

animal lifes' WAGS & bRags

A Pack Walk For Veterans

The first annual Pack Walk for Veterans happened on Sunday June 12, 2016, despite a threat of rain the walk was well attended.

The purpose of the annual walk is to raise community awareness about the plight struggles of many local veterans and their families and to raise money for these Veterans and families. The method to do this is with our dogs!

The idea for the walk was a collaborative effort with Jesse Salas, Paula Phillips, and Kim Arre-Gerber. Jesse Salas, owner of Right End of the Leash Dog Training, is a Desert Storm Veteran. During the war he trained and worked with bomb sniffing dogs to find mines. Jesse is passionate about dogs but also fully understands the hardships of Veterans returning to the community. Jesse, in uniform, led the walk with his obedient German Shepard dog and beautiful 5



year old daughter, Olivia, in hand. Paula Phillips is the proprietor of Shamrock Dog Grooming and Day Care. Paula generously coordinated pledge sheets, organized T-Shirts for participants, and offered Shamrock as a starting place for the walk. Kim-Arre-Gerber, owner and publisher of Animal Life, offered ideas and free advertising of the event in the Animal Life publication. Kim proudly walked with her two gorgeous German Shepards, Iggy and Major.

The people paraded with their dogs from Shamrock to the Veterans Memorial on Colt Rd. Cars passing-by honked horns and waved to show support. At the Veterans Memorial, Anthony Riello sang the national anthem. Also, Veteran speakers praised veterans and spoke of current issues with veterans and their families. A wreath was placed on the Memorial in remembrance. It was a short and very emotionally-moving ceremony.

The walk raised money by soliciting business sponsors. In addition, walkers solicited friends to pledge financial support for the miles walked. All the proceeds were donated to a needy veteran family in Dalton.

Business sponsors included: The Right End of The Leash, Shamrock, Animal Life, Williams Kingsley Auto Repair, QualPrint, Peace Train Tees, Berkshire Bank, American Legion Riders Post 155, and Fitter Critters Canine Rehabilitation.

Please give back and join us next year in supporting this worthy cause.

Jody Chiquoine