

How a Service Dog Effects a Family

The Story of Service Peace Warrior (SPW) Woodrow and how he saved not only a veteran but a marriage and a family...

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My name is Stacey and I have been married for almost nine years to an amazing man that suffers from a few different health conditions. During our nine years of marriage my husband's disability rating with the department of veteran's affairs went to 100%, what does that mean? The VA doesn't have solutions but instead a list of ideas to try, first being prescription drugs. That one was the hardest on him, me and our marriage. Taking pills to try help pain, depression, PTSD, anxiety is not the answer, it destroyed his ability to maintain healthy relationships and spiraled out of control, putting him in a very dark place. We tried everything on the list, physical therapy, psychiatry appointments, counseling sessions... or so we thought. Then our daughter was born August 2, 2014, having a new baby shifted the dynamics in our relationship the focus went into caring for her, fast forward a few years into the toddler phase and our marriage was in a bad place. My husband was trying to find a solution to help himself and really us, searching online he found the Service Peace Warriors website and was intrigued with what he read, an organization that pairs veteran's with service dogs to help them live with PTSD. When he showed me, I basically laughed, at that time in my mind a service dog was a German Sheppard that a blind person would use to cross the street, extremely naïve but it's the truth. How could a dog help my husband? But I supported him and his decision even if I didn't understand it at the time. He applied, sent in the application and we waited for an answer. He received that call about two years ago that he had been accepted into their program. It was a huge commitment, the training, the travel, the testing, the education it felt a little overwhelming, but he was committed and I was proud of him, I loved seeing him engaged in a project, seeing his eyes light up again.

He was paired with SPW Woodrow a year and half ago. Woodrow is a very large black huskie/lab mix- not your classic looking service dog but my husband isn't your classic looking disabled person. Here is where the shift happened- the education, what is means to be disabled and that you can't tell by looking at someone what their disabilities are. This program gave my husband a new purpose and a new outlook on life. He would come home happy, excited, he had made friends and he was talking, talking a lot! I remember the first time I witnessed Woodrow "working", we were out shopping which can be stressful for anyone and then add a toddler and a disable veteran, my husband sat down on a bench and Woodrow threw his huge paw up on his leg, over and over again until my husband bent down and started petting him, this amazing animal was able to refocus my husband and pull him out of an anxiety/ptsd attack, which is the past would of just caused a huge fight between us. This dog has changed all our lives. SPW Woodrow is the reason my husband is a better father and the reason our marriage is amazing. This dog has allowed my family to live, to live without pills, to live happy. SPW Woodrow has also helped others, his presence when he is in his vest opens conversations about disabilities, helps people talk about depression, PTSD, anxiety, helps women and children see that there is hope, there is a solution, there is life after you serve our country. Thank you, Service Peace Warriors, for everything you have done for my husband, Me and our family!!

With All of Our love,

Stacey, Pete, Adalynn and Woodrow



