

Veterans of Weston partners with YMCA for free weekly programs in February



Veterans of Weston is partnering with the YMCA of South Florida to bring four free programs to Broward County-based veterans, one per week, in the month of February. (File photo)



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Active duty military personnel and veterans in Broward County now have an additional resource for assistance.

Veterans of **Weston** is partnering with the YMCA of South Florida to bring four free programs to Broward County-based veterans, one per week, in the month of February. The events will be every Wednesday from 9 to 11 a.m. beginning Feb. 6 at the **Weston YMCA Family Center, 20201 Saddle Club Road, Weston, FL 33327.**

“This was a collaboration that really came together over the course of five or six months,” said John Antonelli, executive director of the Weston YMCA. “For the last few years, we have been doing a Veterans Day breakfast here. We actually just had our third one on Veterans Day and it was a way for us to honor our local veterans because a large population of our membership base is veterans or active duty military.”

Antonelli said the YMCA has forged relationships with local organizations and the city to maximize their reach and impact.

“Our last event we had, one of the facilitators that helped do that is a board member of ours, her name is Mary Molina-Macfie, she was also just voted in as our commissioner in Weston,” he said.

“She said came to us and said, ‘look, as I’m talking to our group and talking to people in our crowd, they have a lot of concerns and a lot of interest in learning what is available for them. What’s available for them at the Y and how can the Y be a better resource for them to help them understand what resources are out there for veterans?’”

The schedule of events and partnering agencies is:

- Feb. 6 – **Broward County Department of Elderly & Veterans Services**
- Feb. 13 – **Pompano Veterans Center**
- Feb. 20 – **CareerSource Broward and Broward County Office of Economic and Small Business Development**
- Feb. 27 – **Project Courage Foundation**

According to **The Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs**, there are about 20 million veterans living in the United States, with over 1.5 million of them in Florida. Broward County has among the highest population of veterans in the state, and its **Veterans Services department** “serves more than 700 individuals monthly, files more than 1,927 claims annually and in one year, assisted applicants in receiving more than \$9,932,680 in benefits,” according to the county.

“We’re just excited to be able to bring that to the city of Weston,” Antonelli said. “The city of Weston has been a great partner of ours and they’re excited to see this come into the city as well.”