



DOG TALES



K9s' Most Tail-Wagging News Source  Warrior Update 108, August 2017



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Thank you to our supporters. You are our heroes!

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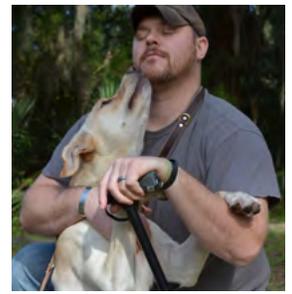
There is No Gimmick in Gratitude

How can we thank thousands of individuals who donated their hard earned money to our mission?

How can we thank the Jacksonville news station, First Coast News, that went above and beyond to host our telethon? How can we thank the volunteers who provided their valuable time? Anyone can simply say, "thank you," as those words are not difficult to say. We could mail cards displaying priceless pictures. We could send emails containing creative content. We could even feature a Facebook post sharing sentimental sentences; but we won't thank you in any of those ways. At least not for the funding raised and awareness created by the 2016 Veterans Day Telethon. Instead, we will show you how thankful we are through a valuable action: **we will save more lives!** We will create a training facility that will provide our warriors and dogs with powerful learning tools; they will be better prepared to reintegrate back into society. We will continue to provide an environment that is a home-away-from-home for our military heroes. We will continue to view rescue dogs as beautiful souls with important missions. We will continue to treat every dog and veteran with dignity, respect, and love. You will see how thankful we are for your kindness through everything we do, and the best is yet to come!

Warrior Update: Another "Stepp" Up

In June, our graduate team Benjamin Stepp and his service dog, Arleigh, were featured in the nation's most prestigious newspaper, the New York Times. The article details the way in which Arleigh helps assuage Benjamin's PTSD symptoms, as it examines the emotional bonds between dogs and humans. If you'd like to read the article, you can find it on nytimes.com, titled "The Empathetic Dog."



2017

August

- 2nd:** August Class Dog Day
- 4th:** National Assistance Dog Day
- 4th:** Coast Guard Birthday
- 17th:** Graduation, 6pm
- 26th:** National Dog Day
- 30th:** September Class Dog Day

September

- Service Dog Month*
- Suicide Awareness Month*
- 4th:** Labor Day
- 10th:** World Suicide Awareness Day
- 11th:** September 11 Memorial
- 14th:** Graduation, 6pm
- 18th:** Air Force Birthday
- 27th:** October Class Dog Day

October

- Adopt a Shelter Dog Month*
- 12th:** Graduation, 6pm
- 13th:** Navy Birthday

November

- 1st:** November Class Dog Day
- 9th:** World Freedom Day
- 11th:** Veteran's Day
- 16th:** Graduation, 6pm
- 23rd:** Thanksgiving
- 28th:** #GivingTuesday
- 29th:** December Class Dog Day

December

- 13th:** National Guard Birthday
- 14th:** Graduation, 6pm
- 24th:** Christmas Eve
- 25th:** Christmas Day
- 31st:** New Years Eve



An Adventurous Race for Life

Chad Layman never served in the military. However, for decades he suffered from undiagnosed depression and anxiety. It ultimately led to a 12-hour ordeal between him and the authorities who attempted to talk him out of suicide.

Like so many veterans, conventional treatment didn't work for Chad. Then, one day he rescued a dog, and his life changed. He now had a purpose, a non-judgmental companion to love.

Hearing about the high suicide rates of military veterans, Chad discovered K9s For Warriors through a local graduate and decided to make it his mission to help save others who suffered from the mental torment he did. He created the Fine Earth Adventure Race, a SWAT obstacle course fundraiser named after his business in Harrisonburg, VA. The two races he's put on so far have been wildly successful. Participating teams come from all over the country in the form of groups of friends, first responders, volunteer groups from companies and more. K9s For Warriors also sends up a team to race in the challenging course! This year's event

brought in over \$200,000, enough to cover the cost of an entire graduating class. We are immensely grateful for Chad Layman's dedicated support of our veterans, and thank the entire Harrisonburg community for recognizing the need to end veteran suicide. We can't wait to see everyone again at the 2018 Fine Earth Adventure Race!



We've Broken Ground!

Dear K9s For Warriors followers, there is promising growth happening these days!

As you may have heard, we're in the beginning stages of building our training facility and veterinary technician's room. These two buildings will be a huge step forward in our ability to serve our dogs and veterans. The training facility will feature a mock restaurant environment, office area, TSA scanners, and multiple flooring types (so the dogs can easily become familiar with carpet, tile, wood, and other flooring surfaces). Having access to these environments will enable us to train our dogs and warriors more thoroughly.

Our vet technician's room will give us better space and the ability to perform more treatments on-site. This will allow



K9s to save funds that we ultimately will put right back into our program. Along with the vet technician's room, there will be an additional seven to eight indoor/outdoor dog runs, which will increase the number of dogs we

can house on campus (approximately 65). Two years ago, we could house a maximum of 30 dogs. The success achieved by our determination to grow never ceases to amaze me!

I sincerely thank our followers and supporters. Without your passion for our mission, we would not be able to provide these amazing service animals to our deserving veterans.

Thank you for your continued support!

Brett Simon
President, K9s For Warriors



Sometimes We All Need a Little Reinforcement

One of our southern sponsors, Early Times Kentucky Whisky, took a unique approach last year to helping a warrior find his new "leash" on life.

Partnering with our Warrior Ambassador, Joe, and his service dog, Lily, Early Times sent troubled veteran Travis on a road trip with Joe to show him there is hope. Many veterans had traveled the same road of despair that he had. Early Times produced a documentary of the pair's travels that proved to Travis his road could end at a place of

hope and renewal, called Camp K9. The documentary, "Reinforcements," was featured at the GI Film Festival, and is now available to watch for free on YouTube. A committed partner, Early Times Kentucky Whisky has donated \$100,000 to our program, with long-term plans to continue their generous support of our mission.





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If You Build It, They Will Join!

It is quite an honor that other service dog organizations look to us as an example. As a result, K9s For Warriors, along with other top service dog organizations, has identified a need for an assembly of knowledgeable service dog providers to establish critical guidelines, deliberate on key matters, and advocate for new laws.

I am proud to announce that this coalition has been created. The *Association of Service Dog Providers for Military Veterans* (ASDPMV) requires that best practices are utilized by qualified organizations to ensure that veterans are paired with the best service dogs and services possible. The Association will also increase the understanding of medical evidence supporting service dogs as a PTS treatment tool and persuade for expanded use of qualified service dogs.

ASDPMV held its first official conference last month in our nation's capital; our constituents focused on setting goals and lobbying for the PAWS Act. In addition, ASDPMV recognized those in Congress who have made a substantial impact in the veteran-service dog field.

I am excited about the establishment of ASDPMV. I sincerely believe that we are well on our way to ending the veteran suicide epidemic. As always, thank you for your commitment to saving our rescue dogs and veterans.

Rory Diamond
Chief Executive Officer, K9s For Warriors

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