



**VAMSA**

Veteran and Military  
Support Alliance  
(VAMSA)

**NEWSLETTER**

Volume 2023 Issue 1



## WELCOME



*From VAMSA Vice Chair,  
Eric Johnson*

We are excited to release the first newsletter for the Queen Anne's County Veteran and Military Support Alliance (VAMSA). We plan to release this monthly to share news from "the front lines" (patient and client center updates) and "Garrison happenings" (reports on operational advancements in the background). We hope this is informative and can celebrate the tremendous progress we make toward opening The Center for the Military and Veteran Family on Kent Island!

## MAKING HISTORY

On Friday, February 3 an historic event took place in Silver Spring, Maryland. Leadership from both VAMSA and the Veteran Health and Wellness Foundation met to sign a strategic partnership agreement.

FINISH READING ON PG. 2



## CONSULTANT BEGINS IMPORTANT WORK

Strategy/Operations Consultant Maggie Thomas rolled up her sleeves and began the important work of helping VAMSA organize its Board, Committees and Fundraising Strategy.

FINISH READING ON PG. 3



## STAGING OF OFFICE SPACE TO COMMENCE

On Monday, February 13 Alliance Vice Chair Eric Johnson and Consultant Maggie Thomas met with Board Member Walt Petrie to look at the space Walt set aside at Bay Bridge Marina.



KENT ISLAND, MD



## Continued from Page 1 – Making History

During a “meeting of the minds” over dinner, leaders from both groups discussed shared objectives and a common vision for the establishing a national “center of excellence” in Maryland. The group agreed to meet for a series of visioning sessions to generate more formal plans for The Center for the Military and Veteran Family. This group seeks to set the standard for how to operationalize thanking military families for their service/sacrifice.



*Pictured (from left to right) are: Shirley Bowens, MA, PNP, FAANP (Veteran Health and Wellness Foundation/VHWF Vice Chair), Bridgette Lundfelt (VAMSA Board Member), Alesha Bowens (VHWF Board Member), Joe Candella (VAMSA Board Chair), Eric Johnson, MPSA, CPS, CEM (VAMSA Board Vice Chair and Director of Operations), Evelyn Lewis, MD, MA, FAAFP, DABDA (VHWF President and Board Chair), Maggie Thomas, MS (VAMSA Strategy and Operations Consultant), Wendy Foster (VAMSA Board Treasurer), Denise Stackhouse (VHWF Board Treasurer), Capri Fowler (VHWF Director of Programs and Social Impact), and Robyn Goldsmith (VHWF Director of Development)*

VAMSA was launched in 2022 to address the unique needs of military, veterans, and their families here in the Mid-shore. This innovative alliance is working over the next year to develop and open a resource center that offers the following: (1) Assisting with access to and use of government and private sector agencies, (2) Education and Training, (3) Access to Medical and Behavioral Health Care, (4) Peer Support, (5) Financial Counseling, (6) Holistic Therapies and Healing Services (e.g., massage, aromatherapy, music and art therapy, etc.), (7) Entrepreneurship, and (8) Resource Networks for Family Members and Caregivers.

Community leaders across the nation will travel to this transformational center to take part in carefully designed workshops and presentations. The purpose of the national center is to educate and equip attendees with tools to take better care of their communities of military, veterans and their family members. Our center will emphasize and respond to rural communities as they are often devoid of resources that are more plentiful in urban centers. Our military and veteran families have sacrificed so much and deserve to live in communities that value them, invest in them, and understand the unique cultural, environmental, and battleground experiences they share.



# GARRISON REPORT

## Continued From Page 1 CONSULTANT BEGINS IMPORTANT WORK

*By Maggie Thomas, MS*

*From February 14, 2023 Email to the Alliance:*

With the focus on creating structure for our future success, three committees are being created to tackle the workload, and accomplish tasks quickly. These committees will meet on the third Monday of each month. The times will be decided by the chair of each committee, who will be selected at the committee's inaugural meeting. Each of the committees will create a six-month timeline of activities (see below). I will be working with each chair and committee as needed to facilitate and support. Each of these committees will be discussing the items assigned to them and the chair will report out at the full meeting on the first Monday of the month.

The three committees needed at this time are:

- (1) **Executive Committee:** This group's focus will be on the transition from a committee structure to a governing body (Board of Directors). Developing a Mission and Vision statement, along with creating and approving board structure, executive team duties and responsibilities, and selection and onboarding of said executive team. These activities are mission critical for the agency, along with grant applications.

- (2) **Fundraising and Marketing Committee:** The focus in this group will be to create a strategic marketing campaign, develop timelines for promotional items, along with identification of donors, tracking of donor databases, and creating a plan for approaching various donors that include timelines and collateral that will be used. The creation of a clear message and goals for the 'launch' are essential for initial funding, along with this information being included in grants.

- (3) **Membership Committee:** This group will be focused on identifying new members of the alliance and tracking their demographics. In addition, creation of a timeline to send out the needs assessment, along with plans to collect (if physical forms provided), and/or tracking of completed assessments and needs identified. This is key information that will be useful in grant writing and obtaining other funds.

**Please email me the order in which you would be willing to serve (first, second and third choice) no later than Friday, February 17<sup>th</sup>.**

I will compile the committee lists and notify each member of which they are being asked to serve on Sunday evening, along with meeting times for Monday the 20<sup>th</sup>. I will do my best to offer you your first choice, however, I know the amazing level of dedication of this group, and we will be happy to serve wherever we are needed to get things rolling.

Please reach out to me directly with any questions.

Maggie  
Email: [Strategy@VAMSA.us](mailto:Strategy@VAMSA.us)

## Phone Tree Update!

We have procured 844-MIL-VETS for the Center. Call it today and check it out!

