



# OFFICIAL ATTEMPT

## **On July 26<sup>th</sup>: ‘Bark in the Park’ Previews GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS™ Attempt at Largest Dog Wedding Ceremony**

***Kane County Cougars Baseball Foundation hosts both events, capped by Oct. 2<sup>nd</sup> fundraiser for U.S. military veterans & animal rescue groups***

**July 14, 2022** – An October 2<sup>nd</sup> bid to shatter the GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS mark for the largest dog wedding ceremony kicks off later this month with a sneak preview event at Northwestern Medicine Field in Geneva.

On Tuesday, July 26<sup>th</sup>, the Kane County Cougars host the Lake Country DockHounds, an Oconomowoc, Wis. rival in the American Association of Professional Baseball. Alongside the contest will be a variety of “Bark in the Park” activities, an annual event in which fans are encouraged to bring their canines.

A little over two months later, the Kane County Cougars Baseball Foundation and Robust Promotions aim to marry 1,000 dogs, or 500 canine couples, on Sunday, October 2<sup>nd</sup> at the ballpark, 34W002 Cherry Lane in Geneva. Dubbed “Diamonds in the Ruff,” achieving only half that goal would shatter the 15-year-old record of 178 couples that was originally set in Littleton, Colorado.

The motivation behind both light-hearted events is a serious mission: to raise money and awareness for non-profit organizations, including a national group that pairs service dogs with military veterans who struggle with mental health and die by suicide at alarming rates.

Organizers aim to raise \$100,000 for K9s For Warriors and 12 other service animal organizations and local pet adoption groups. Determined to end veteran suicide, K9s For Warriors is the nation’s largest provider of trained service dogs to military veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), traumatic brain injury and/or military sexual trauma. On a daily basis, nearly 20 veterans take their own lives, and since 2001 there have been four times as many veterans who have died by suicide than the number of U.S. military personnel who died in combat in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Dr. Bob Froehlich, Cougars owner and CEO, said both “Bark in the Park” and “Diamonds in the Ruff” are a perfect match for the organization.

“We are a bit quirky and always push the marketing envelope, so hosting a massive dog wedding is a natural,” Froehlich said. “Our foundation gives back to the community over \$1 million annually in cash and in-kind donations. One of our biggest areas of focus has always been veterans and active military. In many ways, our organization was made for this event.”

Leslie Allison-Seei and her husband, Greg Seei, own [Robust Promotions](#), a Villa Park-based firm with extensive professional promotional-and-marketing expertise. They coordinated a dog wedding ceremony

last September in Villa Park that joined 80 canine couples in tongue-in-cheek matrimony. The event sparked extensive media attention throughout the Chicago-area market, as well as coverage in national outlets, including *People* and *The New York Times*.

In January, Allison-Seei approached Froelich about the Kane County Cougars Baseball Foundation helping take another shot at the record, this time without the Delta variant of COVID-19 hindering participation, as was the case last fall.

“We want to have an event that helps save lives, human and canine, and also brings people a lot of joy while breaking a Guinness World Record,” said Allison-Seei. “But the biggest motivation is having a positive impact on the lives of brave men and women who have served our country.”

Stephanie Vogt, community relations manager at K9s For Warriors, said service dogs help veterans “return to a life of dignity and independence.”

“We couldn’t be more excited to be a part of this awesome attempt,” Vogt added. “Diamonds in the Ruff will allow us to continue changing veterans’ lives for the better and give new purpose to rescue dogs.”

Those who are unable to participate in person can also play an active role in the initiative. Organizers are holding a “Voice Your Vows” contest, in which dog owners upload a brief video at [voicemyvows.com](http://voicemyvows.com) of their dog “barking, singing, howling or talking.”

A panel of celebrity judges will select 10 finalists in September, with money raised when people vote for their favorite canine crooner. A grand-prize-winning dog will have its picture appear on the NASDAQ billboard, win a trip for two to New York City to see it in person, and receive a lifetime veterinary care in the form of a \$10,000 check. The top 10 videos will be played during “Diamonds in the Ruff.”

For “Bark in the Park” as well as “Diamonds in the Ruff,” London-based, world-renowned magician Martin Rees, a five-time Guinness World Records holder, will perform a variety of tricks.

Rees and [WGN Radio “Pet World” host Steve Dale](#) will serve as emcees for both events.

[Pet Supplies Plus](#), the nation’s largest pet retail franchise, is the lead sponsor of “Diamonds in the Ruff.” In addition to K9s For Warriors, online at <https://k9sforwarriors.org/>, the participating rescue groups for “Diamonds in the Ruff” are:

Greater Chicago Cage Bird Society, <https://www.gccbc.org/>  
New Start Dog Rescue of Illinois, <https://www.newstartdogrescue.org/>  
Rover Rescue, <https://roverrescue.org/>  
Tiny N Tall Rescue, <https://www.tinyntallrescue.com/>  
Underdog Railway Rescue, <https://business.facebook.com/underdograilway/>  
Kane County Animal Control, <http://www.kanecountypets.com/>  
V.E.T. Service Dogs NFP, <https://vetservicedogsnpf.org/>  
Paws 4 U 4 Ever, <https://www.4paws4u4ever.com/index.html>  
Border Tails Rescue, <https://www.bordertailsrescue.org/>  
Almost Home Foundation, <https://www.almosthomefoundation.org/>  
Players for Pits, <https://www.playersforpits.com/>  
DuPage County Animal Services, <https://www.dupagecounty.gov/animalservices/>

*Anyone who registers for the Oct. 2<sup>nd</sup> “Diamonds in the Ruff” before July 26<sup>th</sup> will receive a free ticket to that evening’s game. To register, learn more about the fundraising efforts and other details, visit [www.LargestDogWedding.com](http://www.LargestDogWedding.com)*

*To enter the “Voice Your Vows” contest, visit [www.voiceyourvows.com](http://www.voiceyourvows.com).*