

ANNUAL REPORT



Vet to Vet ME's Major Milestones in FY23

In our fifth year as an independent nonprofit, Vet to Vet Maine continues its important work serving Maine Veterans.

Some of the year's highlights:

- V2VME founder/executive director Susan Gold and Lynn White, V2VME incorporator and the organization's first president, step down from their respective posts.
- New England Patriots honor V2VME Peer Companion and board member Sam Kelley and donate \$10,000 to Vet to Vet Maine.
- Three new staff members join V2VME: Maggie Catanese (Outreach Director), June Budrow (Administrative Assistant), and Melissa Chason (Volunteer Coordinator).
- V2VME is awarded \$20,000 in American Rescue Plan Act funds to support our mission to reduce social isolation and enhance community and connections for older veterans and their caregivers.
- V2VME receives funds from United Way of Southern Maine (York County region), Cumberland County Community Development program, Drummond Woodsum law firm, two anonymous foundations, Shutterbugs 4 Charity, 100+ Women Who Care, City of Saco, South Portland and Cape Elizabeth Rotary Club, Construction Golf League, and Eddie Woodin's Challenge Fundraiser, along with generous gifts from our donors.
- The Caregivers Support Network hosts its annual Roll-A-Thon with a luncheon, cake, and a stroll and roll along the Shaw Cherry Hill Farm trail in Gorham, topped off with Beal's ice cream sundaes.
- We are finally able to hold in-person case reviews for our Peer Companions, thanks to the generosity of the Scarborough American Legion Post 76, which provides a meeting space. The gift of an OWL computer from the Biddeford Adult Education program enables those at home to view and participate in the case review. Biddeford-Saco Rotary Club and its president, Martin Grohman, arranged for the OWL.

From July 2022 to June 2023, Vet to Vet ME Peer Companions devoted more than 2,800 hours to 110 Veterans who needed a friend. Other Volunteers spent nearly 1,700 hours supporting V2VME caregivers and the organization's mission.



Companionship Built Upon Respect

Vet to Vet Maine's fifth year as an independent nonprofit—and the program's eighth year since its inception in 2014—continues to be filled with remarkable stories of the power of friendship. The story of Lou and Ron shows how going the extra mile—a visit, a book, and fresh air—can be the highlight of one's week.

Louis Léveillé still exemplifies the Air Force core values he committed to in October of 1950. The 91-year-old Korean War Veteran continues to put “service before self” as he volunteers his time with V2VME as a peer companion to fellow Veterans who need a friend. Since 2014, V2VME volunteers have eased Veterans' social isolation, while linking them to services that can improve their lives.

Lou joined the organization six years ago and was matched with Ron, a Navy Veteran, who is six months his elder and legally blind. Lou began making regular visits to Ron's home, stopping by at least once a week and sometimes more often. The two became fast friends, going out for coffee, swapping stories, and spending time together. As Ron's health deteriorated, Lou and the Vet to Vet Maine staff helped him to arrange for home health care, provided advice on getting into the Maine Veterans' Home in Scarborough, and looked into getting Ron an electric recliner. Ron moved to the Veterans' Home in 2022.

These days, Lou makes the 86-mile round-trip drive almost weekly from his home to the Maine Veterans' Home in Scarborough to pick up Ron. The two load into Lou's car and set off for the local doughnut shop, where they enjoy coffee and a treat. Eventually they park near the beach, where Lou reads aloud to Ron for hours. The ocean air and Lou's voice fill the car. To judge from the smiles on the two Veterans' faces, it would be difficult to determine who is benefiting more from this companionship, Lou or Ron.

It's the same for many of the 60 or so peer companions in Vet to Vet Maine, who often say they get as much out of the relationship as the Veterans they visit. Floyd Hastings, another longtime Vet to Vet Maine peer companion, says of his experience in the program: “This is the best thing I've ever participated in. We both enjoy the visits so much. They help give meaning to my life [and] are the highlight of the week for both of us!”

See more stories on the amazing work our volunteers are doing on Page 7.

Best regards, Maggie Catanese, Executive Director



Ron, seated, and Lou, right, chat with Peer Companion Paul Lapierre in 2019.

V2VME Staffer

Judie Alessi O'Malley:

A Constant Presence



Before I worked for V2VME, I was a volunteer coordinator at Southern Maine Agency on Aging. V2VME founder Susan Gold learned that I had been furloughed from SMAA in March 2020 due to the pandemic and asked if I would consider taking a job with V2VME as program director. I began my tenure with V2VME just after July 4, 2020, and still love my job after three years.

My father was an Army veteran and served in Europe during WWII. Like many, he didn't talk much about his service. Mom told me the sad stories, while he told the funny ones. After the 2018 Honors Ceremony, I strolled through the Maine Military Museum and was struck by the souvenirs GIs brought back home. I was reminded of my father's beautiful handmade box from the former Czechoslovakia with a wood burned image of a town he was stationed in on the lid. A Czech fellow who befriended Pop gave it to him. When I got home from the event, I looked up the town online and it still looked exactly like the image on the box. During a 2019 vacation to Germany, my husband and I spent two days in that town, Husinec, exploring the same streets my Pop walked as a kid in his 20s. It was one of the most meaningful experience in all my travels. Ever. And, I thank V2V for inspiring me to go there. My father would have loved this organization and loved to know I visited Husinec. I think of him often in my work.



Judie O'Malley

One of the most rewarding matches I made was with Peer Companion Trevor Engling and Mike. Mike called Sue and was in distress. He had dropped out of college and was feeling awful. Trevor, a USM student, was a new volunteer. The match was a success for several years, and we were told by Lorrie Spaulding, USM director of the Military-Affiliated Student Hub, that the match helped change Mike's life, and he returned to classes. Both Trevor and Mike have moved on, but it was so rewarding to help someone who was clearly in distress to find his footing again.

There isn't a typical day at V2VME, except for the golden retriever puppy at my feet who needs to go out every two hours. I have each day planned, but the plans never seem to play out as expected. Generally, I onboard volunteers, veteran friends, and do matches. However, I field all kinds of questions from volunteers, veteran friends, and the public about services available and where to go for help. I follow up on nearly every issue a volunteer alerts me to, which means interacting with the VA, Maine Veterans' Homes, Maine Bureau of Veterans' Services, SMAA, Preble Street, and a myriad of other agencies providing services to people in need. We are also setting up veter-



Volunteers are Vet.

Honors Ceremony Celebrates Volunteers

Seventy-five Veterans, volunteers, staff members, and friends gathered on June 10 at the Maine Military Museum to honor retiring executive director/founder Susan Gold and president Lynn White and pay tribute to the volunteers who keep the organization running.

Lynn White, a V2VME incorporator and the organization's first president, reminisced about his experiences with three Veterans, whom he visited regularly as a V2VME peer companion. One, a merchant marine, lived almost 100 years and shared stories about his experiences during the Normandy invasion in World War II. Lynn joined Vet to Vet in 2015, served on the Shared Leadership Team, and led V2VME's transformation from a program at Southern Maine Agency on Aging to its current status as an independent nonprofit.

To honor him for his service with V2VME, the board presented Lynn with a plaque featuring a parable and an image from a needlepoint created by the wife of a V2VME Veteran.

The attendees also honored V2VME founder Susan Gold as she steps down from the executive director position, a position she held as a volunteer since V2VME's incorporation in 2018. Incoming executive director Maggie Catanese and program director Judie O'Malley presented Susan with an engraved wind chime and words of gratitude for her service.

Susan recognized five veterans who attended with their peer companions and presented certificates of appreciation to 36 volunteers, including seven board members, who have dedicated many hours to V2VME. The audience gave special recognition to two members of the first peer companion team who attended the ceremony, Ernest Merritt and Robert Ferrante. Ernie donated an exquisitely hand-carved cribbage board to the event's raffle, which was won by peer companion Paul Kelly.

Guest speaker Lance Corporal Norman VanCor spoke about his experiences as a Vietnam combat Veteran as recorded in his book, "Swift. Silent. Deadly." Copies of the book were distributed to all V2VME volunteers in attendance, thanks to the generosity of an anonymous donor.



A moment of silence followed by "Taps" played by Don Lauzier commemorated late V2VME participants.

Our thanks go to sponsors Lamb, Peterson & Mann; Meserve's Market in Wells for donating delicious Italian sandwiches, chips, and desserts for the event; Hannaford Supermarkets for drinks and paper goods; and Jenny Meyer of Aetna Medicare for coffee.

Photos by V2VME peer companion Phil Yunger

2 Vet ME's Heart!



Top row, left: V2VME's first president Lynn White and founder Susan Gold are honored on their retirement. Right: Veteran Philip Roewer, left, and peer companion Jim Arcaro look at their copy of the book, "Swift. Silent. Deadly." by speaker Norman VanCor. 2nd row, left: Italian sandwiches, chips, and desserts donated by Meserve's Market, Wells; right: Susan Gold, center, presents V2VME board members with pins and certificates, from left: Sam Kelley, Secretary Marianne Russell, President Lynn White (partially obscured), Susan, Treasurer Marshall Archer, Shirl Weaver, Bill Libby, and Robert Small. Vice President Adam Cote was unable to attend. 3rd row: left, V2VME volunteer Gail Merritt welcomes peer companion Gerry Treadwell and his wife, Claudia; right: V2VME program director Judie O'Malley, right, greets Veteran Tom Daley, left, and his peer companion, Jerry Harkavy.





Kathy Lavigne: Providing Support to V2VME Caregivers



Kathy Lavigne, in her fourth year, serving as Caregiver Coordinator, continues to lead the Caregiver Support Network, which brings the caregivers of veterans together to provide a support network of peers who can share stories and information and offer support to one another.

Kathy has been in touch through the year with over a dozen V2VME caregivers and survivors whose V2VME veterans have died. Caregivers have expressed gratitude for the support offered, especially during the hard times following the death of a loved one.

continued from page 3

an group meetings at facilities, an exciting prospect. Some days I forget to stop working, which to me means I am in the right job.

To any vet who wants to volunteer, and to those who may not see themselves as peer companions, I say, “You will love it!” Our volunteer peer companions tell me over and over that they get more from their V2VME service than they give.

“My” volunteers and “my” veteran friends have become an important part of my life and I thank them all for the opportunity to work with them. — Judie Alessi O’Malley

We remember and honor our Veterans, caregivers, and friends who have died between July 2022–June 2023

VETERAN FRIENDS

- John Anderson
- Paul E Brouker
- Francis Collins
- Leo Couture
- Kenneth Davis
- Jean Doe
- Richard Downs
- Millard “Bud” Hanson
- Vernon Huestis
- Maurice Hutchins
- Blanche Kelley
- Louise Lyman

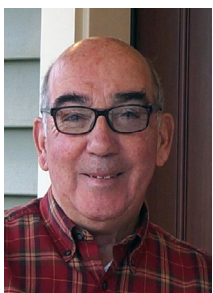
Francis Joseph Mahoney

- Douglas Miles
- Francis Morrison
- Allan Neff
- Eugene “Geno” Petrell
- Bruce Wakefield

CAREGIVERS & FRIENDS

- Rachel Meade, wife of Veteran Friend Andrew
- Douglas O. Wilson of SMAA

NEW PEER COMPANIONS July 2022–June 2023



Doug Robb



Phil Yunger



Jack McGloin



Butch Freeman



Jeremy Puckett



Lucas Walsh

Veteran Stories

Eric Mihan and veteran friend Vernon had gotten together more than 400 times—and hold the record for the longest relationship and the most visits between Vet to Vet veterans.



Their relationship has outlasted many marriages. Sadly, Vernon died in February. Eric continues his role as a peer companion with another veteran. *Photo: Vernon, left, and Eric celebrate their 100th visit with many more to follow.*

The first time veteran companion David Bedell met with his veteran friend, he asked Gordon where he wanted to go. “Ice cream!” declared Gordon. They make regular visits to South Portland’s iconic ice cream haunts: Red’s and DQ. On good days, they walk in the park across the street from Gordon’s home. On rainy days, they may stay indoors and play Battleship. *Photo: David, left, and Gordon explore Portland Head Light*



V2VME companion Julie Bedell often visits Kay in the house that her father built and where she grew up. One day when Julie picked up Kay to take her to a nearby restaurant, Kay remembered that she had a standing lunch date to meet a dozen friends from her graduating class of 1958 at the same restaurant. They immediately welcomed Julie into their group, teasing her that she was born the same year they all had graduated from high school! Since then, Julie often joins the group during the monthly luncheon.



Photo: Julie, left, and Kay enjoy their time together

Bill Libby, incoming V2VME Board President, puts technology to good use as an “electronic veteran friend” to Larry, who happens to be the father of incoming Executive Director Maggie Catanese. Although they are geographically separated by 120+ miles, the two chat regularly through phone calls. Since Bill spends six months of the year in Florida, he realized that there were aging veterans who couldn’t “meet on the couch but could meet electronically.” This is fine with Larry as he sips his coffee and watches the deer on his property, all while chatting with a new friend.



Photo: Bill, left, and Larry at a welcome in-person visit



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Fiscal Year 2023: July 1, 2022—June 30, 2023

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New England Patriots Foundation
Shutterbugs 4 Charity
South Portland and Cape Elizabeth Rotary Club
United Way of Southern Maine

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NOTE: Donations made in June but deposited after June 30 will be credited in FY24 Annual Report.

Vet to Vet Maine extends our deep gratitude to all our donors, benefactors, sponsors, in-kind contributors, and grantors for their generous support of our work and mission.



In-kind Donors

American Legion Post 76
Aroma Joe's, gift cards
John Bouchard, Smartsources, letterhead
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Our Mission

VET TO VET MAINE is committed to alleviating social isolation and loneliness among Maine's veterans and linking them to needed services. We accomplish this by connecting trained veteran peer companions with fellow veterans who need a friend. These volunteers provide companionship, offer assistance with benefits, support independent living, and foster friendships and mentoring with other veterans.



Financial Statement

Unaudited Consolidated Financial Statement
 Year Ending June 30, 2023

Complete nonprofit financial report is available upon request.

Where Our Funds Come From

REVENUES	Budgeted 2022-2023	Actual 2022-2023
TOTAL RECEIPTS	\$85,624	\$92,908.56
Restricted Funds	\$63,800	\$40,877.40
Emergency Fund \$375		
Grants \$40,402.40		
Shirl Weaver Women’s Fund \$100		
Unrestricted Donations	\$21,824	\$49,165.16
Businesses \$682.32		
Construction Golf League \$9,050.00		
Individual Donors \$7,566.48		
Municipality \$1,000		
Nonprofit Organizations \$5,000.00		
Unrestricted Foundations \$20,536.36		
Woodin Challenge Grant \$5,330		
In-Kind Services		(\$2,866.00)

Volunteer Time
July 2022–June 2023
4,553 hours

Peer Companions: 2,866 hours
 serving 110 veteran friends

All other volunteers: 1,687 hours

Executive director: 1,227 hours

Board members: 201 hours

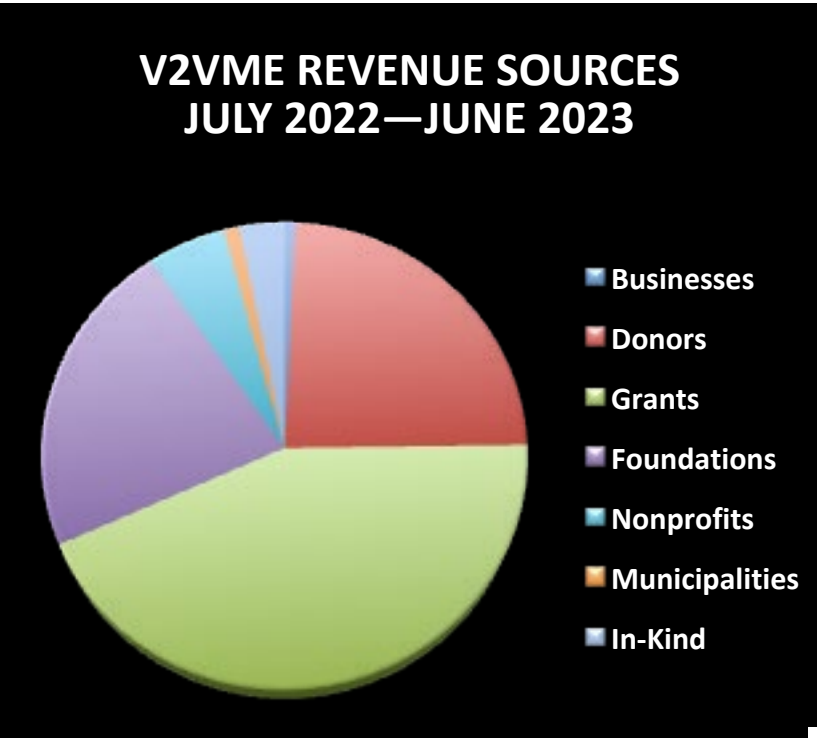
Caregiver Support: 139 hours

Administrative assistants: 29 hours

Webmaster: 28 hours

Fundraisers: 47 hours

Newsletter: 16 hours



Financial Statement

continued

How We Spend Our Funds



EXPENSES

	Actual Expenditures
Program Related	\$13,424.90
Caregiver Program	100.00
Printing & Marketing (Recruitment)	94.09
Program Software (Volgistics, Zoom, Litmos)	3,802.84
Program Supplies	248.93
Recruitment	49.00
Training & Background Checks	6,477.57
Travel	1,124.15
Veteran Aid (emergency fuel, food, etc.)	375.62
Volunteer Recognition	520.28
Workers Comp	726.51
Occupancy	In-Kind
Volk Packaging Corp. official address	0
Operating Expenses	\$13,974.26
Administration	In-Kind
Advertising & Marketing	94.09
Bank & PayPal fees	70.11
Conferences & Classes	89.00
Fundraising	95.00
Insurance	3,950.00
Information Technology (Office Software, IT hosting)	119.19
Professional Fees (IT)	517.50
Website Work (in-kind)	(2,380.00)
Office equipment	456.50
Office supplies	1,294.45
Postage	717.10
Taxes & Licenses	115.00
Professional membership	125.00
Professional Fees (accounting)	2,576.50
Professional Fees (operations, in-kind)	(486.00)
Utilities (Cell phone service)	888.82
Salaries & Related	53,805.39
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$81,204.55
TOTAL REVENUE	\$92,908.56
YEAR-END BALANCE	\$11,704.01

Vet to Vet Maine Leadership

2022-2023 Board Members & Officers



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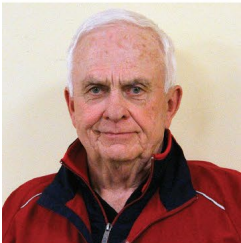
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