** was a member of United States Army 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division serving in the Vietnam War; and*

**WHEREAS**, ***Joseph Ruszala** is a member of the fundraising team at Western New York Iraq Afghanistan Memorial Committee, (WNY IAM), Veteran Peer Support at Dog Tags Niagara and co-founder at Veteran Canine Coalition; and*

**WHEREAS**, ***Joseph Ruszala** found much comfort from his pets. He had an idea to get veterans from Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom (OIF/OEF) and other veterans coping with PTSD paired up with supportive animals. From this idea, **Joseph Ruszala** partnered with the SPCA creating the program Dog Tags Niagara where veterans and staff work with each other to emotionally heal wounded animals and in turn provide much healing for the veterans; and*

**WHEREAS**, ***Joseph Ruszala** also began to facilitate relationships among community members and military veterans in need and along with others formed "Pathfinders," that collaborates with Department of Veteran Affairs on outreach events; and*

**WHEREAS**, ***Joseph Ruszala** began his volunteer activities after retiring and is a valuable volunteer with the Department of Veteran Affairs, Veterans Peer Support out of the Buffalo Vet Center, where he attends numerous outreach events and provides much needed mentorship for veterans in a kind, caring and compassionate manor; and*

***WHEREAS, Joseph Ruzala*** was recognized in Albany New York being named to this year's class of the New York State Senate's Veterans Hall of Fame; and

***WHEREAS, Joseph Ruzala*** celebrated the culmination of the WNY IAM memorial with the delivery of the granite on 9/11 and then with the formal dedication on Saturday, September 13, 2014 where the names of 71 Western New Yorkers, who lost their life serving our country, were inscribe; and.

***NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT***

***RESOLVED***, the Erie County Legislature pauses in its deliberations to recognize ***Joseph Ruzala*** as Citizen of the Month for October 2014 and applaud his remarkable community service to the veterans of Western New York.

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*Lynne M. Dixon*  
*Erie County Legislature District 9*

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*Karen M. McCarthy*  
*Clerk of the Legislature*