

# Guardian Angels Medical Service Dogs, Inc. Chooses Pittsburgh Area to Build State-of-the-Art Service Dog Campus

PITTSBURGH, Pa., March 15, 2019 (SEND2PRESS NEWSWIRE) – Over the course of its 9 years, Guardian Angels Medical Service Dogs (GAMSD) has grown into one of the largest service dog organizations in the nation. We raise, train, advocate for, and donate these incredible medical service dogs, specifically trained to perform tasks for disabled veterans, first-responders and civilians.



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“Our dogs help to mitigate the challenges of disabilities and assist them in performing tasks they are no longer able to perform for themselves, thus lessening the burden on caregivers, community services and families,” says Christine Patrick, Communications Manager. “We are extremely proud of our more than 300 teams working in 22 states across the U.S., with over 30 of those currently in Pennsylvania.”

Throughout the years, we have had many of our initiatives supported by various Pittsburgh individuals, philanthropic foundations, professional sports teams, corporations and other community efforts. That has produced the

sponsoring of 60 current and future service dogs to date, as well as funding for our traveling trainer and rescue programs.

Some noteworthy supporters include: PNC Bank, Armstrong Cable, The Aloe Family Foundation, Ernst & Young, Highmark, DSF Charitable Foundation, The Pittsburgh Foundation, Michele & Agnese Cestone Foundation, the Pittsburgh Steelers, Pirates, Penguins and Duquesne University, along with various schools and tremendous volunteer organizations such as Life Changing Service Dogs for Veterans. In addition, the Eat'n Park Hospitality Group Fund of The Pittsburgh Foundation has stated their intention for the naming rights of the Recipient Housing portion of the campus.

For these reasons and more, we are proud to announce we have selected the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania as the first location for our new campus outside of our Florida Headquarters. The airport area where the GAMSD campus will be located is within close proximity to several National Guard and Military Reserve Units, parallels the Montour Trail and is about twenty minutes from downtown Pittsburgh.

The construction of the new GAMSD Pittsburgh Regional Campus will be a 12 to 18-month project that will have a positive impact on the local and state economy. On average, 75 to 100 workers will be employed during the planning and construction stages. They will include architects, engineers, plumbers, electricians, equipment operators, landscape professionals, roofers and a variety of other skilled trades. This 102-acre site that was once strip-mined, will be restored to its full natural beauty.

We have contracted RBVetCo, a disabled veteran-owned business, with a high-quality reputation to build our new facility. Once fully operational, we will have about twenty full-time staff members from the surrounding areas employed at the Pittsburgh Regional Campus. The number of jobs on-site is not significant in quantity, but meaningful in the purpose and role they play in raising, training and donating our highly skilled dogs to those in need.

Our campus will be one of the most important new establishments in the Pittsburgh area. We have a proven track record of positively changing and saving lives through our holistic approach to mitigating the challenges of permanent disabilities. With the help of our specially trained dogs, our disabled recipients begin to integrate back into their family circles, and become productive members of their communities again, even breaking the cycle of inter-generational PTSD in children. Once paired with one of our service dogs, we have countless teams that have enrolled in, or returned to college, completed degrees, become gainfully employed, started businesses, or simply left behind years of self-isolation and begun to travel.

This campus will touch the lives of countless individuals, creating both social & economic impacts. Once a recipient is paired, they begin their "New Normal". We estimate that in a family of four, each dog has the potential to positively impact the lives of 4,380 people in their community each year.

Guardian Angels Medical Service Dogs is honored to serve our nation's Veterans, first-responders and disabled population. With more than 2.2

million veterans facing permanent disabilities, first-responder PTSD rates at record levels and 13% of the general population burdened with a permanent disability, this new campus will allow us to better serve those in need. In fact, although the rate of suicide in our nation's veteran population is a staggering 20-22 per day, once paired with a Guardian Angels Medical Service Dog, the rate of suicide to date in our teams is Zero. Lesser known, is that the rate of divorce in combat veteran families can be 90% higher than the national average, but once paired with one of our service dogs, the rate of divorce falls to less than 1%.

Beyond training and donating these incredible dogs, Guardian Angels takes a multi-phased approach to helping our community. This includes a comprehensive college accredited apprentice program and it is also approved by the Veterans' Administration under the GI Bill.

## About Guardian Angels Medical Service Dogs:

Guardian Angels Medical Service Dogs is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization founded in Williston, Florida and has grown into a nation-wide Service Dog Organization. We rescue, raise, train and donate individually trained medical service dogs to veterans, first responders and others who suffer from disabilities including PTSD, Traumatic Brain Injury, seizure disorders, diabetic alert, mobility issues and more. Guardian Angels receives up to 40 inquiries each day for one of their medical Service Dogs. There is very little state or federal funding available for this critical life-saving program.

If you'd like to learn more about our programs, get involved, make a contribution, or be part of supporting this life-saving project/naming a building please call 412-352-1111 or visit our website at:  
<http://www.medicalservicedogs.org/>.