



## Mission Accomplishments for the Year 7/1/20- 6/30/21

*Working Dogs For Vets Mission is to provide service dogs and training to disabled heroes in need, empowering them as they return to civilian life with new found independence; reducing suicide and overcrowding in animal shelters.*

- 2656 Total Members 7/1/2020-6/30/21
- 230 Dogs to evaluate
- 104 veterans need to be matched with adopted dogs
- Adopted dogs this year 420 (total = 1611)
- 230 Teams across the U.S. working on basics and continuing to train for Service Dog In-Training Evaluation
- 118 Service Dogs In-Training learning tasks to become a Service Dog
- 141 Service Dog Graduates this year. We recertify yearly but many continue to train, visit, and volunteer.
- Suicides this year 1
- Dogs passed away 3 this year
- 2 Animals Rehomed this yr Dogs that were rehomed because they didn't make it as service dogs. Those who do not make it will have received basic/advanced training and will be placed into a new home as a pet.
- # of Animals Rehabilitated- this yr 1611
- # of Animals Monitored Post Release-1611
- Average # of service recipients per month-999
- # of recipients who are employed-977
- # of Clients who report that services and support is available when needed even in a crisis-2649
- # of adults with disabilities receiving sufficient social and emotional support- 2656

### **Age groups remaining tasks add the following counts**

18-34 = 1023

35-50 = 1010

51-70 = 557

71+ = 66

Total 2,656

### **Genders**

Women 775

Men 1881

Total: 2,656

### **Branches of service**

Army 1459

Navy 399

Marine 338

Air Force 281

Coast Guard 47

1st responders/other 132



Charting Impact:

### **What is the organization aiming to accomplish?**

- To provide trained service dogs to veterans at no out of pocket cost to the veteran.
- To reduce suicide rates among our veterans.
- To help reduce overpopulation among shelters.

### **What are the organization's key strategies for making this happen?**

- No Veteran Left Behind Program.
- Pairs Veterans in need of Service Dogs with volunteer trainers in the veteran's location. This eliminates much of the need to come to the WDFV facility for training.
- Before a veteran is entered into the program, WDFV ensures the following.
  1. That the veteran has been medically prescribed a service dog.
  2. That the veteran is capable of caring for a dog.
  3. That the veteran understands what will be involved to train a service dog.
- Once the veteran is enrolled in the NVLB Program, WDFV uses their nationwide network of volunteers, to find a volunteer trainer located near the veterans home.
- The volunteer trainer:
  1. Evaluates the veteran's dog, if they have one, to see if their dog might be a candidate for training as their service dog.
  2. If their dog does not pass the evaluation for training purposes, WDFV will find a suitable candidate through evaluation and adoption.
  3. The volunteer trainer checks-in with the team weekly.
- We have been building a nationwide network of professional dog trainers who are willing to donate their time to help veterans by evaluating and helping veterans to train their service dogs.
- We have also been building a nationwide network of shelters who are willing to donate dogs to the program.
- Through our volunteer trainers, we have been instructing veterans on how to train their own service dogs. The volunteer trainers monitor the progress of the handler and the dog and report results back to WDFV.



### **What are the organization's capabilities for doing this?**

- Working Dogs For Vets helps veterans of all eras. Some are active duty, but all are heroes and have served in the military.
- Many of our veterans suffer from Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) or Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), both of which can be deadly disorders.
- We also help disabled veterans who have had loss of limb(s), and many other disabilities.
- Service dogs, properly trained, are amazing for recovery from PTSD, TBI, and other disabilities. We have been honored to serve these brave men and women that have given this country so much.
- There is no charge for our service, it is our duty, honor and privilege. We support our team's training for life!
- We have events that our teams are welcome to attend. Many lodge locally or camp at our facility, where they train and learn to re-enter civilian life.
- We are a small charity doing huge work and making a difference. Our men and women of our military fought for our tomorrows, so we fight for their tomorrows today.
- Our programs have been very successful, proving amazing results in recovery, but the need is critical and empowers us to continue.
- We are growing at a sustainable growth rate and have 2,656 members that we are serving. But with your support we will be able to serve many more. Our plans are to continue to train our teams and leaders to help with our programs to serve more veterans in need.

### **How will we know if we are making progress?**

We continue to conduct self-assessments to determine our strengths and opportunities for improvement.

Recognizing the constraints imposed by financial realities, we have sought to identify the most important and achievable strategic initiatives on which we must concentrate our efforts in the coming years:



## What has and hasn't WDFV accomplished so far?

### 2020-2021 Progress Report

- Working Dogs For Vets is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization! Founded in Lawrenceburg, Tennessee is one of the Nation's Largest Service dog providers.
- We now have veterans and volunteers in every state, and that number is growing daily! We are pulling dogs from over 100 shelters! WDFV is the 1st service dog provider in the state of TN that had veteran service dog teams stay in VA long-term treatment centers. We have service dogs/working dogs that have been accepted at military bases with some who are currently serving alongside active military veterans.
- Teamsters truck drivers now allow Working Dogs for Vets dogs to travel with truck drivers nationally.
- A first for the President and a first for Working Dogs For Vets. On June 4, 2018, a reception and memorial program was held for Gold Star Families at the White House. The event was hosted by President Donald J. Trump and attended by First Lady, Melania. Working Dogs For Vets had the 1st Service dog to ever be photographed with the President! American Gold Star Mother Cindy Tatum and husband Andy, with Working Dogs for Vets Service Dog Linus were in the official photograph taken with President Donald J. Trump!
- From 7/2017-6/2021 WDFV was able to pair and train 2393 veterans with rescued dogs, train service dogs and serve over 999 teams monthly. That's 4,786 lives saved because of each person's contributions. Many of these service dogs were trained in-house at the Tennessee, Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, and Ohio locations. WDFV was able to grow our membership to over 2,432 veterans! Our Family is growing and more veterans are being helped because of your support!
- 2,432 total members

### What's next?

- Our goal for 2021 is to complete the build of our National HQ, making necessary updates to make handicap accessible. We are working on building veterans housing so we will be able to train and serve more veterans and service dogs as well as train more service dog trainers from across the country to assist those veteran teams that are not capable of getting to the WDFV training facilities. One of our challenges is that because our members are located in many states across the country, they have to travel to our National Headquarters when there are not any qualified volunteers in their area. We have however been able to train many of the veterans after they have successfully trained their own service dogs, to become area lead volunteers to help other veterans with training. Currently, W.D.F.V. has K-9 police officers and dog trainers across the country who have or are currently helping as volunteers for veteran/service dog teams in their area.
- At Working Dogs For Vets National Headquarters we have group training classes each Saturday. This is a great help to those who are able to travel. We are additionally open daily as weather permits for Veteran/Dog teams to come and train by appointment.
- WDFV has partnered with American Gold Star Mothers, Inc. to raise awareness to the tragedy of Veteran Suicide. We have been able to promote the positive benefits that a service dog can provide to soldiers who are suffering from disabilities.

Needs statement: Working Dogs For Vets recently purchased 22 acres for our training facility HQ. We have completed the K9 kennel project, And 1st Veteran/dogs Cabin Sponsored by Hankook Tires, with 2 handicap accessible bedrooms, bathroom/shower, kitchen and laundry area. We have installed the veterans lodge complete with 3 veteran/dog team bedrooms and 3 bathrooms, a living room, laundry room and temporary office. We have begun working On The American Gold Star Mothers Memorial walking trail. We have more funding opportunities. The American Gold Star Mothers Sponsoring the Chow Hall, other sponsorship opportunities include Handicap bathrooms/shower house, Service dog wellness, and grooming center, a dock diving pool, and RV camping spots. We continue to have training classes that all members are welcomed to. Large events this year have been put on hold due to covid, so we adapted to smaller groups with more frequent training sessions. Two of our greatest needs #1 is funding to complete this facility, #2 is additional service dog trainers to help support these American Heroes.



#### **Quick Facts:**

**Founded: 2012**

**Incorporated and Non-profit status 501(c)(3): 2015**

**Service dog graduates: 588**

**Recertification Rate: 91%**

**Total of dogs rescued: 1611**

**Volunteers: Over 1000 active volunteers serving over 40 hrs per week**

#### **Measurements:**

- The average veteran is on 10-15 medications when beginning the Working Dogs For Vets program. 81% reduce or eliminate medication post-graduation.
- 91% of graduates report improvement in health after having received their service dog training.
- 98% report being able to handle anxiety better after having received their dog.
- Before receiving their service dogs, 99% of graduates reported that they considered themselves to be in poor health. After receiving their service dog only 5% continued to rate their health as "poor."
- 98% report a decrease in suicidal thoughts.
- 95% report a reduction in nightmares/night terrors.
- 95% reported handling flashbacks better after receiving their service dog.
- 100% noted that they benefited from the physical and mental bond with their service dog.
- Less than 35% of the participants reported being able to attend work or school before receiving their service dog. 75% increased attendance at school or employment services after receiving their service dogs.
- Before receiving their service dog, 85% of the participants reported that symptoms associated with PTSD played a major role in their inability to enjoy activities. After receiving their service dog, 5% of participants continued to report that their symptoms played a major role in daily activities.