

THE CANINE LISTENER

Dogs for Better Lives
Fall 2018 • NO.133

Magazine

A Second Training Facility

For DBL

Maria is Using Her Noodle

In Charleston, SC

Rescue Me:

The Story of Flynn



One dog rescued. Two lives changed.

Jake was at a shelter in Bakersfield, California.

He had been picked up as a stray and his future was uncertain. Shirley started losing her hearing in her early 20s and it was progressively getting worse.

Shirley needed help to feel more secure in her home and in the outside world. Our trainers saw

Jake's potential to be a Hearing Assistance Dog. Jake was a rescue. We rescued Jake. Jake rescued Shirley. Dogs for Better Lives. Our name is our promise.



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Back in 2014, a few board members, some DBL staff and our CEO got together and formed a facilities committee to answer two very important questions: Should and could DBL realistically build a second training facility?



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On the Cover

The front and back cover photos feature Dogs for Better Lives' client Maria with her Hearing Dog Noodle.

Photos taken in Charleston, South Carolina by Roxy Taylor, Art of Roxy Photography.

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BOARD CHAIRMAN

LETTER FROM AL LANE



This past year, my wife Kim and I had the pleasure of raising one of the puppies for Dogs for Better Lives (DBL). Harley, a smart, sweet, lovable, yellow Lab puppy is slated to become an Autism Assistance Dog. This pup had a major impact on us. Not only was he an amazing dog to have in our home, but he also provided us the opportunity to get an up-close look at the day-to-day operations of Dogs for Better Lives. We were able to see for ourselves how great the staff is, how much they care for the dogs, and the quality of their professional training. Multiple trainers helped us throughout the year, and I must admit we probably learned as much, if not more than Harley did!

Having been a board member for DBL over the past 3 years, I have been fortunate to have a front-row seat to witness the amazing changes and growth that have taken place under the leadership of former Board Chairman Ron Holzkamp. The monumental task of changing the name and adding the autism program to such a well-established organization could only have happened through the coordination of an amazing staff and cohesive board. Ron has been, and continues to be, a major asset to the organization and we thank him for his efforts as they have been greatly appreciated!

This past year at DBL has been a very busy and exciting one! Our previous president and CEO, Blake Matray, left the organization to move back to Alaska. After an exhaustive, nation-wide search for a new president and CEO, I am very pleased to announce that we have hired Bryan Williams to fill that role! Bryan comes to DBL with a vast amount of experience in service and rescue animal organizations. Bryan is a native Floridian, and most recently served as executive director of the Southeast Region of Canine Companions for Independence. His experience also includes tenure as executive director of Community Foundation of South Lake, as well as chief financial officer for Halifax Humane Society. We are very excited to bring Bryan's intelligence, energy, and experience into DBL to lead an already amazing staff into a very promising future.

In addition to hiring a new president & CEO, we have also just completed construction on our new 18,900-square-foot Second Training Facility! This first class 40-kennel facility will be the perfect place to expand our professional training services and continue to build all of our programs. The five training apartments above the kennels will provide our professional staff with state-of-the-art facilities to ensure top notch, real world training as well as monitor and track the goals for each dog on-site. The opportunities for growth and expansion of all of our programs, especially the Autism Assistance Dog Program, is tied directly to this new building, and we are extremely excited to have it up and running!

The heart and soul of DBL continues to be the collective group of people who have a passion for the mission and this organization. Our success, and our ability to grow on the tremendous achievements of those who have impacted DBL in the past, is a direct result of our generous group of donors, volunteers, ambassadors, staff, and board members! Together, we continue to take part in creating an important resource for those who utilize the services of DBL, as well as help to provide a safe, life-long commitment to all the dogs rescued and trained through our organization. It is truly awe-inspiring to listen to testimonials of individuals and families impacted by these amazing dogs and this incredible organization!

Thank you all for your continued hard work and support of DBL and our mission!

Sincerely,

Al Lane, Board Chairman

PRESIDENT & CEO

LETTER FROM BRYAN WILLIAMS

I've always loved animals, beginning with falling in love with my childhood Siberian husky, who had one brown and one blue eye. My wife and I have a rescue dog, have fostered kittens, and provided a loving home to two cats who randomly wandered into our lives -- one who walked right through an open front door on moving day. My involvement with assistance dog organizations began with that love of animals.

But it's not why I chose and am incredibly excited to join the Dogs for Better Lives team. It's the impact assistance dogs make on the lives of the people we serve. Along with the tasks our dogs help people with, it is also the incredibly powerful bond and love our dogs provide. These life-changing placements keep me enthused and committed to our important mission.



Moving across the country to the beautiful Rogue Valley in August with my wife and three children was a scary proposition. It was a decision that took a lot of introspection and soul searching. We took on this new life adventure because of the opportunity to make a difference, to meaningfully contribute to an amazing organization, and because of the wonderful people we've already met along the way. Just like the cat who walked through our front door, in life, opportunities are presented to those who approach things with an open heart and mind. Thank you to everyone in the community who has already made us feel so welcome.

I come to DBL with more than 13 years of nonprofit management experience including my most recent role at Canine Companions for Independence (CCI), where I served as the executive director of CCI's Southeast Region in Orlando. During my time at the region, we achieved record-breaking dog placements, significantly increased revenue, welcomed a new chapter, and unveiled and implemented a plan to improve campus grounds, which included an all-accessible playground and a sensory room. I also introduced tools for more data-based decision making and served on the national Strategy and Systems team, which focused on improving business processes.

Before CCI, I served as the executive director of the Community Foundation of South Lake and held development director and CFO roles with the Halifax Humane Society. I am eager to bring my experience with nonprofit organizations, and some innovative approaches, to DBL.

The Board's vision is to grow the organization while continuing to uphold its history of excellence. With dedicated volunteers and supporters like you, I believe my experience will allow me to work with the amazing team in place to accomplish that goal.

Thank you for your continued support as we move to the next step along the amazing journey of rescuing, training, and placing dogs with people who can benefit from them.

Best Regards,

Bryan Williams
President & CEO

WE GET LETTERS



A dear friend - an excellent example of love, respect, and giving (not to mention a dog lover) -- just lost his father. This donation is in his father's name. Mr. Lazarus, may you rest in peace and forever be proud of raising a role model and mentor to so many.

-Bryan H., Lake Oswego, OR

Daddy, are there dogs in heaven?
Son, it wouldn't be heaven, if there were no dogs there.
Thanks for all you do.

- Bob S., Dover, MA

THANK YOU so very, very much for my incredible wonderful Peaches!!! I've had her for 3 years this August 7. Boy oh boy, what a life changing gift she has been. I don't know how I made it through each day before she rescued me. The work you all do with dogs make such a difference. Thank you again Dogs for Better Lives. And very special thank you to Laura, Peaches' trainer, for all the hard work she did with her and love she gave her and for the perfect match. We love you Laura!

- Eleese H., Jacksonville, OR

George and my German shepherd dog, Scarlett, became porch pals on our walks in the neighborhood. We lost George about a week ago. Scarlett still stops to look up at the vacant porch to see if George is back yet. This donation was for George.

- Howard H., Rockingham, VA

Your organization helps both people and animals. As someone who has a hearing loss and was a teacher of the deaf I appreciate what you are doing

- Sherryl L., Warren, NJ

I have been a supporter of Dogs for the Deaf, now Dogs for Better Lives, for decades and really respect your mission. I particularly appreciate that you draw your dogs from shelters and save lives there too!

- Pamela S., Park Ridge IL

I already receive the Canine Listener, in print, and pass it on when I have read it. It lifts my spirits to read about the good being done, for people and for dogs. And helping autistic children is a wonderful addition to the program. Thank you all!

- Cynthia C., Jacksonville, OR

A member and founder of our chapter has passed away and his passion was Dogs for the Deaf (Dogs for Better Lives). In honor of his passing we would like to donate as a memorial to Dave DeWitte. He loved this charity and with his hard work our chapter has sponsored 12 dogs for DBL and has donated to many more. Through Dave's efforts one of our deaf chapter members received a hearing dog and it has made such a difference in her life.

- Judy Brown, Get Along Good Sam Chapter, Spokane, WA

WE GET LETTERS



This organization has been my favorite charity for many years. We visited the facility several years ago and heartily agree with your missions. I am most impressed that rescue has always been incorporated in your plan.

– Marlene & Larry A., Cheltenham, PA

I am a fifth grader from Pine Hill School. Every year the fifth graders participate in a citizenship project where the whole grade picks a fund or organization that helps the community or world. I chose Dogs for Better Lives because it helps disabled people by connecting them with dogs who can be helpful. I think what you are doing is inspiring and one day maybe I could start an organization like yours. Thank you so much for what you are doing.

– Nathan K., Sherborn, MA

I have hearing loss and although I do not require a service dog, I know some on Facebook and their stories inspire me. Bless all the dogs who are helping people and the people who train them!

– Jean B., Dover, DE

Your charity helps people and helps dogs at the same time, a winning combination.

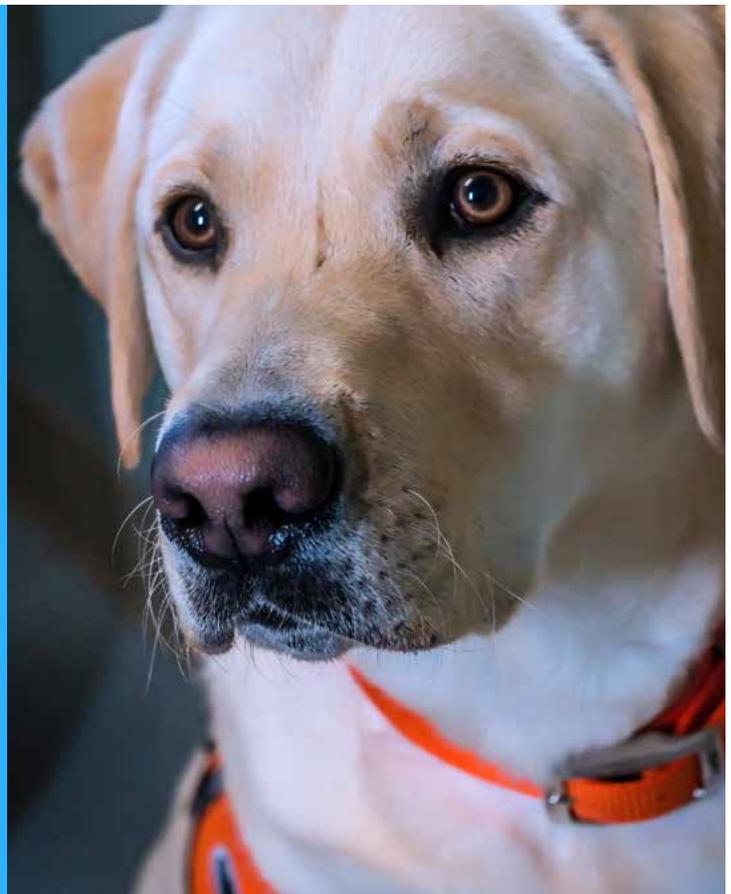
– Stuart E., Lynbrook, NY

Start a DIY fundraiser to help change lives.

Introducing a simple and creative
way to raise money for
Dogs for Better Lives.

You choose how to fundraise,
and we'll provide the tools to help you
succeed.

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MEET THE BOARD

Q&A with Al Lane, Board Chair



Al Lane was born and raised in Kansas City and received his Bachelor of Arts degree in economics from Ohio State University and his MBA from Baker University in Kansas. He began his career in the insurance industry and soon found his true calling when he transitioned to the movie theater industry. Al currently is the president and chief operating officer of Coming Attraction Theatres in Washington, Oregon, California and Alaska, with two fun centers and a mall.

Since 2013, Al and his wife Kim have lived in Rogue River, OR with their three dogs, Barney, Moose and Coco. Al and Kim are passionate about animals, having worked with various rescue groups in Kansas and Missouri, as well as with Dogs for Better Lives as foster puppy raisers.

Q: What attracted you to becoming a DBL board member, and how has being a DBL board member changed you?

A: I was asked about my interest in becoming a board member right at a time in my life when I was looking for a way to give back to our new community. I have some personal connections to the cause of DBL and love animals, so it seemed like a perfect fit. Having seen the process, and even having raised a foster pup for DBL, it puts the mission of DBL in a whole new light. I see the very real benefit DBL provides and it feels good to be a part of an organization that is helping so many people, as well as so many special dogs, to call our donors from time to time and thank them for their help.

Q: When did you first hear about Dogs for Better Lives?

A: Soon after moving to Southern Oregon from Kansas City, DBL (DFD at the time) became a frontrunner when asking people about the best and most respected local charitable organizations.

Q: With so many great organizations to support, why should others choose to support DBL?

A: There are many great organizations out there that need and deserve support. Individuals typically support organizations where they feel a connection and they, and/or the organization, can have an impact on the community. DBL checks so many boxes when people are looking to support a charity close to their hearts. DBL helps children with autism and their families, people with hearing loss, children in schools needing a little extra help from a loving dog, and to top it off, numerous shelter dogs are saved and given a chance at a career in service. It's an easy organization to feel a connection with!

Q: What do you think other people should know about this organization?

A: The behind-the-scenes work it takes to get a fully trained Assistance Dog. It is amazing how much is involved in getting each dog from acquisition (or puppyhood) to placement. There are so many people involved, and it is very expensive to raise and train a dog to be qualified to work as a service animal. It takes a team to acquire the right dogs (or puppies), find the right foster homes, make sure they receive the proper vet care, provide basic training to foster pups (and parents), provide professional training once they are ready, ensure they have food/shelter, place them in the right homes, and finally follow and ensure proper care for the life of each dog, even if they do not make it as an Assistance Dog and have to be adopted out as a Career Change Dog. It is a major commitment to each dog, which in turn provides a great connection to clients.

Q: What would you say to someone considering joining DBL as a staff member, volunteer or a board member?

A: If you have a passion for the mission, and/or any specific aspect of the organization, it is very easy to want to jump in and help. Seeing the result of a well-trained dog being placed with a child on the autism spectrum, and watching the instant recognition from both the child and the dog that the dog is there to work and help that child, makes it unbelievably rewarding for anyone playing even a small part in making that happen.

Q: Al, what inspires you?

A: I am inspired by stories of people (or animals) overcoming large obstacles to achieve great things. I am amazed by the capabilities of these well-trained dogs and I love to see the impact they have on clients and their families. It's a privilege to be involved with such a wonderful organization!



PLACEMENT HIGHLIGHTS



NOVI

Hearing Dog Novi is a 2.5 year-old black Lab who was placed with Samantha in Oregon in late spring. Novi came to us from Guide Dogs for the Blind and she is helping Samantha with confidence and sound awareness. Novi's trainer, Jess, noted that Sam and Novi are similar in multiple ways. Throughout training week, Sam would comment about Novi's character, saying, "Hey, I'm that way too!" Congratulations Sam and Novi on your well-matched partnership!



RUMI

Rumi, a 3-year-old mixed breed, came to us from Valley Animal Center in Fresno, CA and was trained as a Hearing Dog. Rumi was placed with Sally in California to help her with companionship and hearing assistance with the kitchen timer, tea kettle, door knock, smoke alarm and home phone. Sally is thrilled to have Rumi by her side, and it's safe to say Rumi is happy to be with Sally. The second night that Rumi was at his new home, he dragged his blanket and Nylabone from his crate to lay down next to Sally.



WILONA

Hearing Dog Wilona was placed with Annette in Georgia in May. Wilona, a 2.5-year-old yellow Labrador, came to us from Guide Dogs for the Blind and will help Annette with companionship and sounds due to her increased hearing loss. Annette lives in a coastal community close to the barrier islands off the coast of the Atlantic Ocean and enjoys boating. She waited 2 years to receive a Hearing Dog, and reported that Wilona is a perfect match and worth the wait! Wilona's trainer Laura added, "Wilona knew she was at home the very first day, and she'll enjoy boating with Annette at least twice a week!"



GENESIS

Hearing Dog Genesis was placed with Wayne in Illinois this spring, and is working six different sounds in her new large two-story home. Genesis is a 2.5-year-old golden retriever/Labrador mix and came to us from Guide Dogs for the Blind. Wayne loves her high energy level, and really enjoyed learning to work with her during their training week. Genesis was happy to have a person all to herself, to be working sounds, and running on Wayne's acreage. Wayne's wife Fran added, "Wayne is in love with Gen -- he thinks she is the best at everything! They are out and about in public daily and she has done so well."



FLYNN

Two-year-old Flynn, a terrier mix who came to us from Animal Rescue of Fresno, was placed as a Hearing Dog with Gregory in California. Flynn will help Gregory by alerting him to the oven timer, telephone, door knock and smoke alarm because, as Gregory said, "I hear like a dust bunny when I'm not wearing my hearing aids!" Flynn and Gregory bonded quickly and they will enjoy life with housemates Lulu the kitty and Mary the tortoise



BODIE

Hearing Dog Bodie, a 2.5-year-old terrier mix, was placed with Dorothy in Pennsylvania in early spring. Bodie came to us from Valley Animal Center in Fresno and will help Dorothy with sound awareness and companionship. Dorothy loves to volunteer at her local senior center thrift store, and having Bodie by her side will help her remain independent and connected to her community.



NOODLE

Two-year-old Noodle, a yellow Lab, came to us from Guide Dogs for the Blind and was placed as a Hearing Dog with Maria in South Carolina. Noodle is alerting Maria to her phone, alarm clock, smoke alarm, door knock and the oven timer. Maria is thrilled to have Noodle by her side. During placement week, Maria reported, "Having [trainers] Andrea and Mike here this week has been a blessing. They've been very patient and are just so reassuring. I'm super blessed to have Noodle in my life!"



DUMAS

Autism Assistance Dog Dumas came to us from Guide Dogs for the Blind and was placed with Liam, a young boy on the autism spectrum. Dumas, a 2.5-year-old golden retriever/Labrador mix, will help with safety/anchoring in public, confidence building, and will provide a calming effect for Liam. Jessica, Liam's mom, commented, "Every morning after Dumas goes outside, he runs back into the boys' room and jumps on Liam's bed to wake him up -- sometimes sitting on him. Liam loves it!"



MONTESSA

Hearing Dog Montessa was placed with Julia and Ryan in Michigan in May. Tessa, a 2.5-year-old golden retriever/Labrador mix, came to us from Guide Dogs for the Blind and will help both Julia and Ryan with companionship and sound awareness in public and at home. Tessa is already making a difference – the very first morning of placement week, Tessa alerted Julia to the alarm clock. Nice job, Tessa!



BELLE

Hearing Dog Belle is a 2-year-old black Labrador who was placed with Lacie in Oregon this summer. Belle came to us from Guide Dogs for the Blind as a pup and was raised by foster couple Paul and Virginia. Belle is helping Lacie with hearing awareness in public and at home, as well as providing companionship for Lacie's outdoor activities. Belle's trainer Jess was amazed the first night of placement week when Belle jumped onto Lacie's bed, tapped her, and ran to her bedroom door where Lacie's mom had just knocked. This occurred before Jess and Belle had a chance to practice that sound with Lacie – way to go, Belle!

Belle's Journey

Paula and I picked up Belle from Guide Dogs for the Blind in San Rafael in December 2016. Poor Paula had to deal with both me and Belle, for I had food poisoning and Miss Belle was singing us the "song of her people" the whole way home. From there, Belle went on to her first foster home where she started her training.



Due to no fault of her own, Belle was brought back to us and spent quite a bit of time here on campus. Over the course of her stay, Jess fell head over heels for this beautiful onyx-haired puppy and worked with her every day of her stay. Then one day, with a little help from our board chairman's wife, Kim Lane, we were able to talk Virginia and Paul into fostering Miss



Belle. Virginia, Paul, Maggie & Martha (their other two dogs) worked their tails off giving Belle the foundation she needed to come back into the program, and I must say they did a phenomenal job. Once Belle graduated the puppy program, Jess and I waited with fingers crossed that she and Belle would be reunited once again -- and

then the announcement came that Belle was on Jess' training string!!!!

Jess and Belle have worked so incredibly hard together as a team and their hard work has paid off. Once I heard the news that Belle had passed her hearing dog test, I was ecstatic as Belle had come so far. Jess, you are an incredible trainer and deserve to be acknowledged. I have relied on you heavily throughout this whole process of working with our puppy raisers and am never disappointed. Thank you for everything you have done; you rock!



– Hannah Crane, Foster Puppy Coordinator

FOLLOW UPS



BRITT

Program Assistance Dog Britt was placed with special education teacher Gloria 1.5 years ago. The team is doing well together and they have a very solid bond. Britt continues to be a big help with the students by being an attentive listener as they work their reading skills, and spending time with Britt motivates students to have good behavior in class and participate in lessons.



DJ

Hearing Dog DJ, a 14-year-old pug mix, was placed with Jim in Alabama 9 years ago and has recently retired. DJ has been a companion and helper for Jim for many years and has performed his Hearing Dog duties well; at times going above and beyond his training to alert Jim to new sounds and situations. Congrats, DJ, on your many years of amazing service to Jim!

 *Editor's note: DBL sends our heartfelt condolences to Jim on the recent passing of DJ.*



RENO

Hearing Dog Reno was placed with Shirley in South Carolina 1 year ago and he has made such a difference in her life. Reno alerts Shirley to the phone, door knocks, smoke alarms, and does a great job helping her with sound awareness wherever they go. Shirley is very thankful to have Reno by her side and said, "I feel blessed to have Reno. Having Reno in my life was definitely worth the wait!"



NONI

Three-year-old Noni is Richard's second Hearing Dog from DBL. According to Richard, "Noni is very different from Jonah (his previous Hearing Dog), but she is just perfect for me at this stage in my life." Noni is doing a great job alerting Richard to the door -- she even alerts to UPS leaving packages on the porch. In addition to being a DBL client, Richard is also a DBL ambassador and board member.



BARNEY

Dawna and Hearing Dog Barney of Washington have been a team for nearly 5 years in Washington, and he continues to do a great job alerting Dawna to the doorbell, oven timer and the phone. Barney is Dawna's constant companion and she adores him, saying, "I could not be as happy as I am right now... I don't know what I'd do without my little guy!"



GRACIE

Polly and Hearing Dog Gracie have been a team in Georgia for 5 years and they're still going strong! Gracie is a Chihuahua mix who came to us from Valley Oak SPCA. Polly describes Gracie as "the most loving dog ever!" and enjoys watching how proud Gracie is of herself after alerting her to a sound, including the phone, door knock and alarm clock.



MAPLE

Hearing Dog Maple and Karen have been together for just over a year and they are doing great. Maple is a 3-year-old terrier mix and came to us from Southern Oregon Humane Society. Karen feels very lucky to have Maple and says she has become so much more aware of what's happening around her because of Maple's assistance. Way to go, Maple!



TRACY

Michele and Hearing Dog Tracy recently completed their first year together. Tracy is a 3-year-old Labrador retriever who came to us from Guide Dogs for the Blind. Michele said Tracy brings her a sense of security when she travels and that everyone loves her. Having Tracy by her side gives Michele the opportunity to educate others about Hearing Dogs.



TANGO

Nikki and Hearing Dog Tango have been a team for 6.5 years and they are doing great. Tango is a papillon/terrier mix who came to us from Central California (Fresno) SPCA. Tango is Nikki's second Hearing Dog from DBL and works all of his sounds really well, especially the alarm clock. Nikki tells us it's fun watching Tango and the cat play together!



DELIGHT

Danielle and Hearing Dog Delight have been a team for 9 months in North Carolina. Danielle loves Delight's gentle demeanor and her "melt-into-you" touch, especially when Danielle is feeling tired and not hearing things well. "Delight always boosts my energy and gives me the extra reassurance that she's there to help me," Danielle said.

Danielle is a pediatric doctor and shared a special story about life with Delight: "Recently I saw a little 19-month-old girl who was sitting on the exam table when Delight and I walked in. She smiled the biggest smile and her eyes were as big as saucers! Delight settled in her 'down' position, and the little girl watched intently, making little movements with her hands when Delight would move her head. I had my back turned away from Delight and was listening to the girl's heart with my electronic stethoscope. Suddenly the little girl started tapping my arm and wiggling harder to show me something about Delight. Delight had put her head down on the floor to wait, curling slightly into a doggie nap. Our little patient was totally enthralled and hardly noticed her medical exam! I get the same excited feeling having such a beautiful, well-trained dog as my hearing companion. Many thanks!"



RUBEN

Nine-year-old Ruben, a miniature poodle mix, has been assisting Kathy in Oregon for nearly 6 years. Ruben has been very helpful in alerting Kathy to the oven timer, smoke alarm and name call, and he has developed a special relationship with one of Kathy's cats. "It's very entertaining watching them play together," Kathy said.

LOS ANGELES DONOR APPRECIATION EVENT



Brian, Ryan, Emily, Richard and Noni

up until he passed in 2016.” Richard also noted, “Jonah and Noni were the best people magnets - you can’t imagine how many people ask, “is your dog in training?” This leading question allows Richard to explain what a Hearing Dog is and what Dogs for Better Lives does for both dogs and clients.

Also present at the event was DBL ambassador and actor, Ryan Lane, who graciously carved out time for a few photos with guests and DBL board and staff members.

Dogs for Better Lives hosted an appreciation event for its Los Angeles donors earlier this year. The event was held at the downtown San Antonio Winery - a beautiful setting for this special gathering.

DBL client, ambassador and board member, Richard, was the guest speaker and shared his experience with having hearing assistance dogs by his side, and how his first Hearing Dog Jonah and his current Hearing Dog Noni, have enriched his life.

“Jonah gave me the best years of my life - he assisted me with sounds like the doorbell and telephone. I felt like we were pioneers for DBL because we went everywhere together



Ryan Lane selfie with event attendees

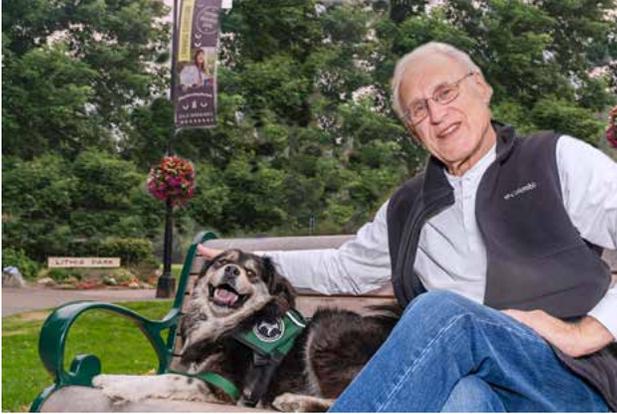
AUTISM ASSISTANCE DOG PROGRAM EXPANDS TO OREGON AND WASHINGTON

This past spring, we were excited to announce the expansion of our Autism Assistance Dog program into the metro areas of Portland and Salem, OR. We initially launched our autism program in 2016 in southern Oregon and expanded our reach to families in central Oregon in 2017.

While the majority of our dogs are rescued from shelters, rescue dogs are not ideal for the Autism Assistance Dog program. We need to know the complete history of a dog and have a thorough understanding of temperament before we can consider that dog for our Autism Assistance Dog program. Therefore, we also began a small breeding program, relying primarily on golden retrievers and Labradors, to support the growing need for Autism Assistance Dogs.

The new breeding program also necessitated a foster puppy program. At 8 weeks old, puppies in our Autism Assistance Dog program are paired with volunteer foster families. During their first year, the puppies are regularly brought back together for classes and some basic training. At one year of age, the prospective Autism Assistance Dog is then assigned to one of our certified assistance dog trainers and spends the next 4 to 6 months undergoing extensive training. It can take 2 years from birth for the Autism Assistance Dog to be placed with a client, provided the pup graduates from the challenging program. Since our Autism Assistance Dog program’s inception, we have placed four Autism Assistance Dogs.

DENNIS POWERS



Dennis Powers with DBL Facility Dog, Hilton in Ashland, OR

When Dennis Powers and his wife moved to southern Oregon more than 25 years ago, they were immediately intrigued by the rich combination of outdoor activities and cultural opportunities available in the region.

“Everything was new and it was exciting to find this combination of the outdoors with organizations found in much larger, congested cities,” Dennis said.

Dennis was quickly drawn to Dogs for Better Lives (DBL), then known as Dogs for the Deaf. A good friend of his was a volunteer for DBL and knew Dennis had a personal connection to the mission. Dennis’ youngest brother, Steven, is deaf; Dennis has been “watching out” for Steven for decades, ever since their parents passed away. Dennis’ friend recommended he and his wife tour DBL’s facility in Central Point, OR.

“I was fascinated by what we learned, the facilities, and professionalism shown in training not only dogs for hearing - both at home and in public -- but the care given to Career Change Dogs, who are not wholly suitable as a program dog, that are adopted out as regular pets to area homes,” Dennis said. “It is difficult to find another nonprofit that not only adopts pets that would otherwise be put to death, but that dually makes the lives of so many hearing-impaired people throughout the United States that much safer and better.”

Dennis decided to write a book to showcase southern Oregon’s diverse region and, of course, to include DBL in his book. “Where Past Meets Present” was published locally in 2017 and remains a best seller for Hellgate Press. The book features 140 stories, from the valley’s history of gold, to how different towns formed, to tourist attractions and interesting trivia.

But Dennis wanted to do more for DBL than just highlight the nonprofit in his book.

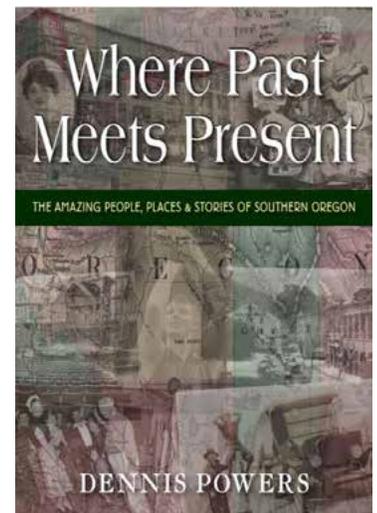
“Owing to my being involved with my brother, Steven, for decades, I truly understand the hardships of the hearing-impaired in just daily activities that most take for granted,” Dennis explained. “Hearing aids don’t always work, give out, batteries go, and locating sounds can be difficult—especially if you are crossing at a light. Coupled with this was my knowing volunteers, my amazement at the facilities and training, and [DBL’s] place in our history.”

Dennis decided to make DBL one of the prime beneficiaries from his book profits. He generously donated \$2,000, which included future profits from book sales, in the name of his brother, Stephen R. Powers.

There is still more Dennis wants to do for DBL. He and his wife are considering volunteering for the Oregon-based nonprofit.

“We have never volunteered together before, as both of us have different interests – except for this that combines our love of animals and helping the needy,” Dennis said. “This is a most worthwhile endeavor. Where else can one support the saving of dogs that would otherwise be euthanized or condemned to an uncertain life at an animal shelter – and instead find a safe home? Where else can one be associated with a nonprofit that relies on its volunteers, financial supporters, and not on government subsidies – and still is as meaningful as established years ago?”

Dennis Powers has published nearly 25 books on a multiplicity of areas and subjects. You can find his books, including “Where Past Meets Present” and his story about DBL, online at <http://www.hellgatepress.com/dennis-powers/>.



QUILTS FOR DOGS

We love volunteers and supporters who share their time and talents with Dogs for Better Lives (DBL)! For several years, local southern Oregon quilter Susan Reker has painstakingly sewn nearly 80 quilted blankets as gifts for DBL's Assistance Dogs to go along with them to their new homes. As a struggling quilter myself, I know just how much time and effort goes into making a quilt, so to say that this is a labor of love is an understatement!

Earlier this year I had the privilege of meeting the elusive and talented Susan when she came in to deliver 13 new quilts. After shamelessly gushing over her quilting celebrity, I asked Susan how long she had been quilting – and how she came to know Dogs for Better Lives. Susan quietly replied, “I started quilting in 2009 and was quickly hooked. I like making small projects, so making dog quilts works well for me, and I am happy that the dogs love them. I learned about your organization from someone who used to volunteer here. She knew that I was a quilter and that I had a large amount of corduroy fabric that I didn't know what to do with. She suggested that I make small quilts for the dogs, and I thought that was a pretty good idea. Besides, I think my neighbors grew tired of all the noise I was making while I was building new bedroom cabinets – there was an awful lot of sawing and hammering! Quilting was a nice change for us all.”

- Monica Schuster, Marketing & Communications



LUCY RETIRES AFTER MANY YEARS AS A DEMONSTRATION DOG



When Lucille was just a pup, her elderly owner recognized she was no longer capable of raising a sassy little terrier. She took Lucy to the local shelter, but fate was on Lucy's side. The very same day, a Dogs for Better Lives (DBL) trainer happened to be at the shelter, evaluating dogs as candidates for their Hearing Dog program. Lucy was snatched up on the spot before she was even signed over to the shelter.

Lucy picked up on her Hearing Dog responsibilities quickly and, in 2007 she was placed in a home. Sadly, after just 3 years, Lucy's person passed away. Lucy came back to DBL.

She spent a few months here before she was matched to another person in need. Lucy went to live this time as a Career Change Dog, which meant she could spend her time posing gracefully on the couch and daintily receiving hand-delivered treats. However, after less than a year, Lucy's new person also passed away. Lucy, again, came back to DBL.

Lucy's original DBL trainer, Carrie, knew Lucy needed security and stability to help her recover from the losses she'd experienced. Carrie decided to career change Lucy once again, this time as a demonstration dog. Lucy could spend her time demonstrating her skills as a highly trained Hearing Dog here at DBL's facilities in Central Point, OR.

Being a demonstration dog also meant Lucy would need someone to foster her – she needed someone to volunteer to take her home each night, to provide a soft bed for her to sleep in, to feed her and pet her. She needed someone to commit to her for the long term. Carrie knew just the right person. Kelly, DBL's development coordinator, had just lost her pet dogs. However, it wasn't exactly love at first sight.

"When I first saw Lucy, I thought she was kind of scruffy," said Kelly, who is known around the DBL office for her perfectly matched outfits, her stiletto heels, and her bejeweled manicures. "I looked at her and I went, are you kidding me?! She's the scruffiest and hairiest thing I've ever seen!"



But it didn't take long for Lucy's personality to come out and win over Kelly. A decent haircut also didn't hurt. Lucy spent nearly 7 years working as DBL's demo dog. She came to the office with Kelly nearly every day and showcased the ways in which DBL's dogs can enrich the lives of their people. Lucy was a reliable little rock star and always nailed all of her sound-work cues ... until the day she didn't. Lucy missed many of her cues during a recent demonstration and DBL's training director made the difficult decision to retire her.

"I'm a little sad she's retiring, but I think it's probably time," Kelly said. "Mostly, I hate how old she's getting. I think she could still probably do the work, but she's starting to really show her age."

The good news is, Lucy finally got her "forever" home with Kelly. When she retired as a demonstration dog, it meant Kelly could officially adopt Lucy, rather than just fostering her. Kelly is making sure Lucy has plenty of games to play and treats to eat at home, and she still gets to come to the DBL office occasionally to allow her devoted fans to fuss over her.



- Sarah Owen, Donor Services

CAREER CHANGE DOGS

Lady at Home with Rick and Ginger

“What began as a mutual-services contract between two very different species became something much more like love. None of that makes a lick of sense, but it doesn’t have to. Love rarely touches the reasoning parts of the brain. It touches the dreamy parts, the devoted parts -- it touches the parts we sometimes call the heart. For many thousands of years it’s there that our dogs have lived.”

How Dogs Think: Inside the Canine Mind, TIME Magazine, July 2018

The story of Lady, for us, really starts with another dog: a spunky terrier friend of 14 years named Lucy. When she died in 2016, there was a little dog-shaped hole in my heart. After over a year without a dog, I started looking on rescue websites. One night, I texted pictures of a couple of cute pups with longing expressions to Rick. He texted a photo of another one back to me. I kept looking.

Then in December 2017, Lady’s happy face popped up in one of my searches and I was smitten! Rick said he liked the looks of her. I took that as a “yes” and called Dogs for Better Lives (DBL) right away. We scheduled an appointment for January 2, 2018 to meet her.

When we arrived, volunteer Betty gave us a tour of the facility and grounds and shared in a talk and video how DBL had come into existence and the process by which the dogs are found, trained and placed. Next, we got to see Buzz, a resident canine ambassador, demonstrate his extensive skill set as a Demo Hearing Dog. With each part of the tour, we were more impressed by this organization and the work they do.



The final piece of our tour involved meeting Lady and another little girl named Miso. When trainer Brittany brought Lady into the enclosure and unsnapped her leash, Lady immediately ran to Rick and rolled over on her back so he could rub her belly! Then we all got acquainted and played for a bit with each of the two dogs.

We left DBL that day briefly entertaining the idea of adopting TWO dogs -- they were both so sweet --but quickly decided that if we could have just ONE, that would be great! It was difficult for me to keep my hopes in check. After all, we were just one of several families meeting Lady and the interviews weren’t over yet! But in the short time we spent at the DBL facility, we had developed complete trust and confidence in the staff’s decision about placement. If there was a better place for Lady to live, then we would stay in touch and wait for the right fit. (Admittedly, I DID have to remind myself of this a few times in the week following our visit!)





*Ginger, Rick and Lady at
Jedediah Smith Redwoods State Park.*

During that week, I walked to the top of our yard to Lucy's final resting place. We had planted a (supposedly flowering) shrub there early on, but it had never bloomed. When I went up there to communicate to Lucy that I hoped we'd be getting another pup soon, guess what? There was a beautiful purple blossom on that bush - in the middle of winter!

Then the call came! Sena, the adoptions coordinator, asked if we were still interested in Lady. YES!! OF COURSE!! As we discussed the details of her delivering Lady to us, she indicated she knew exactly where to come as she used to live in Crescent City. Because Rick and I are both natives of this area, I was interested in her family name. When she told me, I'm sure my jaw dropped as I told her my family name. We realized immediately that our dads had been great friends and hunting buddies for many years. Such a small world experience!

The entire process of adopting Lady has been delightful. We visited DBL a few months after Lady came to us, as we had some pet soap to deliver to Sena and we just wanted to check in with the fine folks who had rescued Lady and given her such a great start. She definitely remembered the trainers who came over to greet her when they saw her -- lots of tail wagging and pets! We have kept in touch with photos as well: Lady at the beach, Lady on a road trip to Idaho, Lady crashed out on the couch after a long walk.



We are blessed to have a furry walking/hiking/traveling companion and she seems just as happy to be with us. First order of each day is a belly rub. Then she's up for whatever's next. She's the first one in the car whenever it looks like it might be leaving the driveway. She's great with people of all ages and other dogs. She makes friends wherever she goes, and more than once people have called her Benji because of her perky expression and loveable scruffiness. She brings a smile to my face every time I look at her.

I think we are unofficial ambassadors for Dogs for Better Lives, because to whoever will listen, we tell the story of where Lady came from: this incredible organization that rescues dogs, trains them to be helpers and places them with those whose lives are then forever changed for the better. Thank you, DBL!!

- Rick and Ginger Finley

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

BILL & JANICE NEWELL

After many years in retail management and later owning and operating two women's apparel stores, Bill decided to change careers and became a registered investment advisor and licensed tax consultant. Then he had a heart attack and bypass surgery in 1986 and a second bypass surgery in 2003, after which he decided to retire.

We heard about Dogs for the Deaf (as it was then named) from a mutual friend who volunteered there. Bill started volunteering at DFD in January 2005 as a dog walker. He continues to volunteer as a dog walker and has represented Dogs for Better Lives at Medford Chamber of Commerce events for the past few years.

I thought it would be fun to volunteer together, so I joined Bill and began volunteering as a dog walker in August 2007, after retiring from Harry and David. My career spanned 40+ years at Harry and David, and I retired as legal services manager at the end of July 2007.

Bill and I have enjoyed volunteering together. Over the years, we have seen many, many dogs trained and placed as Hearing Assistance Dogs and some as companion dogs. Now DBL is also training dogs to assist people with autism and other special needs. It has been a very rewarding volunteer experience, and we have enjoyed getting to know the many dedicated trainers and staff members at Dogs for Better Lives. Since we do not have a dog, we get our "doggie fix" by walking and helping socialize the various dogs at Dogs for Better Lives.



Bill and Janiece Newell

Join Bill and Janiece and other volunteer dog walkers who help exercise and socialize our dogs in training. If you live in the Rogue Valley area and would like to volunteer as a dog walker, contact Volunteer Coordinator Sarina Duncan at 541-826-9220.

www.dogsforbetterlives.org/volunteer

STAFF SPOTLIGHT

NICOLE TALLMAN

Born in Washington state, but raised in Minneapolis, MN, I was used to the hustle and bustle of city life. Desiring a change, I moved to southern Oregon in 2014, which provided much more serenity-- something I realized I had been searching for once I was settled.

I have been around dogs my entire life. In fact, I don't remember a time when there weren't at least a few dogs in my family. I got my first dog, Peewee, a 5-pound shih tzu, for my 16th birthday and that's when my true love of dogs really began. When I moved out on my own, my mom said she couldn't lose me AND Peewee so one of us had to stay. Peewee loved her as much as she loved him, so he got to stay with her and lived the rest of his life being a spoiled little guy. In 2013, I adopted Teddy, my now 5-year-old big goofy mixed breed dog, from the Humane Society in Minnesota and in 2016, my little snuggle bug, Simon, a now 3-year-old Chihuahua mix, from Dogs for Better Lives.

My customer service career started when I was 14 years old working at a small donut and coffee shop. I went on to finish high school, started college, and realized I didn't know what I wanted to be when I grew up. I had a couple of jobs working for some pretty large corporations that focused on customer service. I saw moving to Oregon as an opportunity to expand my horizons a bit. I spent the summer working in a position with limited interaction with other people and I craved to get back into an office environment. I learned that Dogs for Better Lives was looking for a receptionist and it couldn't have been better timing. I was the receptionist at Dogs for Better Lives for 3.5 years.



Simon (left) and Teddy (right) out for a walk



Nicole, Teddy and Simon

I loved being the first person our visitors and callers got to interact with and I have had the pleasure of meeting and speaking with so many wonderful people. In my time here, I have learned so much about Assistance Dogs and the operations of a non-profit, as well as being able to support the other

departments in various ways. The knowledge I have gained has recently given me the opportunity to take on a position here as the staff accountant, which will allow me to grow even more within this amazing organization. Better yet, I'll now have an office with a door where dogs in training can spend their time when they're taking a break from learning. I feel so fortunate to be a part of the Dogs for Better Lives family and can't wait to see what the future holds for me here.



Peewee - my first dog

A SECOND TRAINING FACILITY FOR DOGS FOR BETTER LIVES

Back in 2014, a few board members, some DBL staff and our CEO got together and formed a facilities committee to answer two very important questions: Should and could DBL realistically build a second training facility?

These questions needed to be thoroughly vetted and answered. A feasibility study needed to be conducted. The guidelines of DBL's freshly revised mission statement needed to be followed.

Outdoor play yard



And so a robust journey of grand proportions began. Yours truly was part of this group.

To support a second training facility, the committee needed to verify positive and consistent growth trends. A robust growth path appeared inevitable and was already becoming a reality, as DBL's recently revised mission statement included a new program. DBL staff had kicked off the Autism Assistance Dog program and a couple of pups were already slated for training.

The existing 22-kennel building also was frequently at or over capacity; occasionally, two dogs had to bunk together.

This kennel system is 30 years old and well past its prime in providing housing and training space required by the training department.

Besides the new Autism Assistance Dog program and the existing Hearing Dog program, DBL also maintains its lifetime commitment to all the dogs it rescues, including those not quite up to the task of working as Assistance Dogs. These dogs are repurposed as Career Change Dogs and adopted out to loving homes by DBL, preventing their return to shelters.



Walking path

DBL's growth history and its goals with the new Autism Assistance Dog program assured the facilities committee that more kennel room soon was going to be essential.

DBL is a solid, well-capitalized, debt-free nonprofit organization doing an amazing job for so many folks around the country -- it has operated in southern Oregon for more than 40 years. DBL continues to enjoy a prestigious 4-star Charity Navigator rating, a credibility marker for the best of the best. In 2018, the organization also was again recognized as one of the top 100 nonprofits to work for in Oregon. A well-organized and very effective fund development department at DBL continues to gain momentum in recognizing and thanking donors, and brand awareness is increasing nationwide. Donations, bequests and grant funds are thankfully growing consistently, meeting or exceeding goals and previous years' budgets substantially.

Asphalt work finishing touches





The finance committee considered all these points carefully before launching a further investigation into building a second training facility. The committee resolved to squash the project if any contra-indicators were discovered. There were no areas of concern at all, so the endeavor began to create a second facility.

To research and evaluate zoning laws and regulatory requirements, the committee engaged the services of Akery Construction. Akery Construction owner Jim Akery has been designing and building commercial and residential projects in southern Oregon for more than 30 years. Jim is well acquainted with just about every regulatory agency in the state and in Jackson County. With lots of effort and a few dozen phone calls, Jim was able to plot a path for DBL to build a new facility.

During the ensuing design stages, it became evident that a new well and water treatment system would be required. The existing system was aged, and Oregon law required a public water supply system for the facilities. The DBL property was surveyed by professionals. A new 290-foot-deep, 22-gallon-per-minute well now feeds a new state of the art storage and treatment system. Separate treated water and untreated water distribution piping was installed and is now supplying all buildings on the campus.

Architectural drawings were vetted, tweaked, and tweaked again. In one of the final design review board meetings, one board member remarked, “We have one shot at this -- our zoning laws limit new building construction to every 10 years. The restrictions are plentiful; they require higher elevation than the 100 year flood plain. We need a touch of good luck.” That good luck came with neighbors’ enthusiasm for the project, adequate room for expansion in the current septic system, and just enough qualifying room remaining on the 40-acre site for a new building. A unanimous board member vote of approval was cast.

On December 20, 2016, a design/build contract with Akery Construction was signed, sealed and delivered to the DBL board of directors by DBL’s CEO.



Front of building with Mike & Brittany



New kennel with Mike & Brittany

Nearly 2 years later, and 4 years since the plan's inception, the dream is finally realized. The new building is a two-story, wooden construction, 18,420-square-foot, state-of-the-art facility. The entire interior, including kennels, enjoys a temperature-controlled environment. We are super excited and received our certificate of occupancy from the county inspectors and have moved in. By the time you receive your copy of the Canine Listener, our canines in training will be enjoying a fabulous new facility.

If you are a donor, a volunteer, a board member, an employee of DBL, or just a plain old canine lover, I want to extend sincere thanks for believing in and supporting us in our mission. To those of you who have provided the funds to pay for this facility, you are deeply appreciated. You have enabled us to remain a debt-free nonprofit. This new facility will last a very long time and will serve many families.

It is an honor to be on your board of directors and to be asked to help guide the new Second Training Facility to its completion.

- Brian McQuade, Board Member & Second Training Facility Project Manager

Facts & Figures

over

18K

square feet above-ground floor space



23.7M

pounds of crushed rock



620

gallons of paint



about

4

miles of electrical & internet wiring



2.85M

pounds of concrete



18K

square feet of insulation



\$8.4K

annual utility cost savings



600

feet of pressure washer piping



kennel space for about

40

dogs in training





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USING HER NOODLE

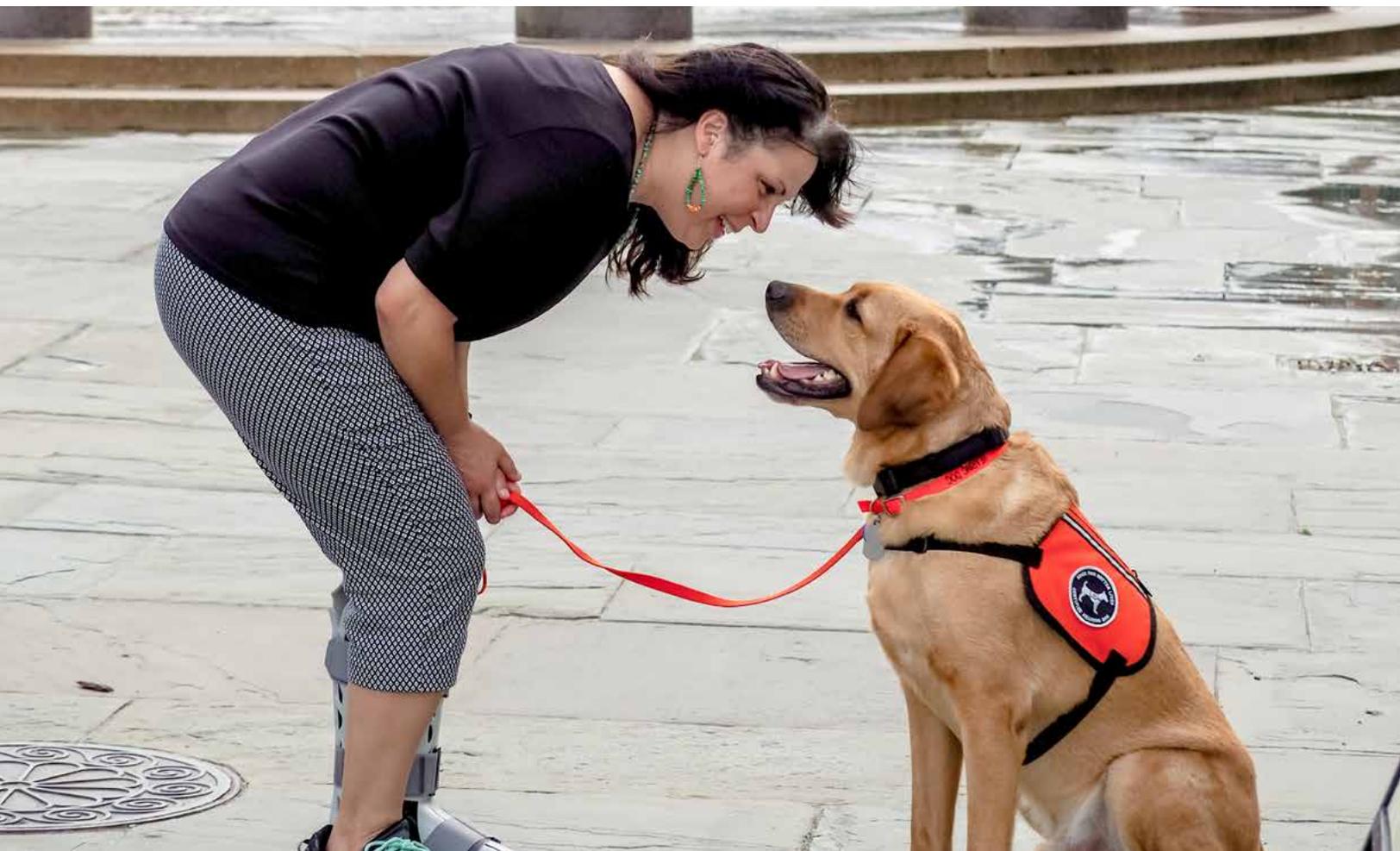
“Life before Noodle was challenging.”

Maria R., a teacher in South Carolina, describes what it was like before April 2018 when she received her Hearing Dog, Noodle, a 2-year-old yellow Labrador retriever who came to us from Guide Dogs for the Blind. Maria first learned about Dogs for Better Lives a few years ago. After traveling to California with a friend who is blind and her Guide Dog, Maria became inspired to do some research on Hearing Dogs. “I experienced her level of independence with her Guide Dog. I then became curious as to whether there may be similar services for people who are deaf or hard of hearing.”

Hearing Dogs are trained to alert to household sounds, but what a lot of people do not know is just how far-reaching that assistance is on a person’s life. “[Noodle] has allowed me to gain independence from others by helping me. I no longer have to wait for someone to be around to help me with some of my personal routines. I now have a partner who can help me with these tasks. Many people do not

realize how such simple tasks can be daunting to someone who is unable to hear,” Maria said.

While the pieces involved in making this partnership may seem straightforward, Maria needed help with sound awareness; Noodle was trained to alert to sounds -- the final result is nothing short of amazing. When Noodle transferred his bond from his trainer, Andrea, to Maria, that is when the magic happened. Mike, an Apprentice Trainer at Dogs for Better Lives, witnessed this special teamwork develop for Maria and Noodle while assisting during Noodle’s placement with Maria. It happened when they were practicing the smoke alarm with Maria lying on the bed. Mike was in position to push the alarm’s test button for the practice session. As soon as Noodle heard the smoke alarm, he went to work. Noodle had done well with all of his practice sessions up to this point, but this bed was higher than the one he was familiar with from training. Once Noodle realized he couldn’t alert Maria from the floor, Mike described seeing Noodle problem-solving the situation. “He



came racing around to the foot of the bed, launching himself onto it, and thrusting his nose against her chest,” Mike said. “Noodle made the decision to go farther than he had previously needed, and got his reward. Then I saw [Maria] dabbing her eyes, and she explained how much that struck her, that he was so adamant about getting to her to let her know the alarm was going off - that he could literally save her life.”



Noodle’s powerful life-changing impact on Maria also reached a deeper level. “He has personally changed me by allowing me to trust him,” Maria said. “I have had to teach myself to trust in someone else to alert me to my surroundings. I have always had to rely strongly on instincts or on my family. I can now cook and feel comfortable about cooking without having to worry. Such simple things in life that many take for granted are the things I am excited about now that I have Noodle with me.”

Their partnership goes beyond the home. Maria and Noodle have done quite a bit of traveling together. A family reunion in Florida and a trip to Michigan to celebrate her grandson’s birthday are a few of the adventures they’ve had together. Additionally, Noodle goes to work with Maria.

“At first I was nervous as to how things would work because I teach high school students,” Maria said. “To my surprise, I saw that [Noodle] even instilled calmness to some of my students who have never been around dogs before, and who were scared or nervous around dogs.”



Her advice to anyone considering getting a Hearing Dog from Dogs for Better Lives: “Go for it! I think more awareness is needed to let the community know how important and how significant it can be to have the assistance of a [Hearing] Dog. A person who is deaf or hard of hearing can gain so much independence from having a [Hearing] Dog. I am less stressed about being home by myself and even feel more confident about my abilities to do things in the home because of Noodle.”

By “using her Noodle,” Maria’s life has been changed for the better.

- Emily Minah, Client Services Field Representative

CLIENT'S CORNER

ASSISTANCE DOG RETIREMENT: WHEN A WORKING DOG FINISHES A JOB WELL DONE

By *Emily Minah, Client Services Field Representative*

Your Assistance Dog has been trained to do a job. In fact, being a “working dog” is the distinguishing characteristic that sets these dogs apart from pet dogs. But what happens when the dog is no longer able to perform the tasks she was trained for?

**“The harder you work, the harder
it is to surrender.”**

- Vince Lombardi

This perspective aptly describes retirement as it relates to Assistance Dogs. For humans, the decision to retire can be a more clear-cut process. We have a “retirement age” as a guideline and target to shoot for, but what is a dog’s retirement age? We are dedicating this Client’s Corner to offer some insight on this issue so you can be better prepared to answer this question when the time comes to retire your Assistance Dog.

When is it time for my Assistance Dog to retire?

Teri F. describes the process with her Hearing Dog, Miss Bethe, after 13 years together. “I noticed that she was working sounds less often. Apparently, my smoke alarm was going off (I burnt some food) but I certainly didn’t hear it and neither was [Miss Bethe] alerting me. I then found out that she was losing her hearing because she would never come to me when I called her.”

Diana G., with Hearing Dog Jim, had a slightly different experience. “Last year, Jim was diagnosed with cancer. After his surgery, Jim did not bounce back to his old self. He slowed way down. Actually wanted to cuddle more and just hang out, so I let him.”

The short answer to this question is: when the dog is no longer willing or able to perform the trained working tasks. However, after years of living and working together as a team, this isn’t always easy to see. As your dog gets into the senior years, pay attention to how the dog is performing



Diane and retired Hearing Dog Jim

the job. When the tasks, previously done reliably and consistently, begin to slip, that is typically a good indication that it is time for your dog to retire.

What is different after retirement?

A few things will remain the same and others will change. Dogs for Better Lives has a lifetime commitment to all of our dogs so, although your dog is retired, you will continue to have our help and support, as needed. Your dog can remain with you to enjoy their well-deserved rest and relaxation. However, their status as an Assistance Dog has changed. Once retired, your dog will no longer have certification for public access to stores and restaurants. For some teams, this is a big change. It is a good idea, for you and your dog, to prepare for this gradually. As your dog ages and starts to slow down, start to occasionally leave your dog at home when you go out. By gently having more separation, it will help both of you make this adjustment.

Additionally, in the case of Hearing Dogs, it is important to prepare yourself for your dog no longer alerting you to sounds. "I have made changes since then. I have an alarm that flashes for the fire/smoke alarm and also to get up in the morning," said Teri F.

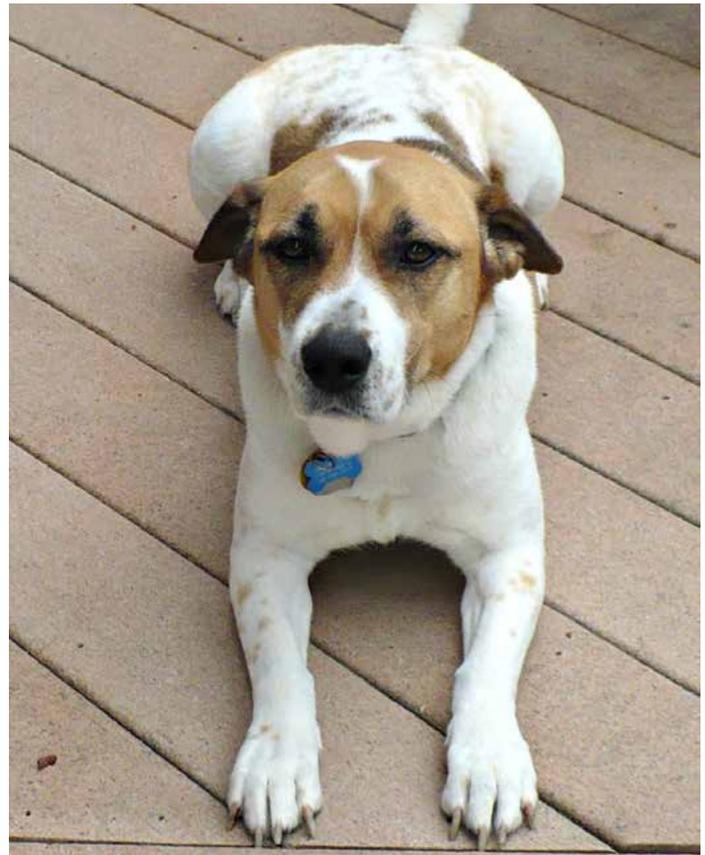
This shift in sound awareness can also happen gradually, depending on the dog. "Jim still works, just not quite as hard. I've learned his mannerisms over the years, so I can still observe him and know what's going on. He doesn't always come get me when someone is at the door, but he always goes TO the door," said Diana G.

What is the process to get another Assistance Dog?

If you decide you want another Assistance Dog, you will need to reapply. As a successor client, you don't need to pay the Good Faith Deposit. However, the rest of the application and interview process is the same. This helps ensure that we have the most current and accurate information about your needs and lifestyle as some things may have changed since your previous application. Dogs for Better Lives does allow a second Assistance Dog to be placed in the home with one of our retired dogs, but the timing of when to get another Assistance Dog will depend on the situation. For an older dog who has been the only dog in the home, adjusting to another dog coming in can be difficult. In some cases, the client decides to reapply but is placed "on hold" while their retired dog is still living with them. When the time comes, your trainer can help provide some guidance on what is best for you and your retired Assistance Dog.

While there are some adjustments for both you and your dog after they retire, it can also be a very sweet chapter. Teri describes her approach to Miss Beth's retirement this way: "I'm trying to make her life more comfortable." Diana has a similar perspective: "Life goes on, just at a slower pace. Just as I am slowing down with age, I can relate."

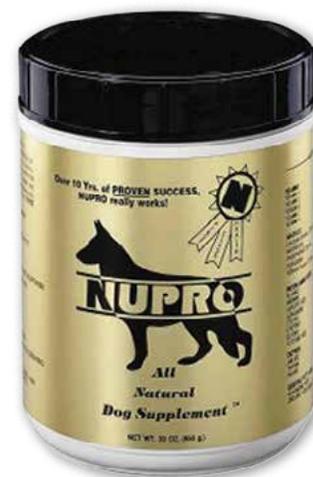
The most important part to remember is this isn't a decision you have to make alone. As part of the Dogs for Better Lives extended family, you will always have our help to determine when your dog is "done" with a job well done.



Retired Hearing Dog Miss Beth

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AMBASSADOR SPOTLIGHT

DEBRA RUSSELL

I became acquainted with Dog for Better Lives when the National Grange organization started to support the nonprofit. At a National Grange Convention some years ago, I met former DBL CEO Robin Dickson and her dog, Tybo, and was very impressed with their different programs. I knew when Robin invited me to become a DBL ambassador for Ohio that I would somehow like to be a part of the organization. If in some small way I could help people with their special needs, it would be worthwhile! I have been a DBL ambassador for nearly 9 years.

I have made DBL presentations at granges, churches, fraternal organizations, women's groups and other service organizations. I had the privilege to attend a Good Sam rally in Ohio, where I met DBL Development Director Harvey Potts and learned even more about DBL programs. What a great time I had meeting all the people at the Good Sam rally!

My first big event was the large Deaf Expo in Indianapolis, Indiana. It was a wonderful experience, and my first time working with an interpreter. I met many people there, and learning their stories was so touching. I knew from then on that this was what I was supposed to do: help people.

I also had the opportunity to work at the National Deaf Convention with DBL Adoption Program Coordinator, Sena Short and her demonstration dog in Columbus, Ohio. It was another great experience meeting people and promoting DBL programs!

A year ago, I was asked to help with DBL's home visits and interviews. I have now performed three home visits and enjoyed every one. Each of the prospective DBL clients had a different story about how deafness had affected their daily life, and how a Hearing Dog would make life so much easier for them. Meeting them and their families was so rewarding! To know that in some small way I might help them acquire a dog to assist them in their daily lives is incredibly rewarding!

I am very grateful that I was asked to become a part of Dogs for Better Lives, whether to present DBL programs to various social groups, meeting people at conventions, or assisting with home visits. It is an experience I will never forget, and I will continue to work to promote the DBL programs for as long as I am needed or able to.



Debra Russell

Are you interested in joining Debra as a volunteer Ambassador?
Contact Michelle Erwin at 800-990-3647 ext. 347 for information.
www.dogsforbetterlives.org/cla

RESCUE ME

My rescue partner, Brittany and I, are frequently asked what we look for when we're assessing potential Assistance Dog candidates at animal shelters. A multitude of traits have to come together to make the "perfect" Assistance Dog candidate. If it sounds like we're picky, that's because we are! Until recently, that wasn't a problem. There were enough perfect dogs available in shelters that we could rescue three to six dogs a month, no problem. Nowadays, things are a little different.

When most people think of animal shelters, they think of a tremendous number of different kinds of dogs languishing away, with euthanasia looming as the unavoidable end. And it was like that at many, many shelters for a very long time. But spaying/neutering pets is commonplace these days (thank goodness) and most people are more apt to keep their dogs in the house or a fenced yard, so unwanted litters of pups is far less common. That doesn't mean there aren't stray dogs that wind up in shelters, just that there are fewer than there were in years gone by.

Perhaps the very biggest change in the rescue world, however, is public awareness. The public has paid attention to the many media campaigns aimed at the plight of shelter dogs (Who hasn't shed a tear at the commercial



RESCUE ME



featuring Sarah McLachlan singing “Arms of an Angel”?) and responded by increasing their demand for shelter dogs. According to one firm that crunched the numbers, shelters can’t keep up with or meet Americans’ demand for 8 million dogs a year.

We are within a day’s drive of some of the largest animal shelters in the U.S. and we’ve rescued hundreds and hundreds of dogs from these historically overpopulated, high-kill shelters. But these days, other rescue groups are pulling dogs from these same shelters and having them transported to their locations on a weekly basis. The pulled dogs can include any and all dogs that may have been candidates for our programs. So, if we can’t be at these shelters at all times, scouting for candidates before other rescue groups call in an order, we’re usually out of luck.

Enter our new Volunteer Canine Recruiter (VCR) program! Two of my colleagues, Brittany and Kristy, teamed up with me to develop a program that will train volunteers to scout for and evaluate suitable dogs at shelters we have established partnerships with in the Central Valley of California.

RESCUE ME

This beta program has been met with a very positive response by dog lovers in the area and we have trained four volunteers so far, with two more awaiting training. We have also teamed up with the Jordan College of Agriculture and Technology at Fresno State University to offer internships to pre-veterinarian students. These students, like the volunteers from their communities, will be learning about dog behavior as they assess shelter dogs. It's our hope that the VCR program will more consistently provide Dogs For Better Lives with good candidates for our Assistance Dog programs, at a lower cost to the organization.

We will continue to scout the local shelters on a regular basis, and we will always rescue, as long as there are suitable rescues to be found!

- Paula Lysinger, Obedience Trainer & Breeding Program Coordinator

What makes a good Assistance Dog candidate?

Dogs that:

- get along well with other dogs
- don't chase cats or other small animals
- are food and toy motivated
- don't have any obvious behavioral problems (like guarding food, for instance)
- like all kinds of people!
- are between 1-3 years old (puppies and older dogs typically don't thrive in kennel situations)
- are healthy, confident, and trainable

Which otherwise "perfect" dogs might we sometimes pass on, and why?

- Hound breeds and herding breeds typically don't do well in a kennel environment for the 6 months or so it takes to train a dog.
- Pitbull/bully breeds still have a bad rap in our society and the last thing we want is for a client to have to deal with an additional obstacle in public perception.
- Long-backed breeds can potentially develop spinal damage from the many physical alerts (in which they jump up on a client) they would be required to make each day as a Hearing Dog.

Why is it so hard to find good Assistance dog candidates at shelters?

- There has been an 18.5 percent increase in national adoptions in the past few years, according to a 2017 press release from the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA). An estimated 3.2 million shelter animals are adopted each year (1.6 million dogs and 1.6 million cats), up from 2.7 million adoptions in 2011.
- U.S. shelters can't meet Americans' demand for 8 million dogs a year, according to The Animal Policy Group, a lobbying firm that crunched the numbers on demand for dogs in a 2017 Washington Post story.
- Other rescue groups "pull" dogs from the same shelters we travel to and have them transported to their locations before we have a chance to see the dogs.

We're looking for Volunteer Canine Recruiters in Central California.

Volunteer Canine Recruiters visit shelters and assess dogs for our Assistance Dog training program. We're looking for friendly, responsible individuals who are comfortable handling dogs, being in a shelter environment, and are able to pass a background check. Time commitment is 2-4 hours per week. Training and ongoing support is provided. We are currently training Volunteer Canine Recruiters in the central California area. For more information, contact Paula Lysinger at paula@dogsforbetterlives.org or 800-990-3647.

RESCUE ME

ANIMAL RESCUE OF FRESNO: THE STORY OF FLYNN FORMERLY KNOWN AS ELVIS

By Wendy Hunter, ARF Volunteer

I never expected to be anybody important. *-Elvis Presley*

When Elvis Presley first gyrated his way onto the stage of the Ed Sullivan Show in 1956, he changed the world of rock 'n' roll forever. With his long rubbery legs, and snarling lip, he drove every girl in the audience mad. Twenty years earlier, a swashbuckling actor with a dashing smile and a way with the ladies, took Hollywood by storm. Errol Flynn was the matinee idol of his time, sword-fighting his way through films like *The Adventures of Robin Hood*. Elvis and Flynn were celebrity icons, and possessed many of the attributes that make for soaring superstars; charisma, confidence, and character. Both luminaries also had smoldering eyes, which they eagerly played up to the cameras. Eyes may be the window to your soul, but they don't necessarily have to be human. Sometimes, you can be four-legged and fuzzy, while showing the world your true optic colors. In this case, glimmering gold, shining brightly, like a pair of cat's-eye marbles.



Wendy Hunter

Okay, I know what you're thinking; where the heck is she going with this? Well, let me introduce you to Flynn, formerly known as Elvis. See the connection now? I know, it's a stretch. Animal Rescue of Fresno pulled Elvis from a local shelter back in August 2017, where he was dropped off as a stray. With his gangly limbs and mesmerizing 24 karat eyes, he quickly became a volunteer favorite. His coat was one frothy swirl of chocolate, caramel and vanilla, all mixed up in a highlighted frenzy. Elvis didn't last long at ARF, because just as September was approaching, the good people from Dogs for Better Lives (DBL) arrived on our doorstep. This non-profit organization is based out of Central Point, Oregon, and has been providing Assistance Dogs to people across the United States since 1977. Traveling to the West Coast, DBL searches for rescue dogs that are suitable for their diverse programs. This includes specialized training for Hearing Dogs, Autism Assistance Dogs, Program Assistance Dogs, and Career Change Dogs. Because he was friendly and interactive, Elvis was chosen as a possible candidate for a Hearing Dog. And with that, Elvis officially left the building.



Flynn, formerly Elvis

Assistance dogs perform tasks that vary depending on the needs of the individual. Hearing Dogs (at home) are trained to alert people to household sounds, which are vital to everyday safety. Hearing Dogs (in public)

are not explicitly trained to alert people to sounds (cars, sirens). Instead, the owner gains awareness of his surroundings by paying attention to the dog's reaction. If his dog looks or turns in a certain direction, his owner will follow suit to check the situation. Autism Assistance Dogs are experts in ensuring the safety of autistic children, and become the foothold that prevents a child from wandering or bolting into the street. These dogs provide constant companionship and a peaceful presence in the child's life. Program Assistance Dogs accompany professionals like physicians and teachers to work, where they maintain a soothing atmosphere for patients and students with special needs. The happy Career Change Dogs have decided that working for a living is basically for the birds. They'd rather be on the couch with you, sharing slices of watermelon and binge-watching Game of Thrones. They just want to be a pet, enjoying all the things you do. Long walks on the beach? Yup. Road trips to the mountains? You bet. Sleeping in your bed and hogging the covers? Like you have to ask...

I allow myself to be understood as a colorful fragment in a drab world.

-Errol Flynn

As for Flynn, he was accepted into the Hearing Dog (at home) program. Now I know nothing about, well, a lot of things, but I positively know zilch about occupational dog training. And so I reached out to Andrea Woodcock, the Training Manager at DBL. Andrea has been a Certified Assistance Dog Trainer for 12 years, with 7 of those spent at DBL. She says Flynn trained for roughly 9 months, where

he learned to alert his trainer to things like the oven timer, telephone, smoke alarm, and door knock. He was taught to detect where certain sounds were coming from, put his paws on the trainer to alert them, and then lead his trainer to the sound. Flynn also mastered basic obedience and house manners, which I'm pretty sure means no elbows on the table, and no talking with your mouth full. I was curious why Flynn was chosen for the Hearing Dog category, instead of a different one. Andrea's response was, "Hearing dogs tend to be more energetic. They always have to be on and ready to work. If the smoke alarm goes off at 2 a.m., they need to wake up and alert their person. Autism and Program Assistance Dogs tend to be lower energy. Both types of these assistance dogs have jobs that require them to remain calm, the majority of the time." Hmm, I'm thinking Jack Russell Terriers need not apply.





Hearing Dog Flynn with Gregory (and Mary)

Although rescue dogs are the primary source for DBL, they aren't used in the Autism Assistance program. Andrea says they've tried in the past, "But after several years, we discovered it was difficult to find dogs in shelters that were temperamentally stable enough for that kind of work." She continues, "Currently all our Autism Assistance Dogs have been purpose bred dogs, either donated from Guide Dogs for the Blind or Dogs with Wings. We've had one litter of puppies from our breeding program, and they're all in volunteer homes. Once they are 14 months old, they return to DBL for 4-6 months of training, and will hopefully be placed in one of our programs." When DBL's Assistance Dogs complete their training and are matched with an applicant, the trainer and dog travel to the client's home and spend 3-5 days instructing them on how to continue the dog's training. For these highly skilled dogs, DBL charges a nominal \$50 application fee, and a \$500 Good Faith Deposit, which is returned after one year. Not bad, considering it costs \$25,000-\$40,000 to train one dog. That, my friends, is money well spent.

For Career Change Dogs, DBL only adopts out to homes within a three-hour driving distance from their facility. And here's the real kicker; there is NO adoption fee, though donations are always accepted. Andrea explains the process, "You must come to our facility and meet the dog, along with all members of your household, including any other dogs in the home. If it's a match, we set up a time to bring the dog to your home. This allows us to provide a successful introduction of the dog into your household." After 10 days, there is a follow-up visit, where DBL helps with any training issues that may have arisen. For the lifetime of their dogs, DBL offers training support, either over the phone or in home. Per Andrea, "Our goal is to help the adopter and the dog have a happy, successful life together." In the last 12 months, DBL placed 61 dogs nationally, which included 18 Assistance Dogs; 17 Hearing and 1 Autism. This summer, DBL will open their 18,900 sq. ft. second training facility, with 40 new larger kennels and open training areas. The staff is excited, and the dogs are hoping for bigger biscuit bins.

And what became of Flynn? He was placed right here in California with a deaf gentleman named Gregory, and now shares yard space with a gigantic tortoise called Mary. With success stories like these, I asked Andrea what she loved most about working for DBL. She replied, "The most rewarding thing is seeing how a dog can change a client's life. There's nothing comparable to watching a client and dog practice the smoke alarm for the first time, and seeing the client's realization that the dog will get them out of the house if there's a fire." Andrea's dad is a registered vet technician, so pets have always been a part of her life. When she was five years old, she began telling people she wanted to be a dog trainer when she grew up. Now that's what I call fate. When ARF pulled scruffy little Flynn from that shelter, he was rescued. When DBL selected Flynn for their Hearing Dog program, he was fated to rescue someone else. Fate may indeed be "a cruel mistress", but today she kindly offers up a grin, and tips her hat to a golden-eyed dog named Flynn.

Wendy Hunter has been volunteering with Animal Rescue of Fresno (ARF) for just over a year. She grew up in Fresno and recently became an Office Assistant with Fresno County. She has been writing all of her life, though never professionally, and currently writes personalized poetry for birthdays, weddings, pet remembrances, etc.

Credit: This article was originally published in the August issue of online magazine Kings River Life. <https://www.krlnews.com/2018/08/arf-flynn-formerly-elvis.html>

FOSTER PUPPY PROGRAM

STUDENTS IN ACTION

Volunteering to become a foster puppy raiser is no easy task. Between all the midnight potty runs, puppy classes, and navigating the foster puppy through any public facility, it truly takes someone with a heart of gold to raise a foster puppy. During my time in this program, I have encountered so many wonderful people dedicated to giving back to their community and our student raisers never fail to amaze me.

Two of our current student raisers are Halle and Daniela and they are absolute rock stars! These young women have tackled everything their foster puppies, Basil and Sesame, have thrown at them with gusto! It is positively inspiring to see these students working so hard to make a difference. Both Halle and Daniela's families have been so supportive throughout their journeys as puppy raisers. It is definitely a team building experience for the whole family! Watching Halle and Daniela in class working together with their foster puppies, it is very apparent how much time and effort they have put in to help these future Assistance Dogs to be successful. There is no doubt in my mind that Daniela and Halle are excellent role models for our southern Oregon community.

- Hannah Crane, Foster Puppy Program Coordinator



Halle with foster puppy Sesame

"My name is Halle and this is my first time fostering a puppy for Dogs for Better Lives. I had originally decided to participate in this program because it was a great way to help others, and having a puppy for a year was an added bonus. I'm a senior at Cascade Christian High School, and I was trying to figure out what I was going to do for my senior project. Well, problem solved: Sesame, my foster puppy, is now my senior project.

While fostering a puppy, there are quite a few ups and downs, especially during the first few weeks and months. This is like nothing that I have ever done before, and it was pretty exhausting at first, but it has gotten better. I just remembered that I had to push through it because: 1. It would get easier, and 2. This is for a good cause and a great organization and it will be so awesome to see how she does in the end.

I'm getting ready to start my senior year in high school and while I do think it is going to be stressful trying to balance school work, my job, and training a dog, I think it will be a good experience for me and so rewarding in the end to see how well she does, and see the hard work pay off."

-Halle D.

"I wanted a puppy but I couldn't have one because I will be leaving for college later. Having to raise a foster puppy is one of the things that made my summer fun and entertaining. For me, knowing that fostering a puppy is going to help someone that needs it makes me feel proud, not only of myself, but for the puppy too because it helps our community."

- Daniela T.



Daniela with foster puppy Basil

COMMUNITY SERVICE CLUB NEWS



BPO DOES CONTINUING SUPPORT OF DBL MISSION

Since 1996, the Benevolent Patriotic Order of Does has donated more than \$500,000 and their support of our mission continues! At the June BPO DOES annual convention, Dogs for Better Lives was presented with another generous gift that is dog-eared towards an apartment in the Second Training Facility. We are forever grateful - thank you, BPO DOES

GOOD SAM VALLEY DRIFTERS

Dogs for Better Lives client and ambassador Bev attended this year's Washington State Good Sam Rally with her fellow Good Sam Valley Drifters.

For more than 40 years, the Good Sam Valley Drifters have been generous supporters of Dogs for Better Lives. Thank you chapter President Dave Cluett for your leadership and hospitality!



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GUARDIAN SOCIETY

The Guardian Society is a group of individuals who have the foresight and dedication to sustain the work at Dogs for Better Lives for many generations to come by including the organization in their estate plans with a gift of at least \$5,000. For more information on becoming a part of the Guardian Society, contact Wanda Cockey at 800-990-3647.

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Pediatrician and Dogs for Better Lives client, Dr. Rose pictured here with her patient and Hearing Assistance Dog Delight.



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For more information about this program, or to join their ranks, contact Wanda Cockey at 541-826-9220 ext. 326 or wanda@dogsforbetterlives.org.

IN MEMORY OF

Donations have been received in memory of the following people who lived lives of love, compassion, and concern for both people and animals.

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Please continue to support the special work and mission of Dogs for Better Lives

LEGAL / FINANCIAL INFORMATION Dogs for Better Lives makes every effort to maintain required charity registrations at state and federal levels. Our philosophy at Dogs for Better Lives has always been to be extremely diligent in following state and federal rules and regulations. In order to continue this due diligence, we are enclosing the information below because various states are now requiring that we include it in all informational correspondence we send out.

CO - Tax Id #93-0681311, Registration #20073010658. No goods or services were provided in exchange for this donation. Your gift is tax-deductible according to current law as written in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. The official registration and financial information of Dogs for Better Lives may be obtained from the office of the Colorado Secretary of State by calling 303-894-2680, or online at <http://www.state.sos.co.us>

FL - A copy of the official registration and financial information may be obtained from the Florida Division of Consumer Services by calling 1-800-435-7352 toll-free within the state. Registration does not imply endorsement, approval, or recommendation by the state.

MD - Tax Id #93-0681311. No goods or services were provided in exchange for this donation. Your gift is tax-deductible according to current law as written in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. A copy of the current financial statement of Dogs for Better Lives is available by writing 10175 Wheeler Road, Central Point OR 97502 or calling 800-990-3647. Documents and information submitted under the Maryland Solicitations Act are also available, for the cost of postage and copies, from the Maryland Secretary of State, State House, Annapolis MD 21401, or by calling 410-974-5534.

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MS - The official registration and financial information of Dogs for Better Lives may be obtained from the Mississippi Secretary of State's office by calling 1-888-236-6167. Registration by the Secretary of State does not imply endorsement by the Secretary of State.

NC - Financial information about this organization and a copy of its license are available from the State Solicitation Licensing Branch at 1-888-830-4989. The license is not an endorsement by the State.

NJ - Tax Id #93-0681311. No goods or services were provided in exchange for this donation. Your gift is tax-deductible according to current law as written in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. INFORMATION FILED WITH THE ATTORNEY GENERAL CONCERNING THIS CHARITABLE SOLICITATION AND THE PERCENTAGE OF YOUR CONTRIBUTION THAT

WILL BE DEDICATED TO THE CHARITABLE PURPOSE MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE ATTORNEY GENERAL OF THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY BY CALLING 973-504-6215 AND IS AVAILABLE ON THE INTERNET AT <http://www.njconsumeraffairs.gov/ocp.htm#charity>. REGISTRATION WITH THE ATTORNEY GENERAL DOES NOT IMPLY ENDORSEMENT.

NY - Tax Id #93-0681311. No goods or services were provided in exchange for this donation. Your gift is tax-deductible according to current law as written in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. A copy of the latest annual report may be obtained, upon request, from Dogs for Better Lives, 10175 Wheeler Road, Central Point OR 97502, or from the New York State Attorney General's Charities Bureau, 120 Broadway, 3rd Floor, New York NY 10271.

PA - Tax Id #93-0681311. No goods or services were provided in exchange for this donation. Your gift is tax-deductible according to current law as written in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. The official registration and financial information of Dogs for Better Lives may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll-free, within Pennsylvania, 800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

VA - The official registration and financial information of Dogs for Better Lives may be obtained from the Virginia State Office of Consumer Affairs in the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Affairs at PO Box 1163, Richmond, VA 23218 upon request. Registration does not imply endorsement.

WA - Tax Id #93-0681311. No goods or services were provided in exchange for this donation. Your gift is tax-deductible according to current law as written in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. The official registration and financial information of Dogs for Better Lives may be obtained from the Washington Secretary of State's Charities Program office at 800-332-4483 or online at www.sos.wa.gov/charities. Registration by the Secretary of State does not imply endorsement by the Secretary of State.

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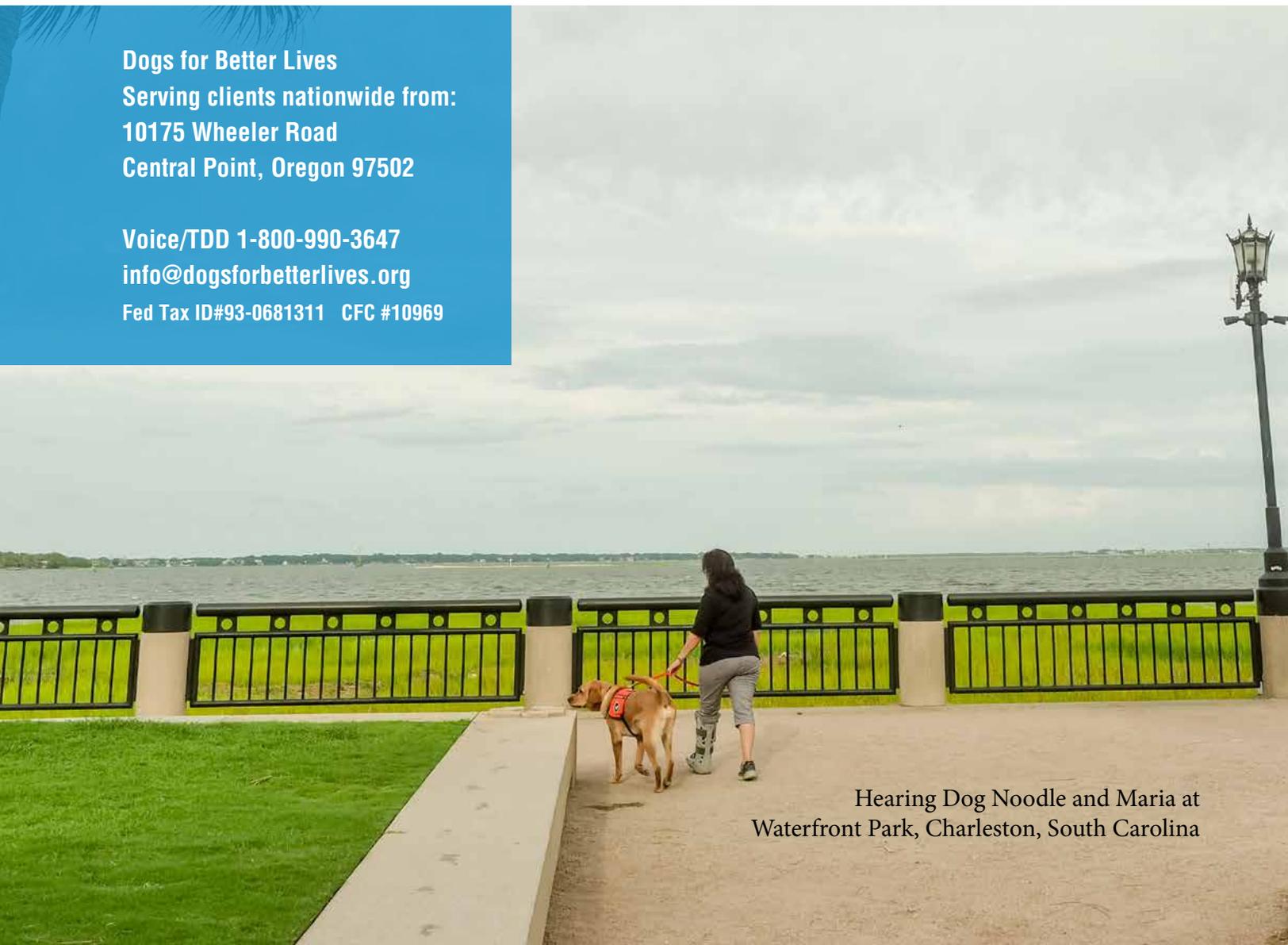


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Hearing Dog Noodle and Maria at
Waterfront Park, Charleston, South Carolina