



STRONGER TOGETHER



Celebrating 15 Years of Service

September 2026 | Issue 9

A Place to Turn: Inside the Binghamton Vet Center

For veterans and service members navigating the transition from military to civilian life, knowing where to turn can make all the difference. In the Southern Tier, the Binghamton Vet Center provides a place where veterans, service members and their families can find counseling, connection and support in an environment built specifically for them.

Vet Centers are community-based counseling centers offering a wide range of social and psychological services. At the Binghamton Vet Center, that includes individual and group counseling, family and marriage counseling, bereavement support, military sexual trauma counseling, substance-use assessment and referral, employment assistance, benefits referrals and connections to other VA and community resources. Perhaps just as important is what veterans don't need in order to walk through the door.

Eligible veterans and service members do not have to be enrolled in VA health care to receive Vet Center services. Services are free and confidential, and Vet Center records are maintained separately from other VA records. Many staff members are veterans themselves, bringing an additional level of understanding to conversations about military service, trauma, loss and the transition home.

"We look for reasons and means to qualify individuals rather than turn them away," the Binghamton Vet Center emphasizes. And if someone does not meet Vet Center eligibility requirements, staff work to connect that individual with an appropriate community resource.

Care Built Around the Veteran

There is no single experience of military service—and there is no single approach to helping someone navigate what comes afterward.

Readjustment Counselor Constance Studgeon, LCSW-R, BCD, facilitates several groups, including Coffee with Connie, an ongoing group primarily attended by Vietnam veterans, with Desert Storm veterans also participating. The group provides opportunities for support, socialization and education about PTSD, triggers and other concerns. She also facilitates a Vietnam Wives Support Group, a Lioness Women Veterans Group and anger-management programming.

Her individual counseling work has included a significant focus on military sexual trauma among both female and male veterans, as well as bereavement counseling and treatment related to chronic pain and trauma.

For Studgeon, one of the strengths of the Vet Center model is the ability to see the person behind the symptoms. Although veterans may share experiences with depression, anxiety, PTSD or other challenges, the circumstances that led them there—and the ways they experience those challenges—can be very different.

Being able to tailor care to the individual veteran, rather than relying on a one-size-fits-all approach, she says, is essential.

• Article Continues on page 2.

Read our full digital edition at **STVSG.org**
Featuring more stories, resources, and events supporting local veterans



Front page article continues:

Readjustment Counselor John Fessenden brings another important perspective to that work: he is a veteran himself.

Fessenden works with veterans spanning generations, from the Korean War through current-day conflicts. After a technical career in industry and business, he was drawn to counseling because he wanted to work in a field where he could have a lasting impact on people. When a veteran first comes to the Vet Center, Fessenden's approach begins simply: start where the veteran is.

That means explaining the role of the Vet Center, listening without judgment and helping the veteran understand that they are not alone

Reaching Veterans Where They Are

Support only works when veterans can access it.

For those living in rural communities or facing transportation barriers, the Binghamton Vet Center takes services beyond its downtown location. Community Access Points throughout rural areas allow counselors to meet face-to-face with veterans, service members and families closer to home. Virtual services are also available for those with transportation difficulties or who are homebound.

The Vet Center's 37-foot Mobile Vet Center provides another way to reach communities throughout the region. Primarily used for outreach in rural areas, the mobile unit can also be staffed with counselors who provide services from inside the vehicle.

Veteran Outreach Program Specialist Jason Davis helps lead those efforts through a strategic outreach plan covering the Vet Center's 10-county service area.

That outreach also relies heavily on relationships.

Readjustment to civilian life can involve needs extending well beyond counseling. Housing, employment, benefits, transportation, financial difficulties and other challenges can all affect a veteran's well-being. The Binghamton Vet Center has developed an extensive referral network with veteran organizations, government agencies and community partners so veterans can be connected with additional resources when needed.

Among those partnerships is the Southern Tier Veterans Support Group. The Vet Center works closely with STVSG to help address unmet needs that fall outside readjustment counseling and other established services.

It is a partnership built on a shared belief: sometimes helping a veteran means recognizing that no single organization can provide everything they need.

A Place That Feels Different

For someone hesitant to seek counseling, even walking through the door can be difficult.

The Binghamton Vet Center has intentionally created an environment that feels welcoming while protecting the privacy of those it serves. Military artwork and a wall of military patches help create a familiar atmosphere, while controlled building access and counseling behind closed doors provide privacy and security.

For veterans concerned about stigma or what others might think, Sturgeon offers a different perspective.

Seeking help, she tells them, takes strength. It can provide an opportunity to better understand why they feel the way they do and, perhaps, find some peace.

And because Vet Center services are confidential, choosing to seek that support remains the veteran's decision to share.

For a veteran who has spent years—or decades—carrying the effects of military service, that first conversation could be an important one.

The message from the Binghamton Vet Center is simple: You don't have to figure it out alone.

Binghamton Vet Center — At a Glance

Free & confidential support for eligible veterans, service members & families

📍 53 Chenango Street, Binghamton, NY

☎ 607-722-2393

Services include:

- Individual & group counseling
- Marriage & family counseling
 - Bereavement support
- Military sexual trauma counseling
- Substance-use assessment & referral
- Benefits & employment referrals
- Connections to VA & community resources
 - Virtual and rural outreach services

You do not have to be enrolled in VA health care to receive eligible Vet Center services.



Subscribe to
the
newsletter:



Southern Tier Veterans Support Group
Serving Veterans Across the Southern Tier of NY & Northern Pennsylvania
STVSG.org | Stronger Together Newsletter



When Someone You Know Isn't Quite Themselves

Recognizing the signs—and knowing when to reach out

Sometimes the first sign that a veteran is struggling isn't a request for help. It may be a spouse noticing they seem different, a friend realizing they've stopped calling, or a family member seeing small frustrations suddenly trigger anger.

Readjustment Counselor John Fessenden says one early sign can be emotional numbing. A veteran may have little reaction to things others find funny, exciting or joyful. Other changes can include increased anger or agitation, difficulty sleeping, frequent awakenings and nightmares. Post-traumatic stress may also occur alongside depression and suicidal thoughts and can affect marriages, families and other relationships.

Readjustment Counselor Constance Studgeon, LCSW-R, BCD, sees similar signs: increasing irritability, sleeplessness, nightmares, night sweats, hypervigilance, isolation and difficulty functioning at work. Sometimes, she says, veterans simply feel they “don't fit” anymore—they no longer feel like the same person who entered military service.

When Struggling Becomes a Crisis

Not every change means someone is suicidal, but certain behaviors deserve attention, particularly when several appear together or become more severe.

Warning signs can include worsening depression; talking about dying or wishing to be dead; increased alcohol or substance use; risky behavior; giving away belongings; excessive sleeping while still feeling exhausted; loss of appetite or interest in favorite foods; withdrawing from close friends and family; missing therapy appointments; and turning anger inward.

Those closest to a veteran are often the first to notice these changes. Family, friends and fellow veterans don't have to be mental health professionals to help. They can notice, listen and connect.

Start with what you've observed rather than making accusations. Listen without judgment. Let the person know you care. Encourage connection to professional help or peer support—and continue checking in afterward. Sometimes simply being a consistent presence matters.

Support Before Crisis

Suicide prevention isn't only about responding in a moment of crisis. It's also about building support before a crisis happens.

Access to mental health care, positive coping skills and strong relationships can serve as protective factors, especially during stressful events such as divorce, job loss or the death of a loved one.

“When Veterans have access to the right support before a crisis happens, lives can be saved,” the Binghamton Vet Center emphasizes.

For Studgeon, an important protective factor is knowing a counselor is accessible when additional support is needed. And when a veteran does reach out, Fessenden says the approach begins by meeting them where they are—listening without judgment and helping them understand they aren't alone.

For veterans who worry that seeking help is a sign of weakness, Studgeon offers another perspective:

It takes a strong individual to seek help.

As we recognize Suicide Prevention Month, that's something all of us can remember.

We don't have to wait until someone reaches a crisis before we reach out.

Notice the changes. Start the conversation. Listen.

Stay connected.



Check out our
digital version
for more
features:



NEED SUPPORT?

You don't have to wait for a crisis to reach out.

Binghamton Vet Center

Free & confidential support for eligible veterans,
service members and families

📞 607-722-2393

📍 53 Chenango Street, Binghamton, NY
Veterans Crisis Line

If you or a veteran you know is in crisis:

📞 Call 988, then Press 1

📱 Text 838255

💬 Chat online at VeteransCrisisLine.net

You don't have to face it alone.

Board Spotlight: Ben Margolius

Service, leadership, and a commitment to supporting local veterans.



Co-founder, past president, Army veteran, and longtime advocate for veterans and their families, Ben Margolius has helped shape STVSG from its earliest days. His commitment to service continues today as a member of the Board of Directors.

For Ben Margolius, service has been a constant throughout his life. After 28 years in the U.S. Army as a combat logistician, Ben carried that commitment to service into his work supporting veterans and their families as a co-founder of the Southern Tier Veterans Support Group.

Ben helped establish STVSG with a strong desire to reach veterans and their families and make sure they had somewhere to turn when they needed support. Over the years, he has served the organization in several leadership roles, including as president, and today continues his service as a member of the Board of Directors.

When asked what the STVSG mission means to him, Ben sums it up simply: “Helping people.”

That straightforward answer captures much of what has guided his years with the organization. For Ben, some of the most meaningful moments have come not from meetings, events, or recognition, but from listening to veterans talk about the difference STVSG made in their lives.

Those conversations are a reminder of why the organization exists—and why the work continues. Looking toward the future, Ben hopes to see STVSG expand its reach into additional counties, connecting even more veterans and military families with the resources, organizations, and support they need.

Outside of STVSG, Ben enjoys computers, and after a particularly busy week, his favorite way to decompress is refreshingly simple: sleep. If you're looking for one of his favorite local stops in the Southern Tier, Humdingers makes the list.

Perhaps the best summary of Ben's approach to both STVSG and service itself comes from his personal motto:

“While we live, we serve.”

After 28 years in the Army and 15 years helping build and lead STVSG, those words aren't simply a motto—they reflect a lifetime of service.

Just for Fun

Coffee or Tea?
Tea

Early Bird or Night Owl?
Night Owl

Book or Podcast?
Book

Plan Ahead or Figure it out as
you go?
Plan Ahead



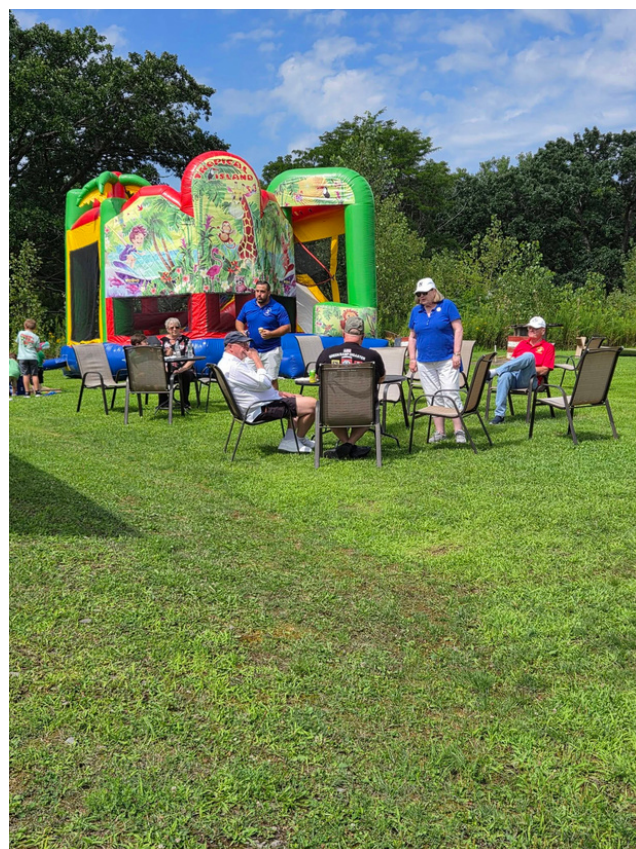
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Southern Tier Veterans Support Group
Serving Veterans Across the Southern Tier of NY & Northern Pennsylvania
STVSG.org | Stronger Together Newsletter

Veterans Appreciation Picnic

Thank you to everyone who helped us celebrate 15 years of helping veterans.



Community Support in Action

August was filled with incredible examples of our community coming together to support local veterans and their families!

Tioga Downs once again showed its tremendous support for the STVSG during the Jefferson Starship concert, helping raise funds that allow us to continue connecting veterans and their families with the resources and assistance they need.

The fun continued at the Binghamton Rumble Ponies' Little Venice Night, where fans helped reach the \$1,000 fundraising goal—which meant the Rumble Ponies GM got “sauced” in celebration! We are incredibly grateful to Tioga Downs, Little Venice, the Binghamton Rumble Ponies, and everyone who donated, participated, and cheered these fundraisers on.

Your support makes our mission possible—and reminds our veterans that their community stands behind them.



To donate:
www.stvsg.org/donate

Online Subscribers:
Click here to donate.
Every dollar helps.
We appreciate the
support.

Southern Tier Veterans Support Group
Serving Veterans Across the Southern Tier of NY & Northern Pennsylvania
STVSG.org | Stronger Together Newsletter

Community Events

For full details and registration, visit
STVSG.org or follow us on Facebook.



UPCOMING EVENTS

VETERANS ★ FAMILIES ★ COMMUNITY

CONNECT
SUPPORT
GET INVOLVED

Mark Your Calendar!

Here are some upcoming events in our community.



BC Safe Chalk the Walk

September 10 – 20, 2026

Help spread messages
of hope, kindness and
suicide prevention
throughout our community.



Clear Path for Veterans Mobile Canteens

October 1, 2026 | 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM

American Legion Post 974, Whitney Point

November 19, 2026 | 11:00 AM – 2:00 PM

American Legion Post 1645, Robinson St, Binghamton

Food. Resources.
Connection.

All veterans and
families are welcome!

SEP
15
TUE

STVSG Affiliates Meeting

Broome County Veterans Resource Center

11 Frederick St., Binghamton | 6:00 PM – 7:00 PM

Guest Speaker: Ryan Longo, Tioga County Sheriff's Office

SEP
18
FRI

Korean War Veterans Breakfast

Blue Dolphin, Apalachin | 8:30 AM

Veterans of all eras are welcome.

Please RSVP to Ralph Luciani, 607-748-2205.

OCT
9
FRI

Greater Binghamton Veterans Breakfast Club

Red Oak Restaurant, Binghamton | 9:00 AM

POC: Caty Strong - Clear Path, 607-744-6303.

OCT
16
FRI

Korean War Veterans Breakfast

Blue Dolphin, Apalachin | 8:30 AM

Veterans of all eras are welcome.

Please RSVP to Ralph Luciani, 607-748-2205.

OCT
20
TUE

STVSG Affiliates Meeting

Broome County Veterans Resource Center

11 Frederick St., Binghamton | 6:00 PM – 7:00 PM

Guest Speaker: TBD

OCT
28
WED

"Stories of Service": A Vets Town Hall

Veterans Resource Center, Binghamton | 5:00 PM – 8:00 PM

Sandwiches, snacks, dessert, coffee and water will be served.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★
No veteran stands alone when a community stands together.

Community Events

For full details and registration, visit
STVSG.org or follow us on Facebook.



ONGOING EVENTS

MARINE CORPS LEAGUE, FIRST MONDAY OF EVERY MONTH, 1900HRS. POST 1194 HILLCREST

"HEALING HAVEN" CREATES THAT SPACE — 1ST MONDAY OF EVERY MONTH AT 7 P.M. – STRESS RELIEF FOR MILITARY SPOUSES

3RD MONDAY OF EVERY MONTH AT 7 P.M. – SELF-CARE TOOLS FOR MILITARY FAMILIES

EVERY (MON), GY6 (GOT YOUR SIX) VETERANS PEER SUPPORT GROUP, MONDAY EVENINGS, 1800-1930 HRS., CITY OF LIGHT CHURCH, 300 LAKE ST., ELMIRA. PLUS: FIRST MONDAY OF THE MONTH IS WING NIGHT AT THE ELBOW ROOM, 1057 WALNUT ST., ELMIRA (EXCLUDES NATIONAL HOLIDAYS)

AMERICAN LEGION POST 1645 177 ROBINSON ST. LUNCH: MONDAY, TUESDAY, WEDNESDAY, THURSDAY 1130-1400 HRS. WEDNESDAYS AND FRIDAYS DINNER IN THE LOUNGE 1800-2100 HRS

EVERY TUESDAY, COFFEE WITH CATY, 0900 VETERANS RESOURCE CENTER, 11 FREDERICK ST. BINGHAMTON

SMILE THROUGH THE STORMS., A SUICIDE SURVIVORS SUPPORTGROUP COMES TOGETHER TWICE A MONTH - BOTH IN PERSON (FOR LOCAL SURVIVORS - HERE IN ELMIRA) AND VIRTUALLY. PEOPLE ARE ABLE TO FOLLOW THE LINK ON THE WEBSITE TO JOIN IN WHEN GROUP IS SCHEDULED. WEBSITE IS [HTTP://WWW.SMILETHROUGHTHESTORMS.COM](http://www.smilethroughthestorms.com)

EVERY THIRD THURSDAY, THE BINGHAMTON VETERANS FLY FISHERS TIE FLIES AT THE BROOME WEST SENIOR CENTER, 2801 WAYNE ST., ENDICOTT. LUNCH IS OPTIONAL FOR ONLY \$4, 1300-1500 HRS.

EVERY THIRD THURSDAY, THE BINGHAMTON VETERANS FLY FISHERS MEET AT THE WEST ENDICOTT FIRE STATION, 113 N. PAGE AVE., ENDICOTT. FREE PIZZA, WATER AND COFFEE. SOMETIMES FREE FLY FISHING GEAR AND BAKED GOODS, 1830 HRS.

EVERY (FRI) 0900-1000 HRS. VVA #803 VETERANS PEER SUPPORT GROUP, VIETNAM, VETERANS MUSEUM, 1200 DAVIS ST., ELMIRA (QUARTERLY BREAKFAST AT CURLEY'S CHICKEN HOUSE, 2100 LAKE ST., ELMIRA, 0800-1000 HRS.)

FIRST (SAT) MONTHLY, VOICES RECOVERY CENTER VETERANS SUPPORT GROUP, 340 PROSPECT ST., BINGHAMTON, 1400 HRS.

Community Events

For full details and registration, visit
STVSG.org or follow us on Facebook.

STVSG MONTHLY AFFILIATE MEETING

When: Sept 15th 6PM

**Where: Veterans Resource Center
11 Frederick St.
Binghamton, NY 13901**

Refreshments
will be
provided

Anyone with an
interest in helping the
veteran community is
welcome.



Stronger Together | stvsg.org

Community Events

For full details and registration, visit
STVSG.org or follow us on Facebook.

VET★**CENTER**

September 2026

Call in advance to register
for **all groups & special**

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	
★ Connection. Camaraderie. Community. Vet Center Website Vet Center Service Video Vet Center Testimonials Life isn't always easy after a deployment. That's where we can help. We offer confidential support for Veterans, service members, and their families at no cost in a relaxed, non-medical setting. Our services include counseling for needs such as depression, post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and the psychological effects of military sexual trauma (MST). We can also connect you with more support in VA and your community. All services are strictly confidential.		1 8:30-10am PTSD Support Group 1030am In-Person Yoga w/ virtual	2 Chess Group 12-2 Lioness Group w Connie 2-330pm (Women Veterans)	3 830am In-Person/ Virtual Yoga	4 10-11am- Camaraderie 1030-12pm ACT w/ Doug	
	7 OFFICE CLOSED LABOR DAY	8 8:30-10am PTSD Support Group 1030am In-Person Yoga w/ virtual	9 Chess Group 12-2 Lioness Group w Connie 2-330pm (Women Veterans)	10 830am In-Person/ Virtual Yoga	11 8:30-10am-Coffee w/ Connie 10-11am- Camaraderie w/Corey 11-12:30pm- Vietnam Spouses 1030-12pm ACT w/ Doug	
	14	15 8:30-10am PTSD Support Group 1030am In-Person Yoga w/ virtual	16 Chess Group 12-2 Lioness Group w Connie 2-330pm (Women Veterans)	17 830am In-Person/ Virtual Yoga	18 8:30-10am-Coffee w/ Connie 10-11am- Camaraderie w/Corey 11-12:30pm- Vietnam Spouses 1030-12pm ACT w/ Doug	
	21	22 8:30-10am PTSD Support Group 1030am In-Person Yoga w/ virtual	23 Chess Group 12-2pm Lioness Group w Connie 2-330pm (Women Veterans)	24 830am In-Person/ Virtual Yoga	25 8:30-10am-Coffee w/Connie 10-11am- Camaraderie w/Corey 11-12:30pm- Vietnam Spouses 1030-12pm ACT w/ Doug	
	28	29 8:30-10am PTSD Support Group 1030am In-Person Yoga w/ virtual	30 Chess Group 12-2pm Lioness Group w Connie 2-330pm (Women Veterans)			

BINGHAMTON VET CENTER - 53 CHENANGO STREET - BINGHAMTON, NY 13901 (607) 722- 2393
Veterans Crisis Line: Dial 988 then Press 1, chat online, or text 838255.