



**A NEW LEASH ON LIFE**

We support our nation's disabled veterans by restoring their confidence and independence.

## **K9s For Warriors Talking Points/FAQs**

Determined to end veteran suicide, K9s For Warriors provides highly-trained Service Dogs to military veterans suffering from PTSD, traumatic brain injury and/or military sexual drama.

To date, K9s For Warriors has graduated more than 700 Warrior-K9 teams and rescued 1,500 dogs overall. With the majority of dogs coming from high-kill rescue shelters, this innovative program allows the K9/Warrior team to build an unwavering bond that facilitates their collective healing and recovery.

### **1. Why is it needed?**

- a) Roughly 20 veterans who served post-9/11 commit suicide daily.
- b) Around 20% of post-9/11 veterans suffer from PTSD, equating to more than 700,000 veterans.
- c) Service members suffering from PTSD are at a higher risk for suicide.
- d) Pre-9/11 era veterans are disproportionately affected by suicide, according to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' [2020 National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report](#). In 2018, veterans aged 55-74 accounted for virtually as many suicides (2,587) as those aged 18-34 (874) and 35-54 (1,730) combined.
- e) Around 700,000 dogs are euthanized in shelters every year. Many of these are wonderful dogs who can be trained as Service Dogs for veterans in need.

### **2. What is PTSD?**

- a) Hyper-vigilance
- b) Panic Attacks
- c) Insomnia
- d) Depression
- e) Isolation
- f) Hopelessness

### **3. How does the K9s For Warriors program work?**

Each month, veterans arrive at K9s For Warriors to take part in a three-week, in-house training program at no cost to them. K9s For Warriors provides a trained Service Dog, housing, all meals, equipment, veterinary care, and training in a welcoming environment that provides essential peer-to-peer support. As the Service Dog is already trained prior to being paired with the veteran, the three-week training period is to teach the Warrior how to use his/her Service Dog, and to facilitate the bonding necessary for the two to be a successful team.

### **4. What types of dogs are used in the program?**

We primarily obtain dogs from shelters, rescue organizations, and owner-surrenders. Occasionally, we receive them from private donors. We do not choose by breed. We do have a few breed restrictions based on service work capability.



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## **5. How does a Service Dog help – what kind of skills are they trained to do?**

- a) Stand: dog places itself between the Warrior and someone approaching.
- b) Look: dog stands and faces backward and “alerts” by a tail wag or ear perk if someone is approaching.
- c) Wakes up handler from nightmares.
- d) Additional tasks trained per Warrior’s unique needs: retrieve items, assist with mobility, brace to help a physically disabled Warrior stand.
- e) Gives unconditional love and support.
- f) The average Warrior is on 10-15 medications when they begin the program. 92% will reduce or eliminate prescription medications over time following their graduation from K9s For Warriors.

## **6. Is it proven that Service Dogs work?**

This treatment method is backed by scientific research (from Purdue University’s OHAIRE Lab) demonstrating Service Dogs’ ability to help mitigate their veteran’s symptoms of PTSD while simultaneously restoring their confidence and independence.

A. The first study was published in the *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology* in February 2018. Results confirmed Service Dogs provide both physical and psychological benefits to veterans’ wellbeing.

B. The second research study was published in the journal *Psychoneuroendocrinology* in June 2018. Data was gathered from saliva samples of participants to measure cortisol levels (“the stress hormone”). Researchers found that PTSD-sufferers who had a Service Dog produced cortisol levels close to those of a standard healthy adult.

C. A third study was published in *Frontiers in Veterinary Science* in February 2019. It found that the bond between veterans and Service Dogs far exceeded that of a human-pet relationship.

## **7. How is your nonprofit supported?**

We continue to exist and thrive thanks to passionate individual and corporate donors and sponsors. Supporters contribute via many avenues: dog sponsorships, recurring monthly donations (Guard Dog program), third-party fundraising events, one-time donations, and many more.



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Our volunteer base is invaluable to our program's success. They dedicate time and talent to cook meals for the Warriors, clean kennels, attend events to represent K9s For Warriors, as well as foster future Service Dogs.

We are grateful to our corporate sponsors for donating supplies that contribute to the welfare of our dogs while in training. Elanco Animal Health provides funding, and flea and tick preventative medicine for all our Service

Dogs-in-training. Merrick Pet Care provides all food and treats for our program, as well as research funding.

## **8. Where does donor money go?**

We're proud to report that 80% of our funds support operating and program costs. The remaining 20% covers administrative costs to ensure the organization will continue to grow, and in turn, save more lives.

We have been awarded several top honors by leading charity-rating organizations for our transparency, program results, and use of donor dollars. Our accreditation profiles can be found on GuideStar, Better Business Bureau, GreatNonProfits, Charity Navigator, The Patriot's Initiative, and Excellence in Giving.

## **9. Our locations**

K9s For Warriors' three primary business operation facilities include: K9s For Warriors National Headquarters (Ponte Vedra, Fla.,) Gold Family Campus (Alachua, Fla.,) Petco Foundation K9 Center (San Antonio, Texas,) and K9s For Warriors at Heidi's Village (Phoenix, Az.)

## **10. In the works**

### **Mega Kennel Training Facility**

Located on six acres of generously donated land near our Shari Duval National Headquarters, this facility will be home to K9s For Warriors' Mega Kennel. As one of the nation's largest kennels, this location will have the capability of housing more than 150 Service Dogs-in-training. These animals will be given exceptional veterinary care and participate in rigorous training in advance of being paired with Warriors to help return them to a life of dignity and independence.

Learn more: [www.k9sforwarriors.org](http://www.k9sforwarriors.org)