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MISSION

Dogs for Better Lives is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that professionally trains dogs to help people and enhance lives while maintaining a lifelong commitment to all dogs we rescue or breed and the people we serve.









VALUES

- Care for the dogs by keeping their well-being (physical, emotional and mental) at the root of all decisions made on their behalf.
- Care for clients by providing our services with kindness, compassion and patience.
- Care for donors by being responsible stewards of our "donor dollars" through mindful and conscientious use of company time and money.

WHY WE DO IT

At Dogs for Better Lives, we believe it's an honor to be a part of something bigger than ourselves, and we're impassioned with what we do. Operating as a team, we put the mission above the individual, trusting in one another to break through challenges and obstacles to maintain our mission of bettering lives by matching people with the amazing dogs we train.

ON THE COVER Hearing Assistance Dog Pringles helps Sheryl to be aware of important sounds and to embrace life.

WELCOME

A consistent saying among successful entrepreneurs and artists is that "an overnight success takes 10 years." The reason this sentiment rings true is that much of the foundational work required to accomplish outward success happens out of the limelight and in anonymity. While the focus of this year's annual report is a year of purposeful progress, I would more accurately label it **another** year of purposeful progress. As we celebrate both the launch and growth of some of our signature programs, this progress began years ago as the seeds of ideas and discussions with DBL's Board of Directors and staff.

Our breeding program uses sophisticated analytics on genetic lines and DNA. We initated the program to provide a more consistent supply of dogs for our autism program. Now, we are intentionally expanding and growing the program on both coasts to supply dogs for all programs while also focusing on efficiently scaling our From Shelter to Service Dog pilot program. In partnership with Operation Kindness in Carrollton, Texas, our shelter program is showing incredible results. The former shelter dogs in the program live in foster homes while working alongside our trainers to learn the skills to become an Assistance Dog. The first dogs to be placed with clients will happen in the coming months. Conversations about revamping our shelter program and partnering with a large-scale humane society began years prior and initially focused on the Southeast, and it is exciting to see the program come to fruition.

During our strategic planning process with the Board in early 2019, we included two focus areas for the expansion of our Prison Puppy Raising Program. The first was to open puppy raising outside of Southern Oregon and the second was to explore the launch of a prison raising program, initially in Arizona. Fast-forward several years later and we're proud to announce that our first puppies entered our first Prison Puppy Raising partnership in Ohio. DBL is also now able to support puppy raisers nationwide.

We certainly celebrate the successful milestones of these programs during this fiscal year, but as you can see, much of the progress made toward this success happened over many years and through the continued hard work and dedication of the Board and staff. And through the consistent, generous support of our volunteers and donors, who provided the resources necessary to make these accomplishments a reality. To continue to grow and scale, it is understood that there will be successes and failures, starts and stops, but with focus on the lives we change, both two-legged and four-legged, we can continue to push through the challenges.

Dogs for Better Lives has made tremendous progress recently purposeful progress – toward the continued goal of serving as many people as we can through the amazing dogs we train. We continue to focus on executing the long-range vision of the organization. We're proud to highlight the stories in this annual report that celebrate our wins. Enjoy!

Sincerely,

Bryan Williams
President & CEO



>YEAR IN REVIEW <









KEY STATISTICS

As of 6/30/23

145 ACTIVE

60,000+ VOLUNTEER HOURS LOGGED

13,000+

LAUNCHED

PRISON PUPPY

RAISING PROGRAM

A YEAR OF GROWTH



OGS SELECTED

LAUNCHED CALIFORNIA REGIONAL ADVISORY BOARD

RAISERS

in 10 states

FROM SHELTER TO SERVICE DOG PROGRAM



Laying the foundation for future program growth



LAUNCHED **BONE APPETREAT**

Our new signature event fully funded 2 Service Dogs in its first year

Donors | Clients | Volunteers | Partners | DBL Staff Regional Advisory Boards | National Board of Directors THANK YOU!



Jo and Ken Voertman of Carlsbad, California love beagles. They have had eight beagles during their marriage.

"Nothing is cuter than a puppy, and a beagle puppy is the cutest of all," says Jo.

Even so, a Labrador puppy from DBL stole a lot of hearts at Jo's church group recently when a local handler came for a talk. About 15 years ago, a couple in the group were laid low when their granddaughter was born with multiple disabilities. Among other issues, the child is deaf. As the family adapted and learned American Sign Language, they discovered DBL.

Learning about DBL from their friends, the Voertmans were intrigued. Knowing dogs well, they immediately saw the benefit a trained Service Dog could bring.

"Dogs are intelligent and want to help," Jo says. "They also give unconditional love, which is the best thing for anyone. Dogs for Better Lives is providing an important resource for people who really need it."

The Voertmans began supporting DBL and have continued to follow the mission at work over the years

"We believe that much is expected from whom much is given," Jo says. "When we give, we want our money to do the work to run the program, rather than other costs. We believe in the work Dogs for Better Lives is doing. We know they are helping people."



Michele Roeder-Latimer had never invented a homemade dog treat before, but when DBL asked her to be a contestant in a first-ever bake-off, she was all in.

"It took three months and a lot of iterations, but I came up with Parker's Peanut Butter and Jelly Biscotti 100% on my own," Michele says. "I had a great time trying different treat recipes. All the ingredients I used are healthy for dogs."

Taste-tested and approved by Michele's companion dog Parker, the biscotti treat was a hit! Michele was named Top Dog of the Bone AppéTREAT contest.

"This was an awesome way to pay tribute to Parker," Michele says. "For me, Parker is just a really special dog. When she was 8 months old, we learned she has multiple congenital heart defects and only had two-to-three months to live. Parker is now 2½ years old. We

are grateful that Parker is still with us today and living her best life."

Michele enjoyed participating in the contest and helping fundraise for it. She had a large group of friends and family cheering her on at her Long Beach, California home for the livestreamed event.

"I've learned from personal experience how a dog can change one's life," she says. "I can relate to doing something to benefit dogs helping people."

As Top Dog winner, Michele received the honor of naming one of DBL's puppies in the "N" litter.

"I named her Nana, after my mother-in-law," she says. "My mother-in-law passed away at the end of September, but she got to see a picture of her namesake. Now she has a legacy with Dogs for Better Lives, too!"

Canine cuisine event provides for Service Dogs

In May, DBL's inaugural Bone AppéTREAT dog treat competition successfully raised more than \$115,000 – enough to fully fund two Assistance Dogs.

Volunteer chefs from around the country showed off their creativity and cooking skills with recipes for human-grade dog treats. Amy McWhirter emceed the event, which was livestreamed. Viewers could vote by donating to their favorite contestant's campaign page.

Chefs presented their treats to an expert panel of judges, who included Cynthia Murray of 4Legz Dog Treats, Michael Goh of Mud Bay and Luke Stark, Chad Stark and Autism Assistance Dog Serenity.

In addition to Michele Roeder-Latimer, the other contestants included Lois Malone, Amir Romero-Harvey and Summer Daidon, CarrieJo Hoelzel and Dr. Danielle Rose and Alicia Shue.

The presenting sponsor was DCH Brunswick Toyota of New Jersey. DBL board member Lisa DeVivo shared the company's pride in supporting the event.

Additional Bone AppéTREAT sponsors included Harry & David, Master Stitch, KOGAP, Peg Beuhler, Ecluse Wines, Dixie Real Estate, Pallet Wine Company and more.



6 Dogs for Better Lives

DOGS for BETTER LIVES 7

Providing Assistance Dogs Since 1977

Assistance Dog in Training Daisleyww, one of the first trainees in the From Shelter to Service Dog Program, gets ready for a training trip out in public.

NONPROFIT PARTNERS

Partnering with Lone Star state rescue experts to find Service Dogs



Texas is a kill state for abandoned animals. In 2022, about 69,000 animals were euthanized. For 46 years, Operation Kindness has worked to rescue dogs from city shelters. They have a full veterinary hospital and specialize in medical cases. They also have a large network of foster volunteers who take in rescues to help find permanent homes. Based in Carrollton (near Dallas), Operation Kindness brought in 5,500 dogs and cats last year and adopted out 5,200.

"Dallas is one of the largest animal services in the country and is often over capacity, even as high as 180% of capacity," says Kelly Furnas, chief operating officer of Operation Kindness. "In Texas, a lot of animals don't get spayed/neutered, and the shelters get overrun. We are doing everything we can to pull animals out. On any given day, we have about 240 animals on-site and another 200 in foster care."

Throughout its history, DBL has searched along the West Coast for shelter dogs to train for service. Partnering with rescue experts in a state with such high need for adoptions just made sense. In 2023, DBL committed to locating a staff member in Dallas to work with Operation Kindness to assess dogs for training. The program,

called From Shelter to Service Dog, identifies rescued pups with the temperament and abilities to become DBL Assistance Dogs.

"This was a huge commitment by Dogs for Better Lives, and I'm so excited to be partnering with them," Kelly says. "Their work is meaningful to me personally because I'm severely deaf in my left ear and I have a nephew on the autism spectrum. It gives me goosebumps that Operation Kindness can be a part of this work."

In the first months of the program, there are already two rescued dogs in training with DBL. One will become a Hearing Dog in 2024 and one will become a Facility Dog. DBL will continue to grow this program and bring more dogs in as we add apprentice trainers rotating through our program in Texas.

"We've had about 100 of our amazing foster volunteers say they are willing to learn how to train with DBL," Kelly says. "It's a significant commitment because they keep the dogs for about seven months. We are excited that this partnership means we can not only give a dog a home but also place them where they can provide a valuable and needed service. I'm excited to see where our Operation Kindness graduates will go."

GUARDIAN SOCIETY

Taking stock for Service Dogs

In 1998, newly retired Phyllis Olsta took a drive along the scenic Oregon Coast. As part of her vacation exploration, she planned to visit an organization she'd read about that trained Hearing Assistance Dogs in a small town called Central Point.

When she arrived, she was given a tour of the campus and training rooms, including a demonstration of the skills the dogs learn. She was wandering the memorial garden when all the pups were released for playtime. Soon, she was in the midst of wagging tails and happy doggy smiles. Phyllis made her first donation to DBL that day.

Born in the Midwest during the Depression, Phyllis learned to be thrifty and started investing in the stock market in her 20s. She's led an independent

and adventurous life. For her career, she worked for the ferry system in Juneau, Alaska. Her aunt left her a house in Portland, which Olsta now calls home.

As part of her estate planning, she carefully curated the nonprofits chosen as beneficiaries. With her smart investing, she's able to give significant legacies to several organizations, four of which involve training different types of Service Dogs. One day, DBL will receive a thoughtful bequest from her estate.

For Phyllis, the decision to support DBL comes down to the mission.

"I'm so impressed with what dogs and their instructors can do," she says. "It's a wonderful place doing so many wonderful things."

FOR MORE INFORMATION on how

you can become a member of our Guardian Society, visit dogsforbetterliveslegacy.org or contact Wanda at (541) 423-8385 or wanda@dogsforbetterlives.org

At 90 years old, Phyllis Olsta has no regrets as she looks back on a meaningful career and a well-traveled life. Instead, she's planning for the future by including DBL in her estate.



COMMUNITY CLUBS

Enduring commitment between DOES and dogs Carla LaPoma of Oklahoma City is on a 500 members of the Benevolent Benevolent



The Benevolent Patriotic Order of Does has made 119 gifts to DBL over 28 years.

"Our members want to give to a nonprofit where the majority of the funds go to making someone's life better."

- Carla LaPoma

Carla LaPoma of Oklahoma City is one of more than 2,500 members of the Benevolent Patriotic Order of DOES, a volunteer order more than 100 years old. Carla is the volunteer director of public relations and is a past supreme president of the national organization. Every year, Does around the country fundraise for several causes they support, including DBL. Since 1996, the Does have given \$613,800 to DBL.

"It makes me proud to be a Doe," Carla says. She's been a member for 20 years, so DBL has been the organization's charity of choice for as long as she can remember. In Carla's opinion, the longevity of the relationship is based on mission, accountability and connection.

"Our members want to give to a nonprofit where the majority of the funds go to making someone's life better," she says. "We research organizations' administration-to-helping people ratio, and Dogs for Better Lives does a great job."

Every year, DBL representatives and dogs attend the Does' Grand Lodge event. In 2023, the event took place in South Carolina. Dr. Danielle Rose and her Hearing Assistance Dog, Delight, joined the Does for a demonstration.

"Dogs for Better Lives shows us they appreciate what we do for them by coming every year for more than two decades," Carla says. "It's hard to find organizations to truly partner with willing to give us the same level of attention. Dogs for Better Lives let us know we are just as important to them as they are to us. When they come to see us, their people are always very humble and gracious for what we do."



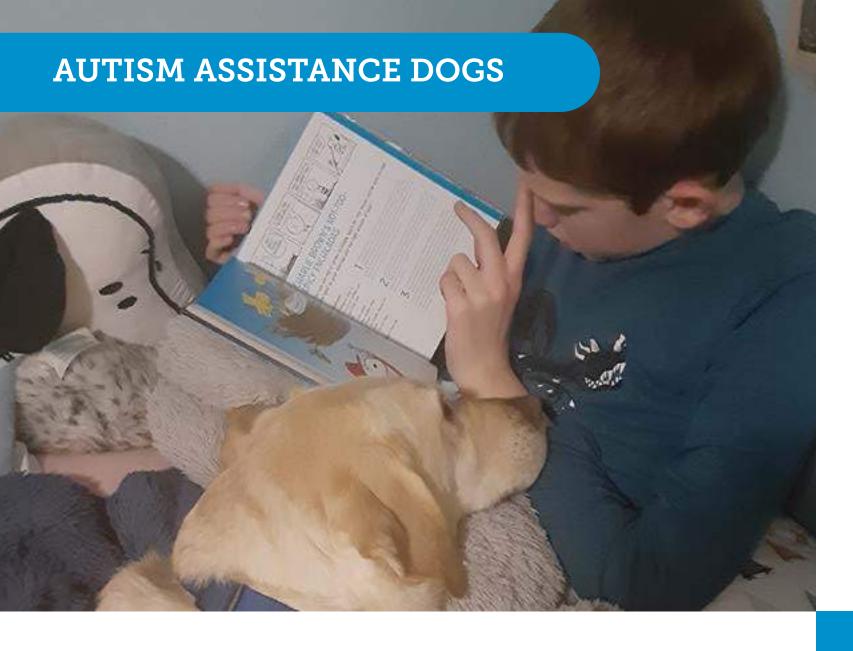
Transforming lives

In 2023, DBL introduced the Prison Puppy Raising Program. This unique program pairs incarcerated handlers with puppies, providing handlers an opportunity to contribute positively to society. Under the guidance of DBL staff, handlers learn effective positive reinforcement training techniques and instill fundamental obedience skills in the puppies. These skills serve as a robust foundation for the young dogs' advanced training at DBL's professional campuses, where they will eventually become invaluable Service Dogs.

Since the program's inception earlier this year, it has experienced plenty of early success, with ten puppies entering the program and multiple handlers actively participating in their training.

DBL Breeder Dog Frosty has also contributed to the success of the program, when one of her puppies joined the program. The Prison Puppy Raising program truly is a win-win for all involved, with the puppies benefiting from undivided attention and the handlers gaining a sense of accomplishment and healing through their involvement in the program.





loves to play keep-away with her toys and has never met a person she didn't love. But she's ready to provide a "squish," calming deep body pressure, or "settle" as soon as she's needed.

"James rests his head on her, like a living, snuggly pillow," Erin says. "The feeling of her breathing is calming."

Taylor provides security, consistency and responsibility for James, who feeds and walks with her. It's a dream come true for Erin and Steve, who never thought it would be possible. Throughout the long wait for a match, the family appreciated the regular communication from DBL.

"Some organizations give off a vibe that you're just a number" Erin says. "But Dogs for Better Lives is so welcoming and informative. They made it easy to apply. They were friendly and supportive during the process. They stayed in contact, even during the craziness of the pandemic. I'm just amazed by their organization."

Watching James and Taylor quietly relaxing in a sunny spot together warms his parents' hearts.

"I believe this will be one of the most profound friendships of James' life," Erin says. "It can be hard to depend on people, but it's easy to depend on dogs."



"I believe this will be one of the most profound friendships of James' life."

- Erin

Calm companionship during Taylor-time

Going out for ice cream changed the lives of one family. Visiting a scoop shop near their home in Spokane, Washington in 2019, Erin, Steve and James happened to meet Rambler, a DBL Facility Dog who was getting acclimated to his new home and partner, Winifred Daisley.

Erin had already done the research. She knew they couldn't afford a Service Dog for their son James, even though she'd read about how beneficial they can be for children with autism. But she'd never heard of DBL

until that chance encounter. She immediately applied. The family waited hopefully throughout the pandemic.

Then James' "dog sister" Taylor joined the family in 2022.

"James doesn't have much social contact, so Taylor is his best friend," Erin says. "She is a social bridge for him. He's proud of having such a nice dog."

Taylor sleeps with James each night and keeps him company while he draws or reads. A dainty girl, Taylor



Expanded service with fewer restrictions

For Autism Assistance Dogs, Dogs for Better Lives is currently serving children between the ages of 4 - 12 in the following states:

- California
- Connecticut
- Maine
- Massachusetts
- New Hampshire
- New York
- Oregon
- Rhode Island
- Vermont
- Washington

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FACILITY DOGS

A Salute to Major

With his soft brown eyes and wagging tail, Major is a pioneer. He's the first Service Dog ever in the school district in Tacoma, Washington.

"Major loves coming to work, trotting in wearing his bandana and carrying his toy," says Kristin, school psychologist at Silas High School. "He's kind of famous. His whole job is to come to school and help people feel better."

While getting her degree, Kristin wrote a research paper about Service Dogs. Even so, she didn't know that Facility Dogs were an option until she happened to meet a DBL staff member. Kristin had to make a strong case to her school district leadership for permission to have a Facility Dog. Even after getting Major in 2022, there are strict limits around his access. Students have to come to him and only with teacher and parent permission. So, Kristin leaves her office door open.

"I have three to five kids every day who come to check in," Kristin says. "I'll ask if they want to talk to me or talk to Major. Many kids find it easier to talk to an animal."

The staff and faculty adore Major.

"Several of our teachers come to my office during their prep time and get support, too," Kristin says. "I use my mental health training to mitigate teacher burnout. Often our teachers say Major is the best part of their day."

For Kristin, Major helps her feel more satisfied. Her job requires a lot of desk work with little time for her passion, which is supporting positive mental health.

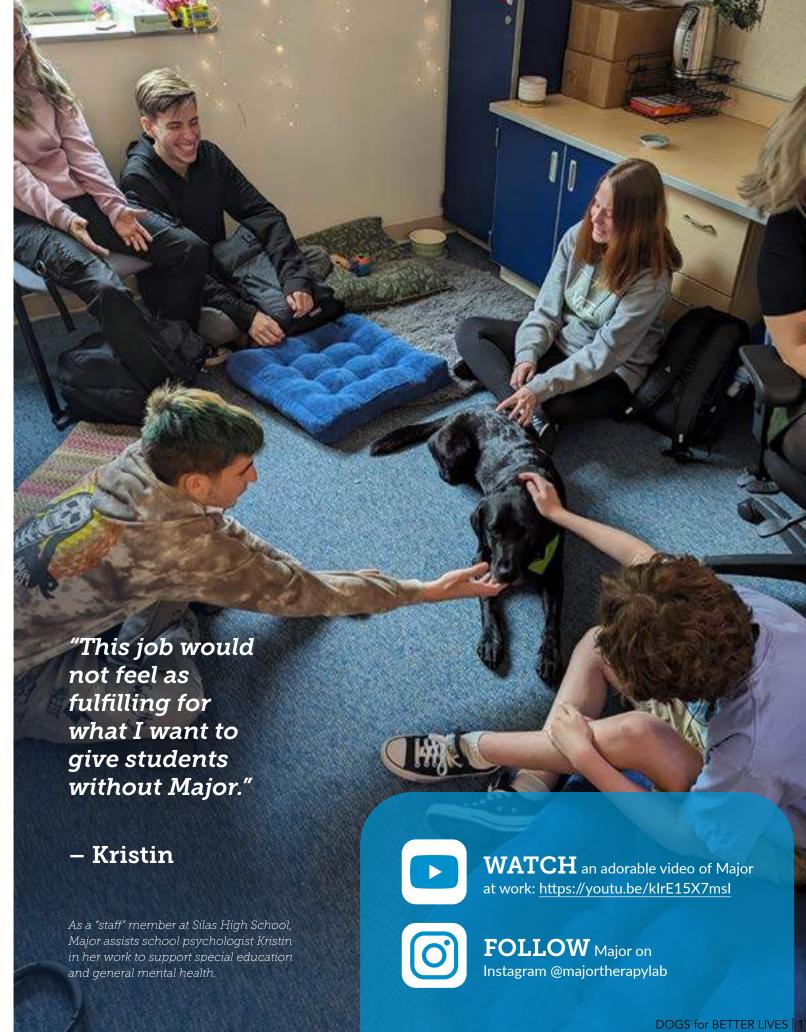


Major and Kristin.

"This job would not feel as fulfilling for what I want to give students without Major," she says. "Since he started coming to school with me, there are so many more students in my office, and I feel more of a part of our school community."

Major is trained to give deep pressure therapy, to allow students to lie on him, and to approach and engage with students when invited.

"The facility dogs program at Dogs for Better Lives is special," Kristin says. "Anyone who needs an Assistance Dog has so many barriers, from the price to finding an organization you trust. I've had such positive experiences with Dogs for Better Lives. They've given me so much support."



16 Dogs for Better Lives

DOGS for BETTER LIVES 1

HEARING ASSISTANCE DOGS Life-changing friendships support independence

Pringles loves people and attention. His partner, Sheryl, has always been more reserved.

"Pringles helps me come out of my shell," she says. "Without him, I would be very reclusive and wouldn't have the quality of life I have now."

Sheryl was 4 years old when her parents realized she was partially deaf. After a virus in early adulthood took the remainder of her hearing in one ear, she retains about 40% hearing with an aid in the other ear. She was always fiercely independent and didn't think she needed any assistance. Then, her grandmother had a stroke.

Sheryl was dog-sitting her friend's Labrador that week. One evening, the dog was a pest, constantly wanting attention. Finally, Sheryl followed the dog to the bathroom to find her grandmother on the floor.

Sheryl deeply appreciates that DBL doesn't charge big fees or require fundraising large sums of money to qualify for a service dog. For her, having Hearing Assistance Dogs Shadow and Pringles has been life-changing.

"That dog saved my grandmother's life," Sheryl says. "That's when I realized I needed a Service Dog."

She retrieved a brochure that had been hanging on the fridge for about 10 years. Her parents gave it to her after visiting an event about Hearing Assistance Dogs. She reached out to Dogs for Better Lives, and soon she received Shadow, an Australian Shepherd. Shadow was her first Hearing Assistance Dog. He was smart, disciplined and agile, which suited Sheryl's lifestyle and career. He passed on in 2015.

In 2017, Pringles came to live with Sheryl in North Carolina. A Patterdale and Lakeland terrier mix, his floppy ears are an irresistible magnet for friendly scratches. His personality is the polar opposite of Shadow's, but he's just as trained and capable of keeping Sheryl alert to important sounds. And he's teaching her about enjoying life.

"They say you get the right dog for the right time of your life," Sheryl says. "Now that I'm retired, Pringles has taught me a lot about relaxing and opening up socially. Why are you so serious, he says to me. Relax!"

CAREER CHANGE DOGS

Bold Bond braves disasters to search for signs of life

In February, a massive earthquake in Turkey toppled buildings across a wide region, burying countless people in debris. Less than 24 hours later, Bond and his handler, John Paul "J.P.", boarded a military jet to assist with the search for survivors. Bond scrambled over mounds of rubble, using his keen senses to look for life signs. Sadly, this time, he didn't find any. This was Bond and J.P.'s first deployment as partners, but they are always training and ready for the next call.

Before his search and rescue career, Bond began life as a DBL puppy. As his personality emerged, the trainers decided he was too high-energy to be an Assistance Dog. Instead, they called Sylvia Stoney, canine recruitment manager for the National Disaster Search Dog Foundation in California. She came to DBL's Oregon campus to meet Bond.

"High intensity is just what we need in our dogs," Stoney says. "After testing, I could see Bond was excited and boisterous, ready to go 110%."

Bond changed careers and learned new skills, especially how to bark alert on a live human scent. Once he graduated, Bond joined firefighter/paramedic J.P. as part of California Task Force 2, one of only two groups in the U.S. that deploys to international disasters. J.P. and Bond achieved Federal Emergency Management Agency certification in 2021. To stay prepared, dogs and handlers do training with helicopters and water rescues, crawl through tunnels, climb ladders and more.

"Dogs for Better Lives does such a great job with their puppy raisers and trainers, so their dogs have all the foundations in place," Sylvia said "Our part was to direct that passion and drive. We have three dogs career changed from Dogs for Better Lives. All have graduated from our program and are now paired and working."



Search Dog Foundation. As a search-and-rescue dog, he trains to find survivors in natural and human-made disasters.

Photo by Dane Mehl.

18 Dogs for Better Lives



Life with puppies is messy but beautiful

Carisa Morales of Columbus, Ohio had fostered dogs before, but she was considering taking it a step further.

"Many volunteers will take a foster but not a pregnant foster," she said. "It's a needed role, and I thought I could do it."

She got a call from her local shelter that a Chihuahua mix had been dumped to be euthanized due to

pregnancy. Carisa brought the mama home and assisted at her first whelping.

"I loved it," she says. "It was a lot of mess and work but so fun and rewarding to see puppies being born and take that first breath."

When DBL needed someone to help with DBL mama Frosty's first litter, Carisa volunteered. DBL brought

Frosty to Carisa's home, where she lived for the next three months. On July 11, Frosty had eight puppies.

"I got in the whelping pen with her," Carisa says. "Then I slept by the puppies for the first couple of weeks, just in case."

Once the puppies were toddling about, Carisa began introducing them to all kinds of new experiences: sounds, music, grass, different surface textures. They loved a tunnel she had for them to crawl through. After a few weeks, it was time for the puppies to move on to their DBL volunteer puppy raisers.

"It's hard to let go, like sending your kids off to college but not even knowing which one," Carisa says. "A few people have sent photos to me. It wraps a warm blanket around your heart to know they are in loving homes and being trained for an important purpose."

For her important role, Carisa was allowed to name one of the puppies. Since it was an "M" litter, "Morales" fit the bill. Though a huge proponent of shelter rescues, Carisa also believes in what DBL is doing with the investment in breeding special pups for temperament and genetic health.

"I like that Dogs for Better Lives is serious about their mission," she says. "I love to help people through the love of a dog."

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2022-2023 Financials

Support and Revenue

Contributions & Grants: \$3,138,192 Program Service Revenue: \$8,952 Investment Income: \$233,996 Other Revenue: \$(428,976)

Total Support & Revenue: \$2,952,164

Expenses

Salaries, other compensation, \$2,803,127 employee benefits:

\$1,308,362 Other Expenses:

Total Expenses: \$4,111,489 Revenue Less Expenses: \$(1,159,325)

*All figures are based on our 2022-2023 IRS form 990, and have been audited by Aiken & Sanders, Inc., Montesano, Washington. To view a copy of this report and our IRS Form 990, visit our website at dogsforbetterlives.org/ financials/. Dogs for Better Lives is a national 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, founded in 1977. Federal tax ID number: 93-0681311.

Support & Revenue

16

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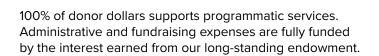
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Assets

Total Assets: \$16,998,55 \$311,885 Total Liabilities:

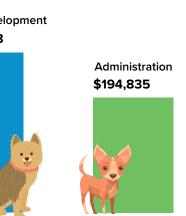
Net Assets: \$16,686,673







Fund Development \$242,278



Total Expenses

\$4,111,489

Revenue Less Expenses **\$(1.159,325)**

\$(1,15)

Leadership

Board of Directors / officers

Dr. Danielle Rose, Chair Tom Dobry, Vice Chair Blake Thurman, Treasurer Garrett West, Secretary

Board of Directors / members

Stacie Bianco

Dr. Joshua Broadwater

Tim Cibula

Cindy Culbertson

Stephanie Deines

Lisa De Vivo

Michelle Farabaugh

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Patty Jensen

Emily Nelson

Rich Perlman

Dr. Chelly Quinn

Lisa Robinson

Stacy Tollie

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Harvey Potts, Vice President of Development

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