

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **FREE “CENTRAL MASS. STAND DOWN” FOR VETERANS BEING HELD JUNE 25-26**

### **Services, Counseling, Activities & Entertainment to be Offered**

SHREWSBURY, Mass., June 9, 2010 – The Fifth Annual Central Massachusetts Stand Down will be held on June 25 and 26, at Veterans Inc.'s Independence Hall, 59 South Street, Shrewsbury, Mass. The event takes place from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. on Friday, and 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday.

“For the first time, we are holding the event outside, with more space for service providers to set up. In addition, the number of veterans in need of services is increasing, due to troops returning from Iraq and Afghanistan, and the state of the economy and job market,” Veterans Inc. Executive Director Denis Leary said. “Both of those factors will contribute to what may be our largest Stand Down ever.”

Veterans Inc. housing resident Alston W. Eldridge, Jr., who served as a Sergeant in the U.S. Marine Corps, encouraged other veterans to attend: “Being centrally located, veterans from most of New England can come and learn about the services available to them, from Veterans Inc. and other organizations. There’s a good chance you’ll meet someone you served with in the service.”

According to Ken Jones, a Veterans Inc. resident and former Lance Corporal in the U.S. Marine Corps, “I am definitely attending this year’s Stand Down, because it’s a great way to find out more about the benefits available to veterans. At last year’s Stand Down, I straightened out an issue with my license and got referrals for free dental work and eyeglasses.”

The Central Massachusetts Stand Down is made possible by a grant from the U.S. Dept. of Labor and private donations; and by the providers and entertainers who volunteer their time and services at the event. Consigli Construction Company of Milford, Mass., donated construction of a permanent stage for the event.

More than 50 providers are expected to participate, representing non-profit organizations, for-profit businesses, and government agencies offering veterans’ services, health and human services, and social services. Veterans at the event can obtain food, clothing, personal care items, haircuts, massages, acupuncture, counseling, legal services; and services and advice related to employment and training, housing, and healthcare. Recovery and AA meetings will be held both days.

Activities and entertainment on Friday include performances by jazz singer Cassandra McKinley, folk/blues guitarist Glenn Pettit, VIBE (the Veterans Inc. Blues Experience), and the Worcester WAIT Team -- a dance/vocal troupe of teenage and young adult volunteers who teach AIDS prevention.

Saturday highlights include the Veterans Inc. Food Bank from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.; a cooking demonstration by Pepper's Catering; performances by Latin band Bolero featuring Cha Cha Conner, original rock band Side Effects, VIBE, and Glenn Pettit; and a guitar workshop led by Glenn Pettit.

The Stand Down is open to homeless and in-need veterans and their families. All services and items are provided free of charge. Veterans should bring a DD-214 or VA card as proof of veteran status.

The WRTA will provide transportation to and from the Stand Down from Veterans Inc.'s Worcester headquarters at 69 Grove Street. For transportation from other locations, contact Veterans Inc. Overnight accommodations at Independence Hall are available on Friday with pre-registration.

The term Stand Down originated during the Vietnam War. According to the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans, the Stand Down was "a safe retreat for units returning from combat operations" where troops had access to clean uniforms, warm meals, medical and dental care, mail, and camaraderie, all in a safe environment.

For more information or to register, contact Joe Boylan at (508) 791-3273, ext. 105, or [joeboylan@veteransinc.org](mailto:joeboylan@veteransinc.org).

Veterans Inc., a private non-profit organization, is the largest provider of services to veterans and their families in New England. Since 1991, Veterans Inc. has helped more than 40,000 veterans with housing, employment and training, health and wellness, and outreach services. The organization is a national leader in ending homelessness among veterans, with one of the highest rates in the nation – 85% - for transitioning veterans out of homelessness. Its clinical case management approach earned Veterans Inc. a "Best Practice" citation from the U.S. Department of Labor and the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans, and two national awards for outstanding performance.

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