

Warrior Walk at YTI Career Institute benefits veterans, pets

YTI Career Institute students hold Warrior Walk to benefit the Wounded Warrior Project and the York County SPCA.

By BRANDIE KESSLER
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York, PA -

After Kay Mahanes finished school, she went to work as a ward clerk at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center.

That was during the Vietnam War.

Mahanes' husband is a veteran of the Vietnam War.

"I like all the veterans' causes," she said, explaining her life experience has ingrained in her the importance of supporting the military.

When Mahanes, of New Salem, learned about a walk being held at the YTI Career Institute Saturday in Springettsbury Township to benefit the Wounded Warrior Project, she put it on her calendar.

"I saw it in the newspaper and thought we need the exercise and it's a cause we support," she said.

So Mahanes brought her dog, Marley Sue, a Saint Bernard, border collie mix, and her granddaughter, Makaela Hopkins, 15. Marley Sue fit in perfectly, as the proceeds from the walk also benefited the York County Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, and dogs were able to register for the walk.

Bambie Jordan, a YTI Career Institute student in the medical assistant program, was among the student ambassadors who organized Saturday's event. She said they took a vote to decide which organizations to support. YTI Career Institute recently started a veterinary technician program, she said, explaining the choice to support the York County SPCA.

"We wanted to help the community," she said. "We wanted to bring this out here to the public and let them know there are people out here helping."

Jordan, of Windsor Township, said her brother is a disabled veteran, and she volunteers at the Red Lion American Legion. She was happy to support the Wounded Warrior Project. She said the walk was scheduled for Saturday to tie in with Armed Forces Day. The day, a holiday to thank members of the military for their service, is held the third Saturday in May. Lester Neidigh, a student at YTI Career Institute who is studying heating, ventilation and air conditioning, is a veteran. He served with the Marines for "1 year, 10 months, 2 days," he said, before he broke his hand and was discharged.

Neidigh said it's important to get the word out about organizations that help veterans, many of whom have injuries far worse than his.

"These guys go out and risk their lives for this country," Neidigh said.

Jan Lawson, director of student services at YTI Career Institute, said there are several veterans in the student



A Warrior Walk was held at YTI Career Institute in York on Saturday to benefit the Wounded Warrior Project and the York County SPCA. Holly, a Labrador mix, is available for adoption from the SPCA. (YORK DAILY RECORD/SUNDAY NEWS -- BRANDIE KESSLER)

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ambassador program, which is "an elite group of students," who have to meet grade point average and attendance requirements. In total, there are about 70 veterans who attend YTI Career Institute, she said.

"They were all really excited we were supporting the Wounded Warrior Project," she said.

Carla Horn, campus president of YTI Career Institute in York, said Saturday's event marked the first time the students opened an event to the public.

"As an organization, we believe strongly that we need to give back to the community that supports us," Horn said. The students, she said, did a great job.

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Everyone loves Holly

When they finished their laps around YTI Career Institute Saturday, many of the Warrior Walk participants made their way to the patio behind the building to grab some food.

Inevitably, they made their way over to Holly, a stray dog believed to be between 1 and 5 years old, who currently calls the York County SPCA home.

The friendly, blond, Labrador mix sat nicely, wagging her tail, excited for people to greet her.

Jill Richcrick, a volunteer with the SPCA for about three years, said Holly has been at the SPCA since March.

"I think she had a family," Richcrick said, noting Holly's demeanor and ability to follow commands.

Holly is one of more than 80 dogs available for adoption at the York County SPCA.

Richcrick said the SPCA is always looking for good homes for the animals they serve, and they're in constant need of volunteers and supplies, including pet food and monetary donations.

Learn more about Holly, the other animals at the York County SPCA, and how you can help them at www.ycspca.org. There, you will also find information about the Bully Bash to be held June 8 at John C. Rudy Park in East Manchester Township, which raises positive awareness for bully dog breeds.

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