

# Paws of Allegiance

Fall 2022 Newsletter - Northwest Region



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## Paws Act Update

By: Melissa Kitko, PPH Program Instructor



Luana, Elaine, Kretzburg, Shapiro

The opportunity to participate in a large scale project such as the PAWS Act is an honor. Although PPH has been working with Veterans Affairs (VA) and helping Warriors since 2006, the signing of the PAWS Act is the nation's first step in recognizing a dog's potential and opens doors to the benefits of Psychiatric Assistance Dogs.

The Alaska facility hosted our first PAWS Act Cohort in June. The 8 week session began with eagerness to interact with Service Dogs-In-Training and was followed by some slight hesitation about what the rest of the journey entailed. Our quiet group of individuals morphed into a cohesive group that not only showed support for the young dogs, but also for the other members of the Cohort. The abstract concepts of how dogs learn and the positive training methods taught by our PPH team quickly became "real" for our Warriors. They also began to understand these concepts and how to actually apply these ideas to different human relationships. It was sad to say goodbye to our first Cohort, but was equally thrilling when we learned that some of them had applied to become volunteers with PPH.

As this newsletter goes to print we are completing Cohort #3 and are eagerly anticipating Cohort #4. We are also hopeful that Cohort participants will come and join us for our monthly social hour, "Warriors & Wags." At this event, Warriors can share the experiences they've had with PPH dogs with other Veterans who may be curious about Service Dogs and how they can impact their lives for the better.

## Tacoma Team Update

**By: Claire Richardson, Advancement Associate**

As many of you know, we have opened a brand new site in the Northwest region this year in Tacoma, WA, just outside of Joint Base Lewis-McChord. As the months have passed, we have made big changes and stepped out into the community there more and more, adding new field trips and visits to events each week!

Ericson, our Service Dog In-Training in this site, celebrated his first birthday this November and as our Senior Dog Instructor, Cassidy, continues to develop his skills and improve his training, he is becoming more and more prepared for bigger

adventures. This year alone, he has gone to many events that helped him be familiar with large crowds, noise, big props and more.

Ericson and the Tacoma Team are even more excited to announce that they've officially moved into their new facility in Lakewood, a major hub for the Veteran community and extremely close to the VA where Canine Assisted Warrior Therapy® is being held. We are beyond excited to continue to serve this region and provide more and more services to those Warriors who need them most. Thanks to your generosity, we have been able to expand our mission by opening up this new site in the Seattle-Tacoma area. It is because of you all that we are able to make achievements such as this!



**Trainer Cassidy with Ericson**

## New Northwest Puppy

**By: Samantha Reside, Advancement Associate**



**Meet our new puppy, Luana!**

We are so excited to introduce our newest Service Dog-in-Training, Luana. Her nickname is "Lulu" and she is a full golden retriever. Luana was born Memorial Day weekend and lived in California with her mother, Rosie, before she flew up to Alaska in early August. Her trainer, Debbie, is actively trying to get her used to different experiences and places as much as possible. She absolutely loves digging in the yard and chewing on anything she can sink her little teeth into. Luana seems to have only two speeds right now; solid asleep or running and playing at 100 miles per hour! She has already proven to love the water and we are certain she will take to the Alaska snowfall like a local. She is a spunky girl who is eager to learn, but is not afraid to try

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something new or join in on play time with the bigger pups. Luana is also the half-sister of our big boy, Kreitzberg, and she is joined by Elaine and Shapiro in her pack of girl puppies. Having her join the team has been an absolute joy and we are looking forward to watching her progress through her training here in the Northwest.

## Thank You To Our Donors

By: Samantha Reside, Advancement Associate



A special visit from the Ft. Wainwright BOSS group

We would not be able to focus on our mission here in Alaska if it weren't for our generous donors and volunteers. Our nonprofit organization survives solely on donations, fundraisers and grants. This fact can make it challenging to get certain supplies that we need for training our dogs and it can even make getting out in public difficult due to lack of staffing and resources. So when people donate their hard earned money to us to help pay for gas to travel to events and when people spend their time off to join us out in the public, it means everything to us. Towards the end of August, we had the Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers group (BOSS) from Fort Wainwright in Fairbanks come down to help us "winterize" our facility.

They pulled weeds from our front property for more than an hour and made the entry to our parking lot much cleaner and safer.

They also helped move our agility equipment into storage and clear up space in our garage or more training activities with the dogs once the snow starts. Their donation of time and effort saved us so much money that can now be used to take our dogs out for more training events and can allow us to participate in more public fundraising opportunities; like tabling events.

Donations of time, energy, resources and money means the world to us here at Paws for Purple Hearts and none of what we do here in the Northwest would be possible without your continued support for our dogs and our mission. If you are interested in donating monetarily to Paws for Purple Hearts or if you would like to sign up to become a volunteer, you can head to our website [pawsforpurplehearts.org](http://pawsforpurplehearts.org) today.



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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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