

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Veteran's Battle with PTSD Inspires Unique Service Dog Organization

Paws and Stripes, Official Charity of NAPPS, help military veterans obtain service dogs

MOUNT LAUREL, N.J., August 30, 2011 – Imagine a brave soldier facing the trials and hardships of war – putting his life on the line to serve his country – only to return home facing a new battle: Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI). With the aid of man's best friend, military veteran Jim Stanek is receiving unique therapy that only a dog can provide thanks to Paws and Stripes, a nonprofit organization formed by his wife, Lindsey, in 2010.

From War Hero to Recovering Veteran

Jim Stanek, a Long Island native and 9/11 clean-up volunteer, began his military career in February 2003 serving in the 82nd Airborne Division, F CO 51st LRSC, and the Big Red One. He returned home early, however, after sustaining injuries during deployment. While being treated at Brook Army Medical Center in San Antonio, Texas, the Army began the process of medically retiring Jim for his multitude of injuries and chronic severe PTSD and TBI. After only six and a half years in the Army, Jim's military career came to a close.

The Search for a Therapy Dog

Following nine months of treatment at Brook Army Medical Center, Jim discovered that the most comfort and relief he found was in the presence of therapy dogs. In May of 2010, Lindsey and Jim tried to obtain a trainer for their rescue dog, Sarge, and soon discovered the tremendous difficulty and expenses associated with this process.

An Idea is Born: Paws and Stripes

After being either turned down or unable to pay for service dogs from multiple organizations, Lindsey and Jim decided to start their own organization assisting veterans in the process of obtaining a service dog. In June 2010 their idea came to fruition, and Lindsey and Jim incorporated Paws and Stripes.

Unfortunately, Jim Stanek is not alone in his experience. With an increased number of military troops returning home, many veterans soon discover that the trials of war do not end abruptly. Instead, a staggering number of veterans experience ongoing struggles with the effects of PTSD and TBI. Paws and Stripes, a nonprofit organization headquartered in Rio Rancho, N.M., works to provide service dogs for veterans of the United States military suffering from PTSD and TBI. The service dogs are obtained exclusively from shelters, and are trained by professionals at no cost to the veteran. Paws and Stripes allows the veteran to select the service dog and participate in the weekly training from the first day, providing a unique form of therapy for the veteran.

Partners in Success: the National Association of Professional Pet Sitters

Recognizing the tremendous need for service dogs among veterans of the United States military, the National Association of Professional Pet Sitters (NAPPS) recently announced Paws and Stripes as its official charity.

Through the partnership, NAPPS members will have the opportunity to designate funds to Paws and Stripes, at membership renewal, participate in several fundraising activities throughout the year – including a charitable auction benefitting Paws and Stripes at the NAPPS Annual Conference and Small Business Forum– and foster greater public awareness of the vital importance of service dogs for veterans through grassroots initiatives.

“Veterans of the United States military have made incredible sacrifices – both physically and emotionally – to protect our country, and NAPPS is grateful for the opportunity to support these heroic women and men with Paws and Stripes,” explained John D’Ariano, President of the National Association of Professional Pet Sitters. “We applaud the bravery of our military veterans, and respect the efforts of Paws and Stripes to assist in the emotional healing by providing service dogs.”

Lindsey Stanek, CEO of Paws and Stripes, continued, “We appreciate the efforts of NAPPS members in supporting the shelter and rescue dogs, and think this partnership is such a neat idea. We truly believe in the power of service dogs, and look forward to working with NAPPS to serve veterans in this critical endeavor.”

To learn more about Paws and Stripes, please visit <http://www.pawsandstripes.org>.

About NAPPS: NAPPS is the only national nonprofit trade association dedicated to serving the needs of professional pet sitters. The Association aims to help the pet owning public, those interested in pet sitting, and professionals engaged in the in-home pet care industry by fulfilling its vision statement, serving as “the most respected authority in professional pet sitting.” It does so by providing the tools and support to foster the success of its members. Additionally, pet parents can benefit from NAPPS’ free resources including a disaster preparedness guide, tips on how to select a pet sitter, and a nationwide referral service,. To find a pet sitter in your area, check out NAPPS’ nationwide “Pet Sitter Locator” at www.petsitters.org. For more information on NAPPS, please follow [@TheNAPPS](https://twitter.com/TheNAPPS) on Twitter or join us on Facebook at facebook.com/TheNAPPS.

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