

HINGHAM HELPS MASSACHUSETTS

# LEADING the NATION

## Hingham's Veterans Services

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**For over two decades the Hingham School Department and Hingham Veterans' Services have collaborated to engage our youth in awareness, understanding, respect and appreciation for our veterans.**

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At every level the Hingham Schools help educate our children on military service and the sacrifice our veterans have made for our country and each of us. On Veterans Day and Memorial Day our Elementary Schools invite our local veterans to their All School meetings to honor their service and say thank you. The children do activities like wearing a star with the names of family and friends who have served our country. On these same occasions over three dozen of our Hingham High band students volunteer to play at the Town sponsored events. At the Middle School each year Senior Chief Petty Officer Keith Jermyn, a member of the Navy Reserves and Hingham alum, shares with the students what it means to serve your country and how it feels to receive letters and packages from your hometown. The school then kicks off a "care package drive" that annually provides for hundreds of pounds of supplies for our Hingham soldiers on active duty. Chief Jermyn believes that "Our community's unique style of being able to bridge the gap between veterans and students pays-off exponentially... it is an educational, first-hand experience for the student, something they can't get from a book or lesson... and for the veteran it's a chance to feel appreciated and to heal – compassion on this level is a two-way street. I am PROUD to be part of the process!"

At the High School the 10<sup>th</sup> grade students have an annual walking field trip to Grand Army of the Republic Memorial Hall on Main Street where they are educated on the wars from the Civil War to present. Hingham Veterans recount tales from WWII to today's Global War on Terrorism. They are able to learn the history and touch and feel military items from that time, and speak directly to those who were there. Andy Hoey, K-12 Director of Social Studies, states, "Through this rewarding partnership with Hingham's veterans, our students not only gain a better understanding of the curriculum through the veterans' personal stories, but they also receive powerful, living examples of service and citizenship." Each year Hingham High students also volunteer to place flags at Hingham veterans' graves, this year alone almost 1,000 flags were placed at gravestones. Hingham High School students representing multiple sports teams have also joined forces to create the Hingham High School Veterans Appreciation Club which engages in activities with the veterans and raises money to support the veteran community. Officer Tom Ford who is the club's faculty advisor stated: "The Hingham High students proudly support the veterans of this community. With the collaboration of Veterans Affairs Officer Keith Jermyn, they have the ability to volunteer for local events and fundraise for many veterans' charities. The experience of meeting local veterans has given the students a better understanding for the sacrifices that people have made for this country."

The collaboration between the Schools and the Veterans' office has provided the foundation for our children to be inspired to support our veterans and this collaboration and support is about more than just Hingham. United States Congressman Stephen Lynch of the 8<sup>th</sup> MA District, recently spoke at Hingham's Annual Town Meeting, and was quoted as saying this "One of the great things I get to do as a member of Congress is to appoint young people to the United States Military Academies and I have to say that for a town of its size Hingham goes far beyond...I have 3 cities and 22 towns in my district and no one even comes close to what Hingham is doing in terms of sending their sons and daughters to our Military Academies...it's really quite remarkable, and I know there's a great history here, a long and strong history of Military service." This collaboration between the Hingham School Department and Hingham Veterans' Services has made a difference for our children, our veterans and our community. For more information on Veteran and Military Affairs, please contact the Director of Veterans Services, Keith Jermyn, at the Hingham Town Hall (781) 741-1440 /jermynk@hingham-ma.gov.

