



Transcript of Social Cause Panel Discussion: Veterans and Military Service

Hosted by: Lindsey Barta (Magnified Giving, Associate Director)

Participants: Kelly Camm (4 Paws For Ability), Karen Suttman (Sub Zero Mission)

Length of Video: 25:33

Question 1: Introduce themselves and share a little bit about their organization, and their mission and how it relates to veterans and the military.

Question 2: what is the impact of supporting veterans and the military in the community? Why do you feel that supporting veterans in the military is important, and why do your organizations invest that time and energy into doing that?

Question 3: What do you feel from your perspectives and from your different organizations, what do you see as you know, some of the greatest challenges facing this work at this time?

Question 4:What brought you into the nonprofit sector? Either working in the nonprofit sector or volunteering what led you on this path? Specifically, I know Kelly for you for Four Paws there are a lot of other social causes that you align with, but for you, Karen specifically, how did you end up volunteering for an organization that specifically supports veterans?

Question 5: If the students listening are resonating with us they are interested in supporting veterans and the military, what would be your advice to them how can they get involved in this cause, and how can they start supporting veterans in the military?

Lindsey (0:00-0:32): Hi everyone, welcome my name is Lindsey and I work with magnified giving. I'm here today with Kelly and Karen and we're here today to talk about veterans and the military as a social cause. I'm gonna have

each of these guys **introduce themselves and share a little bit about their organization, and their mission and how it relates to veterans and the military.** Kelly, can you kick us off?

Kelly (0:32-1:42): Sure! Thank you for having me Lindsey. I'm glad to be with Karen here too, as we're all in this together supporting our veterans. So, 4 Paws for Ability, we serve veterans in addition to children and adults with disabilities. The unique thing about our veterans program is that they do not have to pay a fee for service In order to get a service dog. That's a little bit different than how we handle our children and our adults. The reason we do that is because we believe that our veterans have already paid the price to keep us free in this wonderful country. So, that's what we do and we usually place maybe between five and ten service dogs with veterans each year, versus with children we place over a hundred a year and adults maybe one or two. Thankfully there's a lot of wonderful other organizations out there that support veterans, that's why we don't have as many applications for our veteran service dogs as we do our children. so we're really fortunate in our industry that we do have a lot of other support for our veterans.

Lindsey (1:44-1:46): Awesome! Thank you, Karen?

Karen (1:48- 4:10): Hi, I am Karen Banfield and thank you Lindsey and everyone at Magnified Giving for giving us this opportunity. As a side note, Kelly and I previously discussed this. I work at Miami University for my full-time job and actually a lot of her dogs come onto our campus and help some of the students engage,so it's fun how we have all these different crossovers that kind of happen and you can see really what a small world we live in. I represent the regional chapter and I'm also a board member for Racing for Vets. We are an organization that helps veterans who have a lot of ptsd. They have a service-connected disability, or they've just been in the service and they're out and they're done and they want to come out, and they want to go racing. They may not have been diagnosed with ptsd, but they just have anxiety about going into large places, interacting with the public and people and what's gonna happen. We get them into our indoor event, and so once a month we invite veterans to come out and race at full throttle indoor karting and it's typically one saturday a month for two hours, and they are allowed to come out and they race for free at no charge. We usually do donuts and we have some, sometimes we have coffee there and just allow them to interact in a safe place where it's only veterans. They're not going to

be judged if they go to put a helmet on and they get claustrophobic, or one of the engines backfires and they have a bad reaction to that. No one there is going to judge them. They're all going to support them and then those individuals who enjoy the indoor event, we also race go-karts outdoors. We have five carts that are built and maintained by veterans so they do all of the work on them. They're responsible for them, they race them. As part of what we do since everyone has been so generous to give to us, and we've really built this from the ground up. We also give back through another program called honor and remember, so every day that we race outdoors we honor and remember a fallen hero at our events. so yeah!

Lindsey(4:11-5:00): Very good! Thank you guys, good stuff. I am excited to kind of hear you know, you're both supporting veterans and the military but in very different ways and I think that's really awesome for students to see. I just want to say for the students there are a lot of other organizations that support veterans and the military and a lot of other ways so I encourage you to check out some of the other organizations on the Magnified Giving website who are registered. Or just you know, look around for other organizations in our areas. There are a lot of different ways to support veterans and the military so we just kind of have a small sampling today. I want to ask you Karen and Kelly, **what is the impact of supporting veterans and the military in the community? Why do you feel that supporting veterans in the military is important, and why do your organizations invest that time and energy into doing that?**

Karen(5:02-6:49): I'll go ahead and I'll start off. Veterans especially in this area because we have a very large veteran population. The work they have done fighting for our country and giving us our freedom is so important. coming back trying to figure out how to interact and how to integrate from being in a system where you've been told what to do, when to do it, how to do it, and coming back home and you're out of the service now and you don't know how to go out and get a job. You don't know how to take initiative necessarily and how far you can go so even just interacting with regular people. What do you start a conversation about? How do you make friends? Do you stop moving around from city to city to city every two years and really start to form those true relationships that are people that are going to be your best friends differently than people who have had your six the entire time? So from that standpoint it's trying to get them a better work life balance, a better social life balance, and because most of our veterans, I won't say all, but most of our veterans are very good people. They just that extra little hand to figure out

how to reintegrate from military life to normal life. That's what we try to offer in a fun way.

Kelly(6:50-9:14): Well I'll echo a little bit of what Karen said. You know when you're in the military, you're very isolated and you're with your brothers and your sisters in your troop. You all of a sudden come back and for us especially, we serve veterans with disabilities so all of them have a disability and they didn't have that before they went into service. So to find yourself finally reintegrated back into society, is one hurdle and then all of a sudden having this disability is another hurdle. So the more organizations that can help the reintegration part and, what racing prevents does, is doing it in a fun way and keeping people in the community out and about. The same with four paws. A dog is fun. It's also some responsibility and it allows the veterans when they're out Come up and say, "oh my gosh, what a beautiful dog, what's your dog's name?" Really get them out of their head and out of maybe what they had been thinking about in their little mind or world and get them to talk about their dog and have something fun to talk about. Celebrate with that other person and so and then also on the flip side to help with whatever their disability is. Whether it is PTSD, the night terrors are real. A dog can wake them up if they start to hear some you know sounds from their voice or their wrestling around the dogs can wake them up, lick them comfort them after help them fall back asleep but then with the other disabilities you know hearing impairments mobility impairments and you know diabetic as well a lot of our Vietnam veterans have come back with uh and developed type 2 diabetes and that is there have been studies that talk about agent orange being a factor in that and so being able to uh alert to the highs and lows I'm just really helping them lead a more independent life so that they can have more fun and be in the community and live like the rest of us are you know you know so gladly able to do because of their sacrifice.

Lindsey (9:16-9:32): Yeah absolutely very good. **What do you feel from your perspectives and from your different organizations? What do you see as you know, some of the greatest challenges facing this work at this time?**

Karen (9:35-10:20): For us one of the biggest challenges we have is getting veterans to come out and commit to our outdoor program so it's reaching out and connecting with the veterans that's probably our biggest struggle obviously, there's funding that has to happen because we're racing go-karts they're consumable tires and fuel and parts and whatever but it's really

getting those people out to practice and and wanting to commit to the team support them wrench on the carts that's where we struggle.

Kelly(10:22-11:38): You know, Four Paws, there's so ,many other wonderful causes there's so many people in need and sometimes people don't really think about the veteran and military community as those in need and if you don't know a veteran personally then you may think, oh you know they always look tough and they have other you know really sharp uniforms and so on and all they'll be fine they're adults um because sometimes people tend to maybe want to help those that they consider more vulnerable or like children you know people that are in hunger things like that and those are really important causes but I would encourage students to get to know a veteran talk to a veteran and understand or read a book about a veteran if you don't know a veteran and you'll understand you know how much that they give up for all of us and how important it is for us to now give back to them to thank them for their service and to help them in any way that they need.

Lindsey (11:40-11:57): Absolutely so, kelly; you mentioned a little bit earlier, you know there are a lot of other great organizations who are doing this kind of work and I just wanted to ask for both of you, **how are your organizations able to collaborate with other organizations in the community to achieve your mission and to support veterans?**

Kelly (12:01-13:35): Well, you know, Four Paws, we are on several different veteran resource list and you know certainly we're always telling veterans you know have you gone to this resource have you gone to this resource and vice versa. One of the organizations that we do collaborate with, though on a regular basis is quilts of valor, and I don't know if either of you have heard of this organization or the students have but what we do at our graduation ceremonies when the dogs graduate with their service dogs what did I say when the veterans graduate with their service dogs the quilts of valor group they come in and they present a quilt to the veteran and the dog and the dog of course isn't you know putting the quilt on but we use it as what's called a mutt mat or a place where the dog will sit in a certain time and you know tell your dog to go to a place like if somebody's coming into the door you know into the house or whatever and so that's really a neat opportunity to honor our veterans in a different way at graduation and a lot of time the quilts are gorgeous and they're just a wonderful group and so that's one of the the groups that we you know collaborate with at fort paul's during a graduation but there are some wonderful resources out there and we're always

encouraging our veterans to seek all the resources available because they deserve it.

Karen(12:38-15:11): Everything for us one of the the big resources we use is we actually connect with the fort Thomas VA and they have a program therefore PTSD and so we work with them and that's where a lot of our indoor participants come from we work with the Joseph house as well which is a shelter for homeless veterans who have had alcohol and drug-related addictions so it's helping them get through that get into a safe place to live and then work on finding employment and finding a good place to live we've worked with the Dayton VA a little bit we don't have a good contact up there and Dayton's almost too far of a drive down to Cincinnati so but we have a couple of our vets participate in different groups as well and so that's how we get some of our crossover and I also participate in a sport that is wheelchair rugby and so we have a lot of veterans who come back who have lost limbs and have physical a lack of ability and so they are bound to wheelchairs and we get them out playing a sport and so I get some crossover there and can invite them to come down and hang out with us.

Linsey(15:12-15:49): very cool I love that. I want to ask both of you personally, **what brought you into the nonprofit sector? Either working in the nonprofit sector or volunteering what led you on this path? Specifically, I know Kelly for you for Four Paws, there are a lot of you know other social causes that you align with, but for you Karen specifically, how did you end up volunteering for an organization that specifically supports veterans?** I love sharing with students how people end up in careers or in volunteer positions for non-profits.

Karen(15:51-17:26): I have so I am an accountant by trade and I have always almost always worked in either small business or in the not-for-profit sector so I work in higher education um and I very much love the not-for-profit type mentality and the way things are done for the most part and I happened to be talking to a friend of mine and we were talking about go-karts we were actually at full throttle we were talking about go-karts and racing and they're just like hey this is something we really want to do um and my husband Aaron actually owns full throttle we own full throttle um and so that's where we started kind and so that's where we started kind of spitballing the idea and saying well what if we opened this up, and we did indoor racing here once a month, and that's kind of how the program was built um and we started indoor and then we started like oh here's a chassis for a hundred bucks okay

let's go buy a motor at harbor freight for five hundred dollars and put it on there and that's kind of how we started um and we just built it from the ground up Aaron's brother is a he's actually currently in the military so because we've got mill and my father was air force so ,we've got that military connection in our blood and in our family so being able to give back and and serve other people work with people I think I like not-for-profit just because you have that personal connection with so many people.

Kelly(17:28- 19:54): Yes, I would agree with Karen you know I used to be in the a for-profit world for many the years and about 14 years ago, I was getting my masters of business administration at night working during the day for a for-profit entity and our final capstone project was to find a non-profit or for-profit meet with them figure out their biggest business problem write a business plan and so we worked in teams um we all worked in the for-profit world thought let's do something with dogs, you know, in the nonprofit world and we just did a google search and found four polls, and it was really grassroots at that time they weren't even a million dollars yet on in revenues very small, I think placing you know maybe 25 dogs a year something like that and met with them wrote a business plan a cause marketing plan and after I graduated, I just kept thinking about the organization and I then joined the board of trustees ended up being president of the board and then realized that I wanted to continue and so I became development director an I've been on staff for almost 11 years. You know, the only thing I miss about the for-profit world is the great benefits and salary. However, other than that, no, I honestly would not change at this point because what I feel every day is so different then what I felt in the for-profit world I feel like I'm doing something valuable. I wake up every day excited, especially when you get to meet the clients, and you know we started off helping adults and children. Then we added the veteran's program about nine years ago, and it has been wonderful meeting all of these Veterans. You know one of them. We talk at least every month. He does whatever poor paul's needs if I need him to talk to a group at Cincinnati museum center for veterans day or something. He will always be there with his service dog. They will do anything for you they have always got your back so to speak.

Karen(19:54-20:16): I want to add to what Kelly said. I agree with everything. I think the other thing is that, now I am going to get emotional. The other thing that I really like is that not only are we touching lives, but I know we are saving lives.

Lindsey(20:19-22:11): Absolutely I think that this is, supporting veterans and military is a really good example a cause that impacts people like individuals very deeply you know there are a lot of causes maybe you know hunger where you're supporting a lot of people by providing meals, and that's really important, but you know you can impact a ton of people in small ways and those things add up, but this is an example of providing a service dog to someone that's a huge impact on that person's life. You know providing an opportunity for them to race and get out socially and you know meet people and be in a safe place that's a huge impact on that on that person on those individuals really deeply and I think for students that's something that you have to consider there are certain maybe you are attracted to the idea of impacting a ton of people you know in in small ways or maybe you're really attracted to this idea of impacting one person or 25 people or five veterans a year you know getting service dogs or how you know a smaller number of people but impacting those lives very very deeply. Both are important, both of those options are really really important. I would just like to kind of point out that if if you're interested in this idea of impacting our veterans really deeply, it sounds like these are two organizations that are doing that so you just kind of have to look inside yourself and you know which resonates with you more what what kind of things are you passionate about. So, just something to consider the last question I wanna ask you guys is you know **if the students listening are resonating with us they are interested in supporting veterans and military, what would be your advice to them how can they get involved in this cause, and how can they start supporting veterans in the military?**

Kelly(22:16- 23:36): Well I'll go ahead and start. so Karen alluded to the fact that she her day job is at Miami university and for paul's we have a presence of service dogs on about 25 different college and university campuses and usually within a three-hour radius of you know the Cincinnati area since the Dayton Columbus area and we we're always looking for more volunteers to help and even if you don't want to be a primary handler which is a lot of responsibility it's almost like having a child while you're in college which can be tough um you can be a sitter you can get involved in any of their fundraising events that they have and I know with you know kobe that's a little more difficult but not as many in person but that will change eventually but just supporting the organization in that way and then you know meeting veterans too again just you know reaching out and thanking someone for their service and just asking them questions if you know if you do see them with a dog and you know making it a good experience and you know for them and

that's really kind of what I think in my recommendation would be for the students.

Kelly(23:37-24:54): I agree that I think the easiest thing we can do is just if you know someone is military, go up and thank them for their service and their sacrifice. We can use volunteers at our indoor events. However, unfortunately, due to covid, we haven't been able to run them because the Fort Thomas VA is not allowing their participants to go on field trips. We just wrapped up our outdoor race season. We actually race this weekend, and we have a race on Halloween weekend. Then our race season will be done, and we are actually going to go into fundraising mode. Our largest fundraiser ended up not happening the way it normally does each year so, we got about half the funds. We need actually to survive and to put everything together for next year, so we're going to go into fundraising mode, so if anyone wants to do fundraising or help out in any way, shape, or form, we're more than welcome more than willing to take you on, and I would say find something that you are interested in and that that hits you in your heart.

Lindsey(24:56-25:22): So, yeah, absolutely good stuff. Well, Kelly Karen, thank you guys so much for your wisdom and your insight and for sharing with these students. As I said, I encourage you to check out some of the other organizations that support veterans and the military. Reach out to Kelly or Karen if you have thoughts or questions about their organizations or if you're interested in learning more. Thank you so much for watching, and yeah, we will catch you in the next class panel. Thanks.