

FIDELCO GUIDE DOG FOUNDATION, INC.

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Partners In ExceptionalSM



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: September 19, 2016

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**Fidelco Guide Dog Foundation Receives Second Grant of \$435,000
from U.S. Department of Defense**

Grant will go toward training elite Fidelco German Shepherd Guide Dogs to be placed with service members or veterans who are blind

Bloomfield and Wilton, Conn. – Fidelco Guide Dog Foundation has been awarded a second grant from the U.S. Department of Defense in the amount of \$435,000 to provide its elite German Shepherd Guide Dogs to service members or veterans. This grant follows an initial grant award of \$106,000 received in 2015.

“Our nation’s service members and veterans risk and sacrifice to protect our country and its citizens. Fidelco’s mission, to empower these blinded heroes after the battlefield to return to an independent life is the founding principle of our organization.” said Eliot Russman, Fidelco’s President and CEO. “It is a privilege to be able to serve these heroes who gave so much to our country.”

There are more than 160,000 blind veterans now living in the United States, according to the Department of Veterans Affairs, and that number is expected to increase. More than 17 percent of America’s military who are wounded on the battlefields in Iraq and Afghanistan suffer traumatic eye injury, including penetrative eye damage from IED explosions, according to the American Foundation for the Blind.

The Department of Defense grant is the result of legislative action in the 113th Congress that provided the funding through bill H.R. 2847.

“Fidelco is honored to have worked with Congressman Jim McGovern (D-MA) who sponsored the bill and all its co-sponsors, especially Congressman Walter Jones (R-NC),” said Karen C. Tripp, Fidelco’s Chairman. “We are very appreciative of the unanimous support received from Connecticut’s federal legislators – Senators Blumenthal and Murphy; and Representatives Courtney, DeLauro, Esty, Himes, and Larson – for their longtime efforts to help Fidelco help our nation’s blinded warriors.”

For more information about Fidelco, visit www.fidelco.org.

About Fidelco Guide Dog Foundation

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

Each Fidelco Guide Dog takes two years, 15,000 hours, and \$45,000 to breed, train, and place. 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 more than 1,450 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 has also 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, please visit www.fidelco.org or “Like” us on Facebook at facebook.com/fidelcoguidedog.

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Photos on next pages.



Lt. Brad Snyder, USN, Afghanistan



Lt. Brad Snyder, USN (Ret) with Fidelco German Shepherd Guide Dog "Gizzy"