

Join Pat Gavros in Her Next Big Project

Supporting the dogs who support our troops is my next latest and greatest undertaking!

Pat Gavros,Neighbor

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Supporting the dogs who support our troops is my next BIG project.

You've probably heard the quotation, "A journey of a 1,000 miles begins with a single step." My passion for my latest undertaking, [The Warrior Dog Project](#), was ignited by one picture....that of a dog jumping out of an airplane with his handler. One look at that picture and I was hooked! Like a dog with a bone, I had to know more.

Here's what I learned: These four-legged warriors save three to five of our troops lives each day. Despite the millions the government has spent on high-tech devices, they can't compete with the 85 percent bomb detection success rate of the Military Working Dogs (MWDs). And, these brave canines need special gear (not supplied by the military) in order to do their jobs at peak performance. I also learned that, sadly, when they retire, if they are deemed non-adoptable because of aggression or PTSD, they are euthanized! Doesn't that just break your heart?

When I was talking to one of my friends, it got me to thinking about just how much a soldier's life is worth. I wondered if it was worth giving up coffee for a week, or going to dinner with a friend, or maybe having my nails done? Perhaps it was giving up buying that new television I'd been coveting. Just exactly what would I do if I could actually save just one life? Boy, that's a tough question and, to be honest, it made me squirm more than a little.

I knew that individually I couldn't do a lot, but if I created a project and gathered the support of other like-minded people (like you!), that together we could accomplish something phenomenal. I believe we can all make a difference, and so I've created **The Warrior Dog Project** to help do two very important things:

First, one of the reasons I have taken on the project is to help working dogs (MWDs) and their soldier counterparts, get the much needed equipment they are desperately lacking. Each kit purchased contains a **Chilly Vest** which keeps the dogs from overheating in the searing desert heat, **Doggles** or goggles, that protect their eyes as the constant blowing sand causes eye irritation. Also, because of the scorching sand and asphalt, they need **Mutt Luks** so the sensitive pads of their feet don't get burned. And, finally, when they're being deployed from helicopters or airplanes, they need **Mutt Muffs** for ear protection. This keeps them calm while waiting for deployment so when they reach the ground they're at peak performance; ready to protect and save more of our soldier's lives.

Secondly, when dogs return from active duty and are ready to retire, they are given temperament tests for aggression and other issues that might cause them to be deemed "non-adoptable". And, unless a suitable placement can be found, they will be euthanized.

This is where SAV-A-VET.org comes in. Danny Scheurer, an Iraq War Veteran who was awarded a Purple Heart, has an incredible mission that he began about five years ago. He has set about to acquire these "forgotten soldiers" and then pair them with a disabled veteran who, in exchange for caring for these brave canines, receives a place to live. What an incredibly noble mission! Our successful event will help further this worthy cause. Wouldn't you like the Warrior Dog Project to succeed by seeing these two things happen? A lot of people I've spoken with have remarked that this will be my "biggest and most rewarding project ever." I agree, and you have my personal commitment that I will use all of my considerable resources and energy to make that happen.

I also wanted to share something exciting with you. When **Mike Dowling**, the author of **Sergeant Rex**, heard about my Warrior Dog Project, he instantly committed resources to help me. Now, Mike is a Marine Veteran, who was one of the first 12 dog teams to be deployed to Iraq. He's an author, producer, actor and Veteran's Advocate. I would like to share with you some portions of e-mail correspondence between my friend, Mike Dowling, and myself because it will paint a picture for you of why I am doing this and hopefully inspire you too.

Dear Pat - WOW, I guess I will start by saying thank you so much for EVERYTHING that you do! It really does mean a lot to all of us veterans and, those currently still serving, to know people like you are out there bringing awareness to the troops and of course, the military dog teams. ...This event sounds amazing and only a very special person can pull something like this off, and it sounds like you are that kind of person. So again, thank you for everything that you do."

Dear Mike - ..We have a young, local Marine who lost both of his legs and part of his hand in late October in an IED explosion. Kyle Moser is a brave American who will have a long road to recovery. ...I truly believe if there had been a dog team with their patrol that day, this wouldn't have happened."

Dear Pat - When I enlisted in the Marine Corps, I wasn't even aware the military used dogs. Thanks to the Warrior Dog Project more people will understand the critical role military working dog teams play, and how to support them. If you love dogs, and you love to support our troops, then you will love the Warrior Dog Project. Semper Fi ...Thoughts and prayers to Kyle Moser."

The success of this project will definitely be made easier because of the many media contacts that I've made as a result of the other highly publicized projects.

My mission is "To educate and inspire individuals, and hopefully you too, to stand beside me and become advocates for these warrior dogs." There are many ways that we can, on a continuing basis, support the dogs and their handlers while deployed, and after they've served their country.

The Warrior Dog Project will be a community-wide project that will incorporate schools, businesses, clubs and individuals. We will have a series of fundraising events starting on Sunday, April 1 through Saturday, April 14. Any of the schools who choose to participate in this educational and inspirational project will receive various resources from me such as books, posters, bookmarks, suggested reading lists, coloring pages, etc. We will be selling wrist bracelets, dog tags, doggie bandanas, tee shirts, etc., as part of our efforts.

The has enthusiastically endorsed my project and has graciously purchased a number of additional books about Military Working Dogs and other Service Dogs. We are in the planning stages for lots of activities that will create interest in a number of areas. As time goes on, I'll be revealing more about the project as it evolves (with your help).

I know you're asking, "How can I help?" You or your business can be a sponsor (sponsor levels are on my website), or you can make a direct donation which can also be done on the website. Maybe you'd like to help on my planning committee because, as you know, one person can't accomplish all of this alone. Perhaps you would like to host a fundraiser at your home or place of business? Any help you feel moved to offer will truly be appreciated.

Because of **The Warrior Dog Project**, you might just say Oswego is truly a town that is "going to the dogs!"

I have set-up a website for the project at: www.thewarriordogproject.myevent.com so you can see what I've gotten together so far. It's really pretty amazing! To contact me please go to www.thewarriordogproject.myevent.com and leave a message. I look forward to hearing from you. As always....live an inspired and patriotic life!