

Another Cocktails with Canines on the Calendar



Message from the President

Lots of great news this month. Service Dog Prince was placed with his veteran, and after a year of dedicated hard work from our volunteer staff, the VMF Canine Training and Veteran Support Facility is open for business. We received our occupancy permit on May 2 and conducted a dog training there just two days later. Come by and visit us July 23rd during our Grand Opening & Open House (details below).

To help oversee this new facility and VMF's continued expansion, VMF is appointing a Chief Operating Officer. I am pleased to announce that Blake Myers, who most of you know as our Volunteer Coordinator, will become our COO and Facility Manager June 1st. We are thrilled that Blake is bringing his business operations experience to our organization. More about Blake and this new VMF position will be in the June newsletter.



First Dog Training at Facility

Also, mark your calendars for the 4th annual Cocktails with Canines, November 5, 2016, this time at the beautiful Crowne Plaza in easily-accessible Tysons Corner.

Ken Dowd
President/CEO
Major General (R)

In this issue: [Service Dog Prince & Veteran](#) * [Puppy Raiser Donna](#) * [Raise a Service Dog](#) * [Facility Grand Opening](#) * [VMF in the Community](#)

Service Dog Prince Placed with his Veteran

Last month, Assistance Dog in Training (ADIT) Prince earned his service dog vest and was placed with veteran Maureen in the D.C. area. Maureen is an Army veteran who suffered multiple traumatic brain injuries (TBIs). Among other tasks, Prince will brace to assist if she falls, retrieve items including emergency medication when needed, and open the refrigerator to retrieve water for the medication.

Together, they received a full week of training from VMF trainers Michele and Suzanne. Maureen learned dog handling techniques, feeding guidelines, veterinary care, and public access guidelines. VMF provided a customized training manual with additional guidance on Prince's healthcare and pages of commands and hand signals. VMF also arranged for Maureen to continue weekly dog training sessions with a local trainer.

VMF thanks Puppy Raiser Donna for training and caring for Prince so that this veteran can lead a more independent life.

[Back to the top](#)



Veteran Maureen with Service Dog Prince

Puppy Raiser Donna

Donna Dorula grew up in Northern Virginia and now lives in Clifton with her husband, ADIT Vincent, and a family dog. Donna has raised service dogs for 14 years, including 4 years with VMF. Donna says raising service dogs is a "family affair." Her husband Mike joined the VMF Board of Directors last year.

Her first VMF ADIT Neil is now a facility dog at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune which fits his personality perfectly, she says. "It's like he has magical powers to make people feel good. He is a perfect dog to be working on base doing therapy."

When it comes to Prince, Donna says, "He is so beautiful and well behaved. He was always a great ambassador for VMF." People ask Donna all the time, "How can you give them up?" She wants everyone to know that it is tough, but in her words: "I feel service dogs provided to veterans are a special gift we can give to those who have selflessly given their service to our country."



Donna with ADIT Neil

Donna is now raising ADIT Vincent, Prince's half brother. She flew to Minneapolis and drove 3 hours to pick up puppy Vincent from Snitker Goldens in Iowa, who also donated Prince.

[Volunteer for VMF](#)

[Back to the top](#)

Raise a Service Dog for a Veteran

Being a volunteer Puppy Raiser is tremendously rewarding and a serious commitment. VMF guides and supports puppy raisers every step of the way. **There is still time to join our next series of Puppy Raiser classes.** In addition to these classes, you'll have the opportunity to observe VMF ADIT training, participate hands-on in multiple training sessions, and puppy sit several VMF ADITs for the full experience.

Puppy Raiser Orientation & Training
Thursday evenings, June 9, 16, 23 and 30
VMF Canine Training Facility in Dulles, VA

- Submit [an application](#) by May 27 to participate.
- Contact Michele with questions at mkhol@vetsfwd.org



Puppy Raiser Nancy with ADIT Kirby

or 703-242-2232.

[Back to the top](#)

Canine Training & Veteran Support Facility Grand Opening

Mark your calendars! Stop by to see the facility, have a piece of cake, and see a canine training demonstration. More details in the June newsletter.

Saturday, July 23
Open House, 1 - 4 pm
VMF Canine Training & Veteran Support Facility
44225 Mercure Circle, Suite 130, Dulles, VA

The Dedicated Volunteers Who Achieved this Milestone

It is the tireless work and unwavering dedication of **Suzanne Ager, Michele Khol, Mike Turner, and Blake Myers** that made this facility a reality for VMF. They scouted and selected the location, designed the floor plan, supervised the build out, repaired drywall, painted, installed flooring and baseboards, stained interior doors, negotiated utilities, selected artwork, ordered facility signage, conducted the final inspection, moved equipment from multiple locations, and more.

They also recruited and coordinated many others to help with lease negotiation, finding professional painters, determining lighting, cleaning, securing donations of large appliances, and the occupancy permit application: **Ken Dowd, Larry Grayer, Mike Dorula, John and Donna Hall, Beckie Harris, Beryl Brodsky and Rebecca Renner.** Curt Khol was a superstar helping install office flooring, baseboards, pole pads, and window trim. Ed Gabris provided considerable construction knowledge and coordinated a team of volunteers from Vienna Presbyterian Church.

Special guest volunteers from Vienna Presbyterian Church and VCA Alexandria Animal Hospital joined VMF volunteers to install the very heavy, rubber flooring tiles in the training space.

VMF: **Lyn Sherlock, Stephanie Frederick, Rebecca Renner, Tim Renner, Blake Myers**
Vienna Presbyterian Church: **Ed Gabris, Bob Herdon, Ebens Renard, Jim Roberts**
VCA Alexandria: **Stephanie Galvin, Kaileigh Jessup, Justin Jennings**

Thank you also to those who gave generous donations specifically to help offset costs of setting up the facility: **Joshua & Jill Baker, Susan Duncan, and John & Donna Hall.** Church of Holy Comforter awarded VMF a \$1,000 grant for a veteran and volunteer training area.

[Back to the top](#)

VMF in the Community

Spartan Weekend

The first weekend in May, Veterans Moving Forward joined SAVE Alliance and 10 other nonprofits serving veterans to host an event for over 200 wounded veterans. Read more about the lives touched in a [Washington Post article](#). VMF volunteers provided canine comfort to disabled veterans, manned an information table, assisted veterans with the application for a VMF service dog, and networked with potential partner organizations.



Training Facility Before



Training Facility After

Thank you to Beckie Harris for coordinating VMF's participation and volunteers Donna Dorula with ADIT Vincent, Diane Smart with Therapy Dogs Torque & Tardis, Mike Turner with Therapy Dog Josh, Jaimie Devine, Deb & Bob Harney, Rene Hernandez, Blake Myers, Bob Rosencranz, Lyn Sherlock, Gail Tarlton, and Greg Warfield.

Animal Welfare League of Arlington (AWLA) Annual Walk for the Animals

Volunteers Blake Myers and Diane Smart with Therapy Dog Torque represented VMF at Bluemont Park in Arlington on a sunny day two weeks ago. Lots of dogs and walkers turned out, including several potential, new puppy raisers.

[Back to the top](#)



Spartan Weekend veteran gives and gets comfort with ADIT Vincent



*Veterans Moving Forward (VMF) is a veteran-centric, non-profit foundation and 501(c)(3) charity dedicated to providing trained service dogs and canine therapy services to veterans with physical and mental health challenges across the full spectrum of needs. Your **tax-deductible donation** to VMF will help us with this mission.*

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VMF is proud to have earned the GuideStar Exchange gold seal as a symbol of our commitment to transparency and accountability. We encourage you to visit our GuideStar profile.

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Veterans Moving Forward, 909 N. Washington Street, Suite 410, Alexandria, VA 22314

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