



**K9S FOR WARRIORS**

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# DOG TALES

K9s' Most Tail-Wagging News Source 🐾🐾 Warrior Update 116, August 2019



## PAWS Act of 2019: Update

In June, the Puppies Assisting Wounded Servicemembers (PAWS) Act of 2019 was reintroduced by Congressmen John Rutherford, Gil Cisneros, and Mike Waltz. If you haven't heard of this legislation, it will require the VA to grant \$25,000 to each qualifying veteran with PTSD to obtain a Service Dog from an accredited agency of their choosing. While that may not sound like big news, since you know K9s For Warriors has provided service dogs to veterans since 2011, it indeed would be transformative to thousands of veterans in the VA healthcare system who would benefit from a service dog. Historically, the VA has opposed providing Service Dogs for mental health care.

I generally like to share only good news, but frankly, our efforts in DC for this were disappointing. For the last three years, we have been pushing PAWS because the VA refuses to acknowledge what we all know: Service Dogs are dramatically improving the lives of disabled veterans suffering from PTSD. Most importantly, these dogs are helping keep our heroes alive. Yet, each year I meet with the House Veterans Affairs Committee staff and each year they find a new way to say "No." This past week, we sat down with the Majority and Minority staff and, again, they said "No" to Service Dogs for veterans with PTSD, and "No" to our mountain of evidence that these dogs are saving lives. Instead, they told us to "wait." Wait until the summer of 2020 (or most likely later) until the VA completes a study to tell us what we already know. The VA has spent tens of millions of dollars and over ten years "studying" what one of our 558 graduates (and our rigorous, privately funded, peer-reviewed hard science studies) can tell you in seconds—the dogs work! We can't afford to wait any longer. Please ask your member of Congress to support the PAWS Act – HB 3103.



For updates and to find out how you can lend your support, please visit our website and search for "PAWS Act." ■

**Rory Diamond**, Chief Executive Officer, K9s For Warriors

### Inside This Issue

#### Rolling with Jax

Adventurous supporter rides bike cross-country

#### Military Calendar

August | September | October

#### Warrior Update

Donny and Harbaugh – new milestones and personal achievements

#### Gold Family Campus Update

Partnership with Gratitude America

#### Group Photos

June | July

#### Rescue Puppy Marmaduke – Part 3

Marmaduke enters the kennel

#### Message from Rory Diamond

PAWS Act of 2019: Update

## Rolling with Jax

In case you missed it, an adventurous supporter named John Tate rode his bicycle across the country, from Oregon to Florida, to raise awareness and funds for K9s For Warriors! What's even more amazing is that his trusty canine, Jax, rode right along with him during the 3,000+ mile journey! They went from bearing through snow and freezing temperatures to oppressive heat, overcoming setbacks from wrong turns and broken-down gear along the way. However, John and Jax persevered, even stopping by veterans' memorials throughout America to pay their respects to those who helped keep our nation free.

The pair arrived at our headquarters on July 9th to fanfare from staff and volunteers who welcomed them with open arms. John and Jax then enjoyed a tour of our facility and a relaxing lunch where the staff learned all about the team's adventures.

John's original goal was to raise \$15,000, but doubled that by raising \$30,000 for K9s For Warriors! That means his and Jax's ride raised enough to help provide two service dogs for two warriors suffering from PTSD.

About the accomplishment, John said, "Jax and I made our journey to shine a spotlight on the awesome work done by K9s For Warriors and to raise enough money to fund two dogs for two warriors. That turned out not to be a hard sell — people all along the way were incredibly grateful to those who have served in our military and loved the idea of helping dogs and warriors save each other. The support for veterans and shelter dogs, and the kindness we encountered over the whole 3,469 miles restored my faith in our nation. When we finally rolled into Camp K9 and met so many of the amazing people it takes to make everything happen, it was such an honor and a very emotional experience... the perfect end to our adventure." ■

To DONATE go to [www.k9sforwarriors.org](http://www.k9sforwarriors.org)  
Thanks for your continued support!

## 2019

### August

- 1st: Air Force Day
- 4th: Coast Guard Day
- 16th: National Airborne Day
- 17th: National Nonprofit Day
- 22nd: Graduation, 6pm

### September

- 2nd: Labor Day
- 10th: World Suicide Prevention Day
- 11th: Patriot Day
- 19th: Graduation, 6pm
- 20th: National POW/MIA Recognition Day

### October

- 4th: Columbus Day
- 17th: Graduation, 6pm
- 26th: Day of the Deployed
- 27th: Navy Day
- 31st: Halloween

## Warrior Update: Donny & Harbaugh

Donny graduated with Harbaugh in the January 2018 warrior-canine class. On July 12, 2019 he shared with K9s For Warriors the many milestones and personal achievements



he's made since having Harbaugh in his life. We wanted to share that update with you, to help you understand what your support can achieve. Here is the update, in Donny's own words:

"We did another big thing today. We bought an old mansion in the historic district of our city. Since I've been with Harbaugh, my life continues to get better every day, and it's all been because of the work that Harbaugh and I do. My wife has finished her master's, she's back to work, our family has grown with the birth of our third child, and all of this is because I'm independent and able to take care of the household on my own with the help of my best

friend. It's still a challenge every day and we work hard to make things happen, but we're even finding time to work and be productive on our own creative endeavors with an album that we recorded coming out in August.

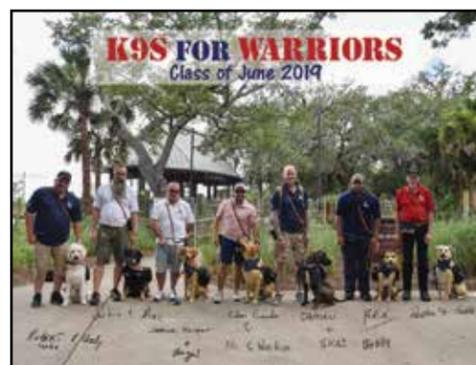
If you put in the work with your dog, what you get out of them is incredible. I'm pretty happy with what's going on in my life right now." ■

## Gold Family Campus Update

Over the last three months, we have partnered with Gratitude America to offer even more services to veterans in need. During our "off" weeks, Gratitude America uses our facility for a one-week residential program. Gratitude America's mission is to provide critical support for service members, veterans, and their families by conducting meaningful restorative retreats to assist participants affected by deployment exposures such as combat related stress and Traumatic Brain Injury.



We've also graduated four warriors and are about to start our second remedial class of the summer. Our dog trainers and K9 Caretakers have been hard at work training and caring for our ten dogs that will be paired with their warriors this Fall. ■



## Rescue Puppy Feature – Part 3

In the life of a K9s For Warriors puppy raiser, there comes the heart-wrenching time when they must say goodbye to the pup they've dedicated months of love, sweat and tears to. The countless hours and energy puppy raisers put in to preparing our dogs for formal service training means they've also built a unique bond.

In the last two issues of Dog Tales, you read about how hard Kathy worked to boost Marmaduke's confidence, help him learn to trust, and give him a new start to the life of abandonment we found him in. Since our last update, Marmaduke has been introduced to even more adventures to help him grow: he went to Indiana with his puppy raiser family where he met chickens, ducks, mules and tiny horses; he visited a fire station, went on an Old Town Trolley tour in St. Augustine, and participated in TSA training at the airport. From trips to IKEA, to eating lunch at new restaurants, to a boat ride on the Intracoastal and a cooking class, Marmaduke has enjoyed quite a full life compared to the barren road he was found on.

On July 15, Marmaduke's next chapter began. On that morning, Kathy returned him to Camp K9 to enter the kennels and begin his formal service canine training. While it's a milestone of achievement for both her and Marmaduke, it wasn't done without a good cry and many hugs from empathetic K9s staff members who know the bittersweet moments of completing their mission as a puppy raiser. As Kathy said goodbye, Marmaduke's ultra-sweet personality lightened the mood for everyone. He eagerly and happily met the new family members who will help guide his journey to saving a veteran who once also felt abandoned.

Stay tuned for Marmaduke's rescue puppy feature, part 4. ■



## Training Center Update



Our new indoor training center is now up-and-running. There was a ribbon-cutting ceremony on August 14th to mark this new, valuable asset and recognize the donors who made it possible. All of our K9 trainers are now using this daily for foundational service dog training. It is a large, open space with fitness equipment, crates for crate training, and everyone's favorite in the Florida heat – air conditioning! ■

**1,059 DOGS RESCUED, 558 WARRIORS GRADUATED**

Check out the K9s For Warriors Facebook page to see updates on warrior graduates and dogs in training. Be sure to "LIKE" us when you get there!

