

August 1, 2025    Volume 4, Issue 8

# Thrive

with Project New Hope



## Mission Ready: Preparing for a New Season

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## Mission Ready: Preparing for a New Season

by Jennifer Cesaitis

There's something about late August that feels like a shift. Maybe it's the cooler mornings or the way the sun sits a little lower in the sky. Even if the calendar doesn't say it yet, fall is coming. For many Veterans, these seasonal transitions carry more weight than we expect.

Shifting gears after the freedom of summer can stir up old patterns. The return to structure might feel comforting, or it might feel jarring. Either way, this time of year offers something we often overlook. A reset. A checkpoint. A chance to ask ourselves, How am I doing, really?

### **When the Seasons Change, So Does the Body**

Service life teaches us to respond to structure, to adapt on the fly. But that kind of training does not always prepare us for the emotional weight that can come with change — especially the quiet kind. The change that happens when routines return, kids go back to school, or the house suddenly feels too quiet.

You might notice more tension in your shoulders or more restlessness at night. Maybe you find yourself more on edge without knowing why. These are not personal failings. They are signals. The body remembers what we have pushed through. This time of year tends to stir up that memory. The good news is that no rule says you have to just white-knuckle your way through it.

### **Don't Brace for the Fall, Prepare for It**

Preparation does not mean making a perfect plan. It just means choosing to respond rather than reacting.



This is a good time to re-establish a simple routine. Nothing complex. Wake up and sit in silence for a few minutes. Drink a full glass of water before checking your phone. Take a slow walk in the morning or early evening. These small practices give the nervous system something to rely on.

If the season ahead feels overwhelming, you are not alone in that. Sometimes the best way to prepare is to pause. Project New Hope offers wellness retreats throughout New England, creating space for just that. These retreats are not about fixing anyone. They are about providing room to breathe, move gently, and reset with others who understand the weight of transition.



# Mission Ready: Preparing for a New Season

(continued)

## Reconnect With What Matters

You do not have to overhaul your life. You just need to find your way back to the things that steady you.

If you haven't checked in with your goals since the new year, now is the time. Are you getting the sleep you need? Are you spending time around people who truly see you? Have you spoken to someone about what you are carrying?

Small steps count. Reaching out to a peer. Attending a Veterans Coffee Social. Visiting Sully's Pantry if food stress is getting in the way of your wellness. These are not just services. They are tools for staying connected when it would be easier to shut down.

## You've Been Here Before

You've made it through tougher transitions. Some seen, some not. This one is different. It is not about survival. It is about finding steadiness before the winds really shift.

Let August be your checkpoint. You do not need to charge into the fall full of energy and plans. Just take one clear step forward. That might be a conversation, a walk, or a retreat. Whatever it is, let it be yours.





**TCM**  
**First Responders Retreat**

**November 6-10, 2025**      **Genesis Spiritual Life & Conf. Center**  
**Westfield, MA**

**First responders often face immense emotional & psychological challenges due to the traumatic nature of their jobs.**  
**This can lead to mental health struggles including depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).**

The Cortina Method (TCM) resolves & dissolves these problem areas. Based on neuroscience, TCM is Brain-Based Healing that helps people process trauma, WITHOUT having to relive ANY pain.  
Replace pain with joy, gratitude, relief, and excitement.  
Enjoy Equine Therapy and holistic wellness of Yoga, Reiki, and Reflexology.

**10 openings - Complete your application TODAY!**  
Phone interview and Employment ID/ DD-214 required.

 **2025 RETREATS**

 **Project New Hope**  
Where Veterans Rebuild With Honor

[Click Here for Retreat Information & Registration.](#)

First Responders are invited to take a transformative step toward healing and resilience with workshops and therapies designed to resolve trauma, calm the mind, and regain joy. You answer the call for Americans 24 hours a day. This retreat is designed to provide a safe, supportive, and healing environment.

Everyone who attends will benefit from The Cortina Method (TCM), led by Trauma Resolution Expert Michael Cortina and his team. TCM helps resolve the trauma that leads to PTS, guilt, anger, fear, physical pain, or limiting beliefs. It offers a neuroscience-based solution for healing without requiring participants to relive any traumatic experiences.

Enjoy equine therapy, holistic yoga, Reiki, and reflexology, and other holistic wellness practices. Learn more about Michael Cortina and The Cortina Method at his website <https://michaelcortina.com/>.

Space is Limited: Only ten spots are available. Participants are responsible for arranging their own transportation to the retreat location.

After you submit your application, a Project New Hope team member will contact you to complete a phone interview, which is required to confirm attendance. Per the instructions during the phone interview, you will need to submit a copy of your employer identification card or DD214.

Lodging, meals, and activities are all provided at no cost to participants. There is a \$50 dollar registration fee that is refunded one week after the completion of the retreat. You must arrange your own transportation to and from Westfield, MA.

Please send questions to Sue at [smwilder@projectnewhopema.org](mailto:smwilder@projectnewhopema.org) or call (508) 762-9738.

#### Priority Enrollment:

First Responders who have not attended a Project New Hope retreat will receive priority consideration.

Join us in taking this step toward healing, resilience, and rediscovering joy in life.

Start Date: Thursday, November 6, 2025

End Date: Sunday, November 10, 2025

Genesis Spiritual Life & Conference Center  
53 Mill Street, Westfield, MA 01085







**Project New Hope INC.**

Where Veterans Rebuild With Honor

## Veterans' Holistic Wellness

### Chair Massage

Enjoy the relaxation and health benefits of a chair massage with Delaney!



First Monday of each month  
20-minute sessions  
Appointments from 5-7 pm

### Reflexology

Whole Body benefits through the feet. Feel relaxed and refreshed with Dawn!



Fourth Tuesday of each month  
30-minute sessions  
Appointments from 6-8 pm

Please call our Worcester office to schedule your appointment today!  
(774) 243-7859

[www.projectnewhopema.org](http://www.projectnewhopema.org)



**Project New Hope INC.**

Where Veterans Rebuild With Honor



## TCMVisits

### Veteran, Spouse, & Children



Resolve trauma/ PTS and other disturbing emotions, thoughts, and behaviors with The Cortina Method (TCM).

TCM uses brain-based healing without reliving painful emotions.

No COST

Private & Confidential via telehealth

Get seen within 1-14 days.

Appointments are limited.



Sign up [HERE](#) for your No Cost TCM Visit Today!

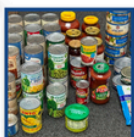
[www.projectnewhopema.org](http://www.projectnewhopema.org)



## WORCESTER, MA

Please bring:  
Driver's license noting Veteran, CAC Card, VA healthcare card, DD214, DOD military/dependent ID

70 James St., #129A  
Worcester, MA 01603  
(774) 243-7859



Serving Military, Veterans, Spouses, and their minor children



Non-perishable food items, frozen meats, dairy items, and seasonal fresh vegetables  
Personal hygiene items, feminine products, and dog & cat food.

Baby & kid's clothing ( NB - children's 12), diapers, wipes, formula and much more.

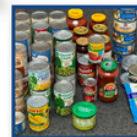
Open 1st & 3rd Saturdays  
9:00am - 11:00am  
by appointment



## WESTFIELD, MA



Hampton Ponds Plaza  
1029 North Road, Suite 9  
Westfield, MA 01085  
(413) 485-7988



Serving Military, Veterans, Spouses, and their minor children



Non-perishable food items, frozen meats, dairy items, and seasonal fresh vegetables  
Personal hygiene items, feminine products, and dog & cat food.

Baby & kid's clothing ( NB - children's 12), diapers, wipes, formula and much more.

Open Weekly!  
Monday, Tuesday, Thursday  
8:30 am - 1:00 pm  
by appointment



**Project New Hope INC.**

Where Veterans Rebuild With Honor

[www.projectnewhopema.org](http://www.projectnewhopema.org)



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## When the Fridge is Empty

Food insecurity doesn't always look like you expect. Sometimes, it seems like a quiet Veteran standing in line at the grocery store, trying to do the math in his head before getting to the checkout. Other times, it looks like a mom skipping dinner to give food to her kids.

Across Massachusetts, food insecurity is on the rise. But for Veterans, the numbers are especially troubling. One in three Veterans in the state struggles to afford food. That's nearly as high as the state average, where 37 percent of households reported food insecurity last year. The difference is that Veterans are even more likely to avoid asking for help.

### Behind the Numbers

When a Veteran doesn't have reliable access to food, it often goes hand in hand with other challenges. Housing costs, medical expenses, mental health, and day-to-day stress are all connected. In many households, one problem fuels another.

In Massachusetts, nearly nine out of ten food-insecure families are also struggling to cover rent, utilities, or medications. Many of the Veterans we serve are living with service-connected injuries, managing chronic health issues, or caring for loved ones. Choices like groceries versus heat, or food versus gas, have become part of daily life.

This is not just about statistics. These are people who raised their hands to serve, who now find themselves without the basics. National numbers support what we see locally. From 2015 to 2019, 11 percent of Veterans aged 18 to 64 nationwide faced food insecurity. Among military families overall, more than one in four reported low or very low food security, a number much higher than that of civilian households. And still, many are going without help.

In Massachusetts, only 7 percent of Veterans who qualify are enrolled in SNAP (formerly known as food stamps). Some are unaware they're eligible. Others are turned away due to paperwork errors or discouraged by recent federal rule changes that place new burdens on recipients. These rules don't always account for disabilities, caregiving, or unstable employment, the very realities many Veterans are living with.





## **Sully's Food & Baby Pantry: Local Help, No Hassle**

Sully's Food & Baby Pantry began during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, built out of concern for local Veterans and military families who were quietly going without. What started as a simple response to a clear need has grown into something lasting. This pantry isn't about handouts. It's about making sure people have the basics to care for themselves and their families. Whether someone stops in for a few items or needs a full restock, they're met with respect and kindness, every time.

### **Veterans' Farmers Market: Fresh and Free**

This summer, we've partnered with the Worcester VA Clinic to offer fresh, seasonal produce through our Veterans' Farmers Market. Free fruits and vegetables are available to Veterans and their families, no questions asked.

## **Why It Matters**

The effects of food insecurity reach far beyond an empty kitchen. For many households already stretched thin, it means making hard choices, skipping meals so a child can eat, cutting pills in half to make a prescription last, or putting off a doctor visit because the groceries ran out first. In 2023, the strain from hunger contributed to more than \$1.3 billion in emergency room visits and hospital stays across Massachusetts.

But the numbers don't show the isolation that comes when someone feels they have no one to turn to; the guilt that settles in when there is not enough to go around, or the quiet burden of carrying one more worry, with no clear way forward.

## **What You Can Do**

You don't need to wear a uniform to serve. Here's how you can help:

- Share this information with a Veteran in your life
- Volunteer your time at Sully's or our mobile market
- Donate food, baby supplies, or hygiene items
- Advocate for policies that protect access to food for those who serve

And if you are a Veteran in need, know this: asking for help is not a sign of failure. It's a step toward stability. We are here and ready to stand with you.

Learn more: [www.projectnewhopema.org](http://www.projectnewhopema.org)





## Worcester, MA

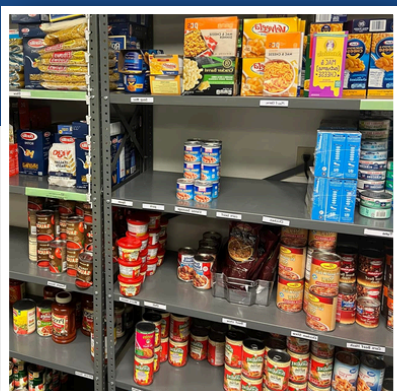
Proud to serve  
over 400  
Veterans & Family members  
for July!

### Office Hours:

Mon – Thurs 9:00am – 1:00pm  
Friday 9:00am – 2:00pm

Project New Hope, Inc.  
70 James Street, Suite 129A  
Worcester, MA 01603

(774) 243-7859



The people we  
serve each month  
grow and we  
depend on your  
donations to  
continue serving  
our Veterans and  
their Families!



## Westfield, MA

Proud to serve  
over 500  
Veterans & Family members  
for July!

### Office Hours:

Mon, Tues, Thurs 8:30am-1:30pm  
Wednesday & Friday Closed

Project New Hope, Inc.  
Hampton Ponds Plaza #9  
1029 North Road, Rt 202  
Westfield, MA 01085

(413) 315-3873







## Worcester Spotlights

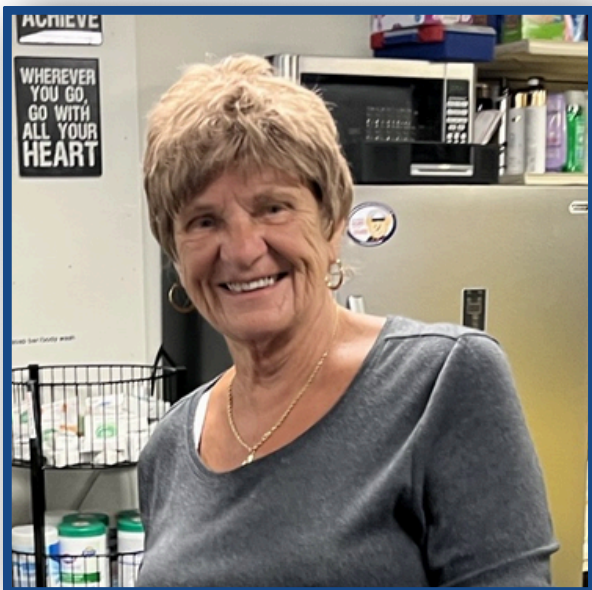
### Veteran Spotlight: Edwin Blondin

This month, we are honored to recognize Edwin Blondin, a proud U.S. Navy Veteran and longtime resident of Brookfield. From 1963 to 1970, Edwin served aboard a destroyer during the Vietnam War, standing watch and carrying out his duties with courage and resolve. His time in uniform reflected a quiet strength that he carried into civilian life.

After his military service, Edwin spent 25 years working at Heald Machine, where he became known not just for his work ethic, but for his loyalty to those around him. Whether in service or in the shop, Edwin gave his all. We thank Edwin for his service to our country, his dedication to his community, and the steady way he continues to lead by example.



### Volunteer Spotlight: Anna Fleming



This month, we are proud to recognize Anna Fleming, a devoted member of our Worcester community and the beloved widow of Richard Fleming, a U.S. Army Veteran who served during the Korean War. Anna's dedication speaks volumes. Through personal loss, she continues to show up — with kindness, with strength, and with a heart for service. Her steady presence at Project New Hope reminds us that resilience is not just about enduring, it's about continuing to give when it matters most. Anna honors her husband's memory not only with words, but through action. Her commitment reflects the very spirit of our mission — to lift others up, to serve with compassion, and to build community through care. Thank you, Anna, for carrying forward a legacy of love and service. You are a light among us.



## Westfield Spotlights

### Veteran Spotlight: David Sweeney

We are proud to recognize David Sweeney as our Veteran of the Month. David served in the United States Navy during the 1960s, a pivotal time in our nation's history. While stationed aboard the USS Ozark, he was deployed to Guantanamo Bay during the Cuban Missile Crisis — a tense chapter in global affairs that demanded steady hands and strong hearts. His role involved seeking and clearing water mines, a job requiring precision, courage, and calm under pressure. David's service reflects a generation of Veterans who stood ready in moments of uncertainty, often without recognition or fanfare. His story reminds us that strength doesn't always raise its voice — sometimes, it simply answers the call.

We thank David for his service, his sacrifice, and his place in the legacy of those who have kept our waters, and our country, safe.



### Volunteer Spotlight: Richard Duquette



This month, we are proud to shine a light on Richard Duquette, a U.S. Air Force and National Guard Veteran whose steady presence and hard work have made a lasting impact at Sully's Food Pantry.

Each Monday, Richard drives to the Western Mass Food Bank to pick up critical supplies — and he doesn't stop there. After the van is unloaded, he stays to organize, stock, and prepare the shelves, fridges, and freezers so that Veterans and families who walk through our doors are met with dignity and care.

Richard never seeks credit, but he always shows up. Whether it's a heavy lift or a last-minute need, he's the one quietly stepping in to help.

We're grateful for his dedication, his service, and his willingness to do whatever it takes to support the mission. Thank you, Richard, for being part of the heart of this work.





## Where to Find Us!

Join our Westfield staff, Amy & Barbara, who will have a table at Veteran Picnic in the Park, West Springfield on August 9 at the Veteran Picnic in the Park!

Morgan Road Pavilion 11am-5pm.

Free entry. Food, games, entertainment.

The poster is framed with a blue border and a red and white striped border. It features a central circular logo with a tree and a picnic table, surrounded by stars. The text is in various fonts and colors, including red, white, and blue. The event details are clearly stated, including the date, time, location, and contact information. A QR code is provided for more information.

presented by

**VOICE**  
Veteran Outreach Into Community Engagement

THE **MATHEW J. VIEU**  
MEMORIAL FUND, INC.

**VETERAN PICNIC IN THE PARK**

**FREE ENTRY**

**11AM-5PM**

**MORGAN ROAD PAVILLION**  
459 MORGAN RD, WEST SPRINGFIELD, MA 01089


**AUGUST 9, 2025**

**The Many Jane Jones**

FOR MORE INFORMATION  
OR SPONSORSHIP CONTACT:  
CHRISTIAN.DILUZIO@MASS.GOV  
413-263-3019  
WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/VOICEWMASS

**LIVE MUSIC - FOOD - FAMILY FUN - COMMUNITY GROUPS**





**Project New Hope** INC.  
Where Veterans Rebuild With Honor



## VA Claims Assistance

Get help with your VA claim  
and answers to your questions!


We partner with local VSO's and experts to provide  
assistance with filing your VA Claim.

2nd Saturday of each month  
8:00 am - 12:00 pm

Project New Hope, Inc.  
70 James Street, Suite 129A  
Worcester, MA 01603  
(774) 243-7859

[www.projectnewhopema.org](http://www.projectnewhopema.org)




## Are you in need of Fuel Assistance?

Are you a Central Massachusetts Veteran behind on your fuel payment and are in need of support, **Project New Hope Inc.** is here to support you, in partnership with the **United Way.**

Grant Funding is provided by the National Grid Foundation to address the demand for utility assistance to Military and Veterans by providing the fuel neutral utility assistance.

**Requirements:**

- Veteran Verification Documentation
- Past Due Bill
- Attendance at 1 Budgeting Class with Sue Katz

Please reach out to our Case Manager, Shelby Frysinger, for more information.  
(508) 762-1459  
sfrysinger@proejctnewhopema.org

**Hanscom** Federal Credit Union  
Certified Financial Wellness Coach

**Sue Katz**  
United Way

**Project New Hope** INC.  
Where Veterans Rebuild With Honor

**UNITED WAY**  
Central Massachusetts

\*\* Grant is open to Central Mass Veterans Only  
\*\* Payment will be submitted directly to fuel company. Funds available while supplies last.



**Project New Hope** INC.  
Where Veterans Rebuild With Honor

## Veterans Coffee Social




Have a coffee, share a story, or reconnect with other Veterans.  
All branches of all eras welcome!

Worcester, MA	Westfield, MA
Every Tuesday 8:30 - 10:30 am	3rd Thursday 9:00 - 10:30 am
70 James Street, Suite 129A Worcester, MA 01603 (774) 243-7859	Hampton Ponds Plaza #9 1029 North Road, Rt 202 Westfield, MA 01085 (413) 315-3873

[www.projectnewhopema.org](http://www.projectnewhopema.org)




**Project New Hope** INC.  
Where Veterans Rebuild With Honor

## Veterans' Farmers Market



Fresh fruit and vegetables  
provided for Veterans and their Families.

**Worcester VA Clinic**  
403 Belmont St  
Worcester, MA 01604  
11:00 am - 1:00 pm

July 11th	August 1st	September 5th
July 18th	August 22nd	September 19th






[www.projectnewhopema.org](http://www.projectnewhopema.org)





# Veterans Coffee Socials!

Good Coffee, Real Conversation, and Community You Can Count On

Sometimes what makes the biggest difference isn't a program or a plan, it's a seat at the table and someone who understands. That's exactly what you'll find at our Veterans Coffee Socials. Held regularly throughout the month, these gatherings are open to all Veterans, service members, and military families. There's no agenda, no pressure, and no cost, just hot coffee, good company, and space to connect.

Whether you're new to the area, looking for support, or just want to be around people who "get it," the Coffee Socials offer a relaxed setting to talk, listen, or simply be present. Some folks come every week, some just drop in when they can. Either way, you're welcome.

Why it Matters:

- Build connections with fellow Veterans
- Share experiences and resources
- Combat isolation with community
- Learn about local programs and services in a low-key setting

We know the weight Veterans carry is often invisible. These Coffee Socials create a place to set some of that down, even if only for an hour.

Coffee's hot, chairs are open, and community is waiting. We'd love to see you there.





# School's In, So Is Stress: How Veterans and Families Can Stay Grounded

by Jennifer Cesaitis

August sometimes feels like a race toward the start of a new school year, and often it feels like a race we're not winning. There are lists to check, supplies to purchase, forms to complete, and new routines to establish. But for Veteran families, there's often something else under the surface. A quiet stress that shows up just as backpacks start coming off the shelves and calendars start filling up.

Whether you are a Veteran raising kids, a caregiver helping someone else, or even a student Veteran heading back to class yourself, this time of year can stir up tension or uneasiness that is hard to put into words. The key is knowing you are not alone in it — and you do not have to power through without support.

## Why This Time of Year Can Feel Heavy

The back-to-school season brings change, and with change often comes unease. For some, it means saying goodbye to the ease of summer. For others, it's the fear of the unknown. New teachers, new routines, new pressures.

If you live with trauma, anxiety, or post-service stress, these transitions can be triggering. Crowded parking lots, loud school events, and sleepless nights can all add up. Even for student Veterans, walking into a classroom where your experiences are not shared by others can bring up feelings of isolation or disconnection. It's manageable with the right support!





# School's In, So Is Stress: How Veterans and Families Can Stay Grounded

(continued)

## Create a Grounded Routine

Routines can make your life predictable and calming. Structure is your ally, but it doesn't have to resemble basic training. Start the day with five minutes of quiet before the chaos begins. End it with a moment of stillness, whether that's a short walk, a breathing exercise, or simply turning off your phone a little earlier.

Help your kids build the same kind of structure. A consistent bedtime, a calm morning, a space to talk through their feelings — it all helps. And when their stress shows up, remember that your response matters more than your perfection.

## Use the Tools That Already Exist

This is also a good time to lean on resources that can help carry the load. The Annie App for Veterans, created by the VA, offers personalized text messages to support your mental health and wellness. From breathing exercises to mood check-ins, Annie is a quiet presence in your pocket that asks how you are before the day gets away from you.

Veterans Coffee Socials, offered weekly through Project New Hope, give space to speak freely or sit with others who get it. During our busiest time, these moments help us connect and ease some of the pressure.

If you are a caregiver or co-parent, be sure to check in with yourself as well. You cannot pour from an empty cup, and this time of year asks a lot from the adults holding things together. You deserve support, too.

And if food security is a concern, Sully's Pantry remains a valuable resource for families in need. A stocked fridge can make all the difference in a stressful week.

## There Is Room to Breathe

If the pace of August feels fast, give yourself permission to slow down. You do not have to fix everything today. Remember what helps you stay grounded.

Maybe that's a pause before answering. Perhaps it's planning one quiet weekend in the middle of a busy month. It could mean asking for help before you think you deserve it.

Whatever it looks like, trust that you are not doing this alone. The path through stress is not always straight, but it does get easier when you walk it with others who understand.

**11th Annual**

# Salute our Veterans

## Motorcycle Ride

**Saturday  
August 16, 2025**

**Honoring All  
Who Served**

**RIDE START:**

**WAGNER MOTORSPORTS**

460 SOUTHBRIDGE STREET  
AUBURN, MA 01501



**RIDE END:**

**VERNON HILL AM.**

**LEG. POST 435**

267 PROVIDENCE ST  
WORCESTER, MA 01607

**CHECK-IN  
9:30 AM**

**KICKSTANDS UP  
11:30 AM**

**FUN & FOOD 'TIL  
4:00 PM**



**Project New Hope INC.**

Where Veterans Rebuild with Honor

**WAGNER  
MOTORSPORTS**  
*The enthusiast's dealership!*



**Chick-fil-A®  
WORCESTER**



**BIRDIES**

**FOR VETS**

**Saturday,  
August 16, 2025**



**Heritage  
Country Club  
Charlton, MA**

**REGISTRATION  
12 NOON**



**SHOTGUN START  
1:00 PM**



**ENTRY FEE  
\$150.00/ PLAYER**