



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Ruff Ruck Challenge Now an Independent 501(c)(3); Partners with WMK9 Foundation to Expand Service Dog Access to First Responders

Lakeside, MI – October 18, 2025 – *The Ruff Ruck Challenge*, now officially a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, proudly presents its annual fundraising event hosted in partnership with *WMK9 Foundation*. This year's event not only supports veterans but also expands its impact by helping train and place service dogs with **first responders** in need.

Held at **Wonderland Distilling** in Lakeside, MI, the Ruff Ruck Challenge offers two engaging options:

- The competitive **12-mile Ruff Ruck**, completed in under 3 hours while wearing a 30-pound ruck, individuals or teams are raising a goal amount through our [Donately.com](https://www.donately.com) page.
- **The Frontline Challenge** – Teams of four, led by a current or retired first responder or military member, ruck 12 miles carrying 100 pounds collectively. Teamwork over time.
- **The Freedom Walk** – Walk at your own pace and distance, weighted or unweighted. Every step supports the mission.
- **The Personal Challenge** – This one is what *you* make it. Whether it's a mile without a wheelchair, a weighted sprint, or simply showing up and finishing your own way, the Personal Challenge is about pushing yourself on your terms.

All proceeds benefit the mission of providing life-saving service dogs to **veterans and first responders** struggling with PTSD, mobility challenges, and more.

Event Details:

- **Date:** October 18, 2025
- **Location:** Wonderland Distilling, Lakeside
- **Time:** 12:00 PM – 5:00 PM (Set-up at 10:30 AM, Registration at 11:00 AM)

Sponsorship / Team Fundraiser Opportunities:

- Second Chance Sponsor - \$500 Donation

- K9 Cadet - \$1,500 Donation
- Man's Best Friend - \$3,000 Donation
- Leader of the Pack - \$15,000 Donation
- Veteran's Hero - \$18,000 Donation

Why Attend:

Enjoy a community celebration at "Ground Zero" with **live DJ entertainment, silent auction, service dogs in training, merch**, and a **live stream broadcast** hosted by Tony Laskowicz and Jessie Wilde to drive online donations and cheer on Ruckers in real time. Connect with WMK9 Foundation staff, meet the pups, and take action for a powerful cause.

Contact:

Tony Laskowicz – Founder

TLaskowicz@gmail.com | 231-670-3934

Corinn Light – Executive Director & Event Coordinator

Corinntaylor97@gmail.com | 231-327-9814

Jessie Wilde – Marketing & Communications

Jessie@westmichigank9.com | 231-557-2378