

Homeless No More, Thanks to Pets for Vets

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Animal lovers, supporters of our men and women in armed forces, and people who want to make a difference have an opportunity to sign on for a crowdfunding campaign that benefits homeless dogs and military veterans. The Karagas Group, a nonprofit organization specializing in pairing up homeless dogs with military veterans, operates under the motto "[Pets for Vets](#)," recognizing that dogs and soldiers together make an unbeatable pair. Head Media Co-coordinator Bryan Wyka defines the mission of The Karagas Group this way: "We want to help heal the souls of both the animal and the human community, by bringing them together."

The 501(c)3 organization has procured 30 acres of land for the construction of a shelter, but it needs a lot of work if this unique rescue mission is going to get off the ground. The organization has raised \$15,000 toward the \$240,000 that is needed to build a facility that will house the 10-20 dogs that have been rescued and are in need of a warm, loving environment. The plan is to have 10-20 rooms inside with individual dog runs for each room. They're reaching out to [Indiegogo crowdfunding](#) backers and animal lovers to raise the money so that they can buy more land for the new facility; clear the land and build kennels and fencing; install heat, electricity, plumbing, and a cooling system; pay for

veterinary costs and food to maintain the dogs for one year; pay insurance for the facility; rewards for backers; and miscellaneous start-up costs. The Karagas Group intends to continue this project for years to come.

The Karagas Group rescues dogs that are scheduled for termination. The dogs receive veterinary care so that they're up to health code. And then, Wyka and fellow campaigner Alicia Holbrook,



explain, "We want to bring the joy that only a dog can bring into the home of someone who has served this country." To date, the organization has rescued 30 animals, and their goal is to increase that number annually.

The Karagas Group has deep roots in serving veterans. The organization started by donating food and hygiene products to the Ann Arbor Veterans' Hospital, which distributed the care packages to homeless veterans. Armed forces families going through rough financial times who are enduring emotional and personal trauma can count on The Karagas Group to play Santa at Christmas time, as the organization solicits donations by posting Christmas lists on its website to brighten up the holidays for families who already have enough to deal with. The organization also adopts families living in shelters for abused woman and children.

Any funds that are left over after the facility is built will be used for the upkeep of the latest group of dogs that have been rescued. The funding will also be used to support the organization's ongoing delivery of VA care packages, which takes place every 4-6 months, for a total of up to 600 packages per year. The goal is to eventually deliver 1000 care packages annually.

The Karagas Group knows that for veterans returning home after their tours of duty, the war isn't always over. But sometimes it's hard for battle-hardened veterans to express themselves. That's when [animals can make the difference](#). A dog that's been abandoned has also suffered, and is likewise unable to give voice to the emotional wounds that he's experienced. But when a dog is paired up with a veteran, words aren't necessary. Pet and vet discover another means of communication that's built on the renewal of trust and shared affection. It's hard to match the loyalty of a dog for his owner or of a soldier for his country. But Indiegogo is offering supporters a chance to see how they measure up.

About The Karagas Group

The Karagas Group (www.karagas.com), a nonprofit organization specializing in rescuing homeless dogs, places the animals with a military veteran. Operating under the motto "Pets for Vets," the 501(c)3 organization has established a commitment to helping armed forces veterans in need. The group began by supplying food and necessities to the local Veterans' Hospital, which then handed the care packages out to homeless veterans. Children of veterans also receive help from the organization at Christmas time. Their latest project, an Indiegogo crowdfunding campaign, will help animals and veterans form a team that builds a healing relationship for each other.

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