



Vets To Vets United, Inc.

“Power of the Animal/ Human
Bond”

Guest Speaker:
Terry Morris, MS, DVM, PhD

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2022

HOST: MADDIE'S FUND

WEEKLY COMMUNITY
COMMUNICATIONS

How to Contact Vets to Vets United



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Dr. Terry Morris, M.S., D.V.M., Ph.D.



- ▶ **Founder/Executive Director of Vets to Vets United, Inc.**
- ▶ **Pair past military service members (Veterans) with rescue dogs**
- ▶ **Passion for helping veterans and saving dogs from euthanasia**
- ▶ **Gold Star Daughter of US Tuskegee Airman killed during Cuban Missile Crisis**
- ▶ **2019 American Humane Hero Veterinarian**
- ▶ **2022 Joseph R. Biden Lifetime Achievement Award and Presidential Volunteer Service Award Recipient**

Vets To Vets United: Our Identity

Experiencing the healing power of the animal-human bond!

- ▶ Vision: Improving lives, saving lives, one veteran and one dog at a time
- ▶ Mission: We pair veterans with disabilities and rescued dogs for an enhanced quality of life
- ▶ Unique Niche: Rescuing dogs and serving veterans with veterinarian services provided by partner veterinarians





Vets To Vets United, Inc.

For US Military Veterans & Their Families

Vets To Vets

Part of the Solution: How it works



- ▶ **Veteran applies - Application reviewed and match made with a rescue dog when a spot is available**
- ▶ **Vet and pup attend training every week**
- ▶ **Average training period is approximately 2 years**
- ▶ **All teams must pass a public access test**
- ▶ **All teams must pass the therapy evaluation**
- ▶ **Dog must show that it can mitigate the veteran's disability**
- ▶ **Graduating teams serve as mentors for new teams**



The Power of the Animal/Human Bond: Emotional & Physical Health Benefits

Vets To Vets: Are We Making A Difference?

- ▶ 30 Veteran/pup team graduates to date
- ▶ 9 Veterans and their rescue dogs currently in training
- ▶ Meet Bill and Tank





Bill and Tank
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dBnqYl6rjB0>



Three Types of Working Dogs

Service dog

Therapy dog

Emotional support/companion animal



SERVICE DOGS

- ▶ Should enhance their partner's life, assisting them to be more independent.
- ▶ There are various types of service dogs, each specially trained to perform a task(s) to help mitigate the handler's disability.
- ▶ Service dogs and their handlers have public access rights defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- ▶ Dogs and miniature horses

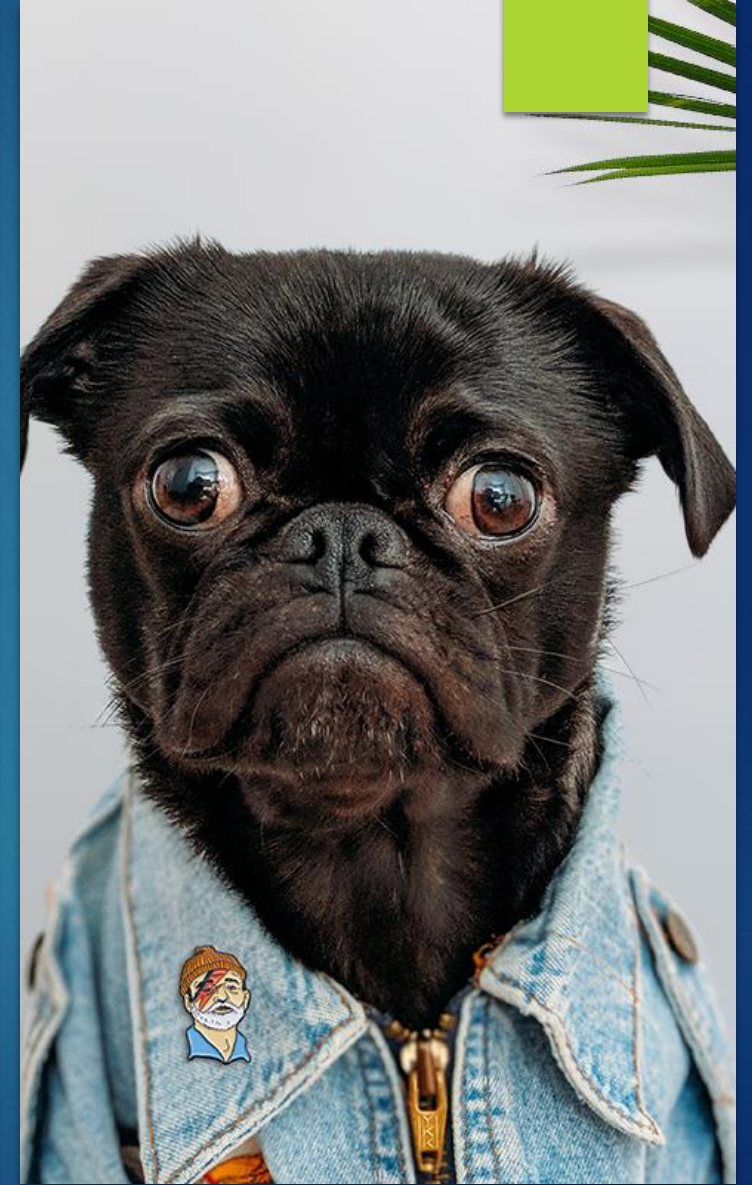
THERAPY ANIMALS



- ▶ Are also working animals, but they are NOT a type of service animal.
- ▶ May include other animals, but are typically dogs and cats.
- ▶ Have been specially trained to provide emotional assistance to people in hospitals, nursing homes, and other institutions.
- ▶ DOES NOT have the same public access rights as service animals and are not covered under the American Disabilities Act (ADA).

Emotional Support/ Companion Animal

- Provides support, well-being, comfort or aid to an individual through companionship
- May include other animals.
- Does not need specific training.
- DOES NOT have public access rights.



Services Provided by Dog for Veterans



- ▶ Turn on lights
- ▶ Wake handler from a nightmare
- ▶ Remind handler to take medication
- ▶ Call for help (911 or predetermined number)
- ▶ Go get help
- ▶ Reduce hypervigilance in public through teamwork
- ▶ Create a buffer zone between handler and others



Services Provided by Dog for Veterans



- ▶ Retrieve dropped items - crutches, keys cane, etc.)
- ▶ Retrieve an emergency kit
- ▶ Balance and stability
- ▶ Assist with removing clothing
- ▶ Open and close doors
- ▶ Push handicap and elevator button to open doors
- ▶ Search home



Ways Dogs Can Help Turn Your Life Around

1. Get active. Dogs help you get out of the house, get active and meet new people.

2. Give more love. Dogs bring out feelings of affection, and they love unconditionally.

3. Feel protected. Dogs make you feel safe and protected. Nightmares, traumatic flashbacks, anxiety and depression can make you feel vulnerable.

4. Mitigate Hypervigilance. Dogs are a natural alert mechanism



Ways Dogs Can Help Turn Your Life Around

5. Boost immunity. People have higher levels of some immune system chemicals -- stronger immune system activation.

6. Social interaction. Natural conversation starters. Helps ease people out of social isolation or shyness.

7. Elderly. Longer life span for elderly. Fewer anxious outbursts with Alzheimer's patients.

8. Healthier heart. Lower stress hormones (cortisol and norepinephrine). Link between these chemicals, plaque build up in arteries and heart disease. Lower triglycerides and cholesterol.

9. Reduce stress. Increased levels of feel-good hormones (oxytocin, dopamine and serotonin).



Health Outcomes

- ▶ Reduce medical visits/cost due to improvement in health.
- ▶ Reduce rate of violence and suicide by reducing stress and providing unconditional love and companionship.
- ▶ Improve/prevent health conditions such as diabetes, obesity, arthritis.
- ▶ Lessen chance of cardiovascular disease.
- ▶ Significantly reduce the number of sheltered animals euthanized by providing them with safe and loving homes.



Shelter/Service Dog Training Organization Partnerships



- ▶ Shelters and rescues - Contact service dog training organizations (local/inside US/outside US)
- ▶ Dog Screening/Temperament Testing
- ▶ Trust/Accountability – what is the plan?
- ▶ Develop Veteran/dog walk program at your local shelter

Developing Program on a National Scale

Things to think about

- ▶ VA Facilities/Mental Health
- ▶ Shelters
- ▶ Training facility
- ▶ Volunteers
- ▶ Employees/staff
- ▶ Fosters
- ▶ Accountability – Financial, Veterans, Dogs
- ▶ University Partnerships

University of Tennessee – AlignCare
(<https://pphe.utk.edu/our-team/>)

UNC Chapel Hill - Center for Excellence in Community
Mental Health

<https://tinyhomes.web.unc.edu/team/>

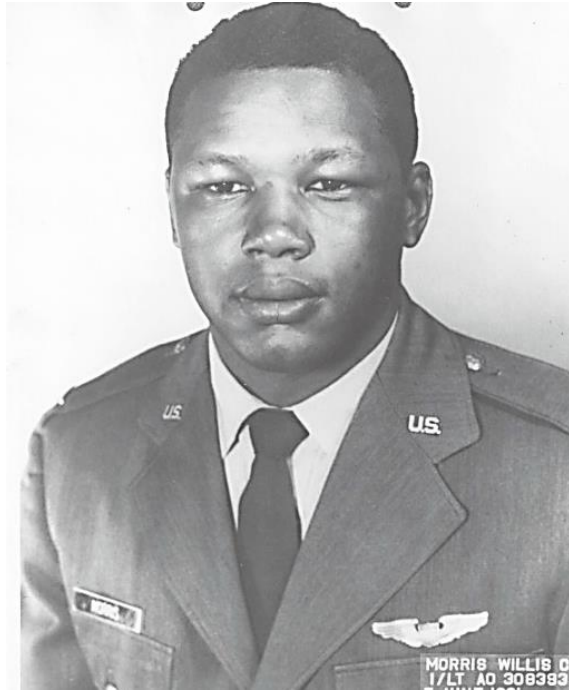


Bridging Human and Animal Services

Important partnerships



- ▶ **Veterinary Social Worker – may be an important link between human and animal services**
- ▶ **Local Department of Social Service – Screening for people/Veterans with animals**
- ▶ **VA Hospital Department of Social Service – screening for Veterans with animals**
- ▶ **Shelters and Rescues**



DEDICATION

Captain Willis C. Morris



DEDICATION

Captain Karon D. (Morris) Crawley

Thanks for Your Time Questions?

*Dr. Terry Morris, Executive Director
Vets to Vets, Inc.*

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The Dodo video

<https://www.facebook.com/334191996715482/posts/2960934570707865>

Vets To Vets Training

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jhENfL8fVUw&feature=youtu.be>