



University of Missouri

College of Veterinary Medicine

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NEWS & EVENTS

Change for Animals of Missouri Raises Funds for ReCHAI

Members of the Warrensburg, Mo.-based organization Change for Animals of Missouri (CAMO) recently presented proceeds raised during the "Hounds for Heroes: Running for Research" 5K run to the University of Missouri Research Center for Human Animal Interaction (ReCHAI). The donation was earmarked to support ReCHAI's Veterans and Shelter Dogs Initiative. CAMO is a small nonprofit, volunteer-based organization that supports groups and programs that benefit shelter animals throughout Missouri.



Melissa Smidt (left) of Change for Animals of Missouri (CAMO) presents a check totaling \$2,167.13 to Dr. Rebecca Johnson, director of the MU Research Center for Human Animal Interaction. CAMO raised the funds during a 5K race to benefit the ReCHAI program Veterans and Shelter Dogs Initiative.

The Veterans and Shelter Dogs Initiative is an ongoing research project led by ReCHAI Director Dr. Rebecca Johnson, PhD, RN, FAAN. The study has two goals: The first goal is to assist combat veterans

who have served in Iraq or Afghanistan to reintegrate into civilian life and lessen symptoms of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). The second aim is to facilitate successful adoptions of shelter dogs. The initiative pairs war veterans with dogs from the Central Missouri Humane Society in an obedience training program that is led by nationally certified dog trainers. Classes take place twice a week at the Columbia Canine Sports Center.

The "Hounds for Heroes: Running for Research" 5k race took place in Knob Noster State Park on Nov. 3, 2012, in honor of Veterans Day and military service members. One hundred CAMO volunteers, runners and walkers from the community raised more than \$2,000 for the Veterans and Shelter Dogs Initiative. Staff and student volunteers from ReCHAI also took part in the event, as well as one veteran and a shelter dog that is participating in the training program.

"It is so kind of CAMO to apply their energies to support of our Veterans and Shelter Dogs study," Johnson said. "Their support will help us to train a PTSD Service Dog to help a veteran in need. Our project is making a difference in the lives of veterans who have served our country and deserve our very best support."

CAMO representatives Melissa Smidt and Sarah Smidt visited Columbia to observe the Veterans and Shelter Dogs class on Jan. 9, 2013, and present the proceeds of their race to Johnson to help support ReCHAI's study.

For more information about the Veterans and Shelter Dog Initiative or other ReCHAI programs, visit www.rechai.missouri.edu or call 573-882-2266.

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