# ANNUAL REPORT 2019-2020

AMBASSADORS: Henry and Hearing Assistance Dog Trooper training on the lawn. Full story on Page 5.

THE WAY A





#### Contents

WELCOME	3	
MAJOR GIFTS	4	
Investing in puppy education		
AMBASSADORS	5	
Trooper carries the service dog flag		
GUARDIAN SOCIETY	6	
Synergy stands out		
FOUNDATION GIVING	8	
Passion for purpose impresses		
COMMUNITY CLUBS	9	
DOEs get it done for dogs		
CORPORATE PARTNERS	10	
Values lead decisions		
MONTHLY DONOR	11	
Where joy and experience meet		
HEARING ASSISTANCE DOGS	12	
Partners of the heart		
AUTISM ASSISTANCE DOGS	14	
An "old soul" provides calm and stability		
FACILITY DOGS	16	
Gentle Nelson impacts a generation		
COMMUNITY PARTNERS	18	
Sunshine and Blue Sky		
2019-2020 FINANCIALS	20	
Statement of activities		
GUARDIAN SOCIETY	23	

#### Mission

Dogs for Better Lives is 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that professionally trains dogs to help people and enhance lives while maintaining a lifelong commitment to all dogs we rescue or breed and the people we serve.



### Why We Do It

At Dogs for Better Lives we believe it's an honor to be a part of something bigger than ourselves, and we're impassioned with what we do. Operating as a team, we put the mission above the individual, trusting in one another to break through challenges and obstacles to maintain our mission of bettering lives by matching people with the amazing dogs we train.

#### Values

Care for the dogs by keeping their well-being (physical, emotional and mental) at the root of all decisions.

Care for clients by providing our services with kindness, compassion and patience.

Care for donors by being responsible stewards of our "donor dollars" through mindful and conscientious use of company time and money.

### WELCOME

This year has certainly been a unique and challenging We are forging forward, doing the best we can every day, knowing that what we are doing is bigger than a single one. At the beginning of the fiscal year, we never thought we'd be working together to lead the organization through a global individual. We couldn't be prouder of the resiliency, strength and determination of the Dogs for Better Lives family in pandemic and devastating wildfires. But with the unwavering continuing to better lives through the amazing dogs that we support of the board of directors and a passionate staff, we had an excellent year given the circumstances. Thanks to years of train and place with clients free of charge. strong financial leadership and a focus on securing bequests And the good news is there is hope for the future. This too through our Guardian Society, we were not forced to make any difficult, short-term decisions. Instead, we have chosen to focus shall pass. Dogs for Better Lives is positioned to outlast these challenging times. We will come out better on the other side, on improving the long-term strength of Dogs for Better Lives. We did not need to furlough or lay off employees due to the because of the support of everyone reading our annual report. So, from the bottom of our hearts, thank you. Thank you for pandemic. We took a deep dive into our Program Department to find ways to improve strategically in an effort to increase the believina in us. number of lives our dogs' impact.

In closing, we would like to thank former Board Chair Al When the pandemic broke out, we realized we wouldn't be Lane for his leadership over the past few years. He set a high bar for future leadership, and we will continue to lean able to make placements in clients' homes for the foreseeable on his experience to serve the organization. The board chair. future. We made the difficult decision to career change the Executive Committee and the entire board are critical to the majority of our dogs rather than house them long term in our kennels. The dogs who stayed in the program went home with success of the organization as the leadership team looks to members of our dedicated training staff in order to continue them to strategically guide the organization. training. This had a big impact on the number of placements I hope you enjoy reading this annual report. And here's to we were able to make. Fortunately, as restrictions have lifted better days ahead and Better Lives in the future. and clients have become comfortable meeting with staff, we have experienced a record number of placements in the first quarter of this year. Sincerely,

Several local wildfires broke out in southern Oregon, forcing staff and board members to evacuate for several days. One wildfire came close enough to our campus that we evacuated dogs and staff out of an abundance of caution. Luckily, fire crews contained that wildfire in a matter of hours, and our staff and dogs returned to campus. We're happy to let you know that none of our staff lost their homes. We were very lucky, and our hearts and prayers go out to those affected by this tragedy.

Financially, we had one of our strongest years in a long time, raising more money than we did in the previous year. As you'll see in this report, 88% of all expenses were invested in our Program Department, the highest percentage in at least a decade. We also cut expenses by 14%, the largest amount in the last 10 years. We continue to focus on using the precious resources our donors entrust us with to their maximum effectiveness, impacting as many lives as possible.

Last year, this letter talked about Lollipop Leadership and that being a strong leader means focusing on positively impacting people's lives every day. Leadership lies in the small moments, the simple things, and changing a single person's life. This year, a pandemic has brought us together globally. It has shown us that we're all in this together, and that no one is immune from tragedy. We're the Dogs for Better Lives family. Whether you are staff, a board member, a client, a volunteer, a donor, an ambassador or just a fan, you are part of our family. We've felt the overwhelming support of everyone, encouraging us to continue our mission and never give up.

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Bryan Williams ff President & CEO at

David Hollingsworth Board Chair





### **MAJOR GIFTS**

The Cynthia Perlman Puppy Sensory Park will open in early 2021.

### Investing in Puppy Education

Cynthia Perlman of East Northport, New York loved dogs and flowers, recalls her husband, Richard. After Cynthia died the day before the couple's 32nd wedding anniversary in 2017, Richard Perlman chose to remember her by providing the lead gift to create a training experience for puppies at DBL. The Cynthia Perlman Puppy Sensory Park will open in early 2021.

"Both of us love dogs and appreciate what Dogs for Better Lives does," Perlman says. "Good things for dogs in turn do priceless things for people."

Longtime annual donors to DBL, Perlman decided to make the special gift for the puppy park so he could see Cynthia's memorial in action.

"Hearing the appreciation for the park, the gratitude for this new resource-you can't put that in dollars and cents," he says.

The sensory park exposes puppies to all types of scents, sounds and textures to prepare them for their important work as service dogs. There are several pathways, including rock, bark, sand, grass and a water feature, among other environments to explore and experience. The park will be invaluable to the puppies DBL raises.

"I'm very proud of it," Perlman says. "It's something that will be there forever, something lasting. It's something that I know Cynthia looks down upon and says, 'good job, Richard.'"

### AMBASSADORS

### Trooper Carries the Service Dog Flag

Well-traveled Trooper lives up to his name as he accompanies Henry Kisor on international trips and author presentation events in support of Kisor's book, "Traveling with Service Animals: By Air, Road, Rail and Ship."

"We are always 'on duty' as ambassadors wherever we go, and however we can, we carry the flag for service dogs in general and DBL in particular, even to countries that do not have service dog laws," says the retired newspaper columnist from Evanston, Illinois.

As a Hearing Assistance Dog, Trooper alerts Kisor to a range of sounds, from the ring of the doorbell to the beep of the Instant Pot. Kisor sought out DBL not only based on its reputation as an Assistance Dogs International-affiliated nonprofit, but also because he appreciated the training of rescue dogs for a second lease on life.

### Have Dog, Will Travel

Henry Kisor and Christine Goodier, who is also an ambassador for DBL, co-authored "Traveling with Service Animals: By Air, Road, Rail and Ship." The book was published in 2019. Chapters cover the specifics of air, rail, road and cruise ship travel. The authors, who both have Hearing Assistance Dogs from DBL, share experiences and practical advice on topics such as packing for a pet, emergencies, import regulations and many other considerations.

- "Because of that, it allowed me to specify a small dog," he says. "As a late septuagenarian, I wasn't in the best situation to handle a large animal."
- Kisor and his wife, Debby, have served as ambassadors for DBL for three years.
- "Trooper and I have done a home visit for a candidate for a Hearing Assistance Dog as well as manned a vendor table at several events," Kisor says. "We have learned during our ambassadorship that many people do not realize how much continuous training service animals require. When I explain that there is no charge at Dogs for Better Lives, the people seem surprised, but then I go on to explain that there are expenses for a dog, especially vet bills, and that there is considerable work in keeping a dog trained."



Henry and Debby Kisor of Evanston, Illinois with Trooper. With Trooper's assistance, the Kisors are more adventurous.

"Dogs for Better Lives is not just dogs and it's not just people-it's the interaction between the two."

- Robert Garbacz

### **GUARDIAN SOCIETY**

### Synergy Stands Out

Robert Garbacz of Columbus, Ohio got his first dog Garbacz says he's also attracted to nonprofits at age 77. He received a 2-pound fluffy snowball of a that rescue animals. He relies heavily on Charity schnauzer as a birthday gift from his sister. Garbacz Navigator, an independent charity evaluator, to make named the pup Maxwell. his donation decisions. He appreciates that DBL has a four-star rating on the site, the highest possible.

"He changed my whole life," the retired Ohio State University professor says. "I was living by myself, Charity Navigator assesses the financial health, and Maxwell gave me something to be responsible transparency and accountability of nonprofit for. He really is my best friend. I love him and he organizations. Donors can see the evaluation of loves me. I can tell." how a nonprofit has sustained its programs and services over time and its level of commitment to Now 87, Garbacz has organized his estate planning good governance, best practices and openness with to include the care of Maxwell and a dozen information. DBL has rated four stars for the last nonprofits that he supports. Animal charities are his seven years.

priority, but what he likes about DBL is the synergy.

"Dogs for Better Lives is not just dogs and it's not just people-it's the interaction between the two," he says. "By supporting Dogs for Better Lives, I'm helping people and helping animals."

> In the last fiscal year, Dogs for Better Lives received \$1,965,315 from individuals who chose to support our life-changing mission by making a future gift through their wills or trusts.



Age is diminishing his hearing, so Garbacz appreciates how helpful even untrained Maxwell is for keeping him aware of sounds. He says it reinforces his belief in the importance of trained service dogs to change and even save lives.





### **FOUNDATION GIVING**

#### Passion for Purpose Impresses

After visiting the DBL campus and meeting with staff one-on-one, Steve and Carolyn West left with a deep sense of the commitment from the DBL team to the dogs and clients.

"The dogs are very well trained, the staff are upbeat, and it's a clean, impressive facility," Steve West says.

Steve and Carolyn began the West Family Foundation in 2006 to support nonprofit causes in four counties in southern Oregon. Over the years, the West Family Foundation has awarded over \$4 million in grants. The foundation's primary focus is providing grants that support families and children. Other than financial factors, the foundation looks for organizations that have a high level of volunteerism, Steve says. "And we go with their passion," Carolyn adds.

Living locally in Oregon, the Wests have watched DBL grow and evolve. They highly approve of the expansion into Autism Assistance and Facility dogs to help children.

"Supporting animal projects isn't our mission, but Dogs for Better Lives benefits kids and adults with disabilities," Carolyn says. "Dogs are great companions and that does a lot for the kids."

The Wests are pet parents to a rescue dog and rescue cats, so they also appreciate DBL's efforts to find and train abandoned dogs for a new purpose.

### **COMMUNITY CLUBS**

### Does Get It Done for Dogs

Ellen Tomberlin of Los Lunas, New Mexico is one of 3,500 members of the Benevolent Patriotic Order of Does, a volunteer order that is due to celebrate its 100th anniversary in 2021. Tomberlin has been a member for 47 years and is a past supreme president of the national organization. Every year, Does around the country fundraise for several causes they support, including DBL.

"It's kind of amazing that these ladies can get this much money that we use to support our communities," Tomberlin says.

Her local group (or drove, as they call it) in Grants, New Mexico holds a basket bingo, for example, where the members put together prizes for auction. DBL is a regular participant at the order's annual

"The way they treat and love the animals is amazing."

- Ellen Tomberlin

o practice their skill



national convention, sending dogs and trainers to the event. Tomberlin says their presence makes her table and workshop the most popular each year.

"Dogs for Better Lives has so many friends among the Does," she says. "We are just really dedicated to Dogs for Better Lives."

Tomberlin made a trip to Oregon in 2018 to see the facilities and meet the staff. Through their gifts, the BPO Does sponsored a training room that simulates a home environment for dogs to practice their skills.

"All of the people I have met from Dogs for Better Lives, they all have this in their hearts," she

says. "The way they treat and love the animals is amazing."





### **CORPORATE PARTNERS**

### Values Lead Decisions

Fine food purveyor Harry & David in Medford, Oregon is one of the area's major employers. Steve Lightman, president of Harry & David, says the company believes a core value is investing back into the community.

"We've got to help one another to make our community a better place," he says. "In 2018, we learned Harry & David could help an individual by sponsoring an Autism Assistance Dog. Our company chose to partner with Dogs for Better Lives because it is a well-run organization with a great mission statement and value proposition. We wanted to be a part of supporting that. And by helping Dogs for Better Lives help others, we become a better company and better community citizens."

Harry & David has an employee committee that keeps a finger on the pulse of the community and

what the company can do to help local people have a better guality of life. The committee spotlighted the need and opportunity at DBL, which received Lightman's approval.

"We partner with organizations that align with our core values," Lightman says. "Through our Charitable Giving Program, we provide product donations to organizations in need. During COVID-19 and our recent wildfires, we have donated more than 100,000 pounds of product to front-line health care staff, long-term care facilities, shelters, first responders and nonprofits."

Harry & David is sponsoring an additional Autism Assistance Dog this year and plans to continue the partnership into the future.

# **MONTHLY DONOR**

### Where Joy and Experience Meet

A substantial health care service provided free? For Keva Meyer, a compelling factor in becoming a donor to DBL is that clients receive trained companions at zero cost to them.

"You can give a little to help someone get something so valuable on so many levels, while also rescuing dogs," says Meyer, who lives in the Twin Cities region of Minnesota.

Meyer loves dogs and has three of her own. But she's attuned to hearing issues because she is an executive at Amplifon Hearing Health Care, where she works with health insurance companies to provide hearing benefits for their members.

"I like how Dogs for Better Lives represents the convergence between my personal passion for animals and dogs and my industry experience in hearing health care," she says.

> "You can give a little to help someone get something so valuable on so many levels, while also rescuing dogs."

> > -Keva Meyer

)BL board membe Keva Meyer of the ven from 2,000 miles vay, there are so many vays to feel like she is actively contributing and supporting DBL's



Meyer is now sharing that experience as a member of the board for DBL. Since joining the board, she led a pet photo contest among Amplifon employees as a fundraiser. The winning photo became the cover of the 2020 Animals of Amplifon calendar. Proceeds from the calendar and additional events raised more than \$3,200 for DBL. Meyer also stepped up personally by enrolling as a monthly donor to show her ongoing commitment.

"I have to set the example that I'm asking people to follow," she says. "If I believe enough to give my time and energy to this cause, then I should believe enough to give my money to it. I feel lucky to be part of the DBL team, working together to build something bigger than ourselves. Even from 2,000 miles away, there are so many ways to feel like I am actively contributing and supporting DBL's mission."



"My favorite thing about Mindy is how in-tune she is to all of my emotions."

Amy Hogue

### Amy Hogue and Hearing Assistance Dog Mindy

## **HEARING ASSISTANCE DOGS**

### Partners of the Heart

Amy Hogue of Woonsocket, Rhode Island debated has taught me how to be present and enjoy the little whether to seek a Hearing Assistance Dog for many things. Her unwavering devotion and adoration have years. Hogue has a rare genetic disorder called helped me to stretch my comfort zones." Noonan syndrome, which causes her deafness. Mindy goes to work with Hogue at the Woonsocket She finally took the leap in 2017 to complete an application with DBL. Harris Public Library.

"There was another agency much closer to my home, but I liked the fact that DBL trained shelter dogs," she says. "I'd never had a dog before, but I was insecure about being home alone. I cannot hear anything without my cochlear implants, which I generally don't wear at home."

A year later, Mindy became her Hearing Assistance Dog partner, filling a hole in Hogue's heart she didn't Being a first-time dog mom, Hogue is grateful for the constant support DBL has provided, from application know she had. to training to ongoing check-ins.

"My favorite thing about Mindy is how in-tune she is to all of my emotions," Hogue says. "She has "I am reassured that DBL will take care of Mindy every stage of her life, while also providing me with become my second half. I feel empty and incomplete without her on my left. Plus, she has made a hiker the support I need as the human half of the team," out of me. We go out for an hour every day, and she she says.

Amy Hogue of Woonsocket, Rhode Island and Mindy are a happy team. "I am always proud of how well Mindy behaves and represents DBL on a daily basis," Hogue says.

"When we are out in public or when she is alerting me to sounds, she is calm, diligent and focused," Hogue says. "I am always proud of how well she behaves and represents DBL on a daily basis.

- However, when we get home and the vest comes off, she becomes very silly, rolling on her back in the grass and kicking up dust with her hind legs."



"He knows Tama is his boy and that he's supposed to be here for Tama."

- Kelly Ngariki

#### Tama and Autism Assistance Dog Harley

**AUTISM ASSISTANCE DOGS** 

### An "Old Soul" Provides Calm and Stability

Kelly Ngariki remembers clearly that it was "Tama has a lot of anxiety and is very impulsive," Christmas Day, 2016 when she first heard that DBL his mom says. "It's hard to make friends. And when you really think about what's important in a person's would be offering Autism Assistance Dogs. She could hardly wait for the next business day to call life, what's more important than that? When we got Harley, Tama just bonded with him right away." to put in an application for her son, Tama, who was then 10 years old. At that point, the Eugene, Oregon family had been trying for more than six years to When Harley first came to live with them, a DBL adopt a service dog, but met the usual obstacles of trainer came too. Ngariki praises that model as cost, distance and just too many requests for too few much more effective than going elsewhere for dogs. Less than a year after making that phone call, training. Instead, families can be in the actual DBL paired the family with Harley. environment where the dog will live and go to their

"Harley is amazing!" Ngariki says. "Right away, he knew what his job was. I feel like he's an old soul. He's so calm. He knows Tama is his boy and that he's supposed to be here for Tama."

Tama, now 14, has a rare genetic condition called Fragile X syndrome. Though there is a different underlying reason, many of the behaviors of the syndrome are similar to autism spectrum disorder.

> Harley lives in Eugene, Oregon with his family.

usual places with the trainer right there to coach everyone along. She also notes that families receive dogs at no cost, compared to thousands of dollars other service dog organizations expect. Ngariki is a donor to DBL, paying it forward.

"Harley is worth every penny we could spend, which is why I continue to support Dogs for Better Lives," Ngariki says. "They have done such an amazing job, and we are so thankful for Harley."



"I think coming to school was doable for some kids because Nelson made it a safer, kinder place."

- Janet Voorhies

Local celebrity Nelson with Janet Voorhies of Ashland, Oregon. After nine years of service, Nelson has retired as the first Facility Dog, beloved by a whole generation of children.

# **FACILITY DOGS**

### Gentle Nelson Impacts a Generation

After nine years serving two schools in Ashland, Oregon, Nelson officially retired at the end of the school year in 2020. Nelson was the first Facility Do trained and provided by DBL. In his years of service he became a public figure, recognized by hundreds of children who love him.

"I think coming to school was doable for some kids because Nelson made it a safer, kinder place," says Janet Voorhies, a special educator and Nelson's handler. "For most kids, school is OK, but for some school is a frenetic, complicated social setup that is hard to navigate, especially for kids on the spectrum."

Voorhies and Nelson served a class of middle-scho children with multiple needs for several years. The they moved to an elementary school of more than 300 students, where Nelson became the school mascot. Voorhies is a resource room instructor for children who need extra help.

"Nelson was a great bridge between the kids with the special needs and the typically developing kids she says. "He made our program less of 'what's wrong with those kids?' into 'those are the kids wh have the dog!'"

At the elementary school, Voorhies and Nelson were In retirement, Nelson is chill available to help whoever needed it, including some of the teachers and staff. On picture day, if you were Voorhies' new puppy, Scout.

The children of the elementary school where he worked nominated Nelson as an American Humane Hero Dog. In his nomination, they said that "his heroic acts occurred daily and, because of the Facility Dog training he received at Dogs for Better Lives, seemed effortless on his part."

Dog ce, s	afraid to get your picture taken, Nelson might show you how he gets his picture taken. If it was the first day of school and you were afraid to go into the building, Ms. Voorhies might let you walk Nelson to your new classroom. If you earned points for positive behaviors, you might get to spend time with Nelson. And on Valentine's Day, you might get a card with Nelson's paw print.
/S	
e, Iool	"In my opinion, working as a Facility Dog is the hardest job for a dog," Voorhies says. "Hearing or guide dog skills are hard, but those dogs are devoted to one person. When you work as a Facility Dog, you have to adapt to everyone's needs and moods and to a lot of different situations."
iool	When Nelson came through DBL nine years ago,
	every dog was tested as a potential Hearing Assistance Dog. Voorhies is grateful Nelson got
r	another chance as the first Facility Dog.
s," ho	"Not every dog can be a hearing dog, but Nelson had so many skills," she says. "Having a bunch of options for these great dogs who don't fit in one program but might work in another is amazing. And it's so awesome that they give these dogs away for free."
ere ne ere	In retirement, Nelson is chilling at home and taking walks by the river. His latest job is helping to train Voorhies' new puppy, Scout.

Research shows that the simple act of petting a dog can reduce stress and anxiety.

"The board members saw how the savings could be reinvested into the care of the animals and clients, allowing DBL to stay more focused on the mission rather than operational costs."

Christina Kruger

### **COMMUNITY PARTNERS**

### Sunshine and Blue Sky

Sunny days will save DBL nearly \$28,000 a year in Taking on the installation of such a large array is energy costs thanks to a new solar array provided no small task, Kruger points out. Pacific Power through a \$175,000 grant from Pacific Power's Blue is looking for groups that are prepared to handle Sky program participants. That award, combined the project management as well as liaise with with about \$20,000 in additional gifts, covered 70% contractors and government. Not all are up to it. of the cost to install the clean, renewable power source at DBL.

Christina Kruger, the regional business manager for Pacific Power, says the grant process for the Blue Sky program is highly competitive, as it is open to schools, libraries, municipal buildings and nonprofits in the four states the company serves. What impressed their committee in reviewing DBL's application was the engagement of the volunteer board and their stamina to see the project through to completion.

"They clearly understood this solar project would help Dogs for Better Lives stay sustainable," Kruger says. "The board members saw how the savings could be reinvested into the care of the animals and clients, allowing DBL to stay more focused on the mission rather than operational costs."



Since 2006, Pacific Power has made awards to 120 organizations in its service area for communitybased renewable projects, including solar, wind, geothermal and other forms of renewable energy. The funds for these Blue Sky grants come from Pacific Power customers who opt-in to the program to support renewable energy by paying an extra amount on their monthly bill.

"The Blue Sky program is a great example of how customers can support one another, thinking as a collective to impact things together," Kruger says. "DBL's new and already functioning solar array is a positive example of collaboration and community."

DBL will save nearly \$28,000 a year in energy costs with a new solar array provided by a grant from Pacific Power's Blue Sky program.

### **2019-2020 FINANCIALS**

Statement of Activities

### Support and Revenue

Bequests	\$1,965,315
Donations	\$1,436,127
Federated	\$25,615
Gifts in Kind	\$132,727
Interest, other	\$451,000

TOTAL SUPPORT & REVENUE - \$4,010,784

#### Expenses

Administration	\$196,492
Fund Development	\$258,730
Public Education	\$794,932
Training	\$2,395,371

TOTAL EXPENSES - \$3,645,525





Guard

\* Continuing to be thoughtful stewards of our donors' dollars, we're proud to share that 100% of every dollar raised goes towards programmatic services. Administrative and fundraising are fully funded by our endowment, specifically the annual interest earned from it, made possible by the past generosity of our Guardian Society members.

### Donations Go Farther to Meet Program Needs: Highest Yields in 10 Years







hours logged by volunteers, equivalent to 13 full-time employees

### \*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*



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dogs

spent

126,288

hours in our care

°11,520

hours logged by our

professional trainers

62,260

pounds of kibble +

training treats

**GUARDIAN SOCIETY** 

plans. Contact Wanda Cockey to learn how you can make an impact through Planned Giving at (541) 423-8385.

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Thank you to the individuals and families who provided philanthropic support for Doas for Better Lives through their wills and trusts this year.

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\* an Active Team is a client with their assistance dog



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