



# MARINE CORPS COORDINATING COUNCIL of GREATER ROCHESTER



## 2023 Annual Report to Our Friends

**L**AST YEAR WAS ANOTHER successful and busy year for the Council. We kept our pledge to our mission faithfully. More importantly we managed to attract some new, and often younger, members. We realize we need to bring in younger members to join our ranks if our important work is to continue. Last year saw a handful of stalwarts, including two founding Council members, retire from Rochester winters and move South. A strong, vibrant influx of new faces is maybe



our most important success to report this year. Our first meeting of 2024 was the best attended Council meeting in our history. Ooh Rah!

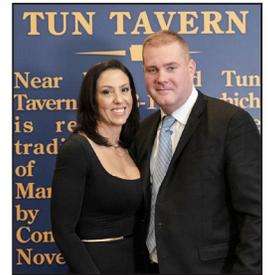
We are aware of the importance of using what has been given to us effectively and efficiently so that we are deserving of your continued support. We hope this report demonstrates that the Council is completing its mission of *'Taking care of our own.'* And that we are doing this with a very high level of efficiency. Approximately ninety-seven percent of our funds are expended on our focus group because we are 100% volunteer.

### Marine Corps Birthday Balls

The uninitiated might ask 'It's a party isn't it?' Yes, but it's also a re-dedication. Much of the formal ceremony at the Ball celebrates the continuity of the Corps from generation to generation. Including the symbolic pass-

ing of the first piece of birthday cake from the oldest Marine to the youngest Marine. The Council supports the Reserve Unit Balls so that our youngest Marines can attend without financial hardship. This year's 248TH Balls were all a resounding success.

Our Council's Ball here in Rochester was held again at the Double Tree Inn. Our Guest of Honor was Marine Nick Stevanovic, Director at Monroe County Veteran's Service Agency. In his remarks Nick focused on the core values that are instilled in Boot Camp. Those values gave him strength while serving in Afghanistan as well as when he was back home struggling to adapt to civilian life. His emphasis on the strong bond of brotherhood amongst Marines resonated throughout the evening.



Nick pictured at the Rochester Birthday Ball with his wife Erin.

Because of the significance of Marine Corps Birthday to all Marines, both active, reserve and separated, the Council traditionally supports all the observances of that day in our area of influence.

### Marine Corps Toys for Tots Program

When Rochester lost our local Marine Reserve Unit we risked losing the *Toys for Tots* program locally. The Council took that on from the start and has, with the



help of many people otherwise not connected to the Corps, succeeded wonderfully. The annual *Marine Corps Toys for Tots* program, done in partnership with the Marine Corps League, the Cooper Marines, the Salvation Army and the Holley Hell-

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*'At the heart of all we do is our commitment to be there for Marine Reservists, Marine veterans and their families. Once a Marine, always a Marine.'*

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# 2023 Annual Report

hounds collected over 121,000 toys that were given to over 54,000 children in eight contiguous counties. The campaign was very successful in maintaining the tradition of *'Every child deserves a little Christmas.'*

The annual **Toys for Tots** program wouldn't be nearly as successful without a large group of volunteers. These volunteers deliver empty boxes, retrieving them when they are full and then spending countless hours sorting and packing toys for delivery at the warehouse. We want to say **'Thank You'** to our volunteers. Without them our mission would be impossible.



Throughout the year **Toys for Tots** supplies toys to children during times of family crisis through partnership with Rochester Police Dept., The Monroe County Sheriff's Office, the Rochester Fire Dept., Compeer Corps for Veterans, as well as the Al Sigl Center.



## Scholarship Program

While limited during the Covid epidemic the Council is back to giving scholarships to Marine Reservists and ROTC high school students in Mexico, New York. This is to assist them furthering their career goals. They can be used for college or trade school. Reservists can find an application on our website at [mccrochester.org](http://mccrochester.org).



## The Leatherneck Open

For 28 years the MCCC has hosted the **Len Benedict Memorial Leatherneck Open** golf tournament which has served as the primary fund-raiser for all of our programs. The Open seems like a gathering of old friends as we see the same familiar faces year after year. Rochester's Theodore & Cashmere Mendick Foundation has been a Gold Sponsor of the Open for years. And they join us on that day. This year's Honorary Chairman was Sergeant Major Frederick Ott USMC RET, an outstanding Marine and a consistent good friend of the Council.



Throughout the years he has supported the Council's mission as a consummate leader exhibiting the highest professional standards. We were proud and honored to have him join us at the Leatherneck Open.

## U of R Midshipmen

At the University of Rochester, where some of our future officers are educated, we annually present the outstanding graduating Marine ROTC midshipmen with a Marine officer's dress sword. This year's two recipients were 2nd Lt. Dustin Kneut and SSgt Alex Martens. Congratulations Marines.



## MCCC Foundation

The **MCCC Foundation Ltd.**, 501 (c)3 charitable organization and fundraising arm of the Marine Corps Coordinating Council has allowed us to tap into other revenue generating resources as well as other entities whose charitable giving is restricted to non-profits with a 501(c)3 designation. Like the Council, the foundation is 100% volunteer with no paid staff and very low operating expenses.

## Family Day Support

The Marine Reserve Centers we serve in Buffalo, Syracuse as well as Erie, PA all have annual **Family Days**. At these events Marines and their families have a picnic and fun day. The Council helps out with food and a Bounce House for the kids. In addition we provide many door prizes in the form of Wegmans Gift Cards. We are very flexible in providing family support.



## The Chairman's Personal Touch

Our chairman Mike Chaba is one of our most consistent and dependable sources of help. Time and again he has exhibited an ideal mix of compassion and practicality. So much so that Mike is Council-authorized to provide help to those we serve up to a certain point on his own immediate judgment and experience. The immediate prompt response is a source of pride for us. With larger amounts we have an email system where members approve financial help as a group. The Council never hands out money but rather pays outstanding bills.

Part of virtually every MCCC monthly meeting is

Mike's report on his activities during the preceding month. Often it is obvious that his efforts have gone way beyond paying some bill; dispensing funds to solve a problem. He has spent time listening and commiserating with a troubled individual. For most of us our participation is limited to our monthly meetings and the occasional fund-raising effort like the once-a-year Leatherneck Open. With Mike it's a matter of the personal touch. Which he brings to this monthly. We are thankful he is the human face of this organization. Otherwise we risk being just dollars and cents.

### Who We Help

The Council also supports other local organizations that we recognize as deserving, useful and whose objectives are parallel to our own. These include the *Veterans Outreach Center*, *The Mark Callanan Memorial 5k Run*, *The Memorial Day Challenge*, *The Jason Dunham Memorial Golf Tournament* and *The Monroe County War on Terror Memorial*.



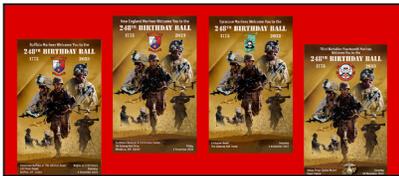
The Monroe County War on Terror Memorial was dedicated 11 September 2021 at Highland's Gary Beikirch Park.

Each year the *Athletes in Action* program at SUNY Brockport is supported with a donation. The local *Military History Society*

of Rochester continues to be a good friend of the Council. We help them to further the display of Marine Corps artifacts and history. The Society's Director Chuck Baylis helps us by bringing a Museum display to our most public events.

### How We Help

The Council continues the tradition of supporting all elements of the Upstate Marine Corps community with our print capabilities. This year four of our Marine Corps Reserve Units received completed programs for their annual Birthday Balls at no cost to them. The Council uses that print ability to support the Cooper Marine American Legion Post as well as the Marine Corps League Detachment. Sharing our graphic abilities is an example of how we continue to support the Marine family in Upstate New York.



We print formal Ball Programs for all our Reserve Unit 'Clients' at no cost. Help at a busy time of year.

### Still Efficient

Our best tradition is still having no paid staff. We still are 100% volunteer. Our members even buy their own gas when we have to travel. Ninety-seven percent of our funds go directly to our programs. It always has. And it always will.

### Near Instant Response

The Council also supplements the *Naval Relief Fund* for those Reservists who have a family emergency that needs immediate assistance. The Council can address such emergencies much faster than usual channels, often within 24 hours of notification.

### Special Donation

The Council gratefully accepted a generous donation from the Marine Corps League Detachment 468 and the American Legion Post 256 after the Memorial Day Challenge 22. Our friends in Canandaigua are amazing. In an age that seems driven by ego they seem totally without egos. They don't presume to have some be-all end-all answer themselves. Rather they have looked around and identified groups doing good. Then asked themselves how they could help and support these people. We are honored to have been chosen.



### New Council Members

This past year the Council was pleased to have welcomed several new members. They bring fresh ideas and new energy to our efforts. We are always welcoming to anyone with a genuine interest in assisting us in our mission.

### The Future

The Council still dreams of having a brick and mortar home for the Council and several Marine related organizations here in Rochester. Meanwhile we thank the Veterans Outreach Center for allowing us to use their boardroom for our monthly meetings.

The Council wants to thank all contributors for their continued support and donations. We welcome you to join us in a future volunteer capacity either at one of our events or at one of our monthly meetings. Please visit our social media sites, including FaceBook, for up to date particulars, calendars and photos of our current activities. Thank you. ☐

# Marines Helping Marines—2023

**I**NSTIGATED BY THE LATE Council member John Gay our **Marines Helping Marines** program has continued to be a challenge. Our motto of 'Always Faithful' is always on our mind while we look for ways to help that are uplifting and constructive and try to avoid being 'enablers' of negative behaviors or poor judgment. We try to fund solutions to problems and issues.

The Council would like to thank everyone who has been a contributor this past year. Through your continued support and monetary donations, the following individuals and families have benefited from your generosity.

*Note: In all cases the Council does not hand out money but rather provides 'financial assistance or monetary assistance' by directly paying outstanding bills.*

## Marines Helping Marines for 2023

**1.** Twenty-eight Marine Reservists went for training out of state. Through administrative misinformation their stay at an unauthorized hotel ended up costing each an additional unanticipated \$200. The Council reimbursed these Reservists that cost. **2.** The Chairman was contacted by 'We Soldier On.' A Marine veteran lost his job and was behind on rent, RG&E bill and car insurance. The Council helped out with these payments. **3.** A Marine veteran passed away, a 'Go Fund Me' account was set up for a scholarship for his daughter. The

Council contributed to the scholarship fund. **4.** A Marine veteran's father, who was an Army veteran, was injured in a motorcycle accident. The Council provided financial aid while he was recovering. **5.** A Marine veteran with PTSD was unable to work and was struggling financially after a divorce. The Council helped him with his mortgage, car payment and RG&E bill. **6.** An unemployed Navy veteran with no car and in deep financial trouble had a baby with serious health conditions. His subsidized housing rent and RG&E bill was covered by the Council. **7.** A Marine veteran asked for help from the Council. He sent a thank-you note after his rent and cell phone bills were paid and is happy to be working again. **8.** An active-duty Marine Reservist received some assistance from the Council after struggling financially. **9.** An active-duty Marine Reservist discovered after, reporting for duty, that he didn't have enough money for bus fare to return home. The Council paid for his return bus ticket. **10.** A Marine veteran requested financial help. The Council purchased wood pellets for her wood stove and a new refrigerator. **11.** A Navy veteran with health problems was helped by the Council who paid his rent. **12.** A Marine veteran with health problems was helped by the Council who paid his rent. **13.** A Marine veteran was assisted after his daughter contacted the Council. He received help when his rent and cell phone bill were paid by the Council.

## Marine Corps Coordinating Council 'HELP LINE' Assistance

**T**he Marine Corps Coordinating Council doesn't just provide monetary support to those in need, but also provides assistance in conjunction with the **Veterans Outreach Center** through the Council's **HELP LINE**, which can be found on our website. As important as monetary assistance can be, sometimes advice and direction are often greater help.

Help, from numerous varied sources is often available but identifying where to focus can be daunting. The **HELPLINE** is not able to provide long-term case management or counseling but it can be a great help in identifying where to look and who a veteran should contact to find the most appropriate and expedient support in the community.

## Marine Corps Coordinating Council 'YEAR IN PICTURES'

**T**he Marine Corps Coordinating Council wants you to see what we're about for the year. We have an extensive picture archive on our website. This code will take you right there. It's a 'QR' code, (for 'Quick Response Code') and it will work with your smart

phone. Use your phone/camera to take a picture of it. Your phone will recognize it and instantly display a link to a specific website. This one will take you to our 'YEAR IN PICTURES' photo archive. Give it a try. It really saves typing in one of those long complicated web addresses.

