

RECOGNIZING JO-ANN CLARK OF STRATHAM

Ms. HASSAN. Mr. President, I am proud to recognize Jo-Ann Clark of Stratham as November's Granite Stater of the Month. Jo-Ann is a Gold Star mother who ten years ago lost her son, Army Specialist Christopher Journeau, to suicide. After learning about the benefits that companion animals can bring to veterans who suffer from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), the same condition that Christopher suffered from, Jo-Ann started an organization in her son's name to fund adoptions of shelter animals by veterans.

Jo-Ann's son, Christopher, served a year in Iraq during Operation Iraqi Freedom and returned home with undiagnosed PTSD. When Christopher took his own life six months later, Jo-Ann was devastated. Over time, she learned about the symptoms of PTSD and recognized that her son had exhibited these symptoms when he returned home from his deployment.

During her research, Jo-Ann also learned that for some people, a companion animal can help to mitigate the impacts of PTSD. Jo-Ann began to research national organizations that help veterans adopt pets, but she found that many veterans faced significant hurdles in the process.

In response, Jo-Ann founded Chris' Pets for Vets to make it easier for veterans to adopt companion animals from local shelters. Among other things, the organization pays the pet adoption fees to ensure that cost isn't a barrier for any veteran.

Since its founding in 2015, Jo-Ann has helped approximately 400 veterans adopt companion animals at various shelters throughout New Hampshire. And despite health concerns that she herself has faced, Jo-Ann has invested an incredible amount of her time and energy into making Chris' Pets for Vets a success.

Jo-Ann's determination to turn her own loss into productive and positive support for veterans has helped hundreds of veterans avoid the confusion and despair that accompanies PTSD. Her commitment is also consistent with the Granite State's long tradition of military service and support for veterans. Jo-Ann understands the importance of supporting veterans in every aspect of their lives, and through Chris' Pets for Vets, she is both honoring her son's memory while making a real difference in veterans' lives. I am honored to recognize her efforts.