



NOTE FROM CEO
LINDSEY KAY

Every year, Paws and Stripes is made possible by so many individual and corporate contributions from all over the state of New Mexico, and beyond. For more than a decade, unwavering support from members of many communities that understand and champion our mission has ensured that our work might continue. This mission is one that will remain critical as long as we continue to

see more veterans succumb to suicide than military conflict, as long as servicemembers continue to suffer military sexual trauma, and as long as veterans are in need of service dogs to assist them with their everyday lives. As long as these realities persist, so will we.

Lindsey Kay

2022 ANNUAL REPORT

MISSION

To provide animal-assisted therapy and other mental health services to military veterans and their loved ones living with service-connected trauma.

VISION

Veterans and their dogs living without isolation.



90% of our service dogs were rescues



of every dollar goes directly to programs



650 THERAPY HOURS PROVIDED



61 total individuals served



Provided referrals to an estimated **620** individuals



700 hours of dog training



of mental health sessions were virtual

SAVING lives **TWO** at a time



200 hours of workshops and group classes



***Approved Star Behavioral Health Provider**
starproviders.org

James grew up on the pueblo Ohkay Owingeh, a reservation along the Rio Grande. A 2021 graduate of the Veteran Service Dog program works alongside his Siberian Husky, Núpahaa. James grew up in the 1960s. The Vietnam War was full swing, and he saw many of his cousins and friends head off to war. So, it was no surprise that he enlisted in the Army himself right after high school and served for nine years.

Like his family who served before him, James wanted to make a career out of the military. Unfortunately, this was cut short by traumatic events he experienced while stationed in South Korea. James returned home and started using drugs and alcohol to cope with his injuries and trauma. He

began isolating from friends and family. "It was hard because I did jail time, relationships were terrible, my life was going nowhere." At the time, James didn't know a lot about post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), or think his experiences affected him in the way it had. The VA stepped in to help James during a difficult time and provided treatment for his symptoms. He also sought other ways to gain support through different groups, art, woodworking and volunteering. However, he did not feel better. Then he found Paws and Stripes. James thought, "Maybe this might be something to get my life back together."

Over the months, James faced multiple challenges training alongside his rescue Núpahaa --

including a global pandemic. Most of all, he was also afraid he would not be able to care for his dog when he felt he could barely take care of himself. Yet, as time went on, James began to learn from Núpahaa. "She taught me a lot of things. She taught me about my attitude, about my well-being. Mentally she has helped me and there is nothing better I could ask for. She is there for me and we still train together every day on different things. We still go to class. We still go to workshops. I am very thankful for what Paws and Stripes has done for me. They've done quite a bit."

Post-graduation, James is still involved with Paws and Stripes. He is currently working towards becoming a Peer Mentor to other veterans and supporting outreach efforts to indigenous communities including his own. "We do have veterans, on our Indian reservation. It affects the whole family members that also deal with veteran issues. I am very grateful that Paws and Stripes is taking that extra step to get involved and I am hoping that I too, can be a part of that situation, where I can get involved to let our Indian people know what is available out there for the veterans and their families."



James and Núpahaa