



## Orange County Youth Bureau Teams Up with Veteran Motorcyclists to Promote Service Learning

25 July 2022

The Orange County Youth Bureau is teaming up with the veteran motorcyclists supporting the National Service Ride project to roar into schools to mobilize youth to better themselves, their community, and their country through service-learning – first at an hour-long Service-Learning Seminar and then at a school Service-Learning Fair. The adaptive, community-based initiative comprises a coalition of government, veteran, community, school, and public organizations.



The Seminar helps teenagers understand the meaning and value of service through role models and peer examples, embracing uplifting and enabling messages about "the best way to thank a veteran is to make this a country worth their sacrifice," how "serving your community is serving your country," and how "service doesn't require a uniform, a good grade

point average, or a change of address." Service learning also helps them gain self-confidence and the leadership, teambuilding, problem-solving, and other practical skills they will need no matter what their pathway forward. In addition to social connections and networks beyond their smart phones, they can build resumes and gain personal references.



In compliance with the New York State Seal of Civic Readiness Program, the Orange County Youth Bureau helps schools identify county community service and veterans' organizations, volunteer and charity groups as well as local businesses for the school-run Fairs. In cooperation with the United Way of the Dutchess-Orange Region, the Youth Bureau provides a virtual portal for youth to find the best community service opportunities they can do after school, over the summer, or beyond graduation to build their resumes. The schools, in turn, can track and certify their service-learning hours and gather data on curriculum outcomes.

Adaptable and flexible to fit growing educational community service requirements and the constraints of each school, the project's low-cost, high-reward platform extends curriculum to help students efficiently and effectively find service-learning opportunities best for them. Pine Bush, Monroe-Woodbury and Washingtonville High Schools already like its "one-stop" delivery method to encourage and empower young people to help themselves by helping others, whether they sit in the front or the back of the class. So far, more than a half dozen Orange County high schools have signed up for events for the 2022-23 school year.



Together, military veterans, police, firefighters, first responders, medical service professionals, and others find better connection with their communities, raising public visibility and awareness, with impacts on branding, membership, volunteerism, and fundraising. The project's mass and social media-friendly platform synergizes limited local organization capacities, helping them grow younger. Its empowering and unifying narrative on citizenship, service and social responsibility helps connect service veterans looking to give back with young citizens looking to pay it forward. By passing the baton of generational leadership this way,

we give our youth a better chance to go forward together in a complex and challenging world.

Working with the Youth Bureau, Veterans Service Agency, Veterans Coalition, and Hudson Valley Veterans Task Force, the National Service Ride is looking to scale both statewide and nationally. To learn more, go to [www.nationalserviceride.net](http://www.nationalserviceride.net). To leverage the program at your school or college, contact the Youth Bureau at: [www.orangecountygov.com/657/Youth-Bureau](http://www.orangecountygov.com/657/Youth-Bureau).