



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Nationally, New Partnerships Pave Way For DBL's Assistance Dog Growth

CENTRAL POINT, OR – The COVID-19 pandemic that hit the United States in early 2020 and will be here for some time to come, has certainly created a number of challenges for many, including how Dogs for Better Lives (DBL) does business.

Historically and to this day, DBL has relied heavily on acquiring dogs from shelters and rescue operations, primarily across the west coast. Though, as a result of the pandemic, many shelters are either closed, have limited numbers of dogs on hand, and/or none that have acceptable temperament to become an Assistance Dog.

In early September DBL reached out to Guide Dog Foundation (Smithtown, NY), in exploring how we could acquire non-graduating Guide Dogs. Often Guide Dogs are the best resource for DBL, as they can relatively easily be converted to a Hearing Assistance Dog, Autism Assistance Dog, or Facility dog. Labradors and Golden Retrievers are breeds that commonly are used and provide great temperament, to be trained as an Assistance Dog.

13 month old lab golden mix Noah came to DBL from Southeastern Guide Dogs (FL) in early Sept.

“Partnerships with Service Dog Organizations across the country are valuable because they are helping DBL maintain our dog numbers as we develop our breeding program, stated Program Field Representative, Andrea Woodcock. “The dogs we are being given were bred to be Assistance Dogs and DBL can help them fulfill their purpose.”

While talking with former DBL colleague, Cameron Mclendon at Guide Dog Foundation, Andrea learned of opportunities to possibly acquire dogs from another Assistance Dog organization, Southeast Guide Dogs (SGD) in Palmetto, FL. SGD actively seeks alternate careers for dogs who have been career changed from being Guide Dogs, as DBL recently discovered with Labrador Noah. It was determined that he would be a great fit for DBL's programs and Noah was recently brought to Oregon, to begin training.”

Over the last 12-14 months, partnerships have begun to develop elsewhere across the country for DBL, including the North American Breeding Cooperative (ABC), facilitated by Assistance Dogs International (ADI), our accrediting body, and a worldwide coalition made up of non-profit programs that train and place Assistance Dogs. Affiliated Assistance Dog organizations have the opportunity to share breeding stock annually with other ADI accredited programs whose dogs have outstanding genetic and health clearances. Since DBL joined ABC in 2019, we have received two dogs into training and moving forward, anticipate 1-2 puppies each quarter.

“We're really excited to be part of the ABC Cooperative, as this provides us with additional dogs and introduces us to new partnerships, all the while we are building out our own breeding program,” stated CEO Bryan Williams. “We cannot do this in a vacuum, and it's been by reaching out and creating new partnerships, we have been able to slowly grow and expand our reach – ultimately benefiting our clients.”

One of DBL's most prized and valued long-term relationships has been with Guide Dogs for the Blind (GDB) in San Rafael, CA, where they have been providing non-graduating Guide Dogs to DBL since 2011. To-date, we have received 68 dogs from GDB and annually receive 10-15 purpose-bred dogs from this partnership.

As DBL's own breeding program slowly begins to expand, there will certainly be a bigger need for volunteer puppy raisers and breeder caretakers. To learn more about our Alliance Partners and volunteer opportunities, please visit... <https://dogsforbetterlives.org/get-involved/>.



Dogs for Better Lives is a national 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization focusing on the training and placing of Hearing Assistance Dogs, Program Assistance Dogs, and Autism Assistance Dogs. Accredited by [Assistance Dogs International \(ADI\)](#) and recognized by [Charity Navigator](#) as a 4-star nonprofit, Dogs for the Deaf has been rescuing dogs, bettering lives, and providing assistance dogs since 1977.

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