

# Lunch and Learn workshop highlights services for veterans

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*Edwardsville Township partners with Ed/Glen Ministerial Alliance, hosts workshop as part of the Social Service Safety Net*

**EDWARDSVILLE** – Over 30 organizations were in attendance for the fifth Lunch and Learn Workshop presented by the Social Services Safety Net. This event was the first Lunch & Learn Workshop since the second annual Social Services Safety Net Forum held by the Edwardsville Township and the Ed/Glen Ministerial Alliance.

The event, which was held Wednesday, January 18<sup>th</sup> at Bella Milano in Edwardsville, focused on providing information on local services available for veterans and their families within our community.

In June of 2015, Edwardsville Township, in partnership with the Glen Ed Ministerial Alliance, held a Social Services Safety Net Forum to bring together area social service agencies, organizations, and churches that provide services to residents of Edwardsville

Community School District 7. The Edwardsville Township and Glen Ed Ministerial Alliance invited local agencies to reconvene in November 2016 to discuss how far we have come and where the Social Services Safety Net can expand. Edwardsville Township offers two assistance programs to residents, General Assistance and Emergency Assistance. These program assist residents with little to no income with shelter, utilities, food, and personal items.

At Wednesday's event, presentations were given by Brad Lavite and Timothy Turner from the Madison County Veterans' Assistance Commission, Jessica Gruneich and Peter Dodge from National Alliance on Mental Illness Southwestern Illinois, Rebecca Lanter from Chestnut Health Systems, and Nathan Ferguson from the Vet Center. Brad Lavite, Superintendent of the Madison County Veterans' Assistance Commission, discussed the changes of services that have been offered throughout the organization's life.

"The Madison County VAC was founded in 1936 and would provide basic commodities such as wood or coal to the veterans in Madison County," said Brad Lavite. "Now the Madison County VAC has moved to fill in the gap that is experienced with many veterans as they operate through the benefits and pension claims through Veteran Affairs. This includes services such as financial counseling, support groups, help filing claims, and rental/utility assistance."

"This Lunch and Learn Workshop was an excellent resource for the Edwardsville Township and all of the organizations in attendance today," said Supervisor Miles in response to Wednesday's event. "To learn about the services available for veterans within our community helps us to expand the social services safety net and to increase the understanding of services within our reach to best serve our residents in need."

The previous Lunch and Learn Workshops included themes of services for homeless clients, domestic violence, senior care, transportation resources, and substance abuse resources. "The first Social Service Safety Net Forum that was held in June of 2015 was very successful," said Supervisor Miles. "Since then we have held five Lunch and Learn Workshops and have met for a second annual forum and have made plans for several future Lunch and Learn themes. Our next event will be a workshop on mental health resources on February 22, 2017, we hope to see you there!"

For more information about the Social Service Safety Net or to register to attend the next Lunch & Learn Workshop, please contact Edwardsville Township at (618) 656-0292.

**Edwardsville Township is comprised of the City of Edwardsville, Village of Glen Carbon and unincorporated areas just outside of these two municipalities. The**

**Township Supervisor's office is located at 300 West Park in Edwardsville and is open from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on Monday and Friday and from 8:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday.**

**Learn more about Edwardsville Township online at [www.edwardsvilletownship.com](http://www.edwardsvilletownship.com) or contact the Township Offices by phone at [618-656-0292](tel:618-656-0292).**