

Paws of Allegiance

Spring 2022 Newsletter - Northwest Region



**PAWS FOR
PURPLE HEARTS**
WARRIOR HELPING WARRIOR[®]

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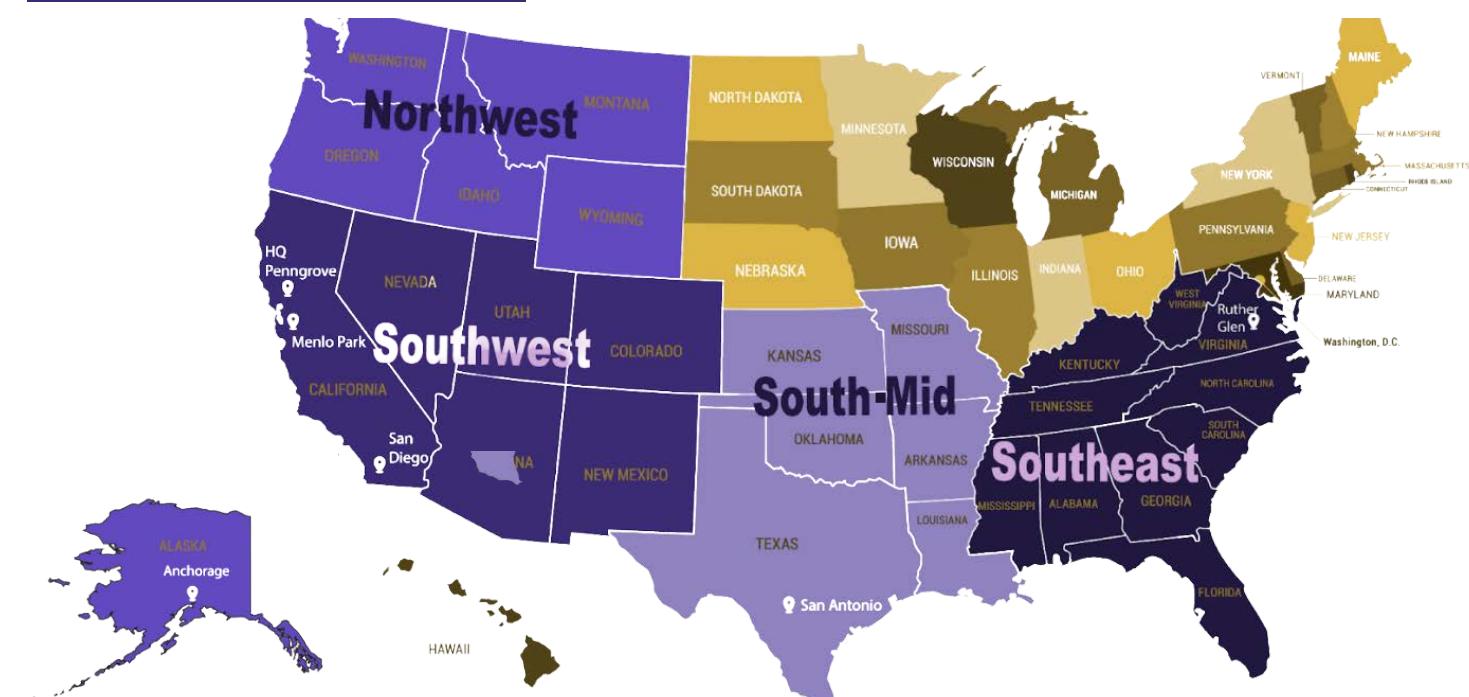
A PACIFIC VISIT

Pawsome Expansion

By: Claire Richardson, Advancement Associate

As Paws for Purple Hearts continues to grow and provide services to Warriors throughout the United States, we are excited to announce the opening of our new Northwest Regional field site in the Seattle/Tacoma, Washington area.

Many of our donors, volunteers, and readers know that Paws for Purple Hearts has already been serving the Northwest region through our Anchorage, Alaska operation.



Cont. Pawsome Expansion

The implementation of Canine-Assisted Warrior Therapy® and Assistance Dog placement in the Northwest have been extremely successful, however the need our Warriors have for these life-changing programs is larger still. For this reason, Paws for Purple Hearts is proud to bring its programming to the large military community in Washington.



PPH "E" Litter Ericson

In addition to this growth in our Northwest Region, in the near future, Paws for Purple Hearts will also be opening new locations in our last two untouched regions in the United States: the North-Mid and Northeast. We plan to expand into Detroit, Michigan for our North-Mid location. We are planning to open our Northeast site in the New York/New Jersey area. It is our mission here at Paws for Purple Hearts to bring these therapeutic programs to Veterans and Active Duty Service Members throughout the country, and with these openings, we are furthering this mission. You can help in many ways. Please consider telling any Warriors you know who might benefit from our services about our programs or just help spread the word in your general community about the difference we make. You can also stop by your local VA and ask them to contact us to find out about how we can work with them to help their Veterans recover from PTSD or TBI. If you are near one of our sites, please consider volunteering with us. You can also help by donating or by purchasing items on our Wish Lists.



Cassidy and Ericson

Leading the opening of this new facility is Bergin University of Canine Studies Masters of Science graduate, Cassidy Cooley. Cassidy is a United States Marine Corps Veteran and comes to us with many years of experience within the Assistance Dog Industry. With multiple years of training under her belt, we are delighted to have her assist with the expansion of Paws for Purple Hearts. Cassidy is extremely excited to facilitate the opening of this new location in the Seattle/Tacoma area with Ericson, one of the puppies from the PPH "E" Litter.

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Northwest Region

Anchorage Updates

Training Pups in the Winter

By: Samantha Reside, Advancement Associate

Our newest Service Dog-In-Training is named Elaine, aka "Laney". This beautiful puppy left California and came to our facility in Anchorage at the end of January when the weather was overloaded with snow, ice, some wind and definitely cold temperatures. She did not take to the snow as quickly as some would have hoped but we purchased some items that have helped her adjust to her new home. Like most things with dogs, it's best to introduce them to something new as young as possible.

First was the jacket. There are certain ways you can introduce an item like this to any dog so that they enjoy putting it on as they grow. Our PPH trainers will use treats, high praise and the command "dress" whenever the jacket is about to be put on. The trainers also encourage the dogs to reach their own heads through the opening of the jacket, rather than force it on over their heads. Laney immediately took to wearing her jacket and would keep it on all day if we let her!

Second, are the booties. Footwear can be helpful when introducing dogs to different types of terrains they might encounter when helping Warriors. We weren't able to get Laney her booties



Elaine staying warm in her jacket



Elaine wearing her booties for the first time

as early as we would have liked, but we introduced her to them very gently and the outcome was great.

Laney's primary trainer, Debbie, put Laney's front booties on first in the same manner that she was introduced to wearing a jacket. She realized very quickly that not only were these warm on her little toes, but they also gave her some great traction on our floors. The next day, Debbie put all four paws to the test and Laney took off across the room like a bolt of lightning. It was easy to see that she wasn't bothered by the booties in the least and that she actually seemed to enjoy wearing them.

Lastly, it's important to make sure puppies don't spend too much time outside during the cold, winter months. So while it's great that she can play out in the snow with her new gear, she shouldn't be left outside for long periods of time. Laney is quickly adjusting to her new environment and looks absolutely adorable while playing in the snow up here at PPH Alaska. This is something that you can do with your dog too if they're new to cold weather and it can be introduced to any dog at any age. Just be sure to make it a fun experience!

To donate, text PURPLEPAWS to 707070 or visit www.paws4ph.org/donate

Northwest Region

Anchorage Updates

Teaming up with our Warrior Community

By: Samantha Reside, Advancement Associate

Our new facility in Anchorage opened up in November of 2021 and we are quickly making it a great atmosphere for our dogs and anyone who stops by. We are making great connections throughout our community by engaging with many of the military and Veteran groups that live and thrive in this beautiful state.

PPH Alaska has teamed up with True North at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson (JBER) to participate in troop engagement and boost morale among the Airmen involved. The True North program embeds a behavioral health provider to the Airmen on base. True North is credentialed with the JBER Medical Group and is able to provide a higher level of care to the Airmen. PPH Program Instructors take dogs directly to the base for these types of sessions. This gives the Airmen the chance to relax and decompress from their busy day and just enjoy the company of the dogs. It also gives the behavioral health provider an opportunity to observe and evaluate the Airmen in a pleasant and

non-intimidating environment. This is a great form of social therapy that the Airmen benefit from and it gives our dogs a chance to interact with more people in different ways.

At Fort Richardson, there is a program called Better Opportunities for Single Service Members (BOSS). Through this program, soldiers can enhance their quality of life, contribute to their community through community service activities, and assist in the planning and execution of their own recreation and leisure events. BOSS members come to our facility in Anchorage to help maintain the cleanliness of our facility. Of course, some mandatory "puppy play" is also involved as part of this volunteer session. Soldiers are encouraged to take time to interact with the dogs and unwind from the stresses of everyday life. This is not only great for the soldiers, but it also helps introduce and reinforce behaviors among the PPH dogs while they're meeting new people.

Alaska Works Partnership has a program called "Helmets to Hardhats" that assists Veterans, Transitioning Service Members, National Guard, Reservists and Active Duty Spouses who are transitioning out of their careers in the military. They're taught skills in vocations like construction, welding, cabinetry and more. The crew at Helmets to Hardhats will be teaching their members to make shelving, cabinetry and possibly more projects in the future for the PPH facility in Anchorage. In return, PPH has given tours to members of Alaska Works Partnership, told them all about the ways that we are trying to assist our Warrior community and we have offered them plenty of time to visit and play with our amazing dogs.



Service Dog-In-Training Tanklage at USO Moral Event at JBER

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Northwest Region

Anchorage Updates

A Pacific Visit

By: Samantha Reside, Advancement Associate

In early January, U.S. Air Force General Ken Wilsbach, Pacific Air Forces (PACAF) commander, and Chief Master Sgt. Dave Wolfe, PACAF command chief, along with Air Force personnel and spouses, met with JBER base personnel, civic leaders and local organizations.

Cindy Wilsbach, the first lady of Pacific Air Forces, and Dr. Doniel Wolfe, spouse of the PACAF command chief and members of their party, paid a special visit to the Paws for Purple Hearts facility in Anchorage. During their visit, the group toured the facility, learned about the ways that PPH connects with the Warrior community and of course met the dogs.

After their visit, this is what Dr. Doniel Wolfe had to say about Paws for Purple Hearts.

"Paws for Purple Hearts offers a treatment approach that seeks to address this critical issue by providing key variables known to be highly correlated with positive outcomes: unconditional love, companionship, and instant engagement in response to heightened anxiety and stress. To be clear, the impact of this organization goes far beyond the warm feelings consequent to their mission, the amazing animals, and the dedicated PPH team; it is the opportunity, with each dog, to have a profound impact on the quality of life of an affected Service Member or Veteran in ways unlikely to come from a pill bottle or therapy session. While I firmly believe in an eclectic approach to mental health and have participated in several discussions on the subject, it is extremely rare to leave the table having been so inspired, much less hopeful, about a resource's capacity to effect meaningful change."

- Doniel Wolfe, EdD, BCBA Spouse, PACAF Command Chief

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Cindy Wilsbach, right, first lady of Pacific Air Forces, and Dr. Doniel Wolfe, left, spouse of the PACAF command chief, meet with the Paws for Purple Hearts Alaska team in Anchorage, Alaska, Jan. 7, 2022.

Photo Credits: JBER Public Affairs Team



Paws for Purple Hearts

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Northwest Region

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Paws for Purple Hearts is licensed by the Military Order of the Purple Heart and the Military Order of the Purple Heart Service Foundation, chartered by an Act of Congress for combat-wounded Veterans.



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