

# Fauquier County Public Schools News Release

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## SEMPER K9 ASSISTANCE DOGS BENEFIT FROM WMS GENEROSITY

The Warrenton Middle School physical education department recently held a fundraiser for Semper K9 Assistance Dogs, kicking off the campaign in the fall with a visit from the founder and executive director, Christopher Baity. He spoke with WMS students about what the organization does and how the assistance dogs help wounded warriors. PE teacher Denise Smith-Haynes spearheaded the fundraiser with a silent basket and silk tie auction (ties painted by the school's National Junior Art Honor Society), a three-hour Zumbathon on April 5, hat day, and donations from students and staff.

"We selected the non-profit organization, Semper K9 Assistance Dogs, because they are pretty local, in the Woodbridge area," explained Smith-Haynes. "We loved that they are helping save lives in two ways: by rescuing and turning shelter dogs into service dogs and pairing the trained dogs with our veterans who are suffering with physical and mental conditions from their service to our country. This organization is founded by Christopher Baity, a Marine veteran himself. The dogs are trained for about a year and then given to a veteran who has applied for a service dog, at no cost to the veteran."

Smith-Haynes said she started the school-wide effort with the hopes that students would see how important and easy it can be to make a big impact on others' lives. Altogether the school raised \$2,012 for Semper K9 Assistance Dogs.

Amanda Baity, wife of the Semper K9 Assistance Dogs founder, visited Warrenton Middle on April 18 with one of the dogs, seven-month-old Rona, who is in training to be a service dog. Baity visited with eighth-grade students since their baskets raised the most money. She explained how the organization works with the dogs, where Rona came from, the cost associated with training a dog, etc. She told the students that the WMS donation would enable them to start four more dogs in the program.

To learn more about Semper K9, visit their [website](#).



At left are the participants in the three-hour Zumbathon that was part of the fund raiser at WMS for Semper K9 Assistance Dogs. The other photos feature Mona, a service dog in training that visited WMS last week.

