



K9S FOR WARRIORS

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DOG TALES

K9s' Most Tail-Wagging News Source 🐾🐾 Warrior Update 114, February 2019



The Lone Star State Steps Up To Serve

We are excited to announce that K9s For Warriors is opening in TEXAS! K9s For Warriors will partner with San Antonio's Animal Care Services to procure more rescue dogs at our newly planned Petco Foundation K9 Center. Until now, K9s For Warriors has served warriors across the country, but we have done so solely from our two campuses in Florida. We chose Texas as our first step from our home state for two reasons: (1) The Lone Star State is home to millions of American veterans; and (2) Texas is the number one state in the nation for euthanizing dogs. Thus, we will be able to do the two things we do best, rescue dogs that will, in turn, rescue our warriors in need.

The prospect of bringing our national nonprofit to San Antonio and the surrounding community is thrilling to us. We will be building the new K9 center on land adjacent to San Antonio Animal Care Services, and a recent \$2 million grant from the Petco Foundation is helping pave the way. That said, we need a lot of help from our friends and supporters in Texas and the San Antonio community. If you would like to be involved, please let us know at K9sSanAntonio@k9sforwarriors.org. This is an exciting next step for K9s For Warriors and a key piece for our relentless effort to end our nation's veteran suicide crisis. ■

Rory Diamond
Chief Executive Officer, K9s For Warriors

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500th Warrior-Canine team

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500

500 warriors, 500 dogs... countless miracles!

In case you missed it, in December we crossed the milestone of graduating our 500th warrior-canine team! It came during the last class of the year, in an all-female class. The graduation ceremony was full of K9s For Warriors supporters, volunteers, donors and staff. During the ceremony, members of the class presented the organization with a framed photo collage boasting the number 500, stating: "We are the class of five hundred, and ... we really just wanted to say thank you to the staff and the volunteers and the trainers and the house moms because really without you guys, this wouldn't be possible."



Our CEO expressed how all of us feel over this inspiring accomplishment: "We are so proud of what this class achieved, and equally proud to welcome them into the K9s For Warriors family. We hope this number of 500 represents hope to every other veteran out there seeking a solution to their invisible wounds. You are never alone. There is hope." ■

To DONATE go to www.k9sforwarriors.org
Thanks for your continued support!

2019

February

Black History Month

- 2nd:** Ground Hog Day
- 4th:** USO Birthday
- 18th:** Presidents' Day
- 21st:** Graduation, 5pm

March

*Month of the Military Caregiver
Women's History Month*

- 13th:** K9 Veterans Day
- 15th:** American Legion Birthday
- 17th:** St. Patrick's Day
- 21st:** Graduation, 5pm
- 29th:** National Vietnam War Veterans Day

April

Month of the Military Child

- 14th:** Air Force Reserve Birthday
- 18th:** Graduation, 6pm
- 21st:** Easter
- 23rd:** Army Reserve Birthday
- 30th:** National Military Brats Day

Camp K9 Expansion Underway

We've been watching construction every day here at Camp K9 for our new, indoor training facility. Put in the pipeline about two years ago, we finally commenced construction in January, and now it is going up fast! We expect completion in March.

This building will help maximize our dog training ability on campus by providing a dedicated indoor space, protecting our trainers and pups from the elements of outdoor training when the weather isn't so accommodating. It will also allow them to stay here more often, instead of driving elsewhere, off campus for basic training. While we love working out in our beautiful community, having this dedicated space will be time- and cost-saving.



The facility has one story and is about 1,600 sq. ft. of an open floor plan. It includes four open kennel runs. Check our social media soon to see photos of the finished product! ■

Rescue Puppy Feature – Part 1

Our robust puppy-raising and foster program relies on dedicated members of the community who go to great lengths to prepare our puppies for the next step in formal Service Canine training. One of our invaluable puppy raisers is named Kathy Brooks, and we're featuring her and her future Service Dog-in-training, Marmaduke, in this issue of Dog Tales.

The beginning of Marmaduke's story is one that makes your heart sink: he was found in the pouring rain on a dead-end road. The shelter in Georgia, where that road was, picked him up and called us. As many of our partner shelters do, they said they think they have a dog eligible for our program. So, our dog procurement team drove up and brought 10-month old Marmaduke to Camp K9, hopeful to give him a new purpose and, eventually, a home with his own veteran. Since Marmaduke was only 10 months old, it meant he had to be placed with one of our volunteer fosters while awaiting his turn to enter the kennel. Our passionate puppy foster, Kathy Brooks, readily took Marmaduke into her loving arms and started putting her heart and soul into helping him overcome fears that likely developed in his past.

The very first challenge was just getting this weary pup into a car. Many shelter dogs have never been inside a vehicle; therefore, they're very reluctant to climb in. Kathy used her training skills to patiently and methodically teach him that it was a safe place. She found that working her way up to serving his meals in the backseat did the trick! It gave him confidence with "loading" and "unloading" (trainer speak for entering and exiting the car). Now, he'll go for a car ride any time!

What are regular household items to humans can actually be fear-inducing to shelter dogs: a common one is the vacuum cleaner. While the thought of just cleaning may be scary to you, that big, noisy machine can feel threatening to dogs not used to it. Marmaduke was instantly startled by the vacuum cleaner. He tried to run away whenever he saw it. Kathy's answer? Meal time next to it! And with Kathy's continued patience and care, Marmaduke is overcoming this fear, too. The next step for Marmaduke? Our kennel staff will monitor his progress to determine the right time for him to enter the kennel for his formal training. Keep your eye on upcoming issues of Dog Tales to read about the next steps in his journey, from street, to shelter, to service. ■

Gold Family Campus Update

Here is a snapshot of the rapid progress of the Gold Family Campus since the last issue of Dog Tales:

- Filled a temporary kennel with ten dogs
- Graduated a total of ten warrior-dog teams in 2018
- Held a total of eight classes (new & remedial)
- Hired six kennel staff
- Benefitted from tons of volunteer support



And...The TV show Military Makeover filmed a mini documentary with the class seen here. **Military Makeover K9s For Warriors Special** is airing Feb 15th & Feb 21st @ 7:30 am EST on Lifetime Network. Tune in!



heart and soul