



Formerly *Dogs for the Deaf*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Dogs for Better Lives' Board Expands with National and Diverse Presence**

**CENTRAL POINT, OR** -- At the August board meeting of Dogs for Better Lives, the national nonprofit brought on three new board members, including two national representatives. Richard Walter (Bass Lake, CA), Doug Hexter (Easthampton, MA), and Blake Thurman (Central Point, OR) were all approved, bringing the board to eleven current members. Board Chairman Al Lane said he is extremely excited with the addition of the new members.

"They each bring unique skills and experience that will be instrumental in taking Dogs for Better Lives into the future," Lane said. "They will play a major role on the board and assist in navigating DBL through the development of the newly rolled out Autism Program, as well as providing stability to our existing programs. I look forward to seeing the impact and contributions of each of the new board members!"

Richard Walter has been engaged with Dogs for Better Lives for nearly 17 years as a Hearing Dog client, and more recently by volunteering as a spokesperson and interviewer in DBL's National Ambassador Program. Richard has been busy presenting across California to local community clubs and businesses about the importance and value DBL provides with every dog placed. Now on his second Hearing Dog, Noni, Richard truly appreciates how a professionally trained Assistance Dog is bettering his own life. Richard is retired from the insurance industry, where he worked for more than 25 years in California.

Doug Hexter is CEO and founder of WoofTrax, a brand engagement platform that promotes healthful dog ownership by connecting pet brands, pet parents and animal non-profits in a mutually beneficial way. WoofTrax is a pet-focused fitness app designed to engage pet owners around their daily dog walk, by linking each walk with the chance to earn donations for their chosen animal non-profit. Prior to founding WoofTrax, Doug was in technology development for several small and large companies including America Online and GE Capital. Doug was raised in New England and currently resides in Western Massachusetts

Blake Thurman has been with Rogue Credit Union since 2013 and currently serves as the bank's CFO. He received his Masters of Accountancy from Brigham Young University and received his CPA designation in 2001. Having a family member on the spectrum was part of the inspiration for Blake's desire to get more involved with the nationally renowned nonprofit. Blake also has sat on several boards and been engaged in his local community, including serving at a homeless shelter for women and children, working with United Way, being involved with Junior Achievement, and volunteering with the Boy Scouts of America.

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*Dogs for Better Lives is a national 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization focusing on the training and placing of Hearing Assistance Dogs, Program Assistance Dogs, and Autism Assistance Dogs. Accredited by [Assistance Dogs International \(ADI\)](#) and recognized by [Charity Navigator](#) 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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