



## PRESS RELEASE

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**DATE:** October 16, 2015

**CONTACT:** Audrey Alt, Communications Manager, Fidelco Guide Dog Foundation  
(860) 243-4800 (o); [aalt@fidelco.org](mailto:aalt@fidelco.org)

### **FIDELCO GUIDE DOG FOUNDATION RECEIVES \$100,000 GRANT** **FROM NEWMAN'S OWN FOUNDATION** **SUPPORTS "SHARE THE VISION WITH VETERANS" PROGRAM**

**BLOOMFIELD, Conn.** – Fidelco Guide Dog Foundation has received a \$100,000 grant from Newman's Own Foundation, the independent foundation created by the late actor and philanthropist Paul Newman. The Connecticut-based Newman's Own Foundation made the award to Fidelco—Connecticut's only guide dog school—in support of Fidelco's "Share the Vision with Veterans" program.

The Newman's Own Foundation grant supports Fidelco's core mission and puts a special emphasis on services for blinded veterans and their families. Since 1997, Newman's Own Foundation has granted nearly \$900,000 to Fidelco. Thanks to this most recent show of support, Fidelco will be able to create two more life-changing partnerships between its German Shepherd Guide Dogs and our nation's blinded veterans.

"There is no greater sacrifice than serving in the military and defending our country," said Eliot D. Russman, Fidelco's president and CEO. "Newman's Own Foundation's passionate support of our mission enables Fidelco to expand its efforts to serve our nation's blinded heroes with the highest quality German Shepherd Guide Dogs available anywhere in the world."

"Recalling Paul Newman's service in the United States Naval Corps in World War II, we have been committed to supporting military nonprofits for over twenty years," said Robert Forrester, president and CEO of Newman's Own Foundation. "More service men and women are surviving battlefield injuries which leave them seriously injured and blind. We are pleased to award a grant to Fidelco as they endeavor to make a difference in the lives of these veterans and their families."

There are more than 160,000 blind veterans living in the United States, according to the Department of Veterans Affairs, and that number is expected to increase. Each year, some 7,000 veterans from the Korean and Vietnam Conflicts become blind or visually impaired due to age-related diseases. And about 17 percent of younger veterans wounded in Iraq and Afghanistan suffer traumatic eye injury, according to the American Foundation for the Blind; these injuries include penetrative eye damage resulting from IED explosions.

The ongoing relationship between Newman's Own Foundation and Fidelco, both having deep roots in Connecticut, was featured in *Give It All Away: Newman's Own Recipe for Success*, a Connecticut Public Television original documentary.

Since its founding in 1960, Fidelco remains the only Connecticut-headquartered guide dog school and, as a nonprofit organization, relies solely on gifts from generous individuals, foundations, corporations, and civic organizations. For more information, visit [www.fidelco.org](http://www.fidelco.org).

**About Fidelco Guide Dog Foundation**

*The Fidelco Guide Dog Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit based in Bloomfield, CT. Fidelco is an internationally accredited organization and an admired expert throughout the world for its highly valued German Shepherd Guide Dogs.*

*Each Fidelco Guide Dog takes two years, 15,000 hours, and \$45,000 to produce. They are given to clients at no cost. Fidelco provides 24/7 client support for the entire working life of its guide dogs – typically 10 years. Fidelco relies solely on the generosity and financial support of individuals, foundations, corporations, and civic organizations to help Share the Vision®.*

*Fidelco has trained and placed over 1,400 German Shepherd Guide Dogs throughout North America – in 41 states and five Canadian provinces. Fidelco pioneered In-Community Placement in the United States — a process that allows all guide dog users to be trained in the communities where they live and work.*

*Fidelco also has placed hundreds of its German Shepherd Dogs with law enforcement agencies, first responders, and search-and-rescue and missing-child recovery organizations to help protect our fellow citizens and keep our communities safe. For more information visit [www.fidelco.org](http://www.fidelco.org).*

###