

# Paws of Allegiance

Fall 2023 Newsletter - Southeast Region



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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!

## Graduation Celebration!

**By: Genevieve Timpone, Marketing & Communications Specialist**



**Service Dog Booth alongside her Warrior Lia**

What's a cooler venue for a graduation than an aircraft carrier? This past July, Paws for Purple Hearts Southeast's Service Dog Booth was partnered with her Warrior aboard the USS Hornet anchored in Alameda, California. This Yorktown-class Naval aircraft carrier was not only active in WWII, it also acted as a recovery ship for NASA test missions for the Apollo Program in its later years. We are so thankful for our partnership with Aircraft Carrier Hornet Foundation and are deeply grateful to have been allowed to hold our Graduation ceremony on such a grand and important US historical landmark!

Two other Paws for Purple Hearts dogs graduated alongside Booth. Reid from San Diego and Chapman from San Antonio were both placed as Facility Dogs and are now working at the Menlo Park VA and the Palo Alto VA in California. Booth is now off improving her Warrior's quality of life at their home together in Colorado!

On the tail of the Graduation aboard the Hornet, another dog trained by our Southeast Team, Jeanette began her two week Client Training process in Anchorage, Alaska. Jeanette's bonding with her handler and Graduation was a great success! She is now providing our Warriors mental health support as a Facility Dog at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson (JBER) Military Base in Anchorage, Alaska. We're so very proud of all our new Assistance Dog graduates. All their hard work and training has culminated in them all achieving their highest purpose of serving our Warriors!

## New Pups On The Block!

**By: Genevieve Timpone, Marketing & Communications Specialist**

There's the pitter-patter of little paws at Paws for Purple Hearts Southeast! Our facility recently received three new Service Dog-In-Training puppies, Nyx, Noble, and Ruiz! Nyx and Noble are sleek little Black Lab puppies. Though unrelated, they were both born on April 8, 2023 and they look quite a bit alike! Ruiz is a Golden Retriever born on June 7, 2023 and he is made of fluff!

Ruiz is still in the Puppy Training stage, where he is learning his manners and how to be a good boy! This comes naturally to him and he is already helping out in our Canine-Assisted Warrior Therapy Program®! Nyx and Noble are entering into their Formal Training stage, where they will be learning the over 100 different Service Commands to help our Warriors with mobility and trauma-related issues. (Cont.)



**Noble, Ruiz, & Nyx**

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In order to provide our Warriors with the highest quality Assistance Dogs, the entire training process for all of our Service Dogs-In-Training is two and a half years. So while over 100 Service Commands sounds like a lot, these pups have ample time to learn, practice, and master every one of them!

We are so pleased with how all the eleven dogs at our facility are progressing in their training! After Booth and Jeanette's Graduation, and with six more of our dogs on track to graduate next year, we are so happy to have these fresh faces in training!

## Honoring American Heroes Through Legacy Giving

By: Danielle Stockbridge, Virginia Site Manager



Service Dog, Booth, Giving Love to Canine Assisted Warrior Therapy Participant®

At Paws for Purple Hearts, we believe that dogs have the power to change a Warrior's life. Through providing canine-assisted therapy and Service Dogs to Veterans facing mobility challenges or trauma-related conditions, Paws for Purple Hearts maintains a lasting commitment to serving the American heroes that sacrificed so much for our nation. Did you know that through a legacy gift to Paws for Purple Hearts, you can ensure that our vital mission continues to thrive long into the future, bringing hope, healing, and independence to those who need it most?

A legacy gift is a donation to a nonprofit, like Paws for Purple Hearts, made in your last will and testament. This gift can be property, cash, or a percentage of your estate. A legacy gift to Paws for Purple Hearts ensures that you will continue to honor our Warriors for years to come.

Did you know you could leave 1% of your assets in your will to Paws for Purple Hearts? This means that your family still gets 99% and establishes a tradition of philanthropy for future generations for years to

come. It is so simple to remember Paws for Purple Hearts in your legacy. Contact your financial advisor and tell them that you want to leave Paws for Purple Hearts as a beneficiary in your will. All you need to provide is our name and our EIN number, #45- 45-3342634. A gift in any amount goes a long way in ensuring the stability and growth of Paws for Purple Hearts' programs in the coming years.



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## **Paws for Purple Hearts**

7404 Commerce Way, Unit D  
Ruther Glen, VA. 22546

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### **Southeast Region**

#### **Regional Headquarters:**

7404 Commerce Way  
Ruther Glen, VA 22546  
Unit D

(804) 589-0077

### **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.



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