

Annual Report 2021



This isn't a K9CMT photo, it was observed while visiting a likeminded organization, The 9/11 Honor and Serve Foundation, in Big Fork, MT. This picture connects me, and it connects K9CMT to a much bigger view of who we are and what we do. First and foremost, our team at K9CMT and our friends and supporters love this country. And, because we do, we love the men and women whose undaunting commitment helps guarantee that Old Glory will continue to fly over The Land of the Free and the Home of the Brave.

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This is the annual report for calendar year 2021. Its purpose is to update our board and supporters regarding our accomplishments in 2021 and outline the focus of efforts in 2022.

Remembrance: For reasons that are complex and beyond my ability to understand, nearly 500 service members took their lives in 2020 and the 2021 numbers are likely to be even higher. These men and women chose to end their lives for reasons that are their own, still had they reached out...had someone taken notice of the signs they might well be alive and with their families today. We all must remain vigilant and ready to help where and when we can.

“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.”

Joshua 1:9

Recognition: I want to take a minute to recognize the state of Montana and its Montanans. I came here 20 years ago in search of a simpler and more peaceful life where folks had room to spread out some. It was not in my mind to create K9CMT when I arrived, rather to rediscover and maybe redefine myself. Frankly, I lived in a small, rundown rented cabin nearby Rock Creek with my service dog Hopper. Over time I sensed the growing need many returning wounded warriors had for dogs such as Hopper. So, two decades later K9CMT is a broadly recognized highly regarded non-profit in Montana. That would not be possible without the untiring effort and generous support of my fellow Montanans and, indeed, the state itself which recognizes our contributions year after year. Thank you all.



If it ain't one thing, it's a variant: We struggled a bit in 2020 and that struggle continued into 2021. Hopes for a better time ahead quickly faded, but we have figured out how to do our work in the prevailing conditions, so no whining here.

Let's instead look at where we stand as we start this new year.

- **Our service dog projects** continue to increase. I have started referring to them as projects because that's exactly what they are...each requiring effort for sometimes two years or more. It all starts with the right pup. There are nearly 80 afield including these latest. We started seven new ones this past year. Two of the dogs will be trained to mobility service dog standards, and five are being developed for support of recipients dealing with Post Traumatic Stress issues or autism. You'll recall from earlier reports, the mobility dogs require further task related training. By the way, one of the dogs involved is a shelter animal out of Heart of the Valley shelter in Bozeman.
- **Virus constraints notwithstanding**, this past year was a good one for our holistic approach to recovery. We had eight veterans out on Lake Francis for our Annual Ice Fishing event. We put 12 more on the Missouri River to try their hands at fly fishing. Another eight



participated individual guided trips across several Montana rivers. Our Annual Wounded Warrior Pheasant Hunt in Choteau was a great success. The guides donated their time and skills. Thank you, Boys.

- I met with **Governor Gianforte** at the Capitol Rotunda. We talked about the struggles of our wounded warriors and the role played by K9CMT. He is appreciative of our efforts in support of Montana's veterans and others.



- We have secured **volunteer** that reach east of the graduate who has already K9CMT.



air transport for some of our projects Mississippi. The pilot is a West Point flown two missions at no cost to

Looking forward there is much to be done and at this point the fiscal health of K9CMT is good despite the ongoing environmental conditions that constrain important fund-raising events. We are blessed to have a number of folks who continue to see value in our work and support us with donations large and small. Once again, a benefactor is transferring securities to the K9CMT investment account. We have also benefitted from businesses that donate or provide at a discount the goods and services required to operate our program. I should note at this point that the cost basis of one service dog has risen to \$15,000 given our need to engage six professional dog trainers statewide to help with the workload. I have attached our **2021 Profit and Loss Statement** so that you will get a sense of what it costs to do what we do. As you review it, please remember we gift these wonderful animals to their selected humans.



The renovation of the K9CMT kennels at my home in Livingston is complete but, it's clear that there's an element missing. After careful consideration and consultation with a legal advisor and others, I have decided to build an indoor training facility on my property here in Livingston. It will be a simple metal-framed building big enough to train five or six teams at once permitting year-round consolidated training. I am in the process of obtaining a construction loan and plan to start building once weather permits. I will lease the building to K9CMT at the lowest feasible price. It is not my intent to make money on this facility, rather to make K9CMT more efficient and effective. The supporting documentation will be prepared professionally and will ensure the interests of both parties: David W. Riggs and K9 Care Montana, LLC. Once available, I'll share the details.

Jo-Jo, I bought this sweetheart out of my pocket and named her after our lost friend and supporter Jo Ellen Smaha. Jo-Jo is on her way to becoming K9CMT's own ambassador dog and maybe we'll breed her when the time is right. *Need a door opened or closed? Call Jo-Jo, she'll do it for you.*



Finally, recovered from Covid and having had other medical issues attended to, I am refreshed and renewed. With your help we are positioned to increase our outreach and our effectiveness in helping wounded warriors, children with autism and injured first responders regain their footing; and, with God's help to once again appreciate the fullness of their lives. Thank you all for your help in this important work.

David W. Riggs
Founder and CEO
K9 Care Montana, LLC

Enclosure: 2021 P&L