

Dogs for Better Lives • Fall 2020 • NO. 137

THE CANINE LISTENER

Magazine

Sustainability Matters at DBL

Our greater responsibility to care for our community and our planet

The Future Looks Bright for DBL

New solar array at our Central Point campus

COVID Stories

Navigating the pandemic



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On the Cover

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PRESIDENT & CEO

LETTER FROM BRYAN WILLIAMS

Most people say that we are living in unprecedented times. In fact, I have heard this word used many, many times in the last six months. And in many ways, we are. COVID-19 has been devastating to so many people and businesses, nonprofits included. I in no way want to minimize the heartbreak and loss people are experiencing, yet there are also opportunities that present themselves during times of crisis and change. One of my favorite authors and speakers is Simon Sinek. He says that we're not living in unprecedented times - we are living in a time of reinvention. "This is not unprecedented. More sudden? Absolutely. More shocking? Absolutely. But this is not unprecedented in the business world. So, for us to say, 'How will we do what we're doing?', but rather, 'How will we do what we're doing in a different world?'

And the world is different."

This is the second crisis I've lived through professionally, having been employed at a nonprofit during the Great Recession. Nonprofits who stayed the course, and were even aggressive during that challenging time, came out better on the other side. Former leadership, especially Robin Dickson and the wisdom of our previous and current Board Members, positioned Dogs for Better Lives to survive this crisis and exit it better than where we entered it.

Luckily, prior to the coronavirus pandemic, we had already started the move to a cloud-based strategy where staff could access the tools they need to do their job remotely. Many of our staff had taken advantage of this shift and were working one or two days a week from home. When the pandemic hit, we were able to shift those people to full time remote work.

Our loyal and passionate donors continue to support the work we do, and we have not been forced to make any difficult decisions. We have also been working on cutting expenses by living our sustainability value. Our solar panel project was completed and is now generating power to reduce our electricity costs. We have made the decision to limit the number of copies we print internally and for our publications like the Canine Listener. Going forward, we will be creating and printing a smaller version of our magazine, while making it widely available online.

Programmatically, we are looking at our strategy and finding ways to shift. The pandemic has made it incredibly difficult to acquire shelter dogs for our program due to the surge in adoptions by the general public. We recognize this shift, as it ultimately serves the greater purpose of rescue dog lives being saved.

We live our value of care for the dogs comes first, and made more placements in client homes than we did at this point a year ago. We're reviewing our policies, procedures, and manuals to ensure we are doing things consistently and at the highest quality. We're planning the future Dogs for Better Lives, taking every opportunity to create a bright future.

The biggest lesson I've learned from this pandemic - and from the recent wildfires that devastated local communities in the Rogue Valley - is that I made the right decision to become DBL's CEO. From the support of our incredibly generous donors, the leadership and steadiness of the Board of Directors, the incredibly passionate staff willing to do whatever it takes, and a group of volunteers eager to return to campus. This truly is a family, and I am a proud member.



Bryan



WE GET LETTERS



“I just found your website and watched several of your videos. Of course, I started to cry because I know firsthand how dogs have changed my life and the lives of people with disabilities that are close to me. Thank you for the work you are doing. You are creating a better, more loving world.”

- Jane T., Prosser, WA

“Always dedicated to helping Dogs for Better Lives. The Benevolent Patriotic Order of Does are very proud to donate monetarily to help with the care and the training of their dogs. We are excited for the continued future of their Autism Assistance Dog program.”

- Ellen T., BPO Does, Los Lunas, NM

“Good luck to little Eliot on his journey at Dogs for Better Lives. You have a puppy we raised for Guide Dogs for the Blind who is waiting to be placed as an Autism Assistance Dog. We also hope he helps to better someone’s life in the future. Thank you for accepting him into your program and for your care and training of him.”

- Anne R., GDB Puppy Raiser

“We are honored to have been chosen to provide pups to this amazing nonprofit. We will donate a puppy to them this year. They did extensive research on us, poured over our health testing documents and then chose a litter. Our puppies and quality once again speak for themselves. I am so happy when trainers, those that devote their time and energy to provide life-saving dogs, take all necessary steps to ensure they are using dogs of sound temperament and health.”

- 4E Kennel

“God Bless all of you out there for the good job you’re doing for people and the animals that I love so much. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.”

- Sylvia P., Roseville, MN

“I have a shelter dog and support my local shelter and will also be sending you \$100 every July. Thank you for all that do for dogs and people.”

- Barbara H., Young Harris, GA

Letter to Isabel, a DBL puppy raiser:

“My heart is full of gratitude for all the love and guidance you showed Ace, and for helping shape him into the little love and helper that he is becoming. Most of all, I am grateful for the gift of your time, that you were able to bond with and love him for one year and then return him to DBL, knowing that you might not see him again and hoping he would change someone else’s life. I am also grateful for Ace’s trainers at DBL. I am also grateful for all the lovely souls that have donated to DBL, to allow them to do what they do best - make lives better. Please know this is the best gift I have ever received. Ace makes me a better person every day, and he fills my heart with so much love and joy.”

- Andrea B., DBL Hearing Assistance Dog client

PLACEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

As you can imagine, our work has been greatly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. In March, the administrative and program staff were sent home to work remotely, and our dogs-in-training were fostered within trainers' homes as much as capacity allowed. All dog placements and in-person follow-up visits were paused, and client support was performed virtually through updated technology. Mission critical work focused on the care, housing and consistent management of our dogs to ensure the work towards their future placements would not be hindered.

We are pleased to announce that dog placements have resumed in states where travel is allowed. Trainers and dogs have been working hard to complete their training. We look forward to sharing more placement stories with you in the future – thank you for your patience and understanding during these unprecedented times.



BASIL

Basil was placed as a Hearing Assistance Dog with Debbie in Tennessee. Basil was donated to DBL as a puppy from Guide Dogs for the Blind and was raised by Daniela, one of our local puppy raisers in Southern Oregon.

Debbie is a retired elementary school teacher who lives in a small rural town. Everyone in the town was made aware of Basil's arrival, and Basil behaved perfectly in public. Debbie lives with her parents, so the most important job for Basil will be the name call. Basil has changed Debbie's life, and her parents' lives as well!



BOOTS

Boots was placed as a Hearing Assistance Dog in Arizona. She came to DBL from Guide Dogs for the Blind. Boots knew she was in her new home when she and her trainer arrived for placement, rushing in immediately, smelling everything, and finding her basket of new toys. She caught on to the new sounds and environment quickly. Boots is working the door knock, doorbell, smoke alarm, oven timer, and name call.



GUIANA

In July, Guiana was placed as a Hearing Assistance Dog with Tracee in Idaho. Guiana came to us from Guide Dogs for the Blind and adjusted quickly to her new role as Tracee's hearing companion. During placement week, Tracee said that she was excited to feel more confident and comfortable, both in her own home and out in public with Guiana by her side.

“Basil has changed Debbie's life, and her parents' lives as well!”

FOLLOW UPS



HILTON

Rebecca and Facility Dog Hilton have been a solid team in southern Oregon since 2015. Rebecca and Hilton assist students in a high school program that emphasizes hands-on activities to directly transfer into the student's independent life skills. Rebecca provided this update:

"Hilton doesn't quite get the online learning that we're all enduring, but we are adjusting to it all just like everyone else. Hilton is a very social guy, so we are finding new ways to keep him active and engaged. We have switched to distance learning for the remainder of the year [due to COVID-19], so, we try to get Hilton online to "see" everyone. The other day we woke up to a lovely note from a student requesting some "Hilton time" – it was really sweet!"



ARLA

Hearing Assistance Dog Arla was placed with Mason in Washington State last year. Since then, it's been a wonderful year for them. Mason adores Arla and loves the excitement of how she alerts him to sounds. He says, "She's a hard-working pup who is

constantly getting praised for her excellent behavior in public, often going unnoticed until we get up to leave. Her companionship has been lifechanging."

"Her companionship has been life-changing."

- Mason about Hearing Assistance Dog Arla



NELSON

Janet and Facility Dog Nelson have been a team for 9 years at an elementary school in southern Oregon. Janet shared this update: "Recently the first-grade class set up a post office and had students write letters which they delivered to other classrooms.

For the past five years, Nelson "wrote" back to everyone that wrote to him. He received over 80 letters from adoring fans! One day at an Assembly, I was called over to talk to a student who was being disruptive. Of course, Nelson was with me and he laid down next to the student, who was calmed immediately and stayed calm for the rest of the Assembly".



SOPHIE

Hearing Assistance Dog Sophie has been helping Sandra for one year in New Jersey. She recently shared this story: "We have many deer in our neighborhood and Sophie gets to see them a lot. She "whoop-whoop's" at them, but never chases. This week as we were walking

down the street, we saw coming at us in the opposite direction two deer running away from another dog who was chasing them, while the owners were chasing the dog. Sophie barked once, I told her to leave it, gave her a treat, and she watched the whole scenario going down. She kept looking at them, then at me, and back to them, as if she was saying, "What is going on here?! Sophie is such a good girl!"

FOLLOW UPS



NOODLE
Maria and Hearing Assistance Dog Noodle have been a team for 2.5 years in South Carolina. Maria is a high school teacher and recently reported, “Now that we’re working from home, we have changed things up quite a bit. We are doing sound work and obedience

training almost daily, and his new “thing” since working from home is to let me know when someone is at the door. He has learned to adapt to the sound of the doorbell, and props his head up immediately to stare at it in attention to let me know someone is there. There is a delay from when the regular doorbell sounds and when my doorbell with the flashing light goes off in the living room, so his alerting me has been awesome!”



WILEY
Ranee and Hearing Assistance Dog Wiley have been a wonderful team for one year. Ranee let us know that they are enjoying more outdoor time (hence the windblown hair), playtime, and that Wiley is working his sounds with no problems. Wiley has been alerting Ranee to

the oven timer, phone, doorbell and name call.

“Now that we’re working from home, we have changed things up quite a bit.”

- Maria & Hearing Assistance Dog Noodle



KYRA
Hearing Assistance Dog Kyra has been helping Stephanie with sound awareness this past year. She shared this update: “Today Kyra came and alerted me – I had no idea what was happening since the [door] alarm was set and I wasn’t aware of any upcoming sounds. She ran to

the kitchen but wasn’t exactly sure where to go. Then my son pointed out that the alarm on the fridge went off because the door was ajar. Boy did I pour out the praise! She has never been trained for that sound, and had never alerted me to it before.... I was so pleased!”



OLLIE
Hearing Assistance Dog Ollie was placed with Joan in Michigan in 2005. He is semi-retired, and although he has slowed down some and doesn’t go to as many places, he still works and alerts her to sounds. Joan shared this update on their partnership: “This winter Ollie really started showing his age.

He is happy and still very healthy, which is a blessing. He has helped me for so many years, so now I help him. He still wakes me up every morning, alerts me to the phone and to the door, and remembers all his obedience and agility commands. I taught him several new behaviors this spring which he learned easily and does well – Ollie has always been smart as a whip! I can’t imagine having spent what is now almost three months of staying home without him as a companion.”

FOLLOW UPS



DELIGHT
In 2018, Hearing Assistance Dog Delight joined Dr. Danielle Rose in North Carolina as her third successor dog from DBL. Not only does Delight help Dr. Rose to sound awareness at home and in her office, she helps Dr. Rose's reluctant young patients warm up

to their pediatric checks. "Yesterday my nurse said, 'your last patient is under the exam table scrunched up against the wall and won't come out. We can't do anything with her.' So I looked at Delight and said, 'Delight, you're up: you have a job to do.' Sure enough, Delight managed to lure the little girl out, and we finished our appointment on time. Then the girl followed Delight to her desk and snuggled with her."



CARLI
Hearing Assistance Dog Carli was placed with Mary in Alabama last year to help her with sound awareness at home and in public. Mary recently shared what she enjoys most about Carli: "Her behavior and obedience! I am so proud other people see what a beautiful dog I

have and make positive remarks of her behavior. I know what Carli is to me, and I'm delighted that other people see her as I do."



MORRIS
Hearing Assistance Dog Morris has been partnered with Stephanie for more than four years, and they are still going strong! Stephanie provided this update: "I've been having a great birthday today, considering the "new normal". Morris and I have been playing and

I had him "help me" with the cooking. I love grilled cheese sandwiches and decided to finally make myself one. I set the timer a few times so he could let me know to check the sandwich. He's so good at his job and is such a wonderful companion. I'm really happy he's with me!"

Shannon's
Pretty Pawz Salon
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Dogs for Better Lives Loves
Shannon's Pretty Pawz Salon!
Thank you for your generous support.

FOLLOW UPS

SUZANNE AND HIDALGO

“It’s been one year since Hidalgo and I became a team. I still remember when DBL trainer Ashley pulled up in the DBL van, and this handsome black lab came trotting into my life. I had just lost my father, ended a marriage, and moved out of a house. I was so nervous about the whole thing and wondered constantly if I was doing things correctly. Hidalgo had a sensitive stomach, so it took a lot of work to figure that out and to help him be more comfortable.

I was accustomed to a certain way of organizing my life, and I struggled to reorganize things around having a service dog. It was all so new, and so different. But with time, I began to notice amazing things: how well-behaved Hidalgo was despite my own nervousness; how intent he was in his focus on me, even when I felt scattered; and how consistently he performed his sound work.

Then I began to notice how I felt with Hidalgo around: more relaxed about living on my own, more confident out in public, more assured at work, and less self-conscious about my significant hearing loss.



COVID-19 has been our latest challenge, and we both miss being able to go to a variety of places, and interacting with people at work. But we’re also now a strong team, best friends, and adventure buddies. Hidalgo has followed me in my love of the water and swimming, and I love watching Hidalgo play with his favorite dog-friends and chase down a ball. It’s hard to imagine sometimes in the midst of a world that seems to be unraveling, but with Hidalgo by my side, I often feel like the luckiest person alive.”

“...I began to notice how I felt with Hidalgo around: more relaxed about living on my own, more confident out in public, more assured at work, and less self-conscious about my significant hearing loss.”

COVID STORIES

HENRY AND TROOPER

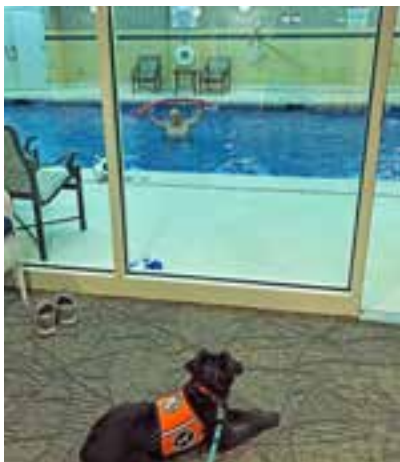
Do something nice for other people. Think about someone besides yourself. That, many psychologists say, is a good way to deal with the isolation of a pandemic lockdown in your home. Trooper has helped a lot with that, because he is extremely sociable, a furry, tail-wagging glad-handed who never met a human he didn't like.

Before COVID-19 came into our lives, Trooper was the unofficial therapy animal of our retirement community, bringing cuddly joy into the lives of residents unable to have dogs of their own. But as coronavirus spread across the country, vets told us to avoid letting our dogs encounter other people. So, I kept Trooper away from neighbors while passing them in the halls and outside on the sidewalk. Needless to say, he missed them and they him.



As the months passed and all residents consistently tested negative for COVID-19, I again let Trooper say hello to his friends while I kept a masked-six feet away. The neighbors once again enjoy their cooing “fur fixes,” and everybody's happier. Me, too. Trooper's amiable companionship (as well as my wife Debby's) has kept me from feeling lonely. That's one of the most important jobs a service dog can perform.

Another way to deal with enforced isolation, the psychologists say, is to put some routine into your day. With Trooper, that's a cinch. He goes out on leash four times a day: at 6 a.m. before his breakfast, 9 a.m. for a long walk, 3 p.m. before his supper, and 8 p.m. before bedtime. During that time, I refresh his training:



Outside, I'll sit on a park bench while Trooper practices an “under,” then walk away and smell the flowers while he performs a “sit-stay” by a tree. Inside, at all meals, he'll “down-stay” by my chair.

On our walks together, my wife Debby will hang behind half a block and then shout my name, to which Trooper immediately “hups”. He'll do the same when she calls me to meals.

When the doorbell rings, I try to make sure that Trooper does a “hup”. He sometimes just rushes up to me, rushes to the door, and then rushes back woofing all the way like the excitable terrier he is. That does get my attention, but we work on those “hups” all the same.

Every morning I swim in our retirement community's indoor pool where Trooper down-stays next to Debby just outside while lifeguarding me through a glass window. He needs to keep an eye on me 24/7: our bond is that tight!

When the Illinois health department eventually loosened restrictions where I was able to go to medical appointments, Trooper down-stayed for more than an hour under the dentist's chair, as well as by the cardiologist's exam table. Everyone remarked at his self-discipline, and I of course, burst with pride!

- Henry Kisor, & Hearing Assistance Dog Trooper

COVID STORIES

SHAYNA AND LILEU



The COVID-19 pandemic has affected the world in many ways. People across the globe have been told to shelter in place. In Connecticut, there is a “Stay Home” order in place that only allows essential businesses to remain open. My husband and I work in an auto shop that is deemed essential, and while our daily routine hasn’t changed much, the affect this pandemic has had on me is monumental.

In the new world of masks and face coverings, many people overlook the fact that the hearing impaired community relies on lip reading to help understand things they may not hear correctly. I have never felt so lost. Working at a sales counter, I have customers frustrated every day when I to ask them to repeat themselves multiple times. The one piece of the puzzle that makes it better is my Hearing Assistance Dog, Lileu. Any time I have Lileu with me, people are a little less frustrated and a little more understanding. When someone sees her vest that says,

Hearing Dog, they can usually put it together that I am not hearing them because I have a disability, and not that I am incompetent or not paying attention.

Unfortunately, there isn’t anything Lileu can do to help me hear someone’s muffled voice or read their lips, but she spreads awareness of my struggle. Hearing loss is an invisible disability, but her bright orange vest makes it known and I am unbelievably grateful for that.

Every day that I have to communicate with people in masks is hard, but having Lileu there is not only helpful as a visual reminder to others, but emotionally helpful to me. In a world that has become more difficult to hear, I always have her right by my side.

- Shayna & Hearing Assistance Dog Lileu, Connecticut

SHERYL AND PRINGLES



“Pringles and I are holding up okay in North Carolina, although I will say how bad I feel for Pringles during this pandemic because he is used to constantly being on the go. During the weeks we were in quarantine, we thankfully did things around the house to keep us in shape (sound-wise). We have been taking longer walks, which we both really need since we have put on some extra pounds!



One Saturday while I was mowing the lawn, Pringles was in our screened room area with two doors, but both were closed so he could not get out. He was laying down enjoying the breeze of the day, and after a few passes with the lawnmower I noticed that he was extremely excitable – almost like dancing, if you will. I thought to myself, “he only does that when the phone is ringing.” So, I quickly stopped the lawnmower and reached into my back pocket to get my phone. It was ringing!!! I was so excited and proud of my boy Pringles – he truly is a blessing in my life!”

- Sheryl & Hearing Assistance Dog Pringles, North Carolina

COVID STORIES

STEVE AND PEPE



COVID-19, the virus behind the coronavirus pandemic, has been a life changing event for nearly everyone. For some like myself and my Hearing Assistance Dog Pepe, that change has been profound.

Three years ago, I retired from a long working life. Pepe and I live solo (except for each other) in a double-wide mobile home near a small community in the Tehachapi Mountains of Central California. Living is easy in a mobile home: we live here for the freedom it gives us to travel. My family is in Alaska, Hawaii and Oregon and we visit them frequently. We also travel often by cruise ship and various public transportation. We are seldom home, but that all changed in March when we began sheltering in place and were isolated and pretty much locked down. Going to the Post Office, or shopping for essential needs, is now the only travel experience we have.

In February, while Pepe and I were in Las Vegas waiting for a flight to Mexico where we had reservations for two-weeks at a Pacific Coast resort, I nearly passed out. Airport Security called for the paramedics. I spent the next nine days in the hospital with what turned out to be a pulmonary embolism – a blood clot in my lungs. Of course, Pepe as a Hearing Assistance Dog, could accompany me during the hospital stay; however, that was not practical. The loving kindness of one of the nurses that was attending to my emergency needs took Pepe to her mother's home where he spent his "vacation" being very well pampered. After I was discharged, Pepe was returned to me wearing a new harness, a new collar and a new leash. He smelled of perfume and pampering, and his nails had been professionally trimmed. He also had a new bed, and new water and food dishes. We are in Las Vegas: I'm in the hospital recovering from emergency surgery, while Pepe is staying in what could best be described as a "Dog Resort".

By early March we were isolated, sheltering in place with me recovering from surgery. Pepe asleep most of the time as his hearing duties were seldom needed. An occasional delivery person will knock on the window giving Pepe an opportunity to alert me to someone's presence. The phone seldom rings with a text message. We would go on short walks a few times each day. We began extending our walks a couple of months ago to help build my strength back to normal after the pulmonary embolism surgery. Those walks soon became preparation for taking day hikes on the Pacific Crest Trail, a national hiking trail that runs from Mexico to Canada. Several of the trail heads are within a few miles of my home.

Walking around our mobile home park, or through fields and open areas where there were no people, soon became boring. We started walking toward a Truck Stop a mile down the road. That mile walk led to walking to the town center, three to four miles away, primarily along a county roadway that's not heavily traveled. Many of the vehicles that pass are trucks going to and from the nearby cement mine; persons working there or at the nearby heavily manned Kern County Fire Station; and commuters that live in the area. There is also a major east/west railroad track that passes along that same route with some 50 trains a day that go by.

COVID STORIES

STEVE AND PEPE CONT.

Pepe and I walk the route almost every day, usually shortly after daylight while the temperature is cooler. We stand out, of course, as there is seldom foot traffic on the roadway. I wear a bright orange t-shirt or fire-engine-red wool shirt, depending on the temperature. Pepe is on a leash, secured to my side with a carabiner. It's obvious to passersby that I'm "taking a hike" with my trekking pole and small backpack.



We always walk on the left facing traffic, and I wave at the drivers in every vehicle that passes. At first, only a few would wave back, but as time went on more and more drivers would wave back. Some obviously would recognize us and start waving, with a big smile, before I do. And, of course, I wave to the train engineers. Many would give a short "toot-toot" in response to my wave – I can't begin to describe how much that brightens my day! That little bit of "people contact" takes me out of isolation and encourages me to go outdoors every morning!

Pepe not only assists me with my hearing loss; he is my constant companion. I may live alone, however I am not lonely. Far from it! The best part for me and Pepe is that we are once again "traveling", so to speak. While sheltering in place, we get out to exercise and see new things almost every day, all while being able to avoid contact with others.

I am so grateful to Dogs for Better Lives for making Pepe available to me – we have each other for constant companionship.

- Steve and Hearing Assistance Dog Pepe, California



DBL NEWS

DBL COVID-19 Update

Since February, DBL has been addressing the COVID-19 pandemic while following Center for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines and working to ensure that staff take all necessary precautions to help reduce and eliminate the spread of this virus. For DBL, our concern has been for clients, staff, dogs, and community partners – ensuring that all are doing as well as they can during this unprecedented pandemic.

As you can imagine, our work has been greatly impacted by COVID-19. In March, the administrative and program staff were sent home to work remotely. Dogs were fostered within trainers' homes as much as capacity allowed, and client support became virtual through updated technology. Volunteers were asked to pause their traditional support until the pandemic was under control, and our Governor's shelter-in place orders were lifted. Several staff, trainers and kennel techs were needed on campus full-time, living in the apartment settings which have been for training purposes only, to support the needs of dogs onsite. Dog placements and in-person follow-up visits were paused. Mission critical work turned to housing and consistent management of dogs to ensure the work towards their future placements would not be hindered.

Still, during these unprecedented times and changing processes to ensure the safety of our staff, volunteers, clients, and dogs, we have experienced record-setting numbers of applicants on waiting lists. People need our services more than ever. Isolation from family, closures of daycare and schools and the loss of employment, or even closures of a family business have propelled the need for the vital support that Assistance Dogs provide.

The pandemic has resulted in a more isolated world for everyone. The current state of events has heightened the isolation our clients experience. Their lifeline to a phone call, package delivery, or a text message when experiencing a loss in hearing is more critical than ever before. Most are looking to the resource of food delivery services and medications by mail order which all lead to diminishing interactions with others. Those who have an Assistance Dog supporting these daily needs are finding their presence more important than ever before. Although our Hearing Assistance Dogs are highly trained for the tasks of alerting to specific sounds, and Facility Dogs are essential to assisting professionals with their patients, students or clients, the added companionship is truly an unexpected benefit.

DBL is committed to providing Assistance Dogs to individuals throughout the U.S., regardless of income level or ability to pay. Your continued support and donations will help us to provide these critical services and support our Assistance Dog programs.

We care about you, your families, and our life-changing dogs. Thanks to your continued support, we remain fiscally strong. There is nothing more powerful and resilient than you – our wonderful DBL community – and we want to thank you for showing your love for our mission and being a part of DBL. To learn more about our approach and plan to our operations in this COVID-19 environment, visit the COVID-19 page on our website.



DBL NEWS

Cynthia Perlman Puppy Sensory Park

We're excited to announce the upcoming opening of The Cynthia Perlman Puppy Sensory Park on our Southern Oregon campus! This unique park was designed to provide various surfaces for our puppies to explore and experience, including rock, bark, sand and grass pathways, and a water feature.

"The Cynthia Perlman Puppy Sensory Park gives us a unique opportunity to show our puppies at an early age what they will encounter on their journey to becoming future Assistance Dogs," explained Puppy Program Coordinator, Hannah Crane. "It's so important that we provide the tools necessary for our puppies and Puppy Raisers to succeed, and this Puppy Sensory Park is a big part to accomplish that."

The Cynthia Perlman Puppy Sensory Park was created through the generosity of local and national philanthropic support, including Richard Perlman, Laura J. Niles Foundation, and the Carrico Family Foundation. Richard Perlman and his late wife Cynthia had a long-time love of and compassion for dogs, highlighting why they wished to support this project. "This project is very special to me for a couple of reasons," stated Richard Perlman. "DBL was one of the organizations which Cynthia always made certain we contributed to, and I wanted to do something to honor her blessed life and that would make her proud. The Puppy Sensory Park will be invaluable to the puppies DBL raises, as it will expose them to different types of scents, sounds, and textures in a comprehensive way to prepare them for their important work as service dogs."



Board Updates



We're pleased to welcome Tim Cibula onto DBL's National Board of Directors. Tim is the Director of Finance and Administration for the Department of Ophthalmology at University of Washington (UW) School of Medicine. Prior to UW, Tim was a department administrator at Oregon Health & Science University (OHSU), Oregon's only medical school. He has worked in medical school administration roles for more than twenty years.

"I believe in the mission of Dogs for Better Lives and its ability to engage with different groups and provide needed services," stated Tim Cibula. "I appreciate the opportunity to work with this excellent organization and look forward to watching it grow."

Tim's longtime love of dogs, passion for the critical work nonprofit organizations endeavor on, and his desire to help create an impactful difference, make him a great fit for the DBL Board of Directors. Welcome aboard Tim!

DBL NEWS

DBL Says Goodbye to Longtime Board Members

At the end of June, two longtime board members, Ron Holzkamp and Brian McQuade, departed DBL's national board. During their tenure on the board of directors, each has served in several capacities, including more recently when DBL's previous CEO departed, Ron stepped in as the interim CEO. During the same period, Brian stepped in to manage the day-to-day operations towards the completion of DBL's new 18,000 sq. ft. Second Training Building on its Southern Oregon campus.



Brian McQuade

“My time on the board has been very satisfying and exciting,” stated board vice chairman, Ron Holzkamp. “We now provide dogs for people who are Deaf and hard of hearing, children on the autism spectrum, and facility dogs to different entities.

“Some of my fondest memories as a DBL board member were meeting and watching the DBL staff do such remarkable work with the pups and collaborating with such a talented and diverse group of people who filled other board positions,” stated Brian McQuade.



Ron Holzkamp

DBL Welcomes Kevin Bendaw

Please join us in welcoming Kevin Bendaw as DBL's Development Manager! With more than 14 years experience in the nonprofit sector, Kevin has successfully led fundraising activities for the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, The Asante Foundation, and Kid Time Children's Museum. Kevin also brings expertise in raising awareness through cause marketing programs, supporting local and national sponsor fundraising programs, and developing corporate partnerships.

Kevin lives in Medford, Oregon with his wife Jessica, daughter Sophia, and Bam Bam, their career change dog adopted from DBL in 2018. Kevin enjoys spending time with his family, outdoor activities, woodworking, and travel.



DBL NEWS

Marvin Rhodes Memorial Fund



We regret to announce that former Dogs for Better Lives board member, Marvin Dean Rhodes, passed away this spring. Marvin served on DBL's Board of Directors from 1987 to 2016. In honoring Marvin's extensive commitment and compassionate support for DBL, past and current board members created a memorial fund to support the completion of two 50' x 80' dog running yards behind the North Kennel Building at the Central Point campus. One of the running yards will be named in Marvin's

honor with a plaque memorializing his board service.

"Marvin, along with former CEO Robin Dickson, had a shared vision of providing trained dogs to assist children with autism," stated former board vice chairman, Ron Holzkamp. "They left DBL in a better place with that vision and the financial ability to accomplish that goal. Marvin was instrumental in helping to leave us with a wonderful legacy."

If you would like to contribute to The Marvin Rhodes Memorial Fund, please contact Harvey Potts at (541) 423-8341 or harvey@dogsforbetterlives.org.

OBX Puparazzi

After an extensive search for a custom bandana handcrafter, DBL selected Lisa Penosky, owner of OBX Puparazzi, to partner with us on our Bandana-rama subscription fundraiser.

Lisa, a resident of Manteo, North Carolina, had a rewarding career in the nursing field. After retiring, she turned her passion for rescue dogs and sewing into a successful dog bandana online business. "I love to sew and paint, especially dog related items. I have four rescue dogs that I love to spoil, and I enjoy helping others spoil their dogs, too! The dogs are my inspiration to create," said Lisa.



Lisa developed a bandana subscription program using her unique bandana designs to help support DBL dogs. Thank you, Lisa, for continuing to support our Assistance Dogs! To learn how you can support DBL through our Bandana-rama fundraiser, visit dogsforbetterlives.org/bandanarama



**Give Your
Dog a Special
Treat**

Order a DBL doggie bandana subscription to show your off your dog's sense of style, and support our mission at the same time!

dogsforbetterlives.org/bandanarama/

DBL NEWS

DBL's Young Professionals Board is Launched in Puget Sound, WA

In July, the DBL Young Professionals Board was launched, securing its first four members in the Puget Sound region of Washington State. In July, Corey Wise (chair), Meghan Heims (vice chair), and Claire Dickinson (treasurer) accepted officer positions within YPB – Puget Sound. And in August, Anthony Dickson joined them as YPB – Puget Sound secretary.

“Despite DBL experiencing unprecedented times, we’re still seeing a lot of buzz and interest in our Young Professionals Board in Washington State,” stated CEO Bryan Williams. As DBL continues to grow and embark on its journey to better the lives of those with disabilities, pairing them with an Assistance Dog, they aim to cultivate the next generation of leaders in the Greater Puget Sound region to become involved in carrying out DBL’s mission and vision.

“In following our strategic plan in further establishing our regional and national reach, the Young Professionals Board (Puget Sound) will play a critical role in assisting DBL with its community outreach and engagement, further extending our reach into the Pacific Northwest”, stated board chairman, David Hollingsworth. The YPB is comprised of like-minded individuals in their 20s, 30s, and 40s that have a passion for dogs and giving back to people with disabilities in their communities. Members will be responsible for marketing the mission of DBL, participating in outreach events, as well as planning and fundraising through a variety of initiatives.

With the support and guidance of the regional Young Professionals Board in Washington’s Puget Sound, DBL will host a yet-to-be-determined signature event, engaging donors, clients, and community partners. Eventually, we will have Young Professionals Boards across the country, working to support each of our planned satellite offices. Currently we have satellite offices in Puget Sound (WA) and Central California, with upcoming plans for a Southern California satellite office in 2021.



Meghan Heims



Corey Wise



Claire Dickinson



Anthony Dickson



DOGS *for*
better
LIVES 

sustainability matters



Sustainability Matters at DBL

At Dogs for Better Lives, we're not just committed to our mission of professionally training and placing Assistance Dogs with people throughout the U.S., we recognize our greater responsibility to care for our community and our planet. We do this through our commitment to the planet, our social responsibility, and our steady operational performance.

Environmentally Mindful

We are committed to leaving the world better than we found it. As part of that commitment, we have adopted various initiatives and in-house changes that govern our everyday business to be more environmentally friendly. Mike Poremba, a DBL Apprentice Dog Trainer and Green Team member, stated, "As a nonprofit, this is especially important because every dollar we receive comes from generous and caring donors, and it is essential that these resources are carefully spent to further our mission of finding, professionally training, and placing Assistance Dogs with the people who need them."

This year we installed a 306-panel, 97.9 kW solar array on our campus that will produce more than 75% of the organization's energy needs, saving more \$28,000 each year, thanks to a Pacific Power Blue Sky 2020 funding award.

Other ways that we are reducing our carbon footprint include:

- Participating in our local Bottle Drop Redemption Center's Blue Bag Fundraiser Program.
- Use of washable cloth towels in all training apartments.
- Replacement of our water cooler/delivery service with purchased coolers with refillable water bottles.
- Encouragement of carpooling and remote work when possible to reduce the CO2 emissions from vehicles.
- Three of our four buildings have LED lighting, equating to 80% total LED lighting campus-wide.

As a leader in our local – and national – nonprofit community, we hope that other nonprofits will explore solar energy and other ways to reduce their carbon footprint. We're all in this together.

“As a non-profit, this is especially important because every dollar we receive comes from generous and caring donors...”

– Mike Poremba, Apprentice Dog Trainer & Green Team Member

Socially Responsible

Dogs for Better Lives is building a lasting and supportive social environment for our employees, suppliers and communities. We are creating positive changes in our workforce and in the local communities where we work and do business.

- Our employees are actively engaged in improving life at DBL through participation in Green and Safety Teams. Our Green Team has accomplished many green initiatives, including the implementation of a robust recycling program including the implementation of a robust recycling program, and further waste reductions through the use of reusable plates, cups, cutlery and cloth towels.
- We're working towards locally sourcing more of our suppliers to support the communities where we work.
- Where possible, our employees can work remotely to promote better work + life balance.
- DBL is also committed to providing employee growth opportunities and has established career pathways for our kennel and training staff. As a result, DBL is recognized as one the Best 100 Nonprofits to Work for in Oregon.



Kaylynn's Climb

Kaylynn Shaw joined DBL in 2018 as the front desk receptionist, with the goal of becoming a Certified Assistance Dog Trainer. Her love for animals and unwavering desire to work with dogs did not go unnoticed – she soon became a Kennel Technician, responsible for the daily cleaning and care of DBL's dogs in training.

Her career path was set in motion: only after three months, Kaylynn was again promoted, this time to Apprentice Assistance Dog Trainer. With Kaylynn's strong drive and determination, we'll be celebrating her next achievement before too long: that of becoming a Certified Assistance Dog Trainer.

Congratulations Kaylynn – you are truly an inspiration!



Apprentice Trainer, Kaylynn Shaw, with Sesame.

Guided By Our Values

We manage our organization in a manner that coincides with our values. We address opportunities and risks, considering the long-term interests of our employees, dogs, clients, volunteers, donors, suppliers, and communities we serve.

We care for our dogs by keeping their physical, emotional, and mental wellbeing at the forefront of every decision. We care for clients by providing our services with kindness, compassion, and patience. We care for donors by being responsible stewards of donor dollars through mindful and conscientious use of company time and money. And beginning this year, 100 percent of all donations support programmatic services, thanks to the generosity of our Guardian Society members.

DBL is fiscally strong and can withstand even the most challenging times, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, and the recent wildfires that devastated local communities in the Rogue Valley. Through the foresight and guidance of CEO Bryan Williams, our digital working platform allows us to continue supporting our mission, with some travel restrictions for dog placement and follow-up support.



Media & Outreach Specialist, Michelle Erwin with Eliot

“Being mindful of our donors’ philanthropic support goes hand-in-hand with how they/we leave our legacy behind.”

- Bryan Williams, President & CEO

Partnerships for Better Lives

Celebrate them. Support them. Join them!

Kennel life is a critical component for dogs in training. Pictured here is "North," a Hearing Assistance Dog in training at Dogs for Better Lives who seems quite happy with his kennel renovation.



Businesses Do Make A DIFFERENCE

A Positive One

Leadership Partner



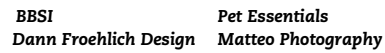
Executive Partner



Senior Partner



Partner



For more information about this program, or to join their ranks, contact Kevin Bendaw at 541-826-9220 ext. 326 or kevin@dogsforbetterlives.org.



photography by Cornelius Matteo
cornelius@cmatteophotography.com 917.693.6475



THE FUTURE LOOKS BRIGHT FOR DBL



From left: Fernando Ayala (Facilities Manager), Loree Siebert (Board Member), Trish Welch (Operations Director), Bryan Williams (President & CEO), David Hollingsworth (Board Chair). In front: Alaska, Autism Assistance Dog.

One of Dogs for Better Lives' largest projects in recent years is the recently launched 306-panel, 97.9 kW solar array on the northern end of our Central Point campus. A ribbon-cutting event was held in June to celebrate the community partnership between DBL, Pacific Power's Blue Sky Participants Program, and Energy Trust of Oregon who funded 70% of the installation costs. The solar array will produce more than 75% of the organization's energy needs and will save DBL more than \$28,000 each year.

"This solar array project is not only a win for the environment but for the DBL community, too. By generating our own electricity, we'll save on energy costs — and that means we can dedicate more of our budget to our core mission of rescuing, breeding, and placing more Assistance Dogs nationally, ultimately bettering others' lives," said President & CEO, Bryan Williams.



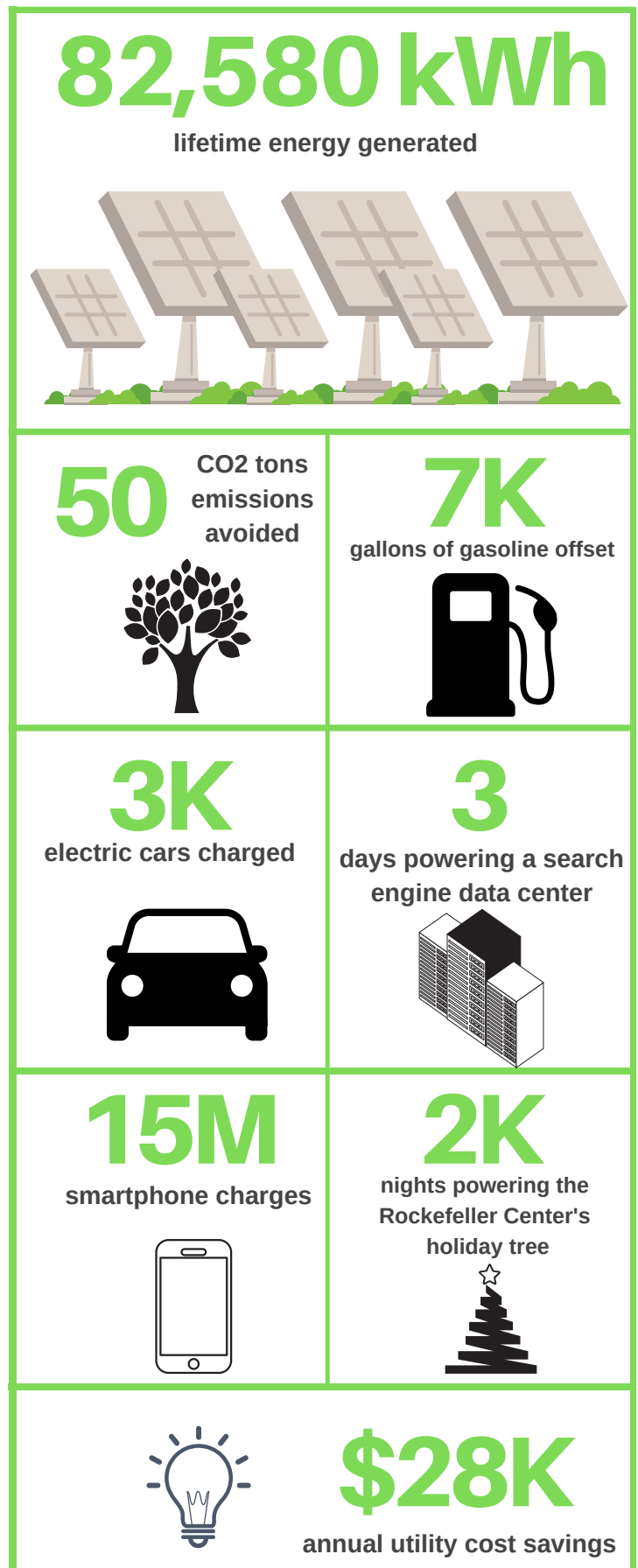


Board member Loree Siebert taking a selfie with DBL dogs in training at ribbon cutting event



Christina Kruger (Pacific Power/Blue Sky) presents grant award to Bryan Williams, DBL President & CEO.

“This solar array project is not only a win for the environment but for the DBL community, too. By generating our own electricity, we’ll save on energy costs – and that means we can dedicate more of our budget to our core mission of rescuing, breeding, and placing more Assistance Dogs nationally, ultimately bettering others’ lives,” said President & CEO, Bryan Williams.



DBL's solar array environmental footprint, as of 9/24/2020.

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

North American Breeding Cooperative

Dogs for Better Lives is thrilled to be entering our second year as members of the North American Breeding Cooperative (ABC). ABC is a cooperative breeding program run by Bob and Marina Phillips that shares breeding stock with other Assistance Dogs International (ADI) accredited schools to improve dog's genetics and health which then leads to higher quality service dogs.

Puppy raisers in our Puget Sound satellite region have welcomed male lab puppies Guinness and Gunther, and female lab golden cross Poppy, into their homes through ABC from Joys of Living Assistance Dogs and Summit Assistance Dogs. We also have female lab puppy, Joy, being raised in our Fresno satellite region thanks to ABC.

Dogs for Better Lives has also donated a puppy from our female breeder Pepper's first litter to Joys of Living Assistance dogs to be raised as a potential breeder for ABC. In addition to sharing puppies, ABC also provides the opportunity for ADI schools to host whelping females and their litters. We are looking forward to another exciting year as members of this community and continuing to do our part to support their mission.



Rita and Guinness



Joy with the Moreno family



Kelli, David and Poppy



Cory and Gunther

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SATELLITE SPOTLIGHT

Seattle / Puget Sound

The old adage, “all good things take time,” proves itself to be true again. It has now been more than a year since Dogs for Better Lives launched our Seattle Area Field Office. We started the summer of 2019 off with multiple events in hopes of getting DBL’s name out there and finding committed volunteers interested in puppy raising. We didn’t have much luck. Until all at once we did!

By spring of 2020 we had our first puppies and puppy raisers on the ground in Seattle and the surrounding area. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, we had to get creative with our training. Our field representative filmed training exercises for our raisers, shared them weekly, and followed up with a phone call each week. Our raisers were encouraged to get creative in socializing their puppies. They created obstacle courses out of everyday things in their homes to get their young charges familiar with walking over many different surfaces. They played dress up and wore as many silly things as they could find to get the pups familiar with bulky coats, floppy hats, and sunglasses. They took the puppies places where they could observe children, other dogs, and traffic to socialize from a safe distance in hopes of having a well-adjusted pup when the world starts to return back to normal.

All this hard work and creativity is paying off as all the puppies are doing very well. As of August 2020, our Seattle Area field office has 6 puppy raisers: three with puppies from Assistance Dogs International’s ABC Breeding Co-op, one from a private breeder, and two from DBL’s E litter. They range in age from 4 months to 9 months.

Classes are now able to meet in person, but still look a little different due to meeting outside, wearing masks, maintaining social distancing, and keeping class sizes to less than five humans at a time. This all has taken time, patience, and creativity, but it is so rewarding to start seeing things come together!

– Jess Reichmuth, Program Field Rep

Socially distanced group class with Poppy, Gunther, and Guinness



Puppy Raiser Dave with Poppy practicing Sit-Stay



Puppy Raiser Corey with Gunther and Jess practicing Polite Greetings



Puppy Raiser Rita with Guinness and Jess practicing Leave-It

FOSTER PUPPY PROGRAM

Maintaining the Mission

Dogs for Better Lives has welcomed our third purpose-bred litter into the world: Litter E! This was a long-awaited and a very exciting moment for us. We watched Pepper grow from a very smart and sweet puppy, who then blossomed into a wonderful and attentive mother. With the right temperament and health clearances, she was the perfect fit for our breeding program. On April 24, 2020, Pepper gave birth to seven puppies, all equally as sweet and smart as she is. It is our hope that these puppies will all go on to change more lives.

It is becoming increasingly more difficult to find dogs in shelters with the right temperament and health clearances to be successful in our Assistance Dog programs. Now more than ever, it is so very important to continue to breed responsibly so that we may continue to serve our clients nationwide. While we will always stay true to our roots and continue to search for dogs in shelters, maintaining a small breeding program is vital to helping more people who need Assistance Dogs.

Purpose-bred litters allow us to ensure, as much as possible, that we have breeders who will pass down their great temperaments and healthy genes to their puppies. We will always continue to do our due diligence to ensure the success of both the Breeding and Shelter programs. At the end of the day, it is our goal to be responsible with our donor dollars, take the utmost care of both our dogs and volunteers, and to help change as many lives as possible.

-Hannah Crane, DBL Puppy Program Coordinator



Litter E pups at three weeks



Breeder caretaker Cat with Eliot



Breeder caretakers Cat and Jamus with Pepper and Litter E pups

STAFF SPOTLIGHT

Terrie Fuller

As the Systems Specialist at DBL, part of my role is to stay up-to-date on emerging technologies and make sure that fellow teammates have the tools they need to stay productive. With a degree in Computer Science, my passion is constantly finding ways to improve upon processes to further streamline daily workflows so that my teammates can focus on what's important to facilitate the certification of our most valuable assets – Assistance Dogs!

I could not ask for a better place to work – and feel extremely grateful to be a part of DBL. My passion for dogs, among other animals, and my supportive nature makes it easy to come to work every day. In fact, I get excited every morning knowing that I get one more day to contribute in changing someone's life.

My parents were high school sweethearts at a local high school and have been married for 65 years. They have five children and are still going strong despite us (just kidding). I am so grateful to them for the values and love they taught us growing up. My father worked for the same local timber company from high school until he retired 50+ years later (with a short stint of leaving to open an Elmer's Restaurant franchise.) In his spare time, he raced stock cars and was a fishing guide on the Rogue River. My mother worked just as hard raising her five children, keeping us in bows and beautiful dresses (not my brother though, lol), working full-time in the administrative office in the timber industry. She is an accomplished seamstress and made all my baton uniforms and taught me to sew. In retirement, she loves to play cards with her friends, garden, and still strives to work full-time, even now at 84. (Retire, mom!)

I have two children: a marine with a purple heart who builds custom homes, and a daughter in college working towards a degree in accounting, and a physician assistant degree. They have given me two beautiful souls called grandchildren, whom I adore. My family is the light of my life, and I would not change them for anything! My fur-baby is Ty, a 9-year-old chihuahua/dachshund/minpin who loves to be held and cuddled whenever possible. My husband put me through college during mid-life as I was not happy with my career at the time. Although challenging to have two young children while attending college full-time, I completed it and am forever grateful to him for allowing me to grow, God rest his soul.

My past employment has afforded me a multitude of experiences for which I am grateful. Each one has taught me skills that I will carry with me and use the rest of my life. I've owned a horse boarding facility; worked for a popular political news site as the Database Administrator/Advertising Manager; worked as an Advertising Director for two other news sites; I was a grocery store frozen food manager/checker; worked on the production line of a major kitchen cabinet company; worked as a hostess at my parents restaurant; and even worked at Taco Bell when I was 16.

Dogs for Better Lives is by far the most rewarding contribution I have been honored to make as my connection to animals is unparalleled. I am honored to lend my life skills to assist in DBL's mission. I believe that family and past experiences help shape our lives, and as Benjamin Franklin once said, "Well done, is better than well said."



CLIENT'S CORNER

A Deaf Deer in the Headlights

My partner Wellie, my Hearing Assistance Dog, is currently saving my soul, my sanity, and then some. She makes me aware of the sounds in my home and outside of my home. She provides me with a sense of “normalcy” (in a world that is far from normal right now), and because of what she provides to me sound-wise; she gives me confidence, she makes me calm, and I feel whole in a world that looks shattered and feels distant right now.

I am totally Deaf in my right ear with only 12% remaining hearing in my left ear. Due to my Deafness, I am a creature of habit. There's safety in the bubble that I created for myself through routine: there are no surprises, no “unknowns,” and no worries or fear. But to truly live, you cannot thrive in a self-constructed and self-contained social bubble.

Wellie has made me step out of my comfort zone, to desire new experiences and adventures. I now live, and I have grown. That is what I have been experiencing since the day we were partnered, and thanks to her I have been living such an openly aware, exciting, and care-free life for the past five years.

Now enter the COVID-19 pandemic: Our new normal is social distancing, required masks, and no touching your face to live, thrive, and to stay safe. Because I am Deaf, my whole being relies on lip-reading, social cues, body language, facial expressions, and sign language which requires touching your face and body.

I can only describe my experience as feeling like a deer...a Deaf deer in the headlights. Am I going to crash and burn? Am I going to make it safely and successfully through this public outing? Am I going to be able to communicate, function, and thrive? I want to touch my face to adjust the mask. I cannot wear the same kind of masks as most people because the ear loops cause my

hearing aids to fall out. The straps rub against the microphone on my hearing aid which causes scratchy static that totally defeats the purpose of even trying to hear what little bit that I can. So, I've had to make the tough decision for my well-being: wearing the mask is far more important than wearing my hearing aids, so no hearing aids when in public. Once again, I am a “Deaf deer in the headlights”, incredibly anxious and wildly unaware of everything.



Jen and Hearing Assistance Dog Wellie have been a team for 5 years in Pennsylvania. 7-year old Wellie is a yellow Labrador who came to us from Guide Dogs for the Blind. Wellie continues to assist Jen by alerting her to sounds at home and in public, and by being her constant companion.

I am sharing this because when in public, I would like you to be more aware that members of the Deaf community are among you. We are stressed, anxious, and isolated. A little patience and compassion would go a long way.

I also want to you to know that my calm in this storm - my beacon of light while feeling so lost and unaware, and my only saving grace who is truly saving me - is Wellie. When people see her with me, they look at her vest, leash and collar that say "Hearing Dog" on it, and they immediately know that I am Deaf. Wellie, my Hearing Assistance Dog, is my new normal. Without her, I would be lost. I would be locked away into my self-constructed bubble. I would not consider venturing into the world for groceries, medicine, doctor visits, or my physical therapy.



I pray for the day where we can all be safe amongst each other in public. I pray for the day where masks do not exist, where I can see faces again to know what is going on and being said. Until then, my world and life are in the paws of Wellie.

I am praising and thanking God for my pandemic partner, my Hearing Assistance Dog. How blessed am I to have such a faithful, loving, and dedicated partner to help me mitigate a world that is so full of unknowns.

- Jen W., DBL Client and National Ambassador

LANDSCAPE PEOPLE ARCHITECTURE URBAN AVIATION

Jack Sann
PHOTOGRAPHY

www.jsannphoto.com jack.sann5@gmail.com

Steve is a retired business owner who experiences first-hand the profound impact that a Hearing Assistance Dog can have on people's lives

“Hearing Assistance Dog, Pepe, has been such a blessing for me. With Pepe by my side, people no longer treat me differently, because they now realize that I am deaf.

I want Dogs for Better Lives to help others like me.”

That's why Steve included Dogs for Better Lives in his will.

For information on how you can include Dogs for Better Lives in your will, contact:

Wanda Cockey (541) 423-8385 | wanda@dogsforbetterlives.org





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DBL trainers from left: Mike Poremba, Emily Sanders, Dana Wheeler, Kaylyn Shaw, Brittany Peery, and Juan Ramos.