



**SOLDIER'S
BEST ★ FRIEND**

Touching 2 Lives at Once

COMMUNITY CONNECTION

Soldier's Best Friend Newsletter

Winter 2020

FINDING NEW STRENGTHS, A GRADUATE'S TESTIMONY

When it came time to retire his aging service dog, Cosmo, Richard was referred to Soldier's Best Friend by a former graduate. Although he worked with Cosmo for years, Richard had never trained a service dog himself. He felt he was up for the challenge.

Richard joined the United States Army when he was 17 years old and still in high school. By the time he was 20, Richard deployed to Iraq as a forward observer in an infantry platoon. His job was to figure out where insurgent fire was coming from and coordinate air support to respond.

Ke'koa was picked up as a stray by Yavapai Humane Society. He was friendly, boisterous, and had almost no training. He liked to greet people by jumping on them and, if service dog training didn't pan out, would probably have made a great sled dog.

To graduate from the program, Richard would not only have to overcome his own anxieties going out in public but also turn an unruly shelter dog into an obedient service dog.



Richard and Ke'koa, March 2020 Graduates

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NEW VENUE, SAME FUN AT ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT



For the first time ever, golfers met at Talking Stick Golf Club in Scottsdale to play in the 10th Annual Soldier's Best Friend Golf Tournament.

So many people were eager to get out of the house for a morning of socially distant fun that, for the third time in history, we sold out of tickets! Prizes were awarded for categories including closest to the pin, longest drive, drone drive, and several others.

Several SBF graduates turned up with their service and therapeutic companion dogs to volunteer at the tournament. We extend a special thanks to these, and all of our volunteers and sponsors who made the Golf Tourna-

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Thank you, sponsors!

*Sun City Grand Armed Forces Support Group * Circle K * Gust Rosenfeld * Geico * TYR Tactical * BAE Systems * Northwest Cristian School * Aqua Therapy Tubs * Tom Chauncy * Coca-Cola * Execu-Care * Realty Executives Phoenix * Treedah Magee * Titan Tree Care * Swift * T.L. Hughes Enterprises Inc*

Golfer Wall of Fame



Puttskee Contest Winner: Jorge Sommerer
Closest to the Pin Front Hole #8: David Frey
Closest to the Pin Back Hole #16: Josh Graham
Long Drive Men Hole #2: Blake Newman
Long Drive Ladies Hole #17: Joan Scarbrough
Straight Drive Hole #7: Doug Myers
Drone Ball Drop Hole #1: Cindy & Bob Cooper

10th Annual Golf Tournament

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ment possible. Thanks to your generosity, we were able to raise 55 thousand dollars to support our mission of touching two lives at once.

After cancelling two other fundraisers due to COVID-19, we are beyond grateful for the opportunity to safely host one of our biggest events of the year. We worked diligently in accordance with CDC recommendations to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and preserve the fun of everyone involved. Hosting the tournament at Talking Stick Golf Club allowed us to implement necessary precautions and offer golfers a beautiful change of venue.



Finding New Strengths Together

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“At first it was kind of anxiety-inducing because in public everybody wants to see the dog, everybody wants to say hi,” Richard remembered. Walking through a store with a dog draws people’s attention.

“Koa’s actually helped me overcome a lot of that anxiety as well, just by doing the things that scared me and knowing he’s with me,” Richard explained.

“I wouldn’t be where I am today if I hadn’t gone through this program. One hundred percent, I wouldn’t.”

Richard and Ke’koa trained together for almost a year then, two days before their graduation ceremony, Soldier’s Best Friend made the difficult decision to close the training campus in compliance with pandemic-related guidelines at that time. Their graduation ceremony was cancelled.

Instead of on a stage, Richard and Ke’koa received their service dog vest and identification cards in the mail.

As the campus reopens and operations resume their normal functions, Richard and Ke’koa make time to attend group training classes and support the veteran-dog teams still in training.

To teams who are still in training, Richard gives this advice: “You’re going to get out of this what you put into it. If you’re not capable of doing 100 percent, the trainers are going to help you. Use your resources, and Soldier’s Best Friend is a great resource to have.”

Over summer, Richard and Ke’koa visited a zoo, the first time for Ke’koa who, Richard reports, did great.



Thank You!

Soldier's Best Friend extends our sincerest gratitude to the donors who help make our Service/Therapeutic Companion Dog training program possible.

PROUDLY SUPPORTED BY:

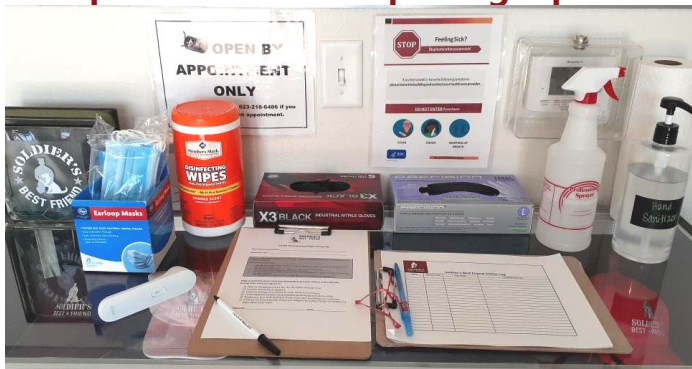


While we cannot list all of our supporters, please know it is only because of our community's generosity that we are able to continue to provide services at no cost to our veterans, and provide a loving home and meaningful job to so many of Arizona's homeless dogs. We appreciate everyone's support.

If you would like to learn more about the training program and how you can support our mission, please visit our website at:

www.SoldiersBestFriend.org/donate

Campus Phased Re-opening Update



As the number of COVID-19 cases in Arizona increase, Soldier's Best Friend is taking a step back to ensure the safety of all. This means all campus visits are by appointment only. Training building capacity is limited to ten people. Trainers will evaluate with veterans regarding virtual training options.

All staff, veterans and visitors are required to wear face coverings while on site, and must observe all safety and sanitization protocols in place. Social distancing is required at all times.

Sporting Clay Update

We are moving forward with plans to host our Annual Sporting Clay event in the spring of 2021. Soldier's Best Friend is committed to maintaining the health and safety of everyone involved. We will monitor the COVID-19 situation carefully to make decisions in the best interest of our community.

We cannot express enough how much we appreciate the support of our community in these uncertain times.

MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT, BETH SCHRYER

Soldier's Best Friend would like to introduce Beth Schryer as President of the Board of Directors. Beth connects to the mission of SBF having been born into military life at Andrews's Air Force Base, and by championing rescue dogs and owning two. Beth is vice president of Facilities and Asset Management at Boeing and has worked for the company since 1996. Beth has been a volunteer with Soldier's Best Friend for two years and was elected as President in July.



Hello and thank you for allowing me to serve as Board President for Soldier's Best Friend. 2020 has been quite a year for all of us, but as we reflect back on the challenges, we also find some of our greatest triumphs. At Soldier's Best Friend we truly appreciate having the support of our generous community. We discovered new depths of resilience and compassion as we navigated turbulent waters.

What a time to step into this role as President of the Board of Directors! I've never been more proud of our organization and community than I am now. With the help and support of many, we were able to maintain our training program by implementing CDC recommended protocols for sanitization. By adapting for the safety of everyone involved, Soldier's Best Friend was able to continue training with our existing veteran-dog teams, and welcome more veterans and rescued dogs into the program.

In fact, we're anticipating a graduation before the end of this year!

It hasn't been easy. We had to make staffing adjustments and other cutbacks as we dealt with reduced fundraising; including cancelling our popular Annual Sporting Clay event. You can imagine how excited we were when the state proceeded with re-opening efforts and we were able to safely host the Annual Golf Tournament. The event's new location at Talking Stick Golf Club in Scottsdale allowed us to introduce additional sanitization procedures to protect the safety and enthusiasm of all participants, and experience this beautiful venue as we raised money to further benefit veterans in our program.

Our heartfelt thanks goes out to everyone who believed in and supported our mission this past year. It is truly an honor to serve these veterans, rescue these dogs, and Touch 2 Lives at Once. We look forward to your continued commitment as we navigate the 'new normal' – your support defines our success as we head into 2021, our tenth anniversary year.

Beth

FAST FACTS

Graduates to Date: 298

Teams Currently in Training: 36

Dogs Rescued: 179

Training Locations:

Phoenix, Tucson, Prescott, Sierra Vista & Flagstaff

Help bring joy this season

Buy your gifts at AmazonSmile and Amazon donates





Log onto **smile.amazon.com** and
select Soldier's Best Friend as your nonprofit,
or check out our wish list by visiting

<https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/151GGEUF9T532?>

PAVER PROJECT



This holiday season consider a gift that forever memorializes a loved one and helps save 2 lives at once. Pavers become a permanent feature on SBF's walkways and patios.

Individuals, groups and companies may purchase a 4x8" paver for a loved one. Celebrate, honor, dedicate or memorialize a cherished person or animal, or buy one for yourself or your business to show support for our cause.

Standard pavers are **\$100** each or **\$125** with one of nine logo options and text.

KEEP IN TOUCH!

Check our website and follow us on social media for the latest news, events, videos and testimonials from our teams and organization.

CONTACT US

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