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## ***Veterans Inc. hosted a Women's Day Event for Staff***

*Employees heard from women in leadership as they shared their unique experiences serving our veteran community.*



*(From left to right) Senator Robyn K. Kennedy, Laura Curtis, Former Captain of the Army Nurse Corps, Michele Suhocki, a Peer Specialist/Outreach Coordinator at the Executive Office of Veterans' Services, & Amanda Riik Herron, Sr. Director of Administration and Employee Relations at Veterans Inc.*

**Worcester MA.** - Veterans Inc. hosted a staff event celebrating International Women's Month. The International Women's Day event was hosted by The Veterans Inc. Junior Executive Council (JEC), a group of employees establishing a peer support network to create an innovative, collaborative environment promoting engagement and professional advancement. Women of Veterans Inc. were thanked for their hard work, leadership, and dedication in supporting our veterans and their family members.

During the opening remarks, Amanda Riik Herron, Sr. Director of Administration and Employee Relations, uplifted those in attendance and honored the 13 women who've worked for Veterans Inc. for over 7 years. Out of 214 employees, 97 self-identify as a woman; over ten women currently serve in the military or are a veteran; and just over 50% of leadership roles are filled with women.

"Today, I think of the hashtag, #EmbraceEquity, which means something to me", Herron shared. "As it's true, not everyone starts from the same place with the same privilege of access and support, which can create significant disadvantages, making it more difficult to achieve the same goals."

The guest speakers included Michele Suhocki, a Peer Specialist/Outreach Coordinator at the Executive Office of Veterans' Services, Laura Curtis, Former Captain of the Army Nurse Corps, and Senator Robyn K. Kennedy, who shared their unique experiences serving our veteran community in their past and present roles.

The speakers shared the following comments:

"I had to redefine myself and ask myself, 'what do I want to do?', said Michele Suhocki, a Peer Specialist/Outreach Coordinator at the Executive Office of Veterans' Services. "I decided that I really feel called to work with veterans. And for me, to empower myself, it is important for me every day to be the absolute best version of myself, and I know I am the only one who can do that."

"Courage is not the lack of fear, its having fear and taking action anyways", said Laura Curtis, Former Captain of the Army Nurse Corps. "I'm not fearless; I'm courageous, and I think that's an important distinction to make."

"As the 226<sup>th</sup> woman elected to the Massachusetts legislature, to be here today on International Women's Day, that is globally recognizing the celebration of the social, economic, cultural, & political achievements of women; I would be remised if I didn't take a moment to acknowledge whenever I have the opportunity, the leadership that came before me," explains Senator Kennedy. "It has created a space for me and so many others to do this work, to continue this work, and, more importantly, to open new doors, to continue the conversation and advancement."

#### **About Veterans Inc.**

Veterans Inc. is the nation's leading non-profit veteran services provider. A 501(c)3 non-profit, the organization's single-minded mission is to be there for veterans and their families in their time of need. We are the largest veteran services provider in New England and have recently expanded programs into Montana and North Dakota. Services provided include housing, homelessness prevention, employment and training, counseling and case management, family support programs, benefits/healthcare coordination, suicide prevention, temporary financial assistance, food services, substance use disorder treatment and recovery support, and women and children services.

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