

New

Cpl. Nathan Cirillo memorial paddling weekend launches in Ottawa

Fundraiser at Rideau Rowing Club benefits group that trains rescue dogs to be service dogs

By Andrew Foote, [CBC News](#) Posted: Oct 02, 2016 6:00 AM ET Last Updated: Oct 02, 2016 6:00 AM ET

After a moment of silence for Cpl. Nathan Cirillo, a group of around 20 paddlers turned their canoes and kayaks away from the service dogs at the Rideau Rowing Club and out onto Mooney's Bay Saturday afternoon, launching a weekend of fundraising for a cause dear to the fallen soldier's heart.

The first annual Cpl. Nathan Cirillo Memorial Cup is happening in Ottawa this weekend, a partnership between Canoe Kayak Canada and [Boots 4 Pups](#), an Ottawa-area organization that raises money to train rescue dogs to help military veterans and first responders living with post-traumatic stress disorder or operational stress injuries (OSI) related to their work.

Cirillo, who was killed Oct. 22, 2014 at the National War Memorial, [was a rescue dog owner](#). Boots 4 Pups director Barbara Boucher said was the reason the organization approached his family and friends for permission to fundraise using his name.

"We rescue dogs from shelters, we train them and we release them to PTSD military veterans and [people with] OSI. They really, really liked that idea," she said Saturday.

Boots 4 Pups has been running since 2014 to support [Citadel Canine Society](#), a B.C.-based non-profit that trains service dogs and sets them up with "new" veterans (who have served since 1990) and first responders at no charge.

\$3,500 to \$5,000 to train a service dog

Around 20 recreational paddlers and 130 competitive paddlers from clubs across eastern Ontario are taking to the Rideau River this weekend.

"Just as you'd have a fundraising walk or run, this is a fundraising paddle," said Ian Miller with Canoe Kayak Canada.

The money raised is going toward the \$3,500 to \$5,000 cost of getting Boots 4 Pups'

third rescue dog ready to be a service dog, Boucher said.

She frames paddling as a low-stress, accessible activity that's a fit for the people they work to help.

"It's a very relaxing sport, it's not a stressful sport and PTSD, there's a lot of stress involved," she said.

"I find canoeing and kayaking myself very, very relaxing. You go out in the morning and just cleanse yourself."

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