



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

### **DAWG Foundation's 1<sup>st</sup> Annual DAWG DAY A Resounding Success**

DAWG Foundation of Houston, TX hosted a day-long festival to raise awareness of combat-related Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and the role of the service/emotional support dog in the lives of our brave veterans battling this condition.

On **Saturday, November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2014 (10am-10pm)**, over 1,900 Houstonians came out to support the DAWG Foundation, veterans, and the service dogs who assist them.

“We are truly humbled by the outpouring of support from our community,” says Pat Mahon, Founder of DAWG Foundation and local business owner, “the money raised will go directly towards our efforts to train more service dogs to pair up with veterans in need. We feel that our secondary mission, building community awareness of veterans battling combat-related PTSD, was also an overwhelming success.” Pat's son, Jeremy, is a combat Marine veteran who battles PTSD from his time spent in Iraq. Jeremy's fight is what inspired Pat to form the Foundation.

Here are some of the highlights from the day:

- \*Over 1,900 attendees (anticipated 1,000-1,250)
- \*Raised approximately \$12,500.00 for training service dogs & community awareness
- \*Chili Cook-Off People's Choice Award Winner: Beef Pokers BBQ Team
- \*Director's Trophy for Excellence: North American Diving Dogs (dock diving event)
- \*DAWG Foundation Volunteer of the Year Award: Joseph “Bubba” Millhouse
- \*”Paratrooper” Award (Best Dock Jump) Varick Foresee (Trainer: Mike Foresee)

Corporate Sponsors: [KARBACH BREWERY](#) & [BARKS 5<sup>th</sup> AVENUE](#)

**This event was 100% PET FRIENDLY**

While the goal of DAWG DAY is to have fun, the purpose is to educate the public on the nature of combat-related PTSD, and how it effects our military veterans returning to the 'real world' after serving in a combat zone. Recent studies have estimated that ***upwards of 22 military veterans commit suicide EVERY DAY in America***. Many have no support network, and their struggle is misunderstood by their family, friends, and co-workers. With no emotional support, they can find themselves isolated and feeling threatened in even the most mundane of surroundings. Service and emotional support dogs, like those trained and provided to veterans by DAWG Foundation, have shown to dramatically reduce the instances of anxiety and conflict that absorb so much of the veteran's social and emotional existence. Our work with canine/veteran teams has found that this partnership has:

- \*Reduced the intensity and frequency of nightmares
- \*Provided a stabilizing partnership when in crowds (a major source of anxiety associated w/PTSD)
- \*Reduces unwarranted aggression/outbursts (dog can sense vet's tension, and helps ground them)
- \*Provides the veteran with a loving, non-judgmental best friend for when life gets tough

The DAWG DAY festival will be held annually in Oct/Nov to offer a chance for the greater Houston community to come out and show support not only for our amazing, brave veterans, but also for the intelligent, strong, and indispensable service/emotional support dogs that keep them safe and sound. Details about the 1<sup>st</sup> Annual DAWG DAY, the DAWG Foundation, and PTSD can be found on our website ([www.dawgfoundation.com](http://www.dawgfoundation.com)) or via our extremely-active Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/dawgfoundation](http://www.facebook.com/dawgfoundation)). Civic organizations, cook-off teams, and other exhibitor inquiries can contact Joe Spencer at the Foundation, at 832-331-4039 or [joe@dawgfoundation.com](mailto:joe@dawgfoundation.com)

### **About DAWG FOUNDATION**

DAWG Foundation is a 501(c)3 (pending) non-profit organization providing service and emotional support canines for military combat veterans and select Emergency Services personnel in the greater Houston area. Services and dogs are provided free of charge for the veteran, and the organization is funded solely by donations from caring citizens and our sponsoring partners. The Foundation is based out of Houston, Texas, and is staffed by a team of volunteer military veterans, professional dog trainers, local business leaders, and good Texans like you.

### **Media Inquires:**

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