

Paws of Allegiance

Spring 2023 Newsletter - Northwest Region



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PAWS Act Developments

By: Samantha Reside, Marketing & Communications Specialist

The PAWS Act was signed into law back on August 25th, 2021 and it requires the VA to conduct a five-year pilot program to provide canine training to Veterans that have been diagnosed with PTSD as a part of their mental health care. It was not only passed by congress, but signed by the President as well to conduct this extremely important research. As we mentioned in our last newsletter, the PPH Alaska site was selected as one of five Service Dog organizations to participate in the "Puppies Assisting Wounded Servicemembers" (PAWS) for Veterans Therapy Act pilot program. The hope is that this program will prove the benefits that Psychiatric Assistance Dogs have on Service Members suffering from the daily struggles of PTSD.



O'Paul 2 & Margaret with a group of Veterans at our Anchorage Facility

We are so excited to tell you all about the PAWS Act and how things are progressing up here in Alaska. By the time this newsletter goes to print, we will have started our fifth “cohort” or group. Several of the participants have come back to PPH after their eight-week cohort to sign up as a volunteer or as a Puppy Parent. The feedback has been extremely positive thus far that we have started holding a second weekly session so that we can have as many Veterans come through our cohorts as possible. The addition of the two new puppies has made these cohorts even more exciting because the participants are able to see the different levels of learning and tasking from a five-month-old puppy up to a dog that has been training for a year and a half. We are continuously grateful for the opportunity to participate in this nationwide pilot program that partners with Veterans Affairs.

Northwest Puppies

By: Samantha Reside, Marketing & Communications Specialist

The Paws for Purple Hearts Northwest Region welcomed three new puppies to our two locations back in November. Paul and Patrick were both from the “P Litter” and Margaret was from the “M Litter” born at our National Office in California. Patrick went to join Ericson at the Tacoma site in Washington, while Paul and Margaret traveled all the way up to Alaska. So far, all three puppies are doing wonderfully and progressing at their task training at an amazing pace. Margaret is proving to be incredibly food motivated, so teaching her new commands has been pretty easy. Trying to get her to do the command calmly without bouncing all over the room, however, is another story entirely. She is an absolute sweetheart and she melts every heart she comes into contact with.

Paul is a completely different puppy compared to Margaret. He is very analytical and mischievous. While he loves tasking, he is a very focused and calm little guy. His favorite thing to do is jump on



Patrick, O'Paul 2, & Margaret at our National Office

top of things he’s not supposed to and pick up anything he can get his little paws on. His litter mate, Patrick, is a spirited young dog that loves to train and learn! He is always ready for a new adventure. His favorite activities, aside from eating, are exploring new places and looking for mischief around the house. His favorite commands are shake and down. He is doing great in his training and is always excited for a new day and a new opportunity to learn more!

Washington's Brand New Facility

By: Claire Richardson, Marketing & Communications Specialist

As one of the newest regional facilities, we could not be more ecstatic to announce a successful open house this Spring! On February 25, our facility was open to the public, allowing everyone in the community to see the work we do. Our goal in hosting this event is to inspire people to get

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Senior Program Instructor, Cassidy Cooley, demonstrating tasks with Ericosn

involved and interested in being a part of our organization. Luckily, the Paws for Purple Hearts Washington team has already been going out into the community and making connections with many different Veteran organizations and retired service members, whom we would like to thank for coming out and supporting us at our grand opening! Cassidy Cooley, our Senior Program Instructor, hosted demonstrations of the tasks our Service Dogs-In-Training perform in their day to day lives. Our National Marketing and Communications Specialist, Claire Richardson, ensured the event ran smoothly and assisted guests as they entered and exited our facility.

This event took a little over two months of planning and preparation, as well as lots of help! Our site has been incredibly fortunate to have gained a talented and hardworking group of volunteers who, throughout the last seven months, have helped us arrange every single room at our site to get it in the best shape possible. To our active duty service members, wonderful retired volunteers, and close friends who have helped us get to where we are at our facility, thank you!

The Importance of Puppy Parents

By: Samantha Reside, Marketing & Communications Specialist

Puppy Parents are very important to the training of our Service Dogs. They help teach our pups how to live in a home outside of their training routine and the PPH staff members. This allows them to learn all about new people, routines, socialization and many new situations. Here in Alaska, we have some of the best Puppy Parents in the world! The first in our list of long-time Puppy Parents are The Darlings. This family of five is just as sweet as their name! They have helped several of our puppies get familiar with their new surroundings and have so far been Puppy Parents to Elaine, Luana, and Margaret.

Next up is Christina Trombley, who also acts as our mental health provider through the True North program at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson (JBER) in Anchorage, AK. She was a consistent Puppy Parent to former PPH pup, Andrea, and has been there to help take care of our other Service Dogs-in-Training, such as Elaine, Kreitzberg, and Paul. Christina loves taking our dogs onto base to meet the Airmen and she has been a huge asset for us and our connectivity to our Air Force community here in Anchorage. Last but not least, we have Mariana Ligon who has been a Puppy Parent to Kreitzberg since he arrived at our facility in the fall of 2021. Mair and her fiancé enjoy taking him hiking, camping, and all over town for field trips. They've also added our youngest pup, Paul, to their weekly schedule and plan on doing a lot of the same activities with him that they have been able to introduce Kreitzberg to.

These Puppy Parents are always willing to help out on events, meet trainers for field trips and show their overall support for PPH and our mission. We would not be able to give these dogs such a well-rounded training experience if it weren't for the time and effort that these families have put into them. We are forever grateful and love having them as part of the PPH family.



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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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