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**For Immediate Release:**  
June 26, 2017

## 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Stand Down Helped 600 Veterans and their Family Members

**WORCESTER, MA** – Veterans Inc., in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, U.S. Department of Labor, and other local agencies, supported 600 veterans and their family members at the 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Stand Down held June 16.

The one day event included 82 providers that assisted with career opportunities, counseling and substance abuse referrals, employment and training, health and wellness, housing referrals and resources, legal services, Registry of Motor Vehicles, and much more. Free items and services included new clothing and footwear, food and refreshments, haircuts, personal care items, and much more.

The event had opening remarks made by Worcester County District Attorney Joseph D. Early and Worcester City Councilor Morris A. Bergman, Chair of the Veterans' & Military Affairs, the national anthem performed by Catherine Parrotta from Boston 25., and former Boston Bruin and now WAAF radio personality Lyndon Byers signed autographs.

"More than 6,000 veterans and their families have received assistance at Veterans Inc. Stand Downs since the event's inception in 2006", said Vincent Perrone, Veterans Inc. President & CEO. He went on to say, "We remain grateful for the outpouring of community support, as this event would not be possible without their generosity."

"By participating in the stand down, Suzanne and I were not only able to see first hand the scope of the needs that some of our veterans have but also the enthusiasm and desire of so many people willing to help them get to a better place. As a Marine officer I was taught that nobody gets left behind. On the day of the stand down, through the help and generosity of many, nobody did," said Veterans Inc. volunteer Thomas Dowd, whose wife Suzanne is also a volunteer.

Corporate sponsor support came from National Grid, MorphoTrust USA, The TJX Companies, Inc., Reliant Medical Group.

"Supporting our local veterans ties directly to MorphoTrust's mission of Simplifying, Protecting and Securing the lives of the American people. Our CEO, Bob Eckel, has made it a key value to give back to the community, and we've been quite honored to have worked with Veterans Inc. for so many years. On a personal note, there's truly nothing better than spending the day with the local veterans; helping them pick out clothing, hand them brand new sneakers and ultimately have them leaving with a smile on their face. It's been a humbling experience to see the tears in their eyes as they thank us for our support." stated Julie Zomar, MorphoTrust Veterans Outreach Council Founder, and Senior Manager of Marketing Programs.

Mark DiFraia, Morpho Trust Senior Director added, "Veterans Inc. is a great organization for us to partner with because we can see every last dollar go directly to the veterans being served."

"Stand Down" is a term that originated during the Vietnam War, used to describe the practice of removing combat troops from the field and taking care of their basic needs in a safe area. 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.

**About Veterans Inc.**

Veterans Inc. is New England's leading provider of support services to veterans and their families. A 501(c)3 non-profit, the organization's single-minded mission is to be there for our veterans in their time of need. Incorporated in 1990, Veterans Inc. has helped more than 65,000 veterans in need and today operates offices and programs in all six New England states. Our services include housing, employment & training, counseling, alcohol and drug treatment center, family support programs, benefits counseling and advocacy, temporary financial assistance, health and wellness, food services, post-9/11 support and women & childcare services. They were there when we needed them...We must be there now that they need us.

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