

Collier County Veterans Mentor Program



THE “VETERANS HELPING VETERANS” PROGRAM

The primary goal of the Collier County ‘Veterans Helping Veterans Mentor Program’ is to assist Veterans who are in the Veterans Treatment Court and who will benefit from having a fellow Veteran help them through the court process. Veterans in this Court are normally receiving treatment for PTSD, TBI, and/or substance abuse and anger management issues. These affected Veterans have "pled out" of a crime and have agreed to treatment in lieu of incarceration. In addition to assisting the Veteran through the court process, the Mentor and the Veteran may privately discuss life topics and items of common interest.



The Mentors in the ‘Veterans Helping Veterans Program’ are not counselors and do not give medical or legal advice nor are they enforcers or court advocates. Typically, a Mentor will have an initial personal meeting with the Veteran to establish a relationship. The visit will be followed by face-to-face meetings and ongoing phone/email contact as appropriate. Although the Mentor is endorsed and supported by the Court, it is important to note that Mentors do not report to the Court.

Mission Statement

The Collier County Veterans Mentor Group Program’s primary goal is to assist Veterans from all branches of the military who are in the Veterans Treatment Court and would likely benefit from having a fellow Veteran with whom they could informally talk and be their friend and ally during this often difficult and challenging time.

Mentors are also available to work with Veterans not in the court system who could benefit from our varied services or perhaps might just like spending some time with a fellow Vet. Mentors are available to work

with anyone who has served in any branch of the military – including Regular, Reserves, or National Guard regardless of discharge status.

Note: Veterans currently incarcerated or facing legal issues, may be eligible for the Veterans Treatment Court and are encouraged to speak with their attorney or the Veterans Justice Outreach representative of Collier County for further assistance.

MENTORS ARE HERE TO HELP



As a Veteran makes their way through the Veterans Treatment Court, we are here to help during the journey. On their first day in court Veterans will be assigned a mentor. Within our mentor group we have Veterans who have served from World War II and Vietnam through today. When a Veteran completes all of the court requirements, the judge presents the Veteran with a “Certificate of Graduation.” Photo: **Court team, Veteran Graduate and Mentor**

The Veteran is also presented with a commemorative coin depicting the court symbol and the following words on the front and symbols of all branches of the service shown on the back.

EFFORT

COMMITMENT

SUCCESS



WHAT A MENTOR DOES:

- ◆ Stresses compliance with the court “rules”
- ◆ Emphasizes this is a second chance and noncompliance has serious consequences
- ◆ Emphasises that honesty to all is of critical importance
- ◆ Is a friend, ally, perhaps coach and builds trust through confidentiality
- ◆ Contacts regularly-initially at court appearances; follow up calls, texts, and emails
- ◆ Relates as a Vet, but tries to find a common interest
- ◆ Meets outside of court as makes sense: coffee, perhaps lunch, Veterans activities, etc.
- ◆ Discusses job search process, community service work, and court directed activities
- ◆ Reminds (not monitors) veterans of appointments
- ◆ Listens for “needs”
- ◆ Openly communicates, encourages, listen to issues, but brings reality as required
- ◆ Has patience: it may take a long time to build a relationship
- ◆ Relates relevant issues and needs to the Mentor Coordinator, Case Manager and/or VJO
- ◆ Contacts case manager/police if made aware of a dangerous situation.

WHAT A MENTOR DOES NOT:

- ◆ Work VA issues
- ◆ Solve serious financial problems
- ◆ Try to be a counselor
- ◆ Give out personal information
- ◆ Report back to the judge.

RESOURCES

Mentors will direct Veterans towards all the resources Collier County has to offer for Veterans and their families. This includes but is not limited to:

- ◆ Vet Center - group and individual counseling
- ◆ Veteran Service officer - claims, discharge upgrades, etc.
- ◆ Employment and educational resources: VA, CareerSource Southwest Florida, Goodwill, etc.
- ◆ PAWS - service or companion dogs
- ◆ Sporting events - Everblades Hockey and baseball
- ◆ Freedom Waters - fishing trips and cruises
- ◆ Home Base –health and wellness
- ◆ Wounded Warriors – disabilities and general
- ◆ Equestrian opportunities

For more information contact: John McLean or Bill Dalton at veteransmentor@gmail.com

***A Special 'Thank You' to our Veterans for Serving
Our Country & Protecting Our Freedom***

