



Hernando County Sheriff's Office

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Media Release

From: Michael Terry
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Re: K9s For Warriors Donates Retired Service Dog to HCSO

Date: June 30, 2022

Earlier this month, the Hernando County Sheriff's Office announced the adoption of Rose – a Service Dog – who is being donated by K9s For Warriors, the nation's largest provider of trained Service Dogs to military veterans.

Founded in 2011, the nonprofit has paired more than 720 veterans with Service Dogs to-date and rescued more than 1,500 dogs.

Rose, a black mouthed Cur mix, becomes the 10th dog to be adopted through K9s For Warriors' Station Dog Program. The program reallocates trained Service Dogs that either have been "retired" following their time paired with a veteran or are designated with a temperament better suited for a Station Dog environment.

Sheriff Al Nienhuis states "Anyone who has owned a pet realizes how much they contribute to our homes and families. This program allows those same benefits to be brought to the workplace. Adopting Rose was a decision that we did not take lightly. We allowed Rose to be part of our work family for several months before making the final decision that Rose would be a good fit for the Hernando County Sheriff's Office. Several of the Departments and individuals have formed a strong bond with Rose and there's no doubt that Rose contributes to the overall effectiveness of the agency."

"First responders encounter traumatic situations that aren't dissimilar to what our veterans experience," said Rory Diamond, CEO of K9s For Warriors. "Our Station Dog Program is built around a Service Dog's ability to alleviate stress and elevate emotional wellbeing, and we're eager for Rose to bring a level of companionship and support to the entire HCSO team."

In conjunction with the adoption, HCSO has assigned a staff member to provide primary care for Rose and be responsible for integrating her into the department environment. As a

Service Dog, she was specifically trained to recognize signals of anxiety or stress and intervene.

Since her time with HCSO, Rose has assisted in the handling of the daily stress our 911 Dispatchers experience. She has aided in providing comfort to Deputies upon completion of a shift that entailed high anxiety and stress. She has also brought comfort and peace to our Forensics team after collecting evidence of a crime scene. Rose is a true asset to HCSO and has truly integrated her personality and companionship within the agency.

Rose was rescued from City of Tallahassee Animal Services by K9s For Warriors and subsequently took part in rigorous training to become a Service Dog for a military veteran suffering from PTSD.

Upon initially being paired with a veteran in July 2019, Rose immediately began to help mitigate her veteran handler's symptoms of PTSD. After spending a few years at her veteran's side, her handler chose to return Rose to give her the opportunity to help others.

About K9s For Warriors

Determined to end veteran suicide, K9s For Warriors is the nation's largest provider of trained Service Dogs to military veterans suffering from PTSD, traumatic brain injury and/or military sexual trauma. With most dogs coming from high-kill rescue shelters, this innovative program allows the K9/Warrior team to build an unwavering bond that facilitates their collective healing and recovery. This treatment method is backed by scientific research (from Purdue University's OHAIRE Lab) demonstrating Service Dogs' ability to help mitigate their veteran's symptoms of PTSD while simultaneously restoring their confidence and independence. Founded in 2011 as a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization, K9s For Warriors remains committed to bringing widespread awareness to veterans' mental health and contributing to policy-level reform. The organization's operation facilities include: K9s For Warriors National Headquarters (Ponte Vedra, FL) Davis Family Mega Kennel (Ponte Vedra, FL) Gold Family Campus (Alachua, FL) Petco Love K9 Center (San Antonio, Texas) and K9s For Warriors at Heidi's Village (Phoenix, AZ). Find more information at www.k9sforwarriors.org | Facebook | Twitter