

# Veterans Business Success Story

## Julie Saatoff

U.S. Army | Rocket Dogs

Julie Saatoff, Army veteran, is following her dream of providing dogs with aquatic recreation services at her business, Rocket Dogs, in Fargo, ND. She is a service disabled veteran who understands how therapeutic dogs can be for veterans who deal with physical and mental issues. Saatoff also knows that dogs are therapeutic for anybody - not just those that have served our country.

Saatoff tells us, "Dogs have a way of soothing our soul. Dogs deserve the best we can give them. They are family!"

Following her time in the service, Saatoff trained several dogs to be therapy dogs. She wanted more for them during the cold, brittle winter months that North Dakota experiences.

"We have winter at least six months of the year. There aren't enough days for dogs to get proper exercise which can result in bad behavior from boredom. And not only do water activities provide exercise, but they can provide therapy for dogs. An example would be a dog who has arthritis, swimming can help with joint pain."

The Fargo Region has doggie daycares and outdoor dog parks, but no water centered activities for dogs. Rocket Dogs, the only indoor water aquatics center within 300 miles of Fargo, offers activities for dogs of different abilities, sizes and ages. There is a fun zone pool, about 8" deep, that dogs of all sizes can enjoy. For those dogs that are more apt to swimming, there is a larger pool, 3' feet deep, that is equipped with a legal size dog jump dock where dogs can test their ability for height, speed and distance. Or, dogs can just play in the larger pool.

Saatoff warns, "Don't wear your nice shoes. If you stand by a pool you are bound to get wet, perhaps drenched!" Because some owners would rather watch than be in the action, Saatoff provides a viewing area where you can watch all the dogs. One day she hopes to include additional services at Rocket Dogs such as dog jumping contests.

"Boots to Business is where my journey started. The workshop was so inspirational. I had no idea how to start but I knew I had the guidance of the SBA resource partner family. VBOC of the Dakotas helped me start my journey and now are helping with marketing concepts and implementation while the ND SBDC helped with financial projections and business planning. I have a wonderful team of cheerleaders!"

### RESOURCES:



*Rocket Dogs, in Fargo, North Dakota, provides an indoor aquatic exercise and play option for dogs of all sizes during the cold, brittle winter months of the region.*



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