

**Special Speaker Series Honors MCC Veterans**

*Marine Corps veteran Stephanie Moreira in the field (far left) and demonstrating MREs with the VRC's Rick Reppucci during her Heroes Among Us talk.*

**S**tephanie Moreira was hoping she'd never have to see – let alone eat – another MRE (meal ready to eat) again. But when she was handed one from a fellow veteran during a recent Heroes Among Us event on the Bedford campus, Moreira demonstrated how an MRE is properly prepared. And she even took a bite – “And that’s enough,” she said.

Heroes Among Us is a speaking program that provides an opportunity each semester for an MCC veteran to share his or her experiences as a service member. MCC Veterans Resource Center (VRC) and the Veterans Club sponsor the program.

Moreira shared her personal path and how her service in the U.S. Marine Corps impacted her future.

She joined the Marines – where women make up only about 10 percent of the corps – right after high school. She was the first member of her family to be in the military. “I graduated high school, took my summer off and went to boot camp in August,” she said. “I definitely remember having a ‘What have I done?’ moment,” she said. “But I’m glad I joined. The military set me up for success.”

After completing boot camp and Military Occupational Specialty School, Moreira was deployed to Afghanistan in 2011 – 2012, where she served as a Field Radio Operator.

“We traveled in convoys between bases to resupply Marines who were stationed there,” she said. “Field Radio Operators help establish communications between trucks in a convoy or help establish network communications between bases,” she explained. “It’s your job to make sure information is getting relayed correctly.”

After serving in Afghanistan, Moreira returned home and decided to go back to school. “I want to be a radio frequency engineer,” she said. She started at Middlesex to brush up on her math skills and is now in the Electrical Engineering Program. She spends a lot of time in the VRC and serves as vice president of the Veterans Club. “It’s great to be with a group of people who understand what you’ve been through,” she said.

After earning her associate degree, Moreira is planning to transfer to UMass Lowell to earn bachelor’s and master’s degrees in its Microwaves and Signals program.

“I love Middlesex,” she said. “I’ve made great friends here and I really like my major. Engineering Professor Michele Stein is a great role model and she helped me get an internship for the summer. Hard work pays off – everything is falling into place.”

— Tura Linderholm

**For more information about Heroes Among Us, contact Maryanne Mungovan at [mungovanm@middlesex.mass.edu](mailto:mungovanm@middlesex.mass.edu)**