



NEWS FROM THE OFFICE OF
ADAM J. BELLO
MONROE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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**MONROE COUNTY EXECUTIVE ADAM BELLO, VETERANS
OUTREACH CENTER ANNOUNCE THE NEVER FORGET ROSE
CAMPAIGN TO HONOR OUR FALLEN VETERANS AND TO
SHOWCASE COUNTY PARKS**

*450 copper roses — each connected to a local fallen veteran — to be placed in
Monroe County parks for summer-long rose hunts*

ROCHESTER, NY — Monroe County Executive Adam Bello, the Veterans Outreach Center (VOC) and the Monroe County Veterans Service Agency (VSA) today announced the launch of the Never Forget Rose campaign in honor of the VOC's 50th anniversary of service to our veterans. Residents can search for one of 450 handcrafted copper roses designed, created and donated by local award winning metal artist Marc Gaiger at special events in most Monroe County Parks throughout the summer.

Each rose has a numbered tag with a URL and QR Code. The number is linked to a local veteran who served our country with distinction and paid the ultimate price for their service. The finder of each rose can enter their rose number at www.monroecounty.gov/never-forget to locate the name of their veteran and which memorial bears that veteran's name. Fifty of the 450 copper roses are tinted red for the 50th anniversary of VOC. Finders of the red roses are invited to carry their rose in the county's second annual Veteran's Day Parade on November 12, 2023.

"Since 1973, the VOC has provided legal aid, health and wellness support, housing and hope for our veterans. What better way to celebrate their 50 years of service than to never forget the sacrifices of our veterans," **said County Executive Bello**. "The Never Forget Rose Campaign provides families with a summer of fun events in all of our 22 beautiful parks. Thank you for honoring our veterans and helping the VOC celebrate 50 years of service. Have fun, enjoy our beautiful parks and happy hunting!"

"It has been an honor to serve thousands of veterans in our community for the past 50 years," **said VOC Executive Director and U.S. Army veteran Laura Stradley**. "The Never Forget Campaign is the absolute perfect way to assure that we always remember those who never made it home."

“The Veterans Outreach Center, founded by our Vietnam Vets, turns 50 this year. An incredible testimony to the Vietnam Era, how we as a country treated returning service members 50 years ago. Yet, they created this organization that has taken care of thousands of veterans since their inception,” **said Sheriff Todd K. Baxter.** “The Never Forget Rose Campaign will help to increase awareness and educate our community about the selfless sacrifice of our fallen heroes.”

The Never Forget Rose Campaign is presented by the West Herr Auto Group and gold sponsor Dale Carnegie of Northeast and New England. The campaign would not be possible without the donation of the 450 beautifully hand-crafted roses by local artist Marc Gaiger.

“We at the West Herr Automotive Group are truly proud to be close partners with the Veterans Outreach Center and the County of Monroe. It is our goal to provide support in whatever capacity we are able to our local program partners,” **said Jay Galligan, VP of Fixed Operations.** “We take pride in the veterans in our community, many of those who also work for the West Herr team. It is our responsibility to take care of those who work so hard to take care of us. We thank all of the veterans in our Rochester community for your service and sacrifice!”

“As a paratrooper of the 82nd Airborne Division, I am honored to recognize my fallen brothers and sisters in all armed services,” **said Doug Escher, Chairman of Dale Carnegie of Northeast and New England.** “My legacy through Dale Carnegie is to bring out the inherent greatness in all we get to serve.”

“This is very personal for me. My father served in the military, and I know a lot of veterans who need help,” explains **Marc Gaiger, artist and creator of the Never Forget Rose.** “Everyone has a gift, being an artist, I can generate something from basically nothing and change a life. I use my gift to generate awareness of the needs of others. In short, my one mission and always has been that I inspire others to give in any way they can.”

The rose hunt kickoff begins on Friday, May 26, with roses placed in every county park except Highland Park and Devil’s Cove. Highland Park will be included in subsequent events. Rose hunt events will run through Labor Day. The events include our popular Movies in the Park series:

- June 29 - “Dog” at Innovative Field
- July 7 - “The Greatest Game Ever Played” at Durand-Eastman Golf Course
- July 21 - “Atlantis” at Ontario Beach Park
- July 27 - “Rookie of the Year” at Innovative Field
- Aug 11 - “Rogue One” at Highland Park
- Aug 18 - “Hook” at Mendon Ponds Park
- Sept 1 - “Raiders of the Lost Ark” at Black Creek Park

In addition, on Wednesday, August 23 – a rose hunt will be part of the “Pound the Ground for VOC” 5K Walk/Run at Mendon Ponds Park to benefit the Veterans Outreach Center.

Special family-friendly pop-up rose hunt events will run throughout the summer and will be announced on social media.

Rose finders are invited to find the name of your veteran on their memorial and upload a selfie with the #ROCneverforgetrose hashtag. We will monitor this hashtag and post to Monroe County's SmugMug page.

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Parking lot:

*Summer long events sponsored by the West Herr Auto Group and Dale Carnegie Training of
Western New York*