

PAWS AND STRIPES



2022 ANNUAL REPORT



Paws and Stripes was created 13 years ago as a grassroots effort to fill the gaps for New Mexico Veterans struggling from the strain and trauma of multiple deployments, long term separation from family and friends, traumatic brain injuries, and even military sexual assault at a time when local Veterans Affairs (VA) facilities were at capacity. We understood back then what still holds true today: that no single organization, agency, or business can do it all on their own. That is why Paws and Stripes continues to partner with more than a dozen organizations throughout

our community to serve Veterans living in New Mexico including a new partnership that began last fall.

The SSG Fox Suicide Prevention Grant Program was launched last fall as a community-based grant program directed by Congress and funded by the VA. Its purpose is to provide financial assistance to organizations offering suicide prevention services to Veterans and their families. Thanks to the endorsements received from New Mexico's congressional leadership and the city of Albuquerque, Paws and Stripes became the sole recipient of this prestigious pilot opportunity in the state, at a time when our state has the 2nd highest suicide rate nationwide and $\frac{2}{3}$ of Paws and Stripes' clients tell us they have experienced suicidality.

As a result of this funding, our organization added six new staff and expanded our canine and nontraditional therapeutic programs. Yet, throughout our journey, we remain steadfast in our commitment to those we serve. Notably, 100% of our programs and clinical services remain under our direction and we ensure that regardless of funding sources no personal information of the families we assist is shared with the VA.



Last year, Paws and Stripes provided services to **73 families with more than 904 hours** of clinical services and canine services. Graduates of our programs experience better sleep, decreased alcohol consumption, and spend more time with friends and family. Ninety percent of our dogs still come from local shelters.

Expanded programs in 2023 are available to Veterans, Active Duty, and family members. Programs include our flagship Veteran Service Dog Program, Companion Animal Program, Individual Therapy options (in-person or virtual) as well as several brand-new workshops including our Forgiveness Workshop, Self-Esteem Workshop, Veteran Women's Workshop, and more!

The SSG Parker Gordon Fox Suicide Prevention Grant Program honors Veteran Parker Gordon Fox, who joined the Army in 2014 and was a sniper instructor at the U.S. Army Infantry School at Ft. Benning, GA. Known for a life of generosity and kindness to others in need, SSG Fox died by suicide on July 21, 2020, at the age of 25.

If you or someone you know is experiencing thoughts of suicide, call 988 immediately. Veterans in crisis press 1, for the Veterans Crisis Line.



988

**Suicide Prevention Hotline
Veterans Crisis Line:
Dial 988, Press 1**

Peer support, therapeutic services, and/or animal therapy for Veterans experiencing depression, PTSD, TBI, MST chronic pain, and suicidality. Family services/support also offered. Apply Now!

Our clients still report **reductions in alcohol use** and day to day symptoms of their disabilities and increased time spent with family, driving, and participating in hobbies.

"[I have] a better understanding of who I am. Learning how to take help break down how I handle situations on a daily. Positive reinforcement and the fact Paws has been here for me through the ups and downs." - Paws and Stripes Veteran

2022 BY THE NUMBERS

73 individuals served



saving lives
TWO
at a time



904
total therapy hours



587
individual therapy
hours



133
workshop
hours



184
group class
hours



1,626
dog training
hours



7 QPR suicide
prevention
presentations
to community



COMMUNITY OUTREACH: SUICIDE PREVENTION

The United States **loses over 20 Veterans per day to suicide**, and in New Mexico, the facts are even more frightening:

- New Mexico has the **2nd highest suicide rate** in the country.
- **¼ of all LGBTQIA+ youth** in NM report attempting suicide at least once.
- Native Americans in our state have a **43% higher** rate than whites.
- Suicide is the **2nd leading cause of death** for people 34 and under.

Paws and Stripes' Suicide Prevention Training educates our community on 3 core areas:

1. **"Gatekeeper training"** is one of the most widely used suicide prevention strategies and teaches everyday people to identify those who are experiencing suicidality and refer them to appropriate services for support.
2. **"Lethal Means Safety"** training is an effective, evidence-based intervention that prevents firearm injury and death by helping families reduce access to guns for those at risk of suicide. An alarming 82% of suicide attempts by firearms result in death.
3. **Stigma Reduction** Perceived stigma can affect feelings of shame and can lead to poorer treatment outcomes and people experiencing suicidality are not "abnormal, weak, or mentally ill." Asking about suicide does not introduce or increase the idea in the minds of those we care about.

Our 90-minute course in-person or virtually to individuals, organization, businesses and more! Everyone is encouraged to help save lives! Book Today!





THANK YOU

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PARTNERS



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of New Mexico**

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INTERESTED IN BECOMING A PAWSOME PARTNER?



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of every
dollar goes
directly to
programs



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