



Buddy-to-Buddy Program

Capt. Stephanie Zarb, MA

Program Overview



- Michigan based peer-to-peer program that trains veteran peers to provide outreach, support, and linkage to resources for service members and veterans.



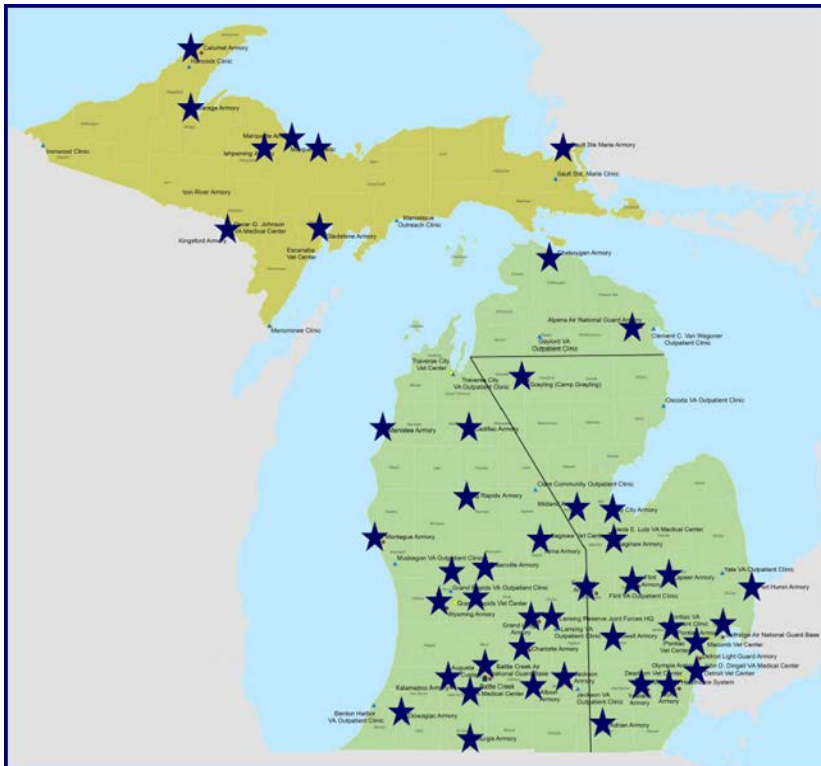
- Launched to address the needs of Post-9/11 Veterans
- Expanded to include all service members and veterans
- Assisted 3,824 service members and veterans since 2010



- Developed by faculty and staff at U-M, in partnership with the MIARNG, and input from the VA and veteran advocates

Program Overview

*“The mission of the Buddy-to-Buddy Program is to use **trained peers** to help military service members and veterans **overcome** the **stigma** around asking for help and to **link** those who are facing challenges with appropriate **resources** that will optimize their quality of life.”*



2015 in review

- 129 active volunteer veterans
- Assisted 758 unique service members and veterans
- Attended 640 drill visits and outreach events
- Recorded 5,699 hours of volunteer service

Top three concerns identified:
mental health, financial issues
and employment

Success Factors

Volunteers:

are all veterans

perform warm hand-offs

document their work

participate in ongoing training

perform statewide outreach

- The veteran-to-veteran connection builds credibility and decreases the stigma around asking for help

- Volunteers are tasked to prepare for warm handoffs through networking

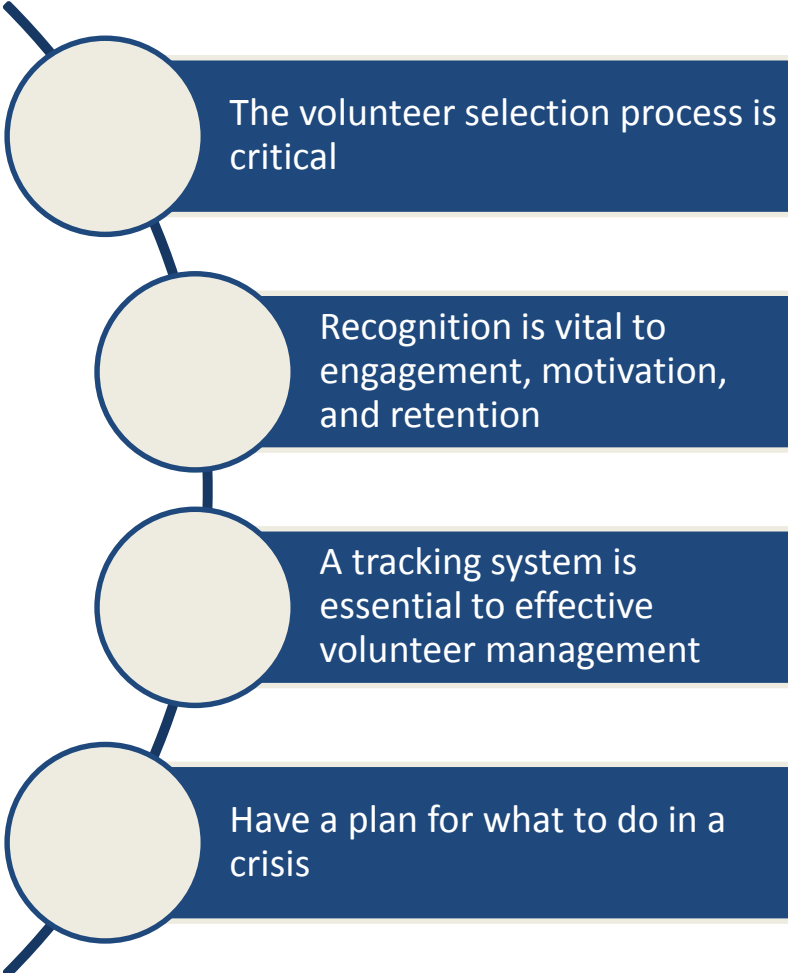
- Program staff reviews these interactions to provide feedback and ensure red flags are not missed and referrals are accurate

- Volunteers attend initial training and two hours of continuation training each month

- Volunteers attend drill with Reserve Units and have a presence at community events



Lessons to Share



The volunteer selection process is critical

Recognition is vital to engagement, motivation, and retention

A tracking system is essential to effective volunteer management

Have a plan for what to do in a crisis

“They met, and he went from being an angry, raging, unhappy person to truly believing that trust and love were still viable avenues for him. It had nothing to do with justice, but everything to do with compassion and an offer of help that was sincere. I don’t think that anyone could have helped him had they not been able to relate to what it’s like to be a soldier who is no longer serving.”

—Mother of a Veteran who was helped by a Volunteer Veteran