



NEWS FROM THE OFFICE OF  
**ADAM J. BELLO**  
MONROE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

**For Immediate Release**  
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**MONROE COUNTY EXECUTIVE ADAM BELLO ANNOUNCES  
INAUGURAL EVENT HONORING AREA HIGH SCHOOL  
STUDENTS ENLISTING IN MILITARY SERVICE**

*“Our Community Salutes” will recognize students from Rochester, Buffalo,  
Syracuse and their families*

**ROCHESTER, NY** — Monroe County Executive Adam Bello today announced the County will host “Our Community Salutes,” an event to honor local high school students who plan to enlist in the military immediately after high school graduation. The ceremony will be held at 6:00 pm on May 19, 2025 at Rochester’s Blue Cross Arena at the War Memorial.

The event will bring together parents, educators, community leaders, and veterans to provide community support for new enlistees and their families as they transition into military service, joining the 1% of Americans who serve in uniform.

“The young men and women who choose to put on our nation’s uniform will join a long line of individuals who have dedicated their careers and lives to ensuring a free democracy, and protecting our way of life,” **said County Executive Bello**. “This event is an opportunity for us to salute their commitment to public service, to recognize the sacrifice they and their families will make, and to make sure that they know that when their service ends and they return home, we’ll be here to support them.”

Each year, thousands of military-bound high school graduates will be recognized by [Our Community Salutes \(OCS\)](#) events across the U.S and Puerto Rico. These ceremonies are dedicated to recognizing a high school student’s decision to enlist in the armed services after graduation versus pursuing other opportunities available to them, such as work, college, or trade careers.

Last spring, a small ceremony celebrated 60 Monroe County high school seniors who had made a commitment to entering military service. This year’s event will expand to include students from the Buffalo and Syracuse areas and their families.

“It is important for us as a community to recognize the selfless decision these young men and women have made to serve their country,” **said Monroe County Veterans Service Agency Director Nick Stefanovic**. “They are the backbone of our nation’s defense, and I am confident they will honorably uphold the values and traditions of our armed forces. They have our support now and always, both during and after their service.”

“Following the success of the 2024 Monroe County OCS Enlistee Recognition Ceremony, we knew we needed to expand our reach in 2025 to include more enlistees from across Upstate New York,” **said Dr. Kenneth Hartman, OCS Founder and President.** “I am incredibly proud of these brave young adults who have taken the oath to protect our freedoms, and grateful for the community’s unwavering support to honor them.”

This will be an annual event with the County’s support. Students and their families will receive an invitation to the event in the spring along with more details on the event.

[The Monroe County Veterans Service Agency \(VSA\)](#) helps connect veterans to life saving physical and mental health services and helps them find housing. It also helps veterans recover millions in lump sum payments every year and connects them to monthly benefits, like VA disability compensation, veterans’ pensions, and survivor benefits for veterans’ family members.

This year, the VSA also spearheaded the County’s effort to establish a first in the nation, County- led nature based therapy program. The program has helped reduce PTSD in veterans, improving their overall mental health, and helping them build a community.

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