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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**San Diego Wounded Veteran Finds Healing in Helping Amputee Pet  
*Invents Prosthetic to be Featured at Balboa Park's Maker Faire***

**September 6, 2017 (SAN DIEGO, CA)** — San Diego native Karolyn Smith is a survivor. An Iraq war veteran and U.S. Army machine gunner, she suffered spine and brain injuries from a roadside bomb in 2005. After years of surgeries and therapies, Karolyn suffered from PTSD but wanted to learn to cope with her pain and trauma without medication. To that end, she adopted a kitten with three legs.

When Smith met Sophia she thought, “Who better to raise a disabled kitten than a disabled veteran?” Sophia was born with the umbilical cord around her hind leg that damaged its development, requiring amputation. Inspired by her work with military veteran amputees, Smith was determined to help her new kitten.

A self-styled “vetrepreneur,” she decided to see if a prosthetic leg could be designed that would make Sophia’s life easier. Connecting with San Diego-based design lab Fab Lab, they invented the prototype of a prosthesis that could be manufactured on a 3D printer.

Three years and three prototypes later, Smith has become an avid inventor, constantly pushing to create the ideal prosthetic. She will be presenting her invention, and telling her story, at the upcoming [Maker Faire San Diego](#) in Balboa Park October 7-8, 2017, a hands-on celebration of technology, arts, crafts, science, and the Do-It-Yourself mindset.

Smith continues to push to make her furry friend’s life as comfortable as possible. Self-funded, she hopes [Maker Faire San Diego](#) will help raise awareness and backing for her cause. She has published a children’s book to both help raise money and to educate kids about amputation. “Sophia, The Bionic Cat” was published in 2016. Animal Planet is currently airing a feature on Smith and Sophia on “My Cat From Hell” with Jackson Galaxy, and Smith is in the process of writing a screen play to tell the story of how technology has helped her and Sophia live better, richer lives as an inspiration to kids—the world’s future inventors.

Smith has been honored locally as the 71<sup>st</sup> Assembly District’s 2014 Veteran of the Year for the sacrifices she has made for her country, and her meaningful, long-time work with veteran’s

groups. San Diegans can hear her story firsthand and meet Karolyn in person at Maker Faire San Diego.

**PRESS MATERIALS:** [Photos and logos](#)

**WEBSITE:** <http://sandiego.makerfaire.com>

**FACEBOOK:** <https://www.facebook.com/SDMakerFaire>

**TWITTER:** <https://twitter.com/SDMakerFaire>

**INSTAGRAM:** <https://instagram.com/sdmakerfaire/>

#### HISTORY OF MAKER FAIRE

The first Maker Faire launched in May 2006 in the San Francisco Bay Area and was quickly followed by Faires in Austin, Detroit and New York City, as well as others around the world. Technology has lowered the barriers to becoming a Maker and this has launched the Maker Movement, which fuels Maker Faire. Maker Faire was designed to be forward-looking, showcasing Makers who are exploring new forms and new technologies. But it is not just for exhibiting what is new in technical fields - Maker Faire features innovation and experimentation across the spectrum of science, engineering, art, performance, and craft.

#### ABOUT SAN DIEGO MAKERS GUILD

The San Diego Makers Guild is a nonprofit that is committed to fostering the maker community and to promoting, showcasing, and encouraging adoption of making by individuals and public and private institutions, with the goal of advancing education, innovation, commerce and lifelong learning. Our vision is to help develop San Diego into a nationally known maker city. Learn more at [www.SDMakersGuild.org](http://www.SDMakersGuild.org).

#### ABOUT BALBOA PARK CULTURAL PARTNERSHIP

Balboa Park Cultural Partnership is a nonprofit organization through which 30 arts, science and cultural institutions in Balboa Park collaborate to achieve shared goals. By helping these groups achieve greater organizational efficiency, innovation and excellence, it seeks to contribute to the vitality and sustainability of Balboa Park. For more information visit [www.bpcp.org](http://www.bpcp.org).

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