

# 2024 National Campaign Quarter 4 Activity Planning Ideas



## Go Wild for Service Animals October – December 2024

This quarter we are honoring and supporting service animals. Often overlooked and underappreciated, animals provide many services. Service animals can be trained to perform complex life tasks to assist people with physical challenges. These animals make it possible for individuals to live more independently. Support and therapy animals provide emotional support in difficult situations. While K-9 units and military working dogs serve and protect us.

Let's go WILD and show our support and appreciation to service animals!

### Planning the activity

**Activity categories are flexible!** Any activity type may be held according to community needs and/or interest of chapter/YSC members.

### **Suggested activities: Educational event, Matching Fund or Hometown Hero**

Select the type of activity that works best for your chapter or club. Include your membership team and members as you plan. Some members may have connections to organizations and/or individuals in your community.

- Select a recipient or organization that:
  - Is well-respected.
  - Your members will enthusiastically support.
- Make an impact locally.
- Ask members about their interests. Do they have activity suggestions?
- Ensure members with allergies or who are uncomfortable around animals can choose their level of participation.
- Before your event is requested, contact the selected location or individual you are working with.
  - Discuss event options and location. Ensure service animals are welcomed at the venue.
  - Choose a date and time that works best for presenters, recipients or organizations involved.
  - Ask your recipient if they would like to share how they support service animals with attendees at the activity. Ask if they would also share how this activity is helping make an impact.

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## Hosting the activity

### Educational Event

Possible topics:

- Introduction to what service animals do.
- Select one or multiple types of service animals to learn about.
- K-9 unit(s) in your area.
- Military working dogs
- Horses and equine service animals
- Comfort animals
- Therapy animals
- How can comfort/therapy animals impact our mental health?
- Training service animals.

### Activity ideas and add-ons

- Ask if presenters can bring their animal to the event.
- Is a tour of a facility possible? Demonstration of skills?
- When appropriate, ask presenter to share information about volunteering opportunities or ways to help.
- Utilize the branded campaign supplies available on the supplies area.
- Take photos at the event.

*Possible presenters:*

- *Local K-9-unit staff*
- *Military dog trainers/handlers*
- *Mental health providers*
- *Comfort animal owners/organizations*
- *Service animal owner/trainers*
- *Individual(s) who own service animals.*
- *Airport security*
- *Equine therapy staff*
- *Veterinarians*
- *Online resources*
- *Search online for service*

### Matching fund

Possible recipients:

- Work with a local organization to raise funds to train, adopt or sponsor an animal.
  - Research organizations in your area that utilize service, therapy and/or service animals.
- Raise funds to purchase protective equipment for a K-9 unit or military working dogs.
- Partner with a local nonprofit to raise funds to provide comfort/therapy animals and/or supplies.
  - Ask nursing homes, senior or veteran centers, schools, hospitals if they provide animals on-site.
  - Temporary housing facilities, like The Salvation Army, residential mental health providers; Ronald McDonald House or homeless shelters may also have comfort, therapy, or service animals on-site.
- Provide funding to place an animal with a new owner when costs are prohibitive.
- Raise money to support a local equine therapy facility.

### Activity ideas and add-ons

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- Plan a walk-a-thon/5K event to raise funds.
- "Howling" Good Time – Hold a karaoke night or battle of the bands to raise money. (Use this event title in October and plan a Halloween-themed event.)
- Sell raffle tickets for a chance to win sponsor-donated prizes.
- "Dog Bowl" – Schedule a bowling event to support service dogs.
- Create a GoFundMe or similar crowdfunding event.
- "Pony-up" for Equine Therapy – Hold a western-themed or derby event to support needs of horses providing service.
- "Paw-ty" Time - Host a party to celebrate service animals and raise awareness.
- Utilize the branded campaign supplies available on the supplies area.
- Take photos at the event.

### Hometown Hero

Possible recipients:

- Local K-9-unit animal(s)
- Military working dog.
- Working or retired therapy, comfort, or service animals.
- Mental health providers who help place animals.
- Service animal organizations
- Service animal owner/trainers
- Equine therapy staff
- Veterinarians who support service animals.

### Activity ideas and add-ons

- Make sure the venue is animal friendly.
- Ask the owner/handler/trainer if there are any special provisions that need to be made for the event.
- Get the word out to members ahead of time.
- Ask if treats for the animal(s) can be provided at the event.
- Take photos at the event. Be sure to take a photo of the hero, if possible.

### Supplies

Utilize the branded campaign supplies available on the supplies area.

### Additional resources

Create events tied to one or more of the following:

- October 4<sup>th</sup> World Animal Day (Service animals)

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- October 10<sup>th</sup> World Mental Health Day (Trained emotional support, guide animals or comfort animals)
- October 14<sup>th</sup> National Dessert Day (Treats for service animals)
- October 21<sup>st</sup> National Pets for Vets Day (Trained service/emotional support/comfort animals)
- October 28<sup>th</sup> National First Responders Day (K-9 units; military working dogs; fire dogs)
- November 6<sup>th</sup> National Stress Awareness Day (Trained emotional support or comfort animals)
- November 11<sup>th</sup> Veterans Day (Retired military dogs)
- December 3<sup>rd</sup> Giving Tuesday (Give back to service animals)
- December 13<sup>th</sup> National Day of the Horse (Trained equestrian service animals; therapeutic riding schools)

### Types of service animals:

- Service animals: dogs (and in some cases, miniature horses) trained to assist people with physical challenges.
- Emotional support animals (ESA): animals that have been prescribed for a person by a mental health professional.
- Therapy animals: animals that comfort and provide affection to people in hospitals, retirement homes, nursing homes, schools, hospices, at funerals, in disaster areas, and to people with learning difficulties.
  - \* Horses and equine therapy animals also provide services to promote physical and mental health.

### Examples of service dogs' skills:

- K-9 units; military working dogs; fire dogs
- Mobility assistance
- Search and rescue
- Detect explosive materials
- Illegal drug detection
- Guide dog
- Hearing dogs
- Diabetic alert