

**KC-FEB Veterans Affairs Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**July 15, 2021 – 1:30 PM (Thursday)**  
**Location – Webex**

ITEM	<u>DISCUSSION</u>	<u>ACTION/ASSIGNMENT/</u> <u>POC</u> If/As Applicable																		
Opening / Introductions		Melissa Jacobson																		
Attendees	<p><u>Via webex</u></p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 33%;">1. Melissa Jacobson (Chairperson)</td> <td style="width: 33%;">6. John Cleveland</td> <td style="width: 33%;">13. Call in user (unknown)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2. Ann Puck</td> <td>7. Keara Torkelson (guest speaker)</td> <td>14. Call in user (unknown)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3. Dennis Johnson</td> <td>8. Levi C Perkins</td> <td>15. Vanessa Thomson (scribe)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4. Diana McCoy</td> <td>9. Sheila Bryan</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>5. Helen Phares</td> <td>10. Sheryl Liddle</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>11. Alan Edmonds</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	1. Melissa Jacobson (Chairperson)	6. John Cleveland	13. Call in user (unknown)	2. Ann Puck	7. Keara Torkelson (guest speaker)	14. Call in user (unknown)	3. Dennis Johnson	8. Levi C Perkins	15. Vanessa Thomson (scribe)	4. Diana McCoy	9. Sheila Bryan		5. Helen Phares	10. Sheryl Liddle			11. Alan Edmonds		N/A
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<b>GUEST SPEAKERS</b>																				
<p>Keara Torkelson</p> <p>Peer mentor and warrior leader volunteer, Wounded Warrior Project</p>	<p>Keara is an Army Reserve veteran and a survivor of the Fort Hood shooting in 2009. Since being shot, the Wounded Warrior Project (WWP) has empowered her to get out of the house, and now her favorite thing is helping veterans find a holistic way to heal and process trauma. Since 2003, WWP, a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, has been meeting the growing needs of warriors, their families, and caregivers — helping them achieve their highest ambition.</p> <p>As a veteran who lives with PTSD, she wants other veterans to know no matter how they have been injured, they are not alone. Getting help does not make you weak, it makes you stronger. The negative stigma related with getting help is a contributing factor to the high suicide rate.</p> <p>WWP is nationwide and once a veteran is connected, they can get weekly emails with different events that they can register for and come spend time with other veterans and their families. Locally, they have many different events like a softball team, yoga, Chief's games, and a peer support group that meets 2nd Monday of each month. They partner with other support groups, like The Battle Within, which provides a FREE 5-day program for all veterans and first responders battling Post Traumatic Stress (PTS). Keara explained it is important for anyone exposed to long bouts of trauma and stress because those events changes your brain. The Battle Within is even hosting an alumni (those battling PTS) event this Saturday for an evening of dinner and hanging out.</p> <p>Sheryl Liddle said she will reach out to Keara to discuss setting up a writing group.</p>	<p><a href="https://www.woundedwarriorproject.org/">https://www.woundedwarriorproject.org/</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.thebattlewithin.org/">https://www.thebattlewithin.org/</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.missioncontinues.org/">https://www.missioncontinues.org/</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.mentoringtheforce.org/">https://www.mentoringtheforce.org/</a></p>																		

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<b>PROGRAM COORDINATOR REPORTS</b>		
a. Discounts & Events	Not present.	Michael Ciliege
b. Veteran Benefits	No update.	Jeff Winters/Alan Edmonds
c. Stand Down - <a href="http://kcstanddown.org/">http://kcstanddown.org/</a>	Both the 2020 Spring and Fall Stand Down events were cancelled as well as the Spring Stand Down for 2021. As of now, there is no Fall Stand Down event scheduled and any future events will depend on the status of the COVID virus (which is rampant in MO). He said they were disappointed when a tentative date/location fell through. He will update Melissa on a Fall Stand Down decision in about a week.	Dennis Johnson (Providers) (816) 510-9802 <a href="mailto:DKJ@POBox.com">DKJ@POBox.com</a>
d. Women Veterans	Not present.	Jonni Christian
e. Guest Speaker	Not present.	Dean Scott
<b>Open Discussion</b>		
Melissa Jacobson	Melissa said the Grand Opening of the Lenexa VA Clinic will happen tomorrow. It is a 23,000 square foot outpatient VA clinic at 15512 W 113 <sup>th</sup> Street, Lenexa, KS 66219.  The ribbon cutting will be at 10:00am and a health fair will be until 2:00pm.	<a href="https://www.kansascity.va.gov/locations/Lenexa_VA_Clinic.asp">https://www.kansascity.va.gov/locations/Lenexa_VA_Clinic.asp</a>
Ann Puck	Ann said there is always need for Clay, Johnson, and Jackson county mentors for the court system mentoring program. Veteran Mentors are veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces who volunteer their time to assist Veteran Court participants. Veteran Mentors provide advice, personal experiences, recommendations, and guidance to veterans.	<a href="https://www.courts.mo.gov/hosted/circuit13/documents/ASC_VeteransTreatmentCourtMentorProgram.pdf">https://www.courts.mo.gov/hosted/circuit13/documents/ASC_VeteransTreatmentCourtMentorProgram.pdf</a>
<b>NEXT MEETINGS:</b>	<b>Aug 19, 2021 at 1:30pm.</b> Teleconference. <b>Sep 16, 2021 at 1:30pm.</b> Teleconference.	<b>Oct 21, 2021 at 1:30pm.</b> Teleconference. <b>Nov 18, 2021 at 1:30pm.</b> Teleconference. <b>Dec 16, 2021 at 1:30pm.</b> Teleconference.