FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Easter Seals Dixon Center and the Institute for Veterans and Military Families at Syracuse University Affiliate to Carry Out Corporate Pledges to Boost Vet Employment

(Washington DC, August 15, 2014)—Easter Seals Dixon Center and the Institute for Veterans and Military at Syracuse University (IVMF) are collaborating to advance veterans employment in the private and public sector. The new partnership, announced today, is anticipated to reach more than 5,000 veterans and their families over the next 12 months.

Through the partnership, Easter Seals Dixon Center will provide networking and training opportunities to its nationwide network of 72 affiliates and more than 550 community-based sites. IVMF will offer consultation and technical assistance for Easter Seals Dixon Center’s employment initiatives. The organizations will seek opportunities to co-sponsor and co-present at events that capitalize on the expertise and support each group provides.

“The most productive employment programs begin with a measured and documented understanding of the challenges and people who we serve,” said Col. David Sutherland, U.S. Army (ret.), Chairman, Easter Seals Dixon Center. “This collaboration will enable Easter Seals Dixon Center to work more effectively within the community to carry out the pledges made by
corporate America to hire or train thousands of veterans and military family members over the next five years.”

The partnership with IVMF comes at a time when veterans and their family members are having tremendous difficulty finding jobs:

- 2013 data: The unemployment rate for post-9/11 veterans decreased from 9.9 percent in 2012 to 9.0 percent in 2013. These figures still persist higher than the 7.2 percent unemployment rate reported for their non-veteran counterparts in 2013. The youngest veterans (ages 20-24) experienced the highest unemployment at 21.6 in 2013. These veterans are currently unemployed at a rate 8.9 percent higher than their non-veteran peers of the same age.

- July 2014 data: In July 2014, post-9/11 veterans are still experiencing higher unemployment rates (currently at 9.2%) compared to all veterans (6.0%) and non-veteran counterparts (6.2%). The youngest veterans (ages 20-24) are still experiencing the highest unemployment which currently is at 31.8 percent as of July 2014, which is 20.4 percent higher than their non-veteran counterpart.

- Military Spouses: The unemployment rate for military spouses is also very high at 32 percent for females with active duty spouses and 21.8 percent for females with veteran spouses.

The memorandum of understanding, signed June 6, will advance each organization’s mission to enable veterans and military families to thrive in their communities beginning with preparation for careers, and engagement with business and industry initiatives. This collaboration will enhance programs developed to support employment needs of veterans and military families as well as identify, document and develop the requisite community resources needed to assure
veterans’ success. This partnership will allow each organization to more effectively meet current challenges and address future needs.

“We believe that veterans offer strong skills built through their service and experience, and know these skills are highly sought by employers,” said James Schmeling, IVMF co-founder and managing director for programming. “Our work with business and industry partners, leading practices materials, and information garnered from our community engagement on careers and education, will help inform best practices in programs and services that Easter Seals affiliates can then implement, with the potential to significantly change the employment picture for veterans.”

This partnership’s emphasis on employment and the skills that veterans bring to organizations is part of an ongoing effort by Easter Seals Dixon Center to keep a steady focus on the issue of veterans’ employment. In May, Easter Seals Dixon Center released a public service announcement titled “The Bank,” part of a series created to use light humor to reinforce subtle, but positive, attributes of returning veterans and offer Easter Seals Dixon Center services to those who need support in transitioning back to civilian life, especially with finding meaningful employment. Additionally, a national contingent of more than 200 Easter Seals and Easter Seals Dixon Center representatives converged on Capitol Hill June 24 to deliver this important message to legislators.

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**About Easter Seals Dixon Center**

Easter Seals Dixon Center believes communities play a key role in the reintegration or veterans, military families and families of the fallen. To this end, it works to strengthen communities by building partnerships, sharing innovative approaches and connecting those who have served by harnessing existing community based services. Simply put, Easter Seals Dixon Center is part of a continuum of like-minded organizations working together for the greater good within their local communities. Find out more at [www.eastersealsdixoncenter.org](http://www.eastersealsdixoncenter.org).
About the Syracuse Institute for Veterans and Military Families

The Institute for Veterans and Military Families (IVMF) is the first national center in higher education focused on the social, economic, education and policy issues impacting veterans and their families post-service. Through our focus on veteran-facing programming, research and policy, employment and employer support, and community engagement, the institute provides in-depth analysis of the challenges facing the veteran community; best practice and serves as a forum to facilitate new partnerships and strong relationships between individuals and organizations committed to making a difference for veterans and military families. Learn more about IVMF at www.vets.syr.edu