NYSDVS Announces First-Ever In-Person Healing Haven Wellness Retreat for Military Spouses on Nov 14 in Chittenango, NY

In-Person Retreat on Nov 14 Will Bring Military Spouses Together for a Free Day of Wellness, Stress Reduction, Resources, and Connection in Central New York



NYSDVS Logo Image

ALBANY, NY, NY, UNITED STATES, November 1, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The New York State Department of Veterans' Services (DVS), in partnership with Clear Path for Veterans through its Wellness and Enrichment Program and Stress Is Gone with Brett Cotter, today announced the first-ever in-person Healing Haven for Military Spouses Wellness Retreat, a free, daylong event taking place November 14, 2026, at Clear Path for Veterans in Chittenango, Madison County.

Building on the Healing Haven for Military Spouses virtual program launched by DVS in December 2025 thanks to the historic investments in suicide prevention funding delivered by Governor Kathy Hochul in the 2025-26 State Budget, this inaugural in-person retreat on November 14 during Veterans Month marks an important milestone in the initiative's continued growth, bringing Military Spouses together face-to-face for a full day dedicated to their physical, emotional & mental well-being. The event will offer hands-on wellness activities, stress reduction workshops, individualized benefits assistance, and opportunities to build meaningful connections with others who share the unique experiences of military family life.

The retreat will take place Saturday, November 14, 2026, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Clear Path for Veterans, located at 1223 Salt Springs Road in Chittenango, NY, and is open to spouses of active-duty Service Members, National Guard & Reserve personnel & Veterans.

The retreat will feature a variety of complimentary wellness activities, including:

- Chair massage and yoga
- Sound therapy and music therapy
- Meditative mindfulness
- Stress reduction workshops
- Clinical nutrition guidance
- Additional wellness experiences

Participants will also have access to valuable resources and support services, including:

- Legal services
- Veterans benefits assistance
- TRICARE assistance
- VA medical care enrollment
- VA home loan assistance
- FreshConnect Checks
- Additional programs and services for Military Families



Healing Haven Nov 14 In Person Wellness Retreat Flyer

The retreat is completely free for eligible Military Spouses. Clear Path for Veterans is generously providing the venue, breakfast, and lunch at no cost. Funding to cover childcare expenses for the day is available upon request through DVS, helping remove a potential barrier to participation.

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>
> *DVS Commissioner Dr. Viviana M. DeCohen*

"Behind so many of our nation's Veterans and Service Members are Military Spouses whose strength, sacrifice, and unwavering support make an immeasurable difference, often without the recognition they deserve," said New York State Department of Veterans' Services Commissioner Dr. Viviana M. DeCohen. "Since launching Healing Haven virtually last December, we have remained committed to creating even more opportunities for Military Spouses to prioritize their own well-being. Hosting our first in-person retreat represents an exciting new chapter in that commitment, allowing us to bring people together, build meaningful connections, and provide direct access to valuable resources. Most importantly, we want these extraordinary individuals to know that their health and happiness matter, their contributions are valued, and they deserve the same compassion, care, and support they so generously provide to others."

“Military Spouses are often the people holding everything together, managing households, navigating complicated benefits systems, supporting loved ones, and making countless sacrifices that are not always visible to the outside world,” said DVS Deputy Counsel Benjamin Pomerance, Esq. “We want this retreat to be more than simply a day of relaxation. Our goal is for participants to leave feeling supported, better informed about the benefits and resources available to them, and connected to people and organizations that can help them navigate the challenges they may face. By bringing wellness and practical assistance together in one welcoming environment, we are helping ensure that Military Spouses know they are not alone.”

A central component of the retreat will be opportunities for participants to learn practical techniques for managing stress, strengthening emotional resilience, and incorporating mindfulness and self-care into their daily lives. Brett Cotter, Founder of Stress Is Gone, brings more than 25 years of experience helping individuals address emotional stress, trauma, and anxiety through wellness education, mindfulness, and stress reduction techniques and is a nationally recognized expert and author in the field.

“Military Spouses carry tremendous emotional responsibilities, and too often their own stress and well-being take a back seat to the needs of everyone around them,” said Cotter. “Our goal is to create a welcoming, compassionate environment where participants can release stress, reconnect with themselves, and learn simple, practical techniques they can use long after the retreat ends. Healing begins when people feel safe, supported, and empowered to take care of themselves. We are honored to be part of an event that places the needs of Military Spouses at the center of that experience."

“Supporting Veterans means supporting the families who stand beside them,” said Ryan Woodruff, President and CEO of Clear Path for Veterans. “Military Spouses play an essential role in the strength and resilience of our military community, yet their own needs can sometimes be overlooked. At Clear Path, we believe that healing, connection, and a sense of belonging are fundamental to the well-being of the entire military family. We are proud to stand with DVS and Brett Cotter in welcoming Military Spouses to our campus for a day dedicated entirely to their health, happiness, and personal renewal.”

“As a Military Spouse, I know firsthand that military life can be both incredibly rewarding and deeply challenging. When I had the opportunity to work with DVS and help develop Healing Haven, we wanted to create something that truly reflected the experiences, challenges, and aspirations of Military Spouses, while giving them a space where they could focus on themselves as individuals,” said Cindy Meili, Onondaga County Veterans Service Agency Assistant Director, 2022 National Guard Military Spouse of the Year, and longtime advocate for Military Families. “We become so accustomed to adapting, finding solutions, and putting our families first that we sometimes forget to make time for ourselves. Seeing Healing Haven grow from an idea into a virtual program, and now into its first in-person retreat, is incredibly meaningful to me. My hope is that every Military Spouse who participates walks away with a renewed sense of purpose, a

greater appreciation for their own worth, and the understanding that investing in themselves is just as important as everything they do for their families.”

Joshua Fitzpatrick
New York State Department of Veterans' Services
+ +1 518-419-4206
joshua.fitzpatrick@veterans.ny.gov
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