



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

1 November 2022

The Orange County Youth Bureau has teamed 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—in an hour-long service-learning seminar, a school volunteer fair, and a virtual volunteer portal. The adaptive, community-based initiative synergizes a coalition of government, veteran, community, and public organizations to energize school service-learning curriculum strategies.



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 their pathway forward. In addition to social connections and networks beyond their smart phones, they can build resume and gain personal references.



In support of the New York State Seal of Civic Readiness Program, the Youth Bureau helps schools identify county community service and veterans' organizations, volunteer groups, and local businesses for the school-run fairs. It also leverages the United Way of the Dutchess-Orange Region's virtual portal for youth to find community service-learning opportunities after school, over the summer, or beyond graduation. The schools, in turn, can track and certify 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 platforms extend curriculum in a continuous effort to help students efficiently and effectively find service-learning opportunities best for them. Participating schools 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, at least eight Orange County school districts have already had or are planning service-learning events using this model 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 also leverages local and school media to generate community support. 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 project looks to scale up regionally, statewide, and nationally. To learn more, go to www.nationalserviceride.net or call Colonel (Ret.) Christopher Holshek, the project's founder, at 1.845.800.6880. To leverage the program at your school or college, contact Michael Bark at the Orange County Youth Bureau at: www.orangecountygov.com/657/Youth-Bureau or call 1.845.615.3614.