

Press Release

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**Vets Helping Heroes creates unique canine pilot program to help
disabled veterans**

Boca Raton - VHH is pleased to announce a unique service dog pilot program to address the dramatic and unfulfilled needs of our severely wounded veterans and active duty service members utilizing rescue and shelter dogs.

Irwin Stovroff , President and Founder of VHH said, "I am on a mission to see that America's wounded service men and women get the very best we can give. Over 39,000 soldiers are returning home blind, missing limbs, deaf, suffering from Post Traumatic Stress and Traumatic Brain Injury. The need of our returning wounded soldiers is great. Combined, all of guide and service dog schools in the U.S. cannot meet the overwhelming needs of veterans severely injured while defending our country in Iraq and Afghanistan."

When Stovroff learned that Mike Sergeant had retired as Chief Training Officer for America's VetDogs, he reached out to Mike to discuss a pilot service dog training program. Tom, a United

States Naval Academy Alumni and his wife Susan, staunch supporters of service dogs for disabled veterans, reached out to Vets Helping Heroes and after conducting their own due diligence, made a lead contribution to the program. For half the cost stated by most service dog schools, Mike with 40 year expertise is currently training six service dogs for placement in July 2011 and another two are scheduled for the fall.

Susan Staudt said, "How can we, as a country say no to the Navy Corpsman who lost both legs above the knee while on patrol in Afghanistan or the Captain who graduated from West Point who lost both legs just under the pelvis bone due to an IED, or the Marine who did two tours and now suffers from traumatic brain injury from being exposed to multiple bombings?"

Trained service dogs play critical roles in the lives of the veterans they serve. The dogs that Mike Sergeant is training will be assisting veterans with balance, bracing, retrieval and seizure alert. In addition to the physical assistance of the service dog, the emotional support and comfort the dog provides are invaluable. They take the focus off the disability in public and can help during times of anxiety, flashbacks, and restless sleep.

Since 2006 VHH has raised funds to support the provision of over 50 guide and service dogs to America's heroes injured in the war in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Trained service dogs play critical roles in the lives of the veterans they serve. Most assistance dog schools have lengthy waiting lists and the published cost of a dog is between \$35,000-\$70,000. The government does not have a program to provide assistance dogs and veterans must rely on donor contributions. This is what drove Irwin Stovroff to develop Vets Helping Heroes, a non-profit organization headquartered in Boca Raton. Stovroff continued "VHH is extremely grateful to our contributors. It is really because of the generosity of others that this is possible."

The mission of Vets Helping Heroes is to provide a professionally trained assistance dog prepared by a qualified instructor to every disabled hero wounded in the global war on terrorism that will enable them to return to a life with dignity and self-reliance whether they are visually impaired or have other special needs that require an assistance dog. All of the services are provided at no cost to the veteran.

For more information or to make a contribution contact VHH at vetshelpingheroes.org or call 561 251 9296.

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