



Formerly *Dogs for the Deaf*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CEO Blake Matray Departing Dogs for Better Lives on High Note, After Four Years of Accomplishment

CENTRAL POINT, OR – President and CEO Blake Matray will be leaving his position with [Dogs for Better Lives](http://DogsforBetterLives.org) (DBL), effective March 9. Matray is leaving on a high note, just two weeks after speaking at Elite Hearing Network’s annual Summit fundraiser in Cancun, Mexico. The event raised a record \$125,000 to benefit DBL and the nonprofit’s nationally renowned [Hearing Assistance Dog](http://HearingAssistanceDog.org) program.

“In his nearly four years as the leader of Dogs for the Deaf, now Dogs for Better Lives, he has accomplished so much and leaves big shoes to fill. Blake will be truly missed by staff, board, donors, and those who knew him from his many travels across the country while representing Dogs for Better Lives,” said Board Chair Ron Holzkamp.

During Matray’s tenure, DBL has seen its annual Assistance Dog placements significantly grow and accomplished a successful organizational rebranding with a new name and logo. In Spring 2016, DBL placed its first Autism Assistance Dog in southern Oregon and the program continues to grow across the state of Oregon. An 18,900 sq. ft., 40-kennel Second Training Facility is nearing completion and donations have steadily increased year over year.

“I have an opportunity to return to my roots in Alaska and work at a job that will allow me to spend more time with my family. At the end of the day, it’s not about me; it’s about the amazing work that DBL does, bettering people’s lives and truly making a difference with every Assistance Dog we professionally train and place,” said Matray.

Blake Matray retired as a Lieutenant Colonel with the U.S. Air Force in 2013 after a 23-year career overseeing flight operations, training, strategic planning and risk management. A graduate of Air Force Undergraduate Pilot Training, Blake went on to fly the B-52 and KC-135 aircraft. He is a graduate of the United States Air Force Academy and has a Master’s Degree in Management from Ellis University in Chicago.

The DBL Board of Directors has begun a national search for Matray’s successor. Board Chair Ron Holzkamp will become acting CEO after Matray leaves.

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Dogs for Better Lives is a national award-winning 501(c)3 nonprofit organization focusing on the training and placing of [Hearing Assistance Dogs](http://HearingAssistanceDogs.org), [Program Assistance Dogs](http://ProgramAssistanceDogs.org), and [Autism Assistance Dogs](http://AutismAssistanceDogs.org). Accredited by [Assistance Dogs International \(ADI\)](http://AssistanceDogsInternational.org) and recognized by [Charity Navigator](http://CharityNavigator.org) as a 4-star nonprofit, Dogs for Better Lives has been rescuing dogs, bettering lives, and providing Assistance Dogs since 1977.

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