

'Hero Coffee' Supports Four-Legged Soldiers with Coffee Beans Made of Love

Written by Panagiotis Argitis

Published by *EllicottvilleNow*

There are thousands of men and women who have previously served or are currently serving in military and police forces across the U.S. Just like their human partners, service dogs sacrifice the majority of their lifetime to protect and better our nation. Under the guidance of dog-lovers, more of these four-legged soldiers find new purpose in their post duty life everyday.

In more cases than one, working class dogs that have since retired from service embark on a special mission to find a forever home. Due to their genetic traits however, veteran dogs require special care and often struggle due to injuries or sickness, which makes the process of rescue difficult.

Once retired from their branch of service, most dogs have reached the age of 10 and require critical attention that not everyone can afford. Majority are either cared for by their former handler or end up in adoption centers spread across the country. Despite their rescue counterpart, service dogs need specialized help to live healthy and happy lives.

PAWS OF HONOR + THE WORKING DOG COFFEE CO.

Since 2015, Paws of Honor — a national organization that believes in accessible, high-quality veterinary care and products for all canines — has made it their mission to bring awareness to retired K9s across America. It is now responsible for the care of over 200 ex-military and law enforcement dogs across 17 states.

As the COVID-19 outbreak began to take shape in 2020, non-profit organizations like Paws of Honor were forced to adjust their goal strategy. While working as Director of Development and Relations for Paws of Honor, Carla Cook looked for a way to raise funds for under-privileged dogs and stumbled upon the Working Dog Coffee Company.

“I was trying to think outside the box,” Cook said. “I searched for a few months and lo and behold, I came across the Working Dog Coffee Co. It’s a small company then based in Pennsylvania, and they had just started and then COVID-19 hit, so I thought this is perfect, like it was meant to be.”

The Working Dog Coffee Co. was launched in April last year by a family of animal and dog lovers who adopted a retired sheepdog named Emma from a rescue farm. From there on, they felt it was their permanent duty to help service dogs have a better life.

Through direct donation from the sale of roast-to-order, premium coffee and other goods, the company supports more than nine different organizations nationwide that specialize in the rehabilitation and re-homing of veteran dogs.

‘Work hard. Play often. Love always,’ is the motto of Misti Pike, founder of the Working Dog Coffee Co. For her, collaborating with Paws of Honor was a no-brainer.

“During the pandemic people couldn’t adopt because you couldn’t even get into a rescue to adopt,” Pike said. “Carla reached out wanting to know if there was anything that we could do and we said, hey, let’s just do a fundraiser. We ran an online fundraiser where people can buy a bag of coffee for themselves, and then we donate money toward Paws of Honor or to a handler in their program.”

While the fundraiser was launched for Veteran’s Day, the mission behind the coffee laid the groundwork for the partnership’s ongoing success. ‘Hero Coffee’ is roasted-to-order with notes of chocolate, berry and citrus and is still available for online purchase today. 75% of proceeds from its sale go directly to Paws of Honor.

NOW AVAILABLE AT SHE SHED HE SHED

Serving as the first carrier in New York State, Ellicottville shop She Shed He Shed will soon leave a mark in the cause by offering the limited edition ‘Hero Coffee,’ whose sale helps support ex-military and law enforcement K9s.

Along with the sale of the purpose-made coffee, the store will also provide at least 10 books from Paws of Honor’s children book series. Created as an educational tool, the books are meant to show the differences between domestic and working class dogs as it explores their quest to find a role in life. The books are also shared with several foster care homes to provide a smile for children across the nation.

Once she heard about the impact of ‘Hero Coffee’ line, Susan Baryza, owner of She Shed He Shed, immediately knew she had to share the coffee with Ellicottville.

“In my mind, I can honestly say that anything that has to do with helping out dogs is totally worth it,” Baryza said. “The mission behind it is exactly what sold me. Some of these dogs can’t come home and live a normal life, just like human veterans, so they need to be taken care of.”

In the years past, service dogs were thought of as equipment and even tattooed, almost like part numbers. The reality is these dogs did their jobs and protected their country, just like the soldiers they are.

When they retire, similar to their human counterparts, they deserve the same care, the same couch to cuddle up on that anybody else needs.

“What we do is not about me, it’s not about my husband, we do it for the dogs. It’s about dogs. Everything that we do is for the love of the dogs,” Pike said. “When people buy this coffee they can walk away and know that they are actually doing something good for a greater cause. They are going to get good coffee and they are also doing a good deed at the same time.”

The ‘Hero Coffee’ is set to be available for purchase at She Shed He Shed soon. For fast, fresh coffee beans made of love delivered at your door the coffee can also be bought online at workingdogcoffeecompany.com.