

**Petco Love Celebrates Veterans and Service Dogs with
\$500,000 in Grants Ahead of Veterans Day**
*50 Organizations Receive Lifesaving Investments to Support Pets Who Assist Veterans
as Part of National Nonprofit's Helping Heroes Initiative*

San Antonio, TX (October 30, 2024) – In honor of Veterans Day, [Petco Love](#) proudly commits more than \$500,000 in 50 service, therapy, and working animal organizations that transform shelter pets into heroes for others, including our nation's veterans. According to the Human Animal Bond Research Institute, pets improve our mental and emotional well-being, with studies demonstrating reduced anxiety, depression, and alleviating symptoms for those with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

Petco Love's Helping Heroes initiative recognizes the profound impact pets have on people, especially our military veterans. With \$18 million invested since 2009, Petco Love continues its commitment to strengthening the bonds between service members and their trained service and companion dogs, along with helping military and contract working dogs retire at home.

Petco Love Helping Heroes grant recipient, Cell Dogs, Inc., trains shelter dogs to serve veterans and first responders at no cost. This California nonprofit improves the lives of veterans like Joel, and his best friend Tahoe, a former shelter dog. Joel, an Army Medic who was specially trained for battlefield trauma medicine, was deployed in the Middle East when his life changed forever. He witnessed a horrific and deadly attack that made it nearly impossible for him to sleep at night. "Frequently, I tend to have bad dreams and remember certain moments that happened to me. But waking up and feeling Tahoe beside me reminds me that everything is going to be okay and that I'm home now and I'm safe," said Joel. "He's my battle buddy, which is a term we use for our friends that always have our back."

"Dogs generally have an unwavering loyalty and intuitive nature. They provide that unconditional love we all need. But when trained to serve, these dogs perform life-changing functions, empowering veterans, who have served their country, to regain independence and rebuild their lives once again," said [Susanne Kogut](#), president of Petco Love. "Investing in organizations that create these new canine Helping Heroes to support our veteran heroes represents our true appreciation for their service, and our commitment to the future health and happiness of these veterans and their pets."

One study¹ conducted by scholars at University of Arizona and Purdue University demonstrated the potential impact of service dog partnerships on veteran sleep and may reflect a mechanism by which service dog partnership reduces PTSD severity. Study findings showed that veterans had fewer sleep disturbances and less fear of sleep after three months with their service dogs. "Veterans have told us directly that our research is improving their lives. Service dog partnerships deserve to be researched, and our findings will help increase access for people who could benefit," said Maggie O'Haire, Associate Dean for Research, College of Veterinary Medicine, the University of Arizona.

Healing4Heroes, a non-profit organization in Georgia that connects wounded service members and those with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and Traumatic Brain Injury with service dogs rescued from shelters, is a Helping Heroes recipient. "What brought me to H4H is combat-related TBI, PTSD, and

¹ [The influence of service dog partnerships on perceived and objective sleep quality for military veterans with PTSD.](#)
Study funded in part by Petco Love.

suicidal ideation. I was paired up with my service dog Rooster,” said Steve, U.S. Navy Disabled Veteran. “It has given me a sense of hope and belonging to be a part of Healing4Heroes. I am so much more encouraged now than I was when I first came. I was in a depressive state, but now I have hope for the future.” Last year alone, Petco Love’s support enabled Healing4Heroes to rescue, spay/neuter, and train 125 service dogs for veterans.

Visit [Petco Love](#) to learn more about Petco Love’s lifesaving impact spanning 25 years and follow along on social media [@PetcoLove](#).

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About Petco Love

Petco Love is a life-changing nonprofit organization that makes communities and pet families closer, stronger, and healthier. Since our founding in 1999 as the Petco Foundation, we’ve empowered animal welfare organizations by investing nearly \$400 million in adoption and other lifesaving efforts. We’ve helped find loving homes for more than 6.9 million pets in partnership with Petco and organizations nationwide. Our love for pets drives us to lead with innovation, creating tools animal lovers need to reunite lost pets, and lead with passion, inspiring and mobilizing communities and our more than 4,000 animal welfare partners to drive lifesaving change alongside us. Is love calling you? Join us. Visit [Petco Love](#) or follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [X](#), [Threads](#), and [LinkedIn](#) to be part of the lifesaving work we lead every day.

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