



Paws and Stripes has worked in New Mexico for a decade to provide not only service dogs to veterans living with the effects of trauma from their time in service, but also to provide ongoing support, education, and mental health services. With real limitations to consistent care at the VA, many veterans spend years seeking reliable and accessible resources that might help them regain their lives, or even just regain some semblance of hope. Through the healing power of dogs, veterans that have completed programs with Paws and Stripes have recorded significant improvements in their quality of life. Furthermore, the dogs that are paired with them are taken primarily from local shelters and rescues –

QUITE LITERALLY SAVING TWO LIVES AT A TIME.

"You can tell when there's a connection between the dog and the person."

– Melissa



James & Nuphaa



We provided mental health support to

33

individual clients last year.

In New Mexico, behavioral health services are sparse, especially in rural areas. Without our program, many veterans would:

- Be unable to access the help they need to fight their symptoms from trauma.
- Suffer from suicidal thoughts and violent actions.
- Run the risk of harming themselves or their families.



James & Nanook

We had a **0%** client attrition in 2020.



Carol & Lily



We provided **3,000**

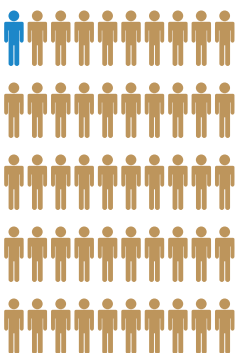
hours of mental health support last year.



Veterans with MST history are **2x** more likely to experience homelessness.



1 in 3 women & 1 in 50 men have experienced Military Sexual Trauma (MST).



Eddie & Azul

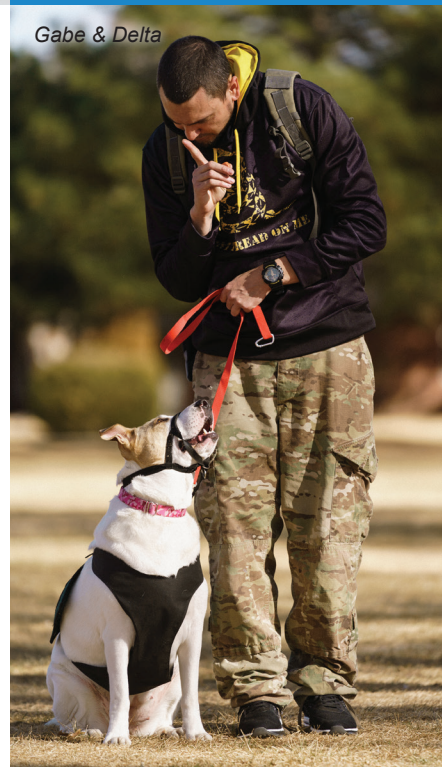


"If I hadn't found Paws and Stripes, I would very likely not be here."

– John

The veterans we serve see huge improvement in their lives as a result of our program. According to the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs, a **10-20 point change** in PTSD symptoms (measured with the PCL-5) represents clinically significant change. Veteran graduates average a **30-point change** with some reporting up to a **47-point change**. This is a staggering **50% reduction** in PTSD symptoms.

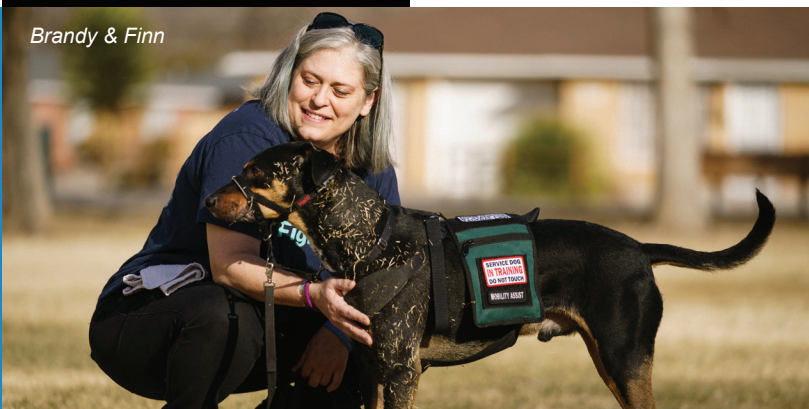
Gabe & Delta



Our team is steadfast to ensure that our clients will not suffer from a disruption of services when they need us most. Our veterans and their families are a part of us as a nation, as people.

AND RIGHT NOW, THEY NEED YOU.

Brandy & Finn



"When I was with Bear, I carried myself differently. That proud Marine came back." – Cole

MAURICE ' S STORY



Maurice & Akira

Maurice, an Army Veteran, first came to Paws and Stripes in early 2017.

The program was different back then. Veterans would work in the kennels learning dog care basics while socializing with potential dog placements and other enrollees. Akira, a gorgeous husky mix, caught the eye of many

of the veterans, and after a few months of interactions, Maurice began the selection process and ended up with her. Maurice said, "I won. We were the dynamic duo."

Akira had been with Maurice for about three years before discovering that she had medical conditions. At first, they seemed treatable, but after several veterinarian visits it was determined that Akira had late-stage cancer. The options were dim any way you looked at it. Ultimately, Maurice describes that he had to make one of the hardest decisions ever in letting Akira go.

When reflecting about Akira, Maurice says that when she was near, his worries lifted, and he could relax. He felt safer with her companionship, saying, "Akira would speak to me."

It took a while to process the loss, and Maurice didn't have the intention of coming back, but with the support and encouragement of the Paws staff, he understood the power of support he could receive with another dog.

Now, Maurice has just completed his dog selection for the second time. At first, he felt guilty and was hesitant due to the bond he had with Akira, but said, "I thought about it and how much of a better person I felt with a dog, I don't know how that is possible. This organization is comprehensive, with mental health, comradery amongst other veterans, and a secure environment where we can feel safe. It's all inclusive and they won't stop short of giving you what you need."

Maurice says he was "stoked" when he met his new dog, Titus. Titus is a large healer mix who loves water (Maurice likes to go fishing), carrying his own leash, and is really smart. Maurice is most looking forward to the companionship with Titus, saying that "while no other dog could fill Akira's big paws, I am sure he will bring all kinds of other good qualities."

Without the generosity and support of donors like you, we couldn't help veterans like Maurice. Every veteran in our program has access to our services from that point forward, a rare and invaluable—at times life-saving—resource for veterans and their loved ones. With your continued help, we can ensure that this resource is never lost to those that need it. As the state reopens, we have some catching up to do. Now, more than ever, your donations are needed to continue our mission. 🐾

