



Get to know **BELIEVET** Canine Service Partners

He just had to do something. After coming home from two tours in Helmand Province as a civilian supporting the Marine Corps, Sam Daly from Northfield, MN just had to find a way he could assist with the heartbreaking need we all could see every day; Veterans trying to cope with traumas they'd been through. But what could he do?

Daly is a humble, unassuming trainer of hunting dogs who had worked with the Marines since 2008 training explosive detection dogs, culminating in two overseas tours in 2012 and 2013 in the area around Musa-Qala, Afghanistan. After returning to Northfield, Sam, one of ten kids of parents who met in the Navy at the end of World War II, just couldn't seem to return back to 'civilian life'. "I was in a fog. I missed working with the Marines. I was trying to figure out how I could help Veterans. So many of them came home with physical and mental injuries. The VA was treating a great many of them with pills. At least 22 a day were taking their own lives. Over 21,000 in Minnesota alone were struggling with Post Traumatic Stress (PTS)", he said.

In the Fall of 2014 he spoke at a local Rotary meeting about his experiences and what dogs could do for Vets with PTS, and a local Veteran named John Sinning suggested he start training Service Dogs for Vets. He would set up the business side if Sam would set up the training side. Canine Service Partners, now Believet™ Canine Service Partners was born. Since then they've trained and placed over 50 dogs, free of charge, with wounded Veterans, living daily up to their Vision "To empower military men and women who have served and sacrificed for our country, our goal is to help them return to civilian life with dignity and independence.

But Service Dogs are expensive, and time-consuming, to train. Around \$30,000 per dog, with mostly volunteers training, fostering, and providing veterinary care for the 12-18 months it takes to turn rescue dogs from shelters and donated puppies into accredited Service Dogs.

It's truly a high-level 'military-type' operation the Believet staff coordinate daily, getting the dogs to and from their fosters and trainers and their Veterans for all the different training sessions. They run almost exclusively on donations. Veterans must complete 120 hours of training after selection to show their commitment and help show suitability before they start training with their dog. This is pretty unique to Believet but contributes greatly to their amazingly high success rate.

Tim Luckey was an Armored Crewmember in the Army who lives in Medford, MN with his wife and 3 kids. His PTS was getting so bad that he was starting to listen to the dark thoughts going through his head. His VA doctor suggested a service dog, Tim was dubious, but finally agreed, and then the program they set him up with wasn't going to get him a dog WAY down in Florida, no less, until sometime in 2026! Luckey googled programs nearby and found Believet, filled out their application on his phone with VA assistance, did the work, and got Nova, who has absolutely changed his life. Tim says "Next to my wife and kids, she's my most important family member. She's everything to me. I literally take her everywhere. I need her way more than she needs me. She is the greatest thing. She is my right hand. She is my life." Nova is a gorgeous English Cream Golden Retriever who was donated to Believet. "Dark thoughts still cross my mind, but now they just pass right through, and I pay them no heed. She helps me cope. She calms me. She keeps me from doing stupid stuff. I couldn't do it without her" he said.



Believet Founder Sam Daly



Tim Luckey and Luna



Asked if he had any advice for Vets thinking about applying for a Service Dog, Tim said "JUST DO IT! The application looks huge and intimidating. The VA will even help you with it. I recommend doing it on the VA app on your phone. It seems hard, but once you start, it's over and you've begun working with Believet, which is amazing."



Get to know BELIEVET (continued)



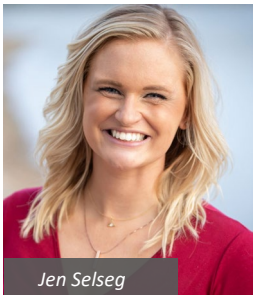
Robert Schmidt, Army Veteran, VFW member, and incoming Believet Chairman, says “so many Vets who need these dogs aren’t applying for them! They think there are other Vets out there who need them more, or they don’t think they are worthy. It vexes me every day when I come across these Veterans who would be ideal candidates, but they won’t sign up and do the stuff needed to get one of our dogs. And it would enrich their lives so much... and maybe even save their lives.”

Another giant part of the problem is awareness. Believet spends 97% of the donations it takes in on operational costs, relying entirely on word of mouth to generate publicity. So many Veterans in our area still have not heard of them or their amazing mission. This is where our network of Service Clubs come in. Former Roseville VFW Commander Kent Emmert says “there are lots of great organizations that help Veterans with Service dogs, and we support them all. But Believet is something really special. They take rescues and donated dogs, train them to be Service Dogs for Vets with PTS, then give them free of charge to our brothers and sisters, and can help save their lives. And the dogs that don’t make it through the training are given to Veteran families as pets! It’s win-win-win, and it’s the most important charity that we support at our Post.”



Besides funding and awareness, the third need Believet has is foster families. There are numerous opportunities to foster new puppies, older puppies, during the week, over the weekends, at all sorts of different stages in the training life of the service dog. Jen Selseg, a banker from Savage, and her husband, have hosted numerous dogs for Believet with their two kids (ages 7 and 5) including Tim Luckey’s Nova and Wilson, a Poodle mix. “I just get so much out of being involved with Believet. It charges my batteries driving over there and I feel so good knowing what we are doing, why we are doing it, and who we are doing it for.” She said “they are just such great dogs. The older ones are already incredibly well-trained, you just have to reinforce that when they’re with you. The puppies you might get at 7 weeks, so they are REALLY puppies! My kids learned to put away all their valuables, which is a great skill. We’ve all learned so much. Patience. New perspectives. Calmness. Consideration. Grace. It has made my family so much better in so many ways. We get so much more out of it than we put into it. I recommend it for everyone who can do it. It will leave you changed for the better.”

Sam Daly, now ‘retired’ to Founder and ‘Trainer Emeritus’ always has an open invite to all to come see Believet in action at their Northfield location, 3385 100th St E, Northfield MN 55057, 507-649-1111. They board and train dogs there, too, and proceeds help Believet train more Service Dogs for Vets. All info for Veterans, potential donors, and potential fosters is available at their website; www.believet.org. All are invited to their numerous events found on the events tab on their website.



Finally, Department Commander Staehlin and Department President England have both selected Believet respectively for their Commander’s/President’s Projects to highlight and raise awareness and funds during their year of leadership and are asking all MN VFWs to help them raise funds, volunteers and fosters for Believet (recognizing that many VFWs are already doing so). Donations may be made directly to Believet (please let Sean Gustafson, Deb Courts-Brown, or Tim Haugen know you have done so), or by check to the MN VFW Charitable Association, and earmarked “Commanders/President’s Project” and mailed to MN VFW Charitable Association, PO Box 17146, St Paul MN 55117. Donations can be made via Venmo or PayPal by using the links at the Minnesota VFW Charitable Association page (be sure to specify Commander and Presidents Project). Auxiliaries and Auxiliary Members are kindly requested to send their donations directly to the Department Office Attn: Laurie Dale. Please consider hosting an event of any kind in the next year to help this amazing non-profit with their mission to help our brothers and sisters. Contact Sean Gustafson at sean.gustafson@gmail.com or 612-751-9918, Deb Courts-Brown at dcourtsb@comcast.net or 651-964-5758, or Tim Haugen at timhaugen74@gmail.com with questions or to invite them!

