

Southeast Region

Ruther Glen Updates



10TH PAWS FOR PURPLE HEARTS ANNIVERSARY

2011-2021

Ten Years of Warriors Helping Warriors

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Celebrating Over 30 Dogs In Training

By: Danielle Stockbridge, Advancement Associate

2021 has been a great year for Paws For Purple Hearts Virginia and we are so grateful for it! In March, Scout graduated as a service dog, and Max was placed as a home helpmate in September. Although COVID has made in-person programming difficult, the Virginia team has been working with the Hunter Holmes McGuire Medical Center to provide social therapy virtually. We've even been able to have a few veterans come for in-person Canine-Assisted Warrior Therapy® sessions. Also in 2021, Paws For Purple Hearts received three new puppies for training! In April, we were excited to welcome Booth and Jeanette to Ruther Glen. And in July, we received "D" Litter puppy, David! With these three new puppies, 2021 is the year that over 30 dogs have undergone training at our Ruther Glen site.

Can you believe that the Southeast Regional Headquarters opened in 2015? This location started as a single garage unit. The dogs were kenneled in the same room where training and Canine-Assisted Warrior Therapy® sessions took place. Now, the team has two different spaces for kenneling and training. The kennel room includes a full dog bath, washer and dryer, dishwasher, and twelve kennel runs. We are so lucky to have such a great facility to train so many dogs!

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October Connected By One Leash Spotlight

By: Danielle Stockbridge, Advancement Associate

Upon opening, the team was also lucky enough to have some fantastic volunteers start working with us, like Brooks/Perkins Family, our October Connected By One Leash Spotlight.

Bob is a retired military member who started as a general volunteer with Paws For Purple Hearts in 2015, shortly after our facility opened. He recruited the rest of his family to volunteer not long after. Now, every Friday, Bob, his daughter, her husband (retired military), their kids, and her husband's dad all come to volunteer! The family helps with cleaning, maintenance, and any other job that comes up. The military family says that they enjoy giving back to the military community through their volunteer work.

To learn more about Bob and his family's story, visit paws4ph.org/connectedbyoneleash. We are thankful to Bob, his family, and all of our extraordinary volunteers for their everlasting dedication to our mission!



October Connected By One Leash
Spotlight: Bob and TomTom

Where is the Virginia Team

By: Danielle Stockbridge, Advancement Associate

This year, the Virginia Team has been attending different events and meeting new people all over the state! Here's a recap of some of the events we've been to over the past couple of months:

The Diamond in Richmond, VA - Max got to throw the first pitch for a Richmond Flying Squirrels Game during this past baseball season. He did an excellent job. Plus, he and Scotty got to meet the team's mascots, Nutsy and Nutasha!

Lonesome Dove in Goochland, VA - We got to visit our friends at Lonesome Dove during Labor Day weekend to table an event with the Steel Warriors Motorcycle Club!

Rosie's in Dumfries, VA. - We're so thankful for our friends at Rosie's who chose Paws For Purple Hearts as the ticket initiative donation. They raised over \$1,000!

Ruritan Club in Doswell, VA. - This Fall, we held our first in-person presentation since the beginning of COVID. It was so lovely to see the Ruritan Club member's smiling faces!

Daughters of the American Revolution in Fredericksburg, VA - We met the Spotsylvania Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution at a beautiful park in Fredericksburg, VA, for a meet and greet with our pups. The ladies and our dogs had a blast!

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Top Five Training Tips

By: Danielle Stockbridge, Advancement Associate

Check out these top five dog training tips from Ruther Glen's Program Instructors, Heather and Mami!

1. Consistency is key!

When teaching your dog something new, you must be consistent in your teaching. Dog's law is that "If it worked, I'll do it again. If it didn't, I won't." So letting your dog get away with a behavior once means that they will try to do it again. Don't forget to make sure everyone in your household is on the same page when it comes to teaching a new behavior or command!

2. Have patience

A dog might not do a command or behavior quickly and perfectly on the first try. You have to give them time to think about what you've said. Don't forget that dogs have feelings too!

3. Be aware of your surroundings

If your dog isn't responding to your commands, try changing up your surroundings. Maybe there's something distracting in your current environment. You can try increasing the value of your treats, taking a different approach to your instructions or moving away from the area that's causing distraction. You should always set your dog up for success

4. Be aware of your state of mind

Dogs often pick up on emotions and synchronize with their humans. Check on your state of mind before doing training with your dog. If you start to get frustrated, take a deep breath and count to ten. Your dog will respond more positively if you are being positive!

5. Set realistic expectations

A dog learning a new command or behavior is a lot like a student learning a subject in school. You have to start with the basics first. You can only learn calculus if you understand basic math. The same goes for learning complex commands. A dog has to learn the basics before they can get an item out of the refrigerator!



Ruther Glen's service-dogs-in-training



Paws for Purple Hearts

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