

STATE COMMANDER'S SPECIAL PROJECT

Background: This year, State Commander Dan Kell has chosen to support two very important programs to assist veteran. Higher Ground whose mission is to use recreation, therapy and continuing support to give people of all abilities a better life. The second is Alliance 180 which is an experience in a new direction in the fight against the effects of trauma that aims to prevent suicide for fellow veterans, first responders and frontline healthcare workers through a transformative equine experience.

Higher Ground veteran programs offer participants an opportunity to create a personal connection which has been proven to remediate symptoms associated with PTSD and MST. New York's weeklong programs include kayaking, fishing, horseback riding, rock climbing, hiking, and ice climbing.

Higher Ground re-engage with participants for at least three years after they attend their program. They check-in with all veterans and their supporter who they brought on the program.

As part of their continuum of care, Higher Ground helps participants gain access to recreation to support their ongoing community reintegration. This includes the Recreation Enhancement Fund each veteran receives after their program to purchase equipment to continue their therapy at home.

Alliance 180 is an effective three-day experience which offers peer-to-peer interaction, private accommodations and classroom training to learn the language of the horse, and round pen interaction with a horse as the final culminating event. Horses require you to be in the moment to fully communicate. The release felt when the horse accepts your offer to bond – breathing – touching and following – it's so empowering. There is no judgement, only acceptance. Over 800 individuals have successfully gone through the program with tremendous success.

Any amount of financial support you can provide will go a long way in assisting our veterans in both of these most important and essential programs.

**Department Special Project Chairman: Gene Ratigliano, PSC, NCM
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Your generous donation should be made out to: Department of NY VFW

**Mailed to: Department of NY VFW
69 Sand Creek Road
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