



**For Immediate Release:**

March 11, 2019

**Media contact:**

Maureen Moore, Communications Manager

704-924-2159

Maureen.moore@energyunited.com

**ENERGYUNITED FOUNDATION AWARDS \$10,000 GRANT TO SAVING GRACE K9'S**

**STATESVILLE, N.C.** – The EnergyUnited Foundation is pleased to announce it has awarded a \$10,000 grant to Saving Grace K9's, a non-profit, veteran support organization located in Davidson County.

Saving Grace K9's was founded by Brigitte Parsons in 2013 to help support veterans suffering from PTSD by pairing each veteran in the program with a rescue dog for service training, or by facilitating service training for a veteran who has already bonded with a dog.

The program offers weekly training for the pair, with a requirement to tally 250 total training hours before graduating. Topics covered in the program include: basic obedience, specific service tasks and public access training.

“Saving Grace K9's is an organization that beautifully embodies the cooperative spirit of the EnergyUnited Foundation,” said Debra Citta, EnergyUnited Foundation Administrator. “Their success represents a perfect example of what we can accomplish when we work together to meet the needs of the people living in our communities.”

In fact, Saving Grace is meeting a very urgent and serious need. Last year, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs released an analysis from 2005-2015 that found an average of 20 veterans commit suicide daily. These numbers are very alarming to Parsons, who has personally witnessed the positive impact that service dogs have on veterans who are dealing with PTSD.

“There are an endless number of tasks a dog can be trained to perform,” Parsons explained. “They can be trained to help alleviate the anxiety, anger, memory issues and hypervigilance that accompanies combat-related PTSD.”

While the benefits of pairing veterans with service dogs is clear, the unfortunate reality is that it is often a cost prohibitive option. Costs to purchase a service dog range from \$10,000 - \$25,000, depending on the animal and service needs of the individual. Saving Grace has been able to minimize these costs by partnering with local animal rescue organizations to locate the best dogs that can be trained to meet the needs of veterans enrolled in the program. Even still, the average cost to cover all training, gear and accessories comes in at approximately \$1,500. That's why the organization relies heavily on individuals and businesses in the community for support.

“We are so thankful for the EnergyUnited Foundation and the support we have received from ordinary people who simply chose to round their bills up to the next dollar,” Parsons said. “That small amount of change from their pockets adds up, and it will make a huge difference for the veterans we serve.”

The EnergyUnited Foundation is a voluntary, member-funded non-profit organization supported by EnergyUnited's Operation Round-Up program. Nearly 70,000 EnergyUnited members choose to participate in the program by 'rounding up' their electric bills each month. The maximum monthly contribution for an individual member with one account is 99 cents. Each of these small contributions are pooled together in a single fund managed by the EnergyUnited Foundation to support needy individuals, families, and non-profit organizations like Saving Grace K9's that complete an application explaining the reason and purpose for their requested grant.

For more information about Saving Grace K9's, please visit <http://savinggracek9s.com>.

## About EnergyUnited

EnergyUnited Electric Membership Corporation (EMC) is the largest electric cooperative in North Carolina serving nearly 130,000 metering points. Headquartered in Statesville, EnergyUnited provides electric service in portions of nineteen counties in west central North Carolina which include Alexander, Cabarrus, Caldwell, Catawba, Davidson, Davie, Forsyth, Gaston, Guilford, Iredell, Lincoln, Mecklenburg, Montgomery, Randolph, Rockingham, Rowan, Stokes, Wilkes and Yadkin. EnergyUnited Propane provides products and services to more than 25,000 residential, commercial and industrial customers in 74 counties across North and South Carolina. Visit EnergyUnited online at [www.energyunited.com](http://www.energyunited.com) to learn more about our electric and propane businesses.



*Pictured from left to right: **Gianna Clark**, Vice President of Customer Care EnergyUnited; **Brigette Parsons**, Director of Saving Grace K9's; **James Dean**, Veteran Liaison; **Rebel**, service dog; **Debra Citta**, EnergyUnited Foundation Administrator*