

Paws of Allegiance

Fall 2023 Newsletter - National Office



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Highlighting Heroes

By: Claire Richardson, Marketing and Communication Specialist

Over the years, Dr. Bonita Bergin has been acknowledged for her development of the Service Dog industry, as well as founding our organization Paws for Purple Hearts. This fall, it is our pleasure to inform you of her most recent venture, as she has been awarded the title of Person of the Year at the inaugural Purple Poppy Awards & Fundraiser held by the National Service Animals Memorial (NSAM)! Not only was she acknowledged as Person of the Year, but a separate organization originally founded by Dr. Bergin, Canine Companions for Independence, won Organization of the Year!



CEO Dr. Bonita Bergin alongside Canine Companion CEO, Paige Mazzoni

The National Service Animal Memorial has been authorized by Congress to construct a memorial site to honor the sacrifices and contributions made by Service Animals and pioneers in this field. This event was held to memorialize the passing of this bill and celebrate the achievements made within the community. The memorial itself will be positioned in the heart of the nation's capital to inspire visitors to pay their respects and gain a deeper understanding of the work done by the variety of Service Animals recognized in this exhibit. (Cont.)

To be honored at this ceremony was a milestone for Dr. Bergin and we could not be more grateful to celebrate this award alongside her. We'd like to take this opportunity to thank the National Service Animal Memorial for hosting this event and allowing us to take part in this historical celebration!

PAWS Act Successes

By: Claire Richardson, Marketing and Communication Specialist

A little over a year and a half ago, Paws for Purple Hearts had the amazing opportunity to engage our nation's Warriors in a program called the PAWS for Veterans Therapy Act, short for Puppies Assisting Wounded Servicemembers Therapy Act, passed by congress and signed by the President.

Our facilities in Anchorage, AK, and San Antonio, TX, were selected as two of the five sites to test the validity of Service Dogs and their effects on PTSD symptoms in veterans, thus making our organization an influential partner in this nationwide study.

Each eight week class of Veterans brings us different batches of backgrounds and personalities with varying perspectives. We have been incredibly fortunate to have had so many wonderful participants move through these eight week sessions with our two sites and share with us their experiences in the military.



Pavloff & Service Dog-In-Training Margaret



Paws for Purple Hearts, Alaska PAWS Act Participant Mary Pavloff & Service Dog Kreitzberg

Fortunately, it has allowed us to watch firsthand how influential this program can be for these Veterans. We have been able to observe the gradual changes in lifestyle and socialization for many of these Veterans due to the time spent with our dogs in sessions.

Despite the differences in climate, location, branch of service, and plenty more, we have been able to track the similarities in improvements at the end of each eight week session. The outcomes have been so positive that with your continued support, we promise to expand our Canine Assisted Warrior Therapy® (CAWT) program to help even more Veterans who need your help!

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Paws for Purple Hearts CAWT Participant & Service Dog-In-Training Ryan

The Growth of Fall

By: Claire Richardson, Marketing and Communication Specialist

This fall season has not only brought many new exciting additions to the Paws for Purple Hearts team in regards to our new employees hired at various sites, but also in new puppies! In the late summer, our National Office welcomed a litter of Golden Retrievers that are excelling in their training at each of our sites around the country!

Thanks to their enrichment opportunities during their first developmental stages at our National Office in Penngrove, CA, they are sent to the sites with the base knowledge that sets them up for success during the rest of their training. We start their training early intentionally as they begin to develop the ability to retain information useful to their education at a very young age.

In addition to these new team members being trained at each of our sites, we've recently had another litter of even more Golden Retriever pups! It is thrilling to witness the rapid changes in abilities that occur each week of their training, but even more impressive to watch the rate at which they grow.

As many of you know, every new day with our puppies reminds us of the importance of our mission. We are proud of the training they receive that will better the lives of Veterans who have served our country through both the therapy sessions, as well as placements!



Service Dogs-In-Training Lois & Ryan



2011 - 2023

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Paws for Purple Hearts President & CEO

Dr. Bonita Bergin

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