

BY: M. of A. Bronson

COMMENDING the Veterans Outreach Center upon the occasion of celebrating its 50th Anniversary

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to recognize veterans' organizations which have positively impacted and substantially contributed to the vitality of their communities; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commend the Veterans Outreach Center of Rochester, New York upon the occasion of celebrating its 50th Anniversary; and

WHEREAS, Founded in 1973 by returning Vietnam Veterans, the Veterans Outreach Center (VOC) remains anchored in the community and offers a comprehensive portfolio of supportive services designed to meet the needs of veterans and their families; through the generosity of the community, all their programs and services are provided free of charge; and

WHEREAS, The Veterans Outreach Center offers employment, education, wellness, and housing programs, with more than 1,000 veterans and families connecting with the services offered through this organization every year; and

WHEREAS, The organization offers job training programs, employment assistance, mental health support, a fitness center, hydromassage, a barbershop, social clubs and therapeutic groups, housing for homeless veterans and low-income veteran families, food, clothing, free bus passes, an emergency fund, case management for veterans that are justice-involved, and more to veterans across the Finger Lakes region; and

WHEREAS, In 1973, the VOC was initially founded as "Veterans Outreach Project" under the non-profit known as Action for a Better Community, with funding provided from Congress; when the government ended the program, citizens of the Rochester community knew something must be done to continue their dedicated support for local veterans; and

WHEREAS, In 1979, "Veterans Outreach Project" turned into Veterans Outreach Center, an independent, non-profit organization whose sole mission was to help veterans in need; despite funding challenges off and on over the last half century, they have not only remained in operation, but also significantly expanded their reach to now serve over 1,500 veterans each year; and

WHEREAS, As part of its health and wellness services, the new Veterans Outreach Center's fitness center provides a space where veterans can decompress, get in a good workout, and connect with other veterans; the fitness center is designed to be individualized and welcoming to veterans of all fitness levels; and

WHEREAS, Earlier in 2023, the Veterans Outreach Center broke ground on a new \$7 million project, focused on expansion at the Richards House, a residence for homeless veterans located in the South Wedge; this is the organization's largest capital project to date, with the renovations to Richards House being part of the VOC's Operation Safe Haven campaign, which is focused on creating additional transitional and emergency housing units; this project will increase the total number of beds available to homeless veterans; and

WHEREAS, Designed with veterans in mind, this landmark project will also include adding an elevator for the three-story building, expanding laundry and common spaces, and the creation of additional bathrooms; furthermore, there will be more privacy available to residents, shifting from four- to six-person bays to single- and double-occupancy rooms; and

WHEREAS, Truly focused on the betterment of the veterans in their community, the employees and volunteers of the Veterans Outreach Center work unrelentingly to provide beneficial and enduring programs which shape the lives of veterans in need; and

WHEREAS, It is with great pleasure that this Legislative Body acknowledges this important milestone in the history of the Veterans Outreach Center, wishing the organization countless years of sparkling success in the future; the likes of which it has grown accustomed to; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commend the Veterans Outreach Center upon the occasion of celebrating its 50th Anniversary; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the Veterans Outreach Center of Rochester, New York.