

Paws of Allegiance

Spring 2023 Newsletter - Southwest Region



IN THIS ISSUE

**A DAY IN DOWNTOWN
DISNEY**

DOGS ON BOARD

OAKLEY PUPDATE

**THE SOUTHWEST
ADVISORY BOARD:
SUPPORTING OUR
MISSION IN THE
SOUTHWEST REGION**

A Day in Downtown Disney

By: Greg DeSantis, Marketing and Communication Specialist

Canine Assisted Warrior Therapy® (CAWT) is becoming increasingly recognized as an effective option for Veterans dealing with PTSD, TBI, and MST. By working alongside our expert Paws for Purple Hearts trainers and a mental health professional, participants engage in a straightforward approach by helping with Service Dog training. This helps them alleviate their own symptom severity as they work

towards a meaningful mission in training lifelong service companions for other comrades in need. This past January, Paws for Purple Hearts San Diego organized one such session in the bustling streets of Downtown Disney in Anaheim, CA. Accompanied by Service Dogs-In-Training Kerry, Reid, Penny, and Nina, the session was designed to help Veterans build their confidence while navigating busy public spaces.

Participants John, Jake, and Vance were carefully guided through various commands while learning to use our dogs to relax and focus amidst the hustle and bustle. Because crowded public spaces can often trigger feelings of anxiety or stress, our Veterans learned to rely on the dogs. In turn, the dogs were trained to recognize any anxiety cues and to relax and settle in such environments. By the end of the session, they navigated the crowded streets with newfound confidence



Service Dogs In-Training Penny, Kerry, Nina, and Reid at Downtown Disney

and a sense of accomplishment in developing a deeper understanding of our dogs and their abilities to work together as a team. While the concept is simple, the impact it has on Veterans' lives is immeasurable. It's another great example of how Paws for Purple Hearts is changing lives, one paw at a time.

Dogs On Board

By: Olivia Hughes, Marketing and Communication Specialist

All aboard! The USS Hornet graciously invited our Bay Area team aboard to visit with members of the community in January. Service Dog-In-Training, Lofty, and Ambassador Dog, Schatzie, spent the day aboard visiting with community members and educating staff and guests about our mission. Throughout the day, Lofty and Schatzie demonstrated their mobility assistance and PTSD commands to show visitors how our dogs help Warriors.

Our crew loved connecting with the community and meeting so many amazing visitors. The day was full of incredible connections, including a family of our generous donors who came aboard because they saw that we would be on the USS Hornet that day! Along with amazing community relationship-building, this second visit aboard the USS Hornet allowed Service Dog-In-Training, Lofty, to get further acquainted with



Service Dog-In-Training, Lofty, and Ambassador Dog, Schatzie, aboard the USS Hornet

the boat environment. It is important that our dogs-in-training experience as many environments as possible to prepare them for placement. With two visits under his belt, the USS Hornet has helped Lofty to advance in his training.

We are grateful for the USS Hornet's continued support and are already looking forward to future visits aboard!

Oakley Pupdate

By: Olivia Hughes, Marketing and Communication Specialist

On April 6th, Service Dog-In-Training, Oakley, turned one! At one year into his training as a Service Dog, Oakley has participated in about 114 Canine-Assisted Warrior Therapy® sessions and directly touched the lives of about 80 Warriors. Through his participation in Canine-Assisted Warrior Therapy® sessions throughout the year, his out-going and friendly personality has helped to bring each participant joy throughout their sessions.

"It is amazing to see how much happiness Oakley brings to Warriors during sessions and how much his presence helps them to open up."

-Megan Franke, Oakley's Program Instructor



Service Dog-In-Training, Oakley, preparing to celebrate Easter

Follow Paws for Purple Hearts on Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and Instagram

Oakley is known for his love for people and is happy to be-friend anyone who approaches him. He is delighted to roll on his back at the end of each session during the cuddle portion of the visit. At events and Social Therapy throughout the year Oakley has provided countless smiles to Warriors and members of the community.

Oakley loves his retrieve commands and 'lap', a command where Service Dogs provide pressure therapy through putting their front paws on their handler's lap. As his first year in training ends, we can't wait to see his growth throughout his training in the next year!

The Southwest Advisory Board: Supporting Our Mission in the Southwest Region

By: Greg DeSantis, Marketing and Communication Specialist

The Southwest Advisory Board serves as an advocate, ambassador, and spokesperson in supporting the mission and goals of Paws for Purple Hearts' Southwest Region. Covering California, Arizona, Colorado, Nevada, Utah, and New Mexico, their primary responsibility is to serve as a resource for our Regional Director while advocating for the organization's mission within the community.

Members also keep the Regional Director informed of any emerging opportunities or challenges and leverage their personal networks to further the organization's goals.

To achieve these goals, responsibilities include facilitating introductions to donors and key stakeholders, reviewing branding and outreach strategies, and actively participating in fundraising activities. Additionally, the Board is expected to actively contribute its leadership, time, and talents to help the Southwest Region reach its goals. This includes learning about the region's strategy, programs, operations, finances, and serving as a representative in the community.

Overall, the Southwest Advisory Board serves as a vital resource for Paws for Purple Hearts' Southwest Region in supporting our mission to improve the lives of Veterans and active-duty service members. If you are interested in being considered for the Southwest Advisory Board or getting more involved, please feel free to contact our Southwest Regional Director, Kerry Blum.



Southwest Advisory Board
Pictured: Vic Martin, Lori Bird, Michelle Melvin, Kerry Blum
Not Pictured: Phil Barlow



Follow Paws for Purple Hearts on Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and Instagram



Paws for Purple Hearts

5550 Oberlin Drive, Ste B
San Diego, California 92121-1738

NON-PROFIT
US POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT #470
SANTA ROSA CA

Paws for Purple Hearts Board of Directors

Mark Quattrocchi, Chairperson
Dave Phillips, Secretary/Treasurer
Bonita Bergin, PPH President/CEO
Lt. Col. Jeffrey Camp (Retired), Member
Col. David Rabb (Retired), Member
Rob Rutherford, Esquire, Member
Roy Hurd, Member
Col. John Lemondes (Retired), Member

Facebook:
@pphSanDiego @pphMenloPark
Instagram: @pphSouthwest

Southwest Region

Regional Headquarters:
San Diego, California (858) 779-2404

Regional Field Site:
Menlo Park, California (650) 684-7244

5550 Oberlin Drive, Ste B, San Diego,
California 92121-1738

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.



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