

GOVERNMENT, SCHOOLS

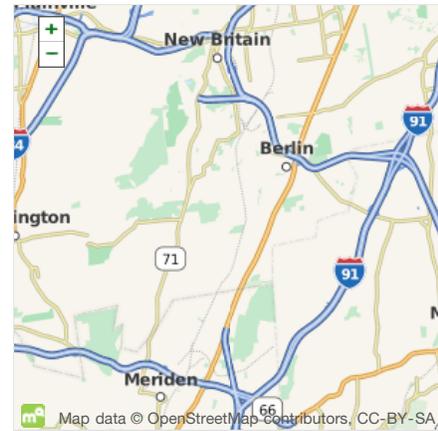
## OASIS Center Opens

Services Available to Vets

By **Virginia Galgano** December 19, 2010

On November 17, 2010, Middlesex Community College opened its "Operation Academic Support for Incoming Servicemembers" (OASIS) Center in the Jean Burr Smith Library at the college. OASIS Centers are available to help returning veterans transition back into civilian life.

The original idea for the OASIS Centers was formed at Central Connecticut State University on October 12, 2007. The premise was that returning veterans in college needed a place where they could meet, socialize, communicate and learn about the services that are available to them and be able to discuss with other veterans the issues they are struggling through. All the State and Community Colleges agreed to make campus space available.



At the opening ceremony of the OASIS Center at Middlesex Community College, bagpiper Patrick J. Whelan led in the procession of dignitaries, among who were Middlesex Community College Interim President, Dr. Jonathan Daube, Senator Elect Richard Blumenthal, Veterans Commissioner Linda Schwartz, Middletown Mayor Sebastian Giuliano, and Chancellor Marc Herzog. Before everyone was seated, Veterans Outreach Coordinator and Ceremonial Sgt. Major, Peter Galgano, led the US Marine Corps 6th Motor Transport Battalion Color Guard in the Presentation of Colors. The Middletown High School Chamber Choir then sang the National Anthem.

Veterans Commissioner Linda Schwartz gave out the Connecticut Veterans Wartime Service Medal to 16 veterans. Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro, representing Connecticut's Third District, sent a certificate and a flag that flew over the US Capitol in Washington DC on Veteran's Day. Mayor Giuliano presented a proclamation that November 18, 2010, in the city of Middletown, is Middlesex Community College Veterans' OASIS Center Day.

The OASIS Center is manned by veteran student workers when the library is open, during the day and evening. Included within the two rooms of the OASIS Center are computers, telephones, a flat screen television, refrigerator, coffee pot, microwave, comfortable study chairs, a pub table for gathering, and a conference table. All of the above is designed to create an atmosphere of welcome, comfort and stability.

Among some of the services available to veterans are regular meetings and events to provide awareness of the needs of veteran students, and appointments and group discussions with the Veterans Administration and the Department of Labor to help veterans transition back into civilian life and the workplace. There is help available with the Post 911 GI Bill, and help in accessing the benefits veterans have earned.

All of the above will be without a lot of delay and paperwork. The college will have workshops for faculty and staff to make them aware how to recognize and help returning veterans who are living with Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

Non-student veterans are welcome at the OASIS Center to meet, socialize, gather with student veterans, and learn how education can help them in transitioning into a better future.

*(Berlin residents attending Middlesex Community College who are veterans are eligible to use these services.)*

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