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**WOMEN VETERANS PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBIT
DEBUTS AT PALISADES CENTER**

West Nyack, NY (October 2020): According to the United States Department of Veterans Affairs, approximately 2 million Veterans in the United States and Puerto Rico are women, accounting for about 10 percent of the total Veteran population. Women Veterans face unique barriers beyond those faced by their male counterparts including mental health stigma and gender sensitivity issues, making them often "invisible" in their communities.

In 2019, Palisades Center's BRIDGES was awarded a grant from Arts Westchester, an advocate for accessibility and diversity of the arts in Westchester and the surrounding counties, for a Women Veterans Photography Project, entitled *Making the Invisible Visible*. BRIDGES, an Independent Living Center dedicated to advocacy and leadership on behalf of people with disabilities, intends to raise awareness in the community of local Women Veterans and to provide insight to who they are and honor their service through the *Making the Invisible Visible* exhibit. The exhibit will showcase 18 Women Veterans in 24"x 36" black and white photographs.

Rockland County Legislator Harriet Cornell, who initiated the County's Arts in Public Places Law, said, "Shining a light on Women Veterans who served our country in the armed forces is extraordinarily appropriate this year, the 100th Anniversary of the passage of the 19th Amendment which granted the vote to women. We celebrate the strength and resilience of women, their determination to win the vote, to seek higher education, to participate in sports, and to enter any and every field of work including the military because patriotism is not reserved to men. These beautiful portraits put a focus on the individuals, but even more importantly, provide us with an opportunity to acknowledge the

sacrifices made by Women Veterans, and to call attention to the issues many Women Veterans face, from high unemployment, mental illness challenges such as depression and anxiety, and higher rates of suicide. Our message to these women warriors is this: We care about you. We value your sacrifices and help is available."

"For too long, women who served felt invisible," said **BRIDGES' Executive Director, Carlos Martinez**. "Women have stated, 'I didn't feel like a Veteran' or 'I never thought the VA clinics and centers were for me.' This project highlights the unwavering commitment of Women Veterans who have sacrificed, put their lives on the line for their country, and offers their perspective on what it meant to serve."

The photographer, Shane Samuels, is a Veteran of the United States Marines and a retired New York City police officer. He was chosen for the project because of his unique and impactful work. For more information, visit www.shanesfocus.com. Hair and makeup services for the project were provided by Capri Beauty School located in Nanuet, New York.

When asked about *Making the Invisible Visible*, **Shane Samuels** stated "Being part of this project with some of the strongest female Veterans I've ever met, is something I will cherish forever. These are America's Veterans and my military sisters."

Palisades Center was chosen as the location to showcase the exhibit due to the diverse group of daily visitors it draws. It gives millions of people access to the arts, who might not otherwise have access. The exhibit will open on Friday, November 6 and will be displayed on Level One by Macy's. The printing and installation will be provided by Foley Signs in Orangeburg, New York. The exhibit will be on display for six months.

"We are honored to host the *Making the Invisible Visible* exhibit at Palisades Center," said **Darrin Houseman, General Manager of Palisades Center**. "The exhibit is a great way to honor our heroes and bring recognition and awareness to our Women Veterans."

For information on Palisades Center, visit www.palisadescenter.com.

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About Palisades Center

Palisades Center is a four-level shopping center offering 225 brands, 16 sit-down restaurants, a bowling alley, ice rink, the world's tallest indoor ropes course, comedy club, and more. With its unique and diverse merchant mix, Palisades Center is the go-to place for local shoppers and tourists alike. To learn more, visit www.palisadescenter.com, www.facebook.com/palisadescenter, www.twitter.com/palisadescntr, or www.instagram.com/palisadescntr.

About Pyramid Management Group, LLC

Pyramid Management Group is one of the largest, most innovative, privately-held real estate developers in the northeast. Headquartered in Syracuse, New York, Pyramid's portfolio of dynamic shopping, dining and entertainment destinations and expanding hospitality presence dominate the northeast with 14 properties located throughout New York and Massachusetts. For 50 years, Pyramid has built its reputation on being first, fast, ahead of the curve and always what's next, leading the industry in combining the best elements of traditional retail with world-class dining and entertainment, all under one roof. For more information, visit www.pyramidmg.com.

