

JANUARY 2020

# VFW Auxiliary

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS AUXILIARY MAGAZINE

2019-2020  
NATIONAL  
PROGRAMS:  
11 NATIONAL  
AMBASSADORS

AUXILIARIES  
IN ACTION

LEGISLATIVE  
VICTORIES

SPECIAL  
PROJECT  
UPDATE:

Veterans  
meet their  
service dogs







FOR UNCOMMON HEROES®

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## About the Cover

*Service dogs, four-legged heroes, help heal veterans.*

*\*Photo by Merritt Thomas on Unsplash.*

# VFW Post 8358 SERVICE DOG Training Program

## National President Peggy Haake's

special project combines two of her passions: veterans and dogs.

- The Service Dog Training Program is an initiative of Chung Mei VFW Post 8358, Sacramento, California.
- The objective of the program is to give back to veterans, who gave of themselves to serve our country, sustaining injuries both visible and those we cannot see.
- Their goal is to establish a veteran/K-9 bond through training that will result in a life-changing experience for both. They will also assist in locating and matching a K-9 for a veteran to participate in the training program.

The goal is to raise \$25,000 to help up to 15 veterans receive a service dog from the program. At the time this went to press, a total of more than \$15,000 had been donated for this project since July 1 and three (3) veterans have been matched with a K-9.

Veteran Casey DeMedeiros said of his new companion, Diesel, "Having him join us was a great experience for me and my family. It took no time for him to work his way into everyone's hearts.

He helps quiet my thoughts and his training helps me turn my thought process into a more positive frame of mind."

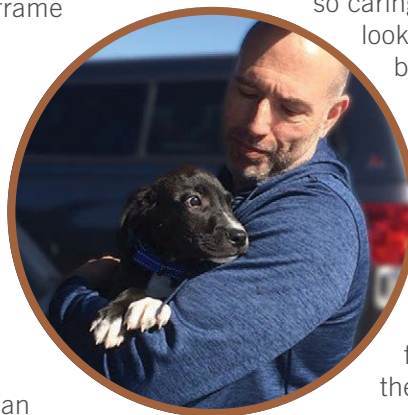
"All of the people responsible for starting up this program are outstanding," he said.

"Having them recognize how a service dog can benefit other veterans, they were able to give me an alternative means of therapy that doesn't involve taking another pill. I'm thankful to everyone involved and I can't say enough good things about what this program is doing for me."

Another veteran, George Valine, was recently matched with his service dog, Mia. He said this program and everyone involved have been amazing.

"I am overwhelmed with the opportunity to have and train my own service dog companion," he said. "We found our pup and have just begun training; she is already bringing so much happiness to our family and I am

so hopeful for my future with her. The program, the leaders and the trainer have all been so caring and supportive in looking after us. It has been a very positive and rewarding process. As the program network expands throughout the country, it can only mean a positive experience for veterans and their needs."

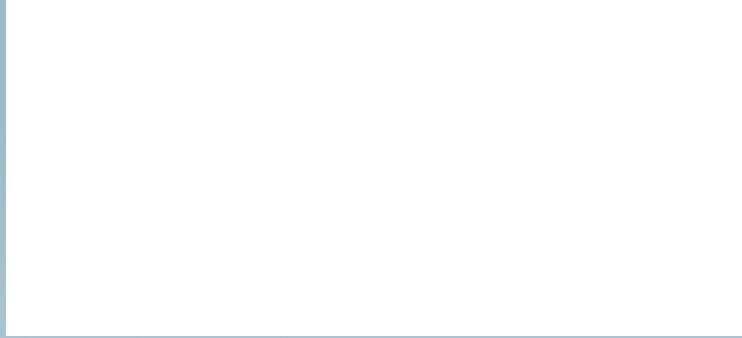


Donations to the project have been made by:

- 127 Auxiliaries
- 7 Individuals
- 6 Departments
- 5 Districts
- 2 Posts

For Auxiliaries interested in starting their own service dog training program, contact Bruce Riecke, director and co-founder of Post 8358's program. He has resources to share with members that will help them get started. Call: 530-529-4433. Email: bariecke@gmail.com.

**Find more information at [vfwauxiliary.org/resources](http://vfwauxiliary.org/resources), Veterans & Family Support.**



Any VFW member, Auxiliary member or non-member can read *VFW Auxiliary Magazine* online at [vfwauxiliary.org](http://vfwauxiliary.org), Media, Magazine.

## DID YOU KNOW?

**NATIONAL PROGRAMS:** Hear from all 11 National Ambassadors.

**IN ACTION: AUXILIARIES** See how members actively support our mission.

**SERVICE PROJECT UPDATE:** Meet veterans and their special new pups.



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