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Ahead of Veterans Day, CN Guidance and UJA Announce New Support Program for Older Veterans

Peer-delivered Critical Supports for U.S. Veterans Ages 60+

HICKSVILLE, NY – In recognition of Veterans Day and the service and sacrifices of our nation's military members, **CN Guidance & Counseling Services,** in partnership with the **United Jewish Appeal (UJA),** is announcing a new initiative to provide trauma-informed support and emergency financial assistance to vulnerable Veterans age 60 and older throughout Nassau and Suffolk counties.

Funded by UJA, the program will utilize a **Veteran Peer Specialist** with lived military experience and expertise helping Veterans navigate benefits, behavioral health services, and community resources. The initiative is designed to assist older Veterans facing financial hardships, behavioral health challenges, barriers to accessing services, and other life stressors that can negatively impact health, stability, and overall well-being.

The program will support a diverse population of Veterans, including retirees, working adults, individuals living with PTSD, immigrants who served in the U.S. military, Holocaust survivors, and Veterans with disabilities or chronic health conditions.

"Veterans often face significant barriers and stigmas that prevent them from getting the care and support they need," said **Lindsay Ragona, Program Director at CN Guidance**. "By engaging the community through the skills of a staff member who is also a Veteran, we can build trusted relationships and connect individuals to critical resources and ensure those who served our country receive the support they deserve."

According to UJA, nearly 600,000 Veterans age 65 and older nationwide live below the poverty line. On Long Island, economic challenges are compounded by one of the nation's highest costs of living, leaving many older adults struggling to meet basic needs despite years of service and self-sufficiency.

While a strong network of resources exists for Veterans, many older adults continue to face significant obstacles in accessing support. Stigma surrounding help-seeking, complex benefit systems, technology barriers, and unmet financial needs can all delay access to care and services.

Key Services Include:

- Emergency financial assistance for essential needs such as housing, utilities, transportation, medical and dental care, legal expenses, and household necessities
- One-on-one support from a Veteran Peer Specialist who understands military culture and the unique challenges Veterans face

- Assistance navigating benefits and connecting with Veteran-serving organizations
- Referrals to trauma-informed mental health and substance use treatment when appropriate

CN Guidance has served Long Island residents for more than 54 years and has developed extensive experience supporting Veterans and military-connected individuals through its Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC) in Hicksville. The organization regularly participates in Veterans stand-down events, collaborates with Veteran-serving organizations across the region, and provides training and support to community partners.

"UJA-Federation of New York is proud to support CN Guidance's peer-delivered work with U.S. veterans," said **Kayleh Levy-Weller, UJA Strategic Planning & Grants Lead**. "Their trauma-informed care and emergency financial assistance meet veterans where they are, and the trust they have built in the veteran community makes this support possible."

"This investment allows us to bring critical services directly to those who deserve only the best," **said Jeffrey Friedman, CEO of CN Guidance**. "We are grateful to UJA for supporting this important initiative and helping us strengthen Long Island's Veteran community. In honoring our Veterans and expressing our gratitude for their service, we must also ensure they have access to the support and resources they need as they age. Together, we can help older Veterans thrive with practical assistance, compassionate support, and meaningful connections to care."

For more information about CN Guidance and its programs, visit **www.cnguidance.org** or call **516-822-6111**.

About CN Guidance and Counseling Services: *Serving children and adults with mental and emotional disorders since 1972, CN Guidance delivers NY-State licensed mental health and substance use treatment services to individuals and families, working in partnership with county government and other community services. With deep, localized knowledge of Nassau County and Suffolk County communities, a 24/7 crisis center, mobile fleet, telehealth capabilities, and a NY State Integrated Outpatient Services license, CN Guidance maintains an exemplary track record of delivering outreach and high-quality behavioral healthcare to more than 25,000 individuals per year. For more information, visit https://cnguidance.org/*