

Dogs for Better Lives • Spring 2021 • NO.138

THE CANINE LISTENER

Magazine



**Surviving to Thriving
Amidst COVID**
How DBL has adjusted

**Helping Every Dog
Succeed**
Shelter Dog Pilot Program

To Write is to Wander
A Dream Comes True





10



20



13



18



4

In This Issue

- 3 CEO Letter
- 4 Placement Highlights
- 6 Follow Ups
- 8 DBL News
- 10 Surviving to Thriving Amidst COVID
- 13 Shelter Dog Pilot Program
- 15 Board Spotlight
- 17 Board News
- 18 Foster Puppy Program
- 20 Staff Spotlight
- 21 Client's Corner
- 23 Young Professionals Board

On the Cover

Front and back cover feature DBL Certified Assistance Dog Trainer Dana Wheeler and Shelter Dog, Libby came to DBL from The Rescue Ranch in Yreka, CA

Cover photos taken by Deborah Christenson
www.DeborahChristenson.com

Canine Listener Team

Managing Editor — Lacy Priesmeyer

Contributing Editors — Emily Minah, Nicole Tallman

Designed by Laurel Briggs, Creative Marketing Design, Jacksonville, Oregon

Printed by Consolidated Press, Seattle, Washington

Special thanks to all contributing writers, photographers and clients who supported this spring issue!

Board of Directors

David Hollingsworth (Chair), Bill Pritchard (Vice Chair), Blake Thurman (Treasurer), Matt Dunbar (Secretary), Tim Cibula, Tom Dobry, Doug Hexter, CarrieJo Hoelzel, Henry Kisor, Al Lane, Keva Meyer, Jeff Rhoden, Lisa Robinson, Dr. Danielle Rose, Loree Seirbert, Stacy Tollie, Garrett West.

PRESIDENT & CEO

LETTER FROM BRYAN WILLIAMS

There is a difficult time in my career that I look back upon, in retrospect, with gratitude. Only a few years after finding my passion to work in the nonprofit field, serving in a fundraising role, I experienced the financial crisis that began in 2007. There was panic within the nonprofit industry and many were fearful of losing jobs and shutting doors. Organizations saw significant declines in revenue and as a result, reduced staff, slashed salaries, and cut programmatic services. There were difficult and necessary decisions made by leadership teams that had significant, long-term implications. Years later, as the financial crisis subsided, organizations looked back at the impact of those decisions and important lessons came to light. One of the lessons was to retain a long-term view when making short-term decisions. Another learning experience was that financially secure organizations, those that stayed true to the course and mission, stayed true to their why, retained donors and rebounded more quickly than those that did not.

When the covid crisis began, I recalled those lessons and encouraged DBL's Board and leadership to rely on the foresight of those who built DBL's financial reserves. I am incredibly grateful for those who came before me and allowed us to survive the tough times that were certain to come. As a leadership team and with the Board's support, we decided that we were not going to cut staff, services, or client support during the challenges caused by covid. We would continue the mission while following appropriate safety precautions and guidelines.

As we seem to be exiting the crisis, I'm happy to report that not only has Dogs for Better Lives survived but we have thrived, continuing to innovate and grow.

The reason that this is possible is because we continually focus on our mission, vision, why, and values. These are the things that allow us to execute even though we do not see each other as frequently and hold more meetings virtually than in-person.

Our why at Dogs for Better Lives is that 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. This "why" seems even more true through the lens of a once in a lifetime health crisis.

A quote from Simon Sinek is one I consistently return to. "Our visions are the world we imagine, the tangible results of what the world would look like if we spent every day in pursuit of our WHY."

There are two things that remain the focus of Dogs for Better Lives: The people we serve through the amazing dogs we train and constant improvement, bettering ourselves daily. Because this focus was established early, it has allowed us to thrive in good times and bad.

The board members we have, the donors we attract, the staff passionate about what they do, and our ambassadors spreading our mission across the country all do it for the above reasons. No one is bigger than the mission. I am extremely grateful that I get to serve as the CEO of Dogs for Better Lives, and I am excited about the future and what this organization can accomplish thanks to you. Thanks to those reading this Canine Listener and continue to support us and believe in what we do. Cheers to you and to continuing to thrive in 2021 and beyond.



Bryan



PLACEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

Dogs for Better Lives is committed to pursuing our mission of providing Assistance Dogs to people across the nation, because we know that our dogs enrich people's lives in ways beyond measure. We are pleased to announce that dog placements have continued to be successful despite COVID concerns and limitations.



LANEY

Sue Grant in Sparks, NV was placed with Laney this August. Laney came to us from Guide Dogs for the Blind and was released from their program due to her sensitivity to the guide dog harness. Sue is a retired firefighter and was stationed during her tenure at Lake Tahoe. Her hearing loss was gradual, but ultimately caused her to have to retire. Laney alerts her to door knock, oven timer, smoke alarm, and her husband calling her name. Laney has integrated herself seamlessly into Sue's life, and since placement they have enjoyed some camping trips together. Sue has experienced a greater sense of security and companionship since receiving Laney, and they are relishing in their new life as a team.



WILLOW

Autism Assistance Dog Willow was placed with successor AAD client Parker in Medford, OR. Parker lost his first AAD, Ian, in 2019 after only 3 short years together. After checking out her new digs, Willow quickly realized who the bearer of all good things was and stuck by Parker constantly from day one. It helped that she could sleep in his bed, lay on the couch with him and get lots of yummy treats. She is the queen of the house. Their first morning together consisted of Parker waking to Willow's sweet face kisses at 7am, but by the third morning they were sleeping in until 8am.

She was very receptive to him and he showed great capabilities handling her in public. They quickly learned their tasks together and he easily put her through her obedience paces.



SESAME

Hearing Assistance Dog Sesame was placed with Marilee in Yarmouth, MA. Covid made placement a little unknown, but thankfully everything worked out last minute. Sesame did well traveling across the US. The first meeting between Sesame and Marilee was everything we had hoped it would be. Sesame was excited to meet Marilee and immediately scoped out the home and found her toys and bed. Marilee previously had a Certified Hearing Dog with a different organization and has been without a dog for about 5 years now and was excited to receive a CHD again. Marilee loves that Sesame follows her around and is thankful to have help with sounds again as well as having a companion as she does live alone. Marilee and Sesame enjoy taking walks down to the beach and

watching the boats come and go. Sesame will be working door knock, oven timer, alarm clock and telephone for Marilee and did well in public. During their down time they like to play with her toys and watch sports. They are a great pair, and I am thankful I got to watch them bond this week.



NORTH

Hearing Assistance Dog North was placed with Kenneth Barnwell in College Station, TX. Kenneth was very excited to receive his first Hearing Assistance Dog and looks forward to having the constant companionship that North will provide in his life. Kenneth plans to bring North to work with him each day where he will work the smoke alarm for him. North will work the oven timer, telephone, door knock, smoke alarm, and name call for Kenneth in the home. Kenneth and his wife DeAnn were very pleased with North's level of training and loved his playful personality.



DEACON

Facility Dog Deacon was placed with Rosie Russell of Medford, OR. Despite the challenges we face with Covid-19 and children unable to attend school at this time, we were still able to attend Rosie's school to practice task work that she will be using with the children when they are able to attend school again. Rosie and Deacon were able to practice all around campus, he even met staff that were working the days we were there. Deacon met the Principal and Vice Principal, and Rosie even practiced some task work on them, such as "touch" and also showed them "under" so they could see what he can do. Both, the Principal and Vice Principal were very impressed on how well behaved he is and how great of a team they have already become.

The kids are extremely excited and can't wait to get back to class now that they know they have a team mascot to come back to. Rosie will show Deacon off during their classwork on zoom until they have a chance to meet in person.



CASEY

Hearing Assistance Dog Casey was placed with Janis in Lexington, KY. Janis has lived alone for 30 years and is looking forward to the security and companionship Casey will provide. He will work the door knock, smoke alarm, oven timer, and telephone for now and Janis plans to work with him to alert her to more sounds in the future. She was really impressed with Casey and his training and is confident he will provide her much relief as her second pair of ears.



OOLONG

Oolong was placed with, Simon Smithling of Portland, OR. His parents, Jason & Janel Smithling are incredibly excited to have Oolong in their lives to help with Simon. Simon has Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), so Oolong can help him to cope with day-to-day things, she can also help his parents to keep him safe in public settings with Oolong's incredible anchoring.

Despite the spikes of Covid in the area and the parents being concerned with public, they did it anyway knowing this is what had to be done for Oolong and Simon. Both parents took the Assistance Dogs International test to be certified handlers. Oolong will be working quite a few tasks, such as... lap, visit, settle, squish, anchoring, touch, and obedience that will help them in public or around the house.

FOLLOW UPS

Covid-19 rapidly changed all our lives in profound ways. Since the health and well-being of our clients is of utmost importance, Dogs for Better Lives learned to adapt.



RAVIOLI

Laurel W. and Hearing Assistance Dog Ravioli from Washington. Ravi (as he is now

known) alerts Laurel to many sounds including the oven timer, the smoke alarm, her husband calling her name, her alarm clock, the microwave, and the alarm on the fridge if it is left open. Laurel says that she feels much calmer with Ravi by her side. She used to feel the need to frequently check the door and now she knows that if there is a sound, Ravi will alert her and tell her where it is coming from.



VIDALIA

Ken Knight of Elko, NV, and Vidalia were placed together 5 1/2 years ago and are doing very well. Vida,

as she is called by Ken, works the alarm clock, smoke alarms, door knock, and name call. Ken says she is as good as the day she came for training!! She also goes to work with him at his cabinet shop, and on fishing trips in warmer weather. Ken and Vida seem super happy despite the pandemic, and you can tell they make each other's lives better. *Cory, interpreter, also featured in photo.*



NORTON

Chris S and Hearing Assistance Dog Norton in Oregon have been a team since April 2019.

Norton alerts Chris to the phone ringing, text alerts, phone, oven timer, doorbell, and his name being called. Chris is completely deaf in one ear, so it is hard to source where sounds are coming from. By watching Norton's body language, Chris is now aware of cars or bikes approaching as well as feeling more secure in his surroundings. In addition to sound awareness, Chris says that Norton brings so much joy and laughter to his and his partner Narayan's life. With Covid-19 they have been more isolated and having Norton's companionship has been a huge help. Norton also helps motivate them to get out of the house and into nature more.



TUCKER

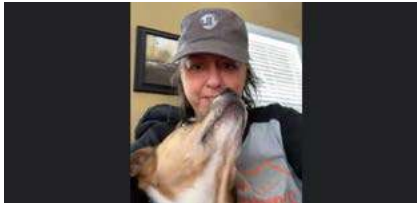
Brenda and Tucker from Oregon. Tucker is a Facility Dog who works with kids in a mental health setting.

He helps break the ice so that the clients are more at ease. Brenda says that Tucker's presence is very calming, and it helps the setting feel less clinical and more relaxed. Many of her coworkers visit with Tucker when they need a break. Brenda says that Tucker not only benefits the clients but the whole community. The impact that he has on the clients ripples out to the people that her clients interact with.

“Tucker’s presence is very calming.”

- Brenda about Facility Dog Tucker

FOLLOW UPS



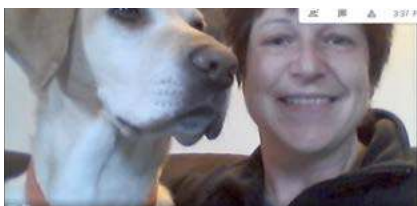
DIESEL
Tina S. and Hearing Assistance Dog Diesel from Tennessee have been a team since 2014.

Tina says that Diesel helps her to feel more confident. Her hearing has worsened since being partnered with him and he lets her know when someone comes to the house or when something is done on the stove. She appreciates the quiet times that they have together. This past year they have been home a lot and he is always by her side.



CHEVY
Jacob W. and Hearing Assistance Dog Chevy from Des Moines, IA have been a team since

2015. Chevy is a rescue from the Klamath Falls Animal Shelter. The follow up was conducted by video streaming due to COVID and travel restrictions. Jacob says that if he could speak to one of our many donors he would say, "thank you!" They should take great comfort in knowing that Chevy will protect him if he leaves the oven on, if someone comes to the door, or if there is a fire in the house. Chevy is always there to protect him.



WELLIE
Jen and Wellie have been a team for five years and live in PA. Jen says that Wellie has enhanced her life

beyond what she knew that she needed. She says that the pandemic made her realize how much she really needs Wellie. Everyone wearing masks has made her cut off from the world and she has had to rely on Wellie more than ever. Jen's proudest moment of Wellie was in her first physical therapy session. Jen was on her exercise bike and watching the timer count down so that she would know when she was done. Once the timer hit zero, she felt Wellie alert her. She didn't realize that the timer was beeping. Everyone in the office was very impressed. Wellie became the office mascot, and the physical therapist made her a bandanna with the logo on it.



RYLEE
Mary Anne and Hearing Assistance Dog Rylee from Croton on Hudson, NY have been a team

since 2015. Rylee was rescued from Home Again Humane Society in The Dalles, OR. Mary Anne says that Rylee loves to chase his ball and especially loves to swim after it in the Hudson River. It is not uncommon for him to have an audience of people clapping and cheering at his antics. Rylee makes her laugh every single day. Mary Anne is much more comfortable at night with Rylee in the house watching over her. She loves waking up and knowing that he will be there.



PALACE
Kai and Hearing Assistance Dog Palace (nickname Pala) are both doing well and clearly love

each other. They have been a team for almost 5 years with Pala alerting Kai to the oven timer, doorbell, door knock, fire alarm, and name call in addition to providing environmental awareness. Prior to having Pala, Kai felt like he had to have his head on a swivel to try to see what was going on around him all the time. With Palace by his side at home, in the classroom he is working in, or in the theater in which he performs, he trusts Pala to let him know when he needs to pay attention to something out of the ordinary.

When asked what Kai would say if given the opportunity to talk to one of our many donors he said, "I appreciate that donors took the leap of faith to donate trusting that good would come of it. That money helped train Palace and place her with me. And now Palace is with me in the schools that I work at. Someday, maybe one of these kids will benefit from an Assistance Dog because they saw the difference Palace made. It's the ripple effect, but it starts with a single donation."

DBL NEWS

DBL's Marketing Tail is Wagging the Dog and Going Green in a Big Way

By HARVEY POTTS, Staff

Dogs for Better Lives (DBL) launched its breeding program in 2015 to augment its rescue program, with a focus on acquiring more dogs to assist more qualified people waiting for an Assistance Dog.

As the breeding program has grown, so has the need for volunteer puppy raisers to raise and train these puppies during their first 12-14 months, before coming back to DBL for 4-6 months of professional training prior to placement with a client.

Until recently, sharing this critical need for more puppy raisers has relied primarily on social media and word-of-mouth. Though, that slowly started to change in late 2020, with the use of digital billboards primarily along major west coast highways. Going digital has also reduced the cost as there is no banner or poster to create, minimal set-up, and there is more flexibility with moving the advertisement around to other digital boards and going green in the process.

Lamar Advertising Company provided digital billboard space in Eugene and Salem (OR) beginning in Fall 2020 and several months later Meadows Outdoor followed with providing space in Klamath (OR), and Puyallup, WA. Later in the spring, DBL will be working on billboard placements along Interstate-5 in the Sacramento/Fresno (CA) markets, where we have already begun to secure puppy raisers and classes. Nationally, DBL has been partnering with AARP-The Magazine for more than ten years, though just since 2020 has targeted the puppy raiser program and need for more volunteers along the west coast.

“The donation of billboard space in Oregon, Washington, and California will immensely help us with visibility and sharing a critical need that we currently have, more volunteers across the west coast helping us with raising our future Assistance Dogs,” stated CEO Bryan Williams. “Ultimately, we want to help more people with our amazing dogs, one billboard at a time.”



Billboard space donated to DBL will improve so many lives—giving dogs a purposeful job and a loving home, providing joy and happiness for puppy raisers, and granting safety and independence to recipients of the dogs. As a nonprofit, DBL relies on the generosity of private donors and funders, while providing Assistance Dogs at no cost to the client.

Creation of the billboard design and layout was done by Young Professionals Board member Matty Walsh.

DBL NEWS

Sharing the Warmth

Students from Crater Academy of Health and Public Services (Central Point, OR) recently completed a blanket drive for their school project and collected more than 50 blankets for DBL and our dogs in training.



100 Best Green Workplaces



We're honored to share that DBL was recognized by *Oregon Business* magazine as a top "100 Best Green Workplaces in Oregon 2021."

"When the staff at DBL created our organizational values, there was an overwhelming consensus to include focusing on the environment as one of our values. By focusing on being an environmentally friendly organization, we will not only protect our world for generations to come but also better steward the resources given to us." - Emily Minah, Green Team Member

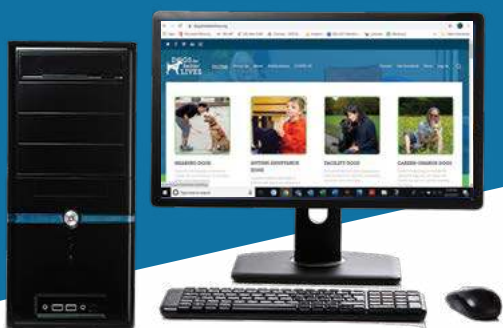
This also speaks to DBL's culture of being a value-driven organization, and Value #6 in particular. "It is the organization's duty to do our best to lessen our impact on the environment and the strain we put on finite resources."

SAVE PAPER

FIND US ONLINE

our website is always open

www.dogsforbetterlives.org



Find Us | *We're Social*



SURVIVING TO THRIVING AMIDST COVID

By HARVEY POTTS, Staff

As news broke in China about the Coronavirus (aka COVID-19) in the early days of 2020 it seemed so distant and inconsequential to those in America. Then COVID cases began to appear elsewhere including in the United States, and Americans began to take more notice.

In February 2020, the leadership team at Dogs for Better Lives (DBL) also took notice, as many businesses and nonprofits became further concerned and more cases were showing up locally, including in Oregon.

Abiding by the Center for Disease Control's (CDC) guidelines and following protocols set out by the Oregon Governor, DBL continued to establish protocols and procedures to move the organization forward. In March 2020 DBL established a dedicated COVID-19 page on the website, as a resource to staff, clients, volunteers, and the public.

“From the very beginning our leadership team took the threat of COVID-19 very seriously. We immediately

took action to ensure the health and safety of our staff and dogs were safeguarded to the best of our abilities,” stated operations director, Trish Welch. “Throughout the pandemic we have remained agile, flexible, and are making the best of a very difficult situation.”

For a year, DBL has been carefully dealing with and navigating around COVID-19's path, as it has certainly impacted the way the organization does business, across all departments, including how the organization acquires and places dogs nationally.

Beginning in March 2020, DBL moved most staff off its Southern Oregon campus, providing them with all necessary resources to work remote. Fortunately, the national nonprofit already had much of the strategy, technology, and equipment in place to establish this overnight.

Working with dogs, many of DBL's programmatic staff continued to stay on campus, caring for and training the dogs, while practicing social distancing,

continuously cleaning hands, and wearing masks, among other best CDC practices.

“External outreach and communications with the public is very limited, though I have been able to give presentations and participate in community meetings via conference video,” stated regional field representative Laura Encinas. “It certainly has been difficult but we at DBL will persevere.”

Laura continued to work with her local puppy raisers in central California, though only through virtual calls and outdoor classes where they can socially distance. Animal shelters are open by appointment only, restrict time allotted to evaluate dogs, and many have a limited number of dogs available. The short supply of dogs at the shelters is primarily due to more people working remote, now having more time, therefore adopting dogs in mass numbers throughout the COVID pandemic.

“Working through the Covid-19 pandemic has certainly been challenging, but our team was quick to adapt and rose up to meet that challenge,” stated puppy program coordinator, Hannah Crane. “Implementing safety protocols have allowed those of us who need to continue working on campus to do so, while others work from the safety of their home. Those same

protocols have helped us to continue to have puppy classes both virtually and in person.”

Hannah is further encouraged by how the management team has kept staff up to date on local restrictions and guidelines, found alternative methods of communicating with colleagues, clients, and volunteers, as well as continuing to provide excellent care to the dogs in training.

While the office dynamic has certainly changed over the last 14 months, staff have found other ways to stay connected with each other on campus, with others working out of state, and many more working remote. Being a Microsoft-based company, DBL has completely embraced the Teams suite, including its video conferencing (with closed captioning), messaging, file sharing, and tutorials.

“Teams is for DBL what the ‘intranet’ was in the 90s for companies, it’s a dynamic way of communicating and engaging others on my team and across departments, in meaningful conversation,” stated Development Director, Harvey Potts. “Of course, many love to emphasize with memes, emojis, and photos, to get their points across – and that works too.”



When normalcy, whatever that may look like, begins to return, several recently implemented best practices during the pandemic could be here to stay. Often change and challenge are good, in that it forces you to look outside the problem to find its solution.

“Working remotely (in Missouri) allows me to collaborate with an organization I admire. I would not have been able to offer my skills in other circumstances because of the distance,” stated digital marketing manager Lacy Priesmeyer. “My creativity is at its best in my home office, and it allows me to contribute to the success of Dogs for Better lives.”



Live streaming board meeting

During unprecedented times, unprecedented steps are required, while done in a thoughtful manner that puts staff and dogs first. The organization realizes that they are far from out of this pandemic and that some of the procedures implemented most likely will continue to be a part of our updated road map moving forward indefinitely.

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



Morgan Stanley



Central Point Rotary



Al and Kimberly Lane



Dixie Hackstedde



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

SHELTER DOG PILOT PROGRAM

HELPING EVERY DOG SUCCEED

By EMILY MINAH, Staff

Dogs for Better Lives strongly believes in attaining dogs from shelters and rescues. Since our beginning in 1977, we have been acquiring dogs from shelters and humane societies to train as Assistance Dogs.

While there have been many changes to our organization over the decades, our commitment to attaining dogs from shelter and rescues has not been one of them – it has and will always remain a core part of our mission. However, in recent years, we began to see a shift in the number of shelter and rescue dogs completing their training and becoming Assistance Dogs. While there was always a small percentage of dogs that did not graduate, the percentage of dogs we brought in for training that “career changed” and were adopted out as pet dogs has begun to significantly increase.

As an organization that is dedicated to providing highly trained professional Assistance Dogs to our clients, we have training standards that all of our dogs must meet before they can graduate regardless of where we acquired them. When we noticed this trend, we asked ourselves, “Why?” We wanted to investigate and reassess the training of our shelter dogs to try and help more of our shelter and rescue recruits go on to help change someone’s life as an Assistance Dog, we made the decision to create a Shelter Dog Pilot Program to do a thorough and comprehensive look (nose to tail!) into the experience of a shelter dog from day one on our campus. As a team, we have deeply discussed this challenge and how we want to approach it. Staff from our training department has eagerly stepped up to be a part of this pilot program.

While the restrictions for Covid have made visiting shelters and evaluating dogs challenging, not to mention the fewer numbers of dogs in shelters available to evaluate, we remain committed, as always, to getting shelter and rescue recruits for our Hearing Dog program. Hopefully, through the work of the Shelter Dog Pilot Program, we will learn just the right formula to help these dogs succeed and go on to change someone’s life as a trained professional Assistance Dog.



Certified Assistance Dog Trainer Dana Wheeler picking up Shelter Dog Libby



YOUR legacy, THEIR future.

Make a commitment today for the future

Your charitable gifts make a difference in the lives of Dogs and People and so can your commitment to the future! Contact us to request a free packet on how you can prepare for your family's future and leave a legacy that helps make the lives of dogs and people better today.

TO LEARN MORE

- ✉ Email info@dogsforbetterlives.org
- ☎ Call direct at 541-423-8385
- 🌐 dogsforbetterlives.org/guardian

“Dogs for Better Lives is not just dogs and it's not just people — it's the interaction between the two. By supporting Dogs for Better Lives, I'm helping people and helping animals.”

**-Robert Garbacz,
Guardian Society Member**



BOARD SPOTLIGHT

Dr. Danielle Rose

Client/Board member Dr. Danielle Rose was recently published in Highlights for Children's March issue of High Five magazine (Ages 2-6). Dr. Rose shares what a working Assistance Dog does and how her Hearing Assistance Dog Delight supports her at work, home, and during her travels.

Delight is Dr. Rose's third Hearing Assistance Dog from DBL and currently travels with her to work at her pediatrics office. Delight is not only a support resource for Dr. Rose, but indirectly helps to welcome and comfort young patients into her office that may be somewhat apprehensive of coming in.

To Write is to Wander

By DR. DANIELLE ROSE, Client/Board

When I decided to write something about my hearing dogs for the traditional children's literature market, I didn't think it would take 10 years. Granted, my writing colleagues at the Society for Children's Book Writers and Illustrators all said it would take an average of 7 years. But still, what's the problem?

First, there was the writing and deciding what idea fit where. While I was writing there were lots of emotional complications. Ginger, my second hearing dog, died during this process. Reliving the memories and losses of Ginger and Chuckie (my first dog) while worrying about not being fair to Delight, my current dog were challenging. To increase my chances of acceptance I wrote several different formats about hearing dogs- a hearing dog and kindergarten shots children's picture book, a middle grade novel about hearing dogs in school, a picture book in rhyme, and some others that didn't rise to submission level. I felt fiction based on truth fit better with the troubling gaps in knowledge about where my first two dogs were before they came to Dogs for Better Lives. But then again, should I look at a more non-fiction approach?

Secondly, I sought critiques at writer's conferences from agents and editors and published authors. They said I shouldn't write only about dogs; children need a child character to identify with and hook the reader. My middle grade novel story should be a chapter book story, but when I added the child character it became more complicated, so it was still a middle grade novel. I revised and revised and submitted to several agents and publishers. I received one rejection and lots of no answer. I perfected queries and learned about researching your recipient and establishing name recognition with social media platforms. Maybe I should try some non-fiction to get something on my resume.



Thirdly, I studied non-fiction children's book writing, added my bibliography, and developed a book proposal even though I already had a book. Traditionally pictures are still the domain of the publisher in children's books and you use notes in brackets to communicate important picture content. Children's books need low word counts and lots of pictures so how is the bibliography counted? Lots more questions to figure out. Still, I submitted. And I heard--nothing back from my submissions.

My author friend Kathleen suggested I write an article for Highlights High Five Children's Magazine. I submitted a non-fiction story about my first hearing dog, Chuckie with bracketed info about picture visuals of his alerts and a bio blurb and picture of both of us. Around that time Harvey Potts of Dogs for Better Lives asked me about becoming a board member of Dogs for Better Lives. This, I really wanted to do so I put the writing on the back burner and became a board member.

A year later, I received an email from High Five division of Highlights! They wanted to purchase my article with a few changes. Hooray! I agreed happily, received my check and contract and -I never heard anything.

Another year later, Harvey Potts emailed that Highlights requested some pictures photographer Anne Zirkle took of Delight and me for the 2018 Annual Report. "Was it ok to release them?"

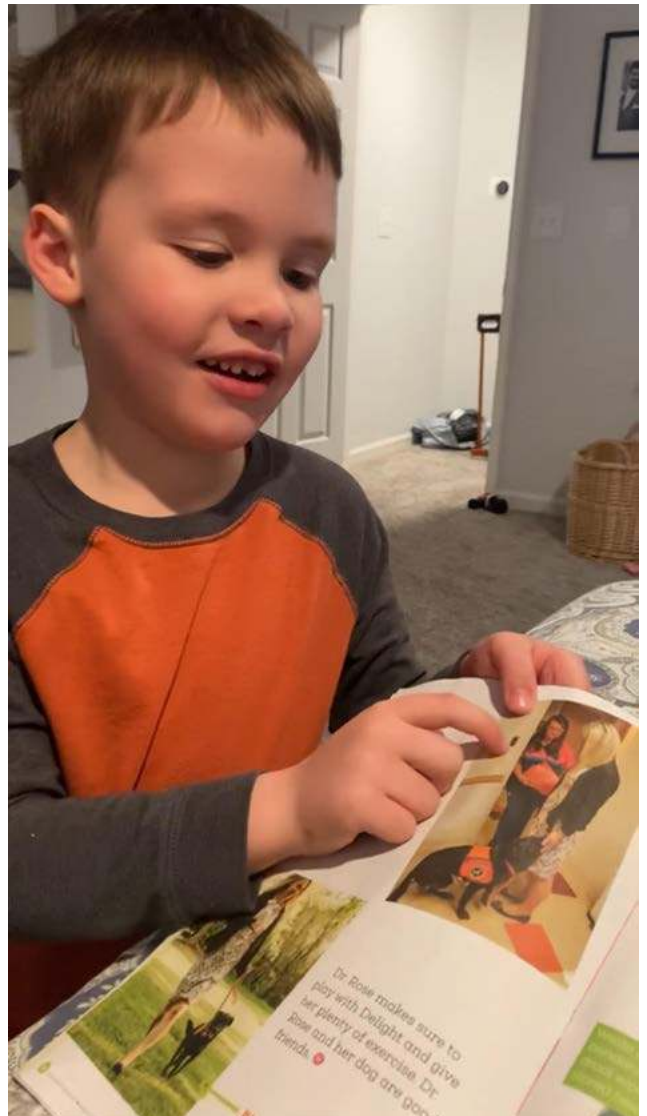
"Yes!" I replied. Two months later the editor emailed a preliminary layout and a release date of March 2021.

The child getting an exam asked her Mom for weeks "when's that magazine gonna come out?"

Before March arrived, I walked in to do a 6 month well check exam and the mom had her children's copy of High Five. "I opened this and said there's Dr. Rose!" she said and asked me to sign it.

Our nurse manager in the photo loves Delight; she received a video from her young friend who was reading High Five and said, "you're in the magazine!" When Dad asked him if that made her famous since she was in the magazine, he angrily said "No, she's not famous, she's my friend!"

Delight and I have worked at Salisbury Pediatrics for nine years now and the locals know all about hearing dogs. Their questions and interactions with us have been the real inspirations to share with many others. We are so grateful to everyone associated with Dogs for Better Lives and Canine Listener readers for their help in sharing our stories in so many ways. My dream of sharing hearing dogs with even more children has now come true with the help of High Five.



BOARD NEWS

Welcoming Our New Members



Lisa Robinson – Joined October 2020

Lisa is the Vice President, Human Resources for the Construction Sector software business that is part of the global company, Trimble Inc. In her role, Lisa and her HR team support 3,000 professionals across 20 countries. Prior to Trimble, Lisa worked for more than 15 years as an HR executive in the financial services industry and professional services.

“Lisa brings a highly desired skillset and background from human resources that will immediately benefit our efforts to take this national Assistance Dog organization to the next level.” - Board Chairman David Hollingsworth.



CarrieJo Hoelzel – Joined April 2021

CarrieJo Hoelzel was born and raised in Minnesota and currently resides in Vancouver, WA, with her husband and fur family. CarrieJo's career in the hearing healthcare industry provided an opportunity for her to relocate to the Pacific Northwest, where she and her family enjoy the amazing beauty of the Columbia River Gorge, mountains, and towering pines all around us.

As a lover of all animals, it was only later in life, that she realized the importance of the animal/human connection; CarrieJo trained her dog Shep to receive his Canine Good Citizen (CGC), allowing them to visit Memory Care Units. Seeing the joy, love, and connection a dog can make with humans has forever changed CarrieJo.



Henry Kisor – Joined April 2021

Henry is a Dogs for Better Lives client, having been partnered with Hearing Assistance Dog Trooper since 2015, and is an advocate for rescue dogs as well as people with disabilities. That's one reason why he chose to apply to DBL (then Dogs for the Deaf) for an Assistance Dog. Another is DBL's reliable nationwide reputation as an Assistance Dogs International affiliated nonprofit.

At 80, Henry is a retired journalist and still active author, having written ten books, including *Traveling with Service Animals: By Air, Road, Rail and Ship Across North America*, with Christine Goodier, also a DBL client. They are at work on a new post-pandemic edition of that book.

FOSTER PUPPY PROGRAM

Foster Puppies in California

By LAURA ENCINAS, Staff

Over the past year Dogs for Better Lives has acquired a considerable amount of new puppy raisers. We currently have 15 active puppy raisers throughout WA, OR, and CA. There are also 6 people on our wait list to receive a puppy. Of the 15, 4 of the raisers are currently in CA with 1 person on the CA wait list.

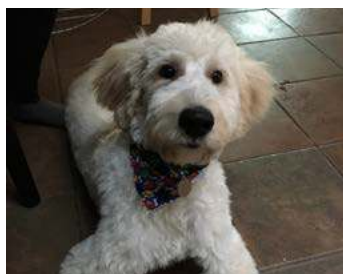
Most of these raisers were acquired through volunteer websites. They are required to be at least 16 years of age or with parent/guardian approval, no more than 2 dogs in the home, provide a safe and loving environment for the pup for a year, and attend training classes with a staff member or approved facility. Once the application is received, normally a home visit and interview would be done. Due to the pandemic, we accept videos and/or photos of the home and yard and will do a phone interview. Once approved, volunteer puppy raisers are placed on a wait list and contacted when a puppy is available.

A little bit about our CA pups:



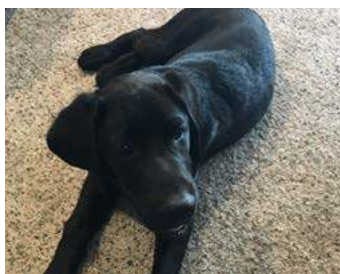
JOY

Joy is an 8-month-old yellow Lab that we acquired through a breeding cooperative. She is residing in Merced, CA with the Moreno family. Jennifer is the main handler. She is a high school student that has been participating in online classes for school. Her family thought it would be great to give back during this time when they are at home more.



ALBUS

Albus is a 7-month-old Golden Doodle that we acquired through a generous donation from 4E Kennels in Nevada. This kennel and owner have been featured on some national morning news programs. Their pups have been temperament tested and evaluated as potential assistance dogs. He is residing in Fresno, CA with Hanna. Hanna is also a high school student participating in online classes at school.



CEDAR

Cedar is a 4-month-old black Lab that we bred at Dogs for Better Lives. He is part of our "C" litter, all the dogs in this litter have names that start with "C". He is residing in Camino, CA with Nancy. Her and her husband are retired and wanted to find a way to give back to the community also. They thought this would be a perfect way to enjoy having a puppy and to help someone receive an assistance dog.



ARCHIE

Archie is a 3-month-old yellow Lab that we acquired through a breeding cooperative. He is residing in Fairfield, CA with Sheila. Sheila came to us with experience in puppy raising with other organizations, she has raised five other pups. Archie occasionally goes to work with her and helps all the staff with his cute and cuddly ways. Sheila enjoys puppy raising and wanted to continue with a new organization.

We are so thankful to all our volunteers for all their time and tireless efforts!
They make up an integral part of the DBL team. With their efforts, DBL continues to make lives better.

NUPRO DOG SUPPLEMENT

Specially designed to condition your pet from the inside out.



For more information contact:

Janice at 1-800-360-3300 or 732-786-8822

email: nupro@skyweb.net • website: nuprosupplements.com

Raise a puppy. Change a life.

www.dogsforbetterlives.org/puppyraiser

DOGS *for*
better
LIVES

Providing Assistance Dogs Since 1977



STAFF SPOTLIGHT

Dana Wheeler

I worked as an Apprentice Assistance Dog Trainer for what was known as Dogs for the Deaf back in 2010 for about 1 and half years. I left to work a different career path, not realizing how much I would miss training dogs. When I got asked to come back to continue my education and get my certification, I didn't hesitate. I was so ecstatic; they would even ask me back! This organization has changed so much during my leave, from a business name change to new staffing. Now with the name changed to Dogs for Better Lives we can serve more people around our country.

It feels great to say I work with dogs for a living; who wouldn't? DBL is like a family to me. They take great care of the dogs, staff, clients, and donors. It's really nice to work for an organization that takes their staff into consideration. Not many people can say they are happy in their job, nor can they brag about how great they are treated.



I am blessed to be a part of DBL! I love waking up knowing I am coming in to see my kids who are assigned to my string. Each dog is incredibly unique and smart. They make me smile and when they learn something new, it is amazing. You must be in my shoes to know how amazing it feels when the dogs you train succeed from what they were to what they are in 4-6 months. Each dog teaches me a lot. They're all different and special in their own way. I love being able to work one-on-one with them to learn to understand them and help them work through any situation. Some move on to become certified and some choose to just be a family pet. Being a trainer can be stressful at times especially when you must cut one loose to become a pet. It's all on how you work through that stress to still work with the others. Sometimes it's out of our hands why we have to release them, but we try hard before making that decision or we may just know right away. No trainer wants to feel like a failure and when you must cut one loose to be a pet, we have to say, "it's in the best interest of the animal." If we keep an open mind we become better at our jobs, I learned that along the way. You can't take everything personally!

I have been back for a little over 2 years now working hard to finish my apprenticeship, and the time has finally come. The feeling one gets when they sit down to take the final test of their apprenticeship, taking a little over 4 hours after bad test anxiety, then scoring so high, feels like an accomplishment. I was so scared to see the pages of questions that I had to answer, but the training paid off. I got tears in my eyes when I got the notice of passing and a sense of relief knowing that big test is over, and I didn't even have to take it again. BIG SMILES on my end. I couldn't have done it without the knowledge and help of the Training Managers and other trainers working together to help build our knowledge. I have come a long way, I was so green when I started the first time not knowing anything about training, but it did help to have animal behavior knowledge to work here. I am still learning and still have questions, but in this profession, we never know everything, we are always learning.

CLIENT'S CORNER

Return Trip to Normal

By HENRY KISOR, Client/Board Member



Thirteen months into the Great Lockdown at Three Crowns Park, the retirement community in Evanston, Illinois, where Debby, Trooper and I live, we're emerging fully vaccinated and taking modest steps back into the outside world.

Isolation hasn't been as dispiriting for me as it has for some other residents, thanks largely to Trooper. As an amiable companion he (along with Debby) has kept my head above the floods of loneliness that so often wash over seniors who must stay inside.

He has also given me purpose: keeping his service-animal skills sharp.

Each day we work on a task. At every call of my name, for instance, he launches himself at me. He has also learned new commands such as "under!"—backing up between my legs as I sit in a chair or rollator, to get out of the way of human traffic. When we residents were vaccinated in January, he performed "under!" so superbly that the medical people all marveled.

Naturally, as a deaf person who uses speech and lipreading, I've had a tough time interacting with masked people. Hearing folks find it difficult to cope with a deaf person who can't understand

them through their masks, and their natural reaction is to avoid awkward encounters.

But when Trooper's with me, such barriers melt away. In the year and a half we have been residents at Three Crowns, Trooper has become not only my service animal but everyone else's therapy dog.

For months under lockdown, residents could gather together only at meal pickup stations in the hallways while maintaining distancing and masking. There I let Trooper greet everyone with wiggles and wags, allowing them to shower him with coos and cuddles. Many have said those daily meetings gave them comfort—and that gave me pleasure.

Being able to interact with people has been good for Trooper, too. After a dog attacked him early in our partnership and broke his leg, he was wary of strangers, and sometimes would bark or growl if one approached. Having a host of new human buddies has helped him over that hump.

Now that we've recently returned to communal dining, I've asked Trooper's friends to ignore his presence in the restaurants so that he can again get used to lying quietly at my feet under the table. They have done so willingly, because they know he can take time to greet them in the halls and living rooms where we all relax. As a result, his dining-room behavior has become as reliable as it was before the pandemic. That makes me proud.



Trooper also helps me look to the future. When we can start post-covid journeying again, perhaps early next year, we're hoping to have lots of adventures. Some of them might appear in an updated edition of *Traveling with Service Animals*, the 2019 book co-written with Dogs for Better Lives client Chris Goodier that brought attention to our furry sidekicks from coast to coast.

Trooper indeed has been a dog for a better life.



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/

Join
"The Pack"
and make it
MONTHLY!

Your monthly gift helps
change **TWO** lives.

HELP THOSE IN NEED AND
GIVE RESCUE DOGS PURPOSE



YOUNG PROFESSIONALS BOARD

By STACIE BIANCO, YPB Board Member

As Dogs for Better Lives continues its mission of enhancing lives through Assistance Dog partnerships with people across the nation, we also aim to inspire the next generation of leaders to be involved in DBL's future. In 2020, Dogs for Better Lives launched its first **Young Professionals Board (YPB)** in the Pacific Northwest, a group of diverse professionals with a passion for dogs and giving back to the community.

As ambassadors of the organization and the broader Assistance Dog community, the Young Professionals Board will be a leader in education, awareness, and support of Dogs for Better Lives and its mission. Members will participate in various outreach events, as well as engaging with volunteers, clients, and community partners through a variety of initiatives.

With the Pacific Northwest chapter quickly growing, DBL's goal is to have Young Professional Boards across the country, working to support each regional footprint of Dogs for Better Lives. Most recently, the YPB Pacific Northwest chapter has developed their mission, vision, and values to establish a framework for future chapters as well as supporting the region's initiatives.

"It's exciting to watch the growth and engagement with YPB – PNW over the last year," stated DBL's Development Director Harvey Potts. "The recent addition of Jo and Sara to the board further exemplifies the talent and diversity within the group. Can't wait to see what they'll further accomplish in the coming months."

The Young Professionals Board is excited to help serve the community and contribute to the mission and future of Dogs for Better Lives. This dedicated group will bring their individual perspectives and skillsets spanning diverse experience as Assistance Dog puppy raisers, marketing professionals, advertising executives, project managers, designers, entrepreneurs, business owners, and social workers, all with a passion for helping create life-changing partnerships between dogs and people.



"I am honored to be a puppy raiser for DBL and humbled to be a member of the YPB. They both give me an overwhelming sense of passion, purpose, and excitement for the opportunity that we have to create immense joy and good in this world. Together, we truly get to change lives."
- Chair, YPB Member, & DBL Puppy Raiser Cory Wise



Introducing the Young Professionals Board - Pacific Northwest:

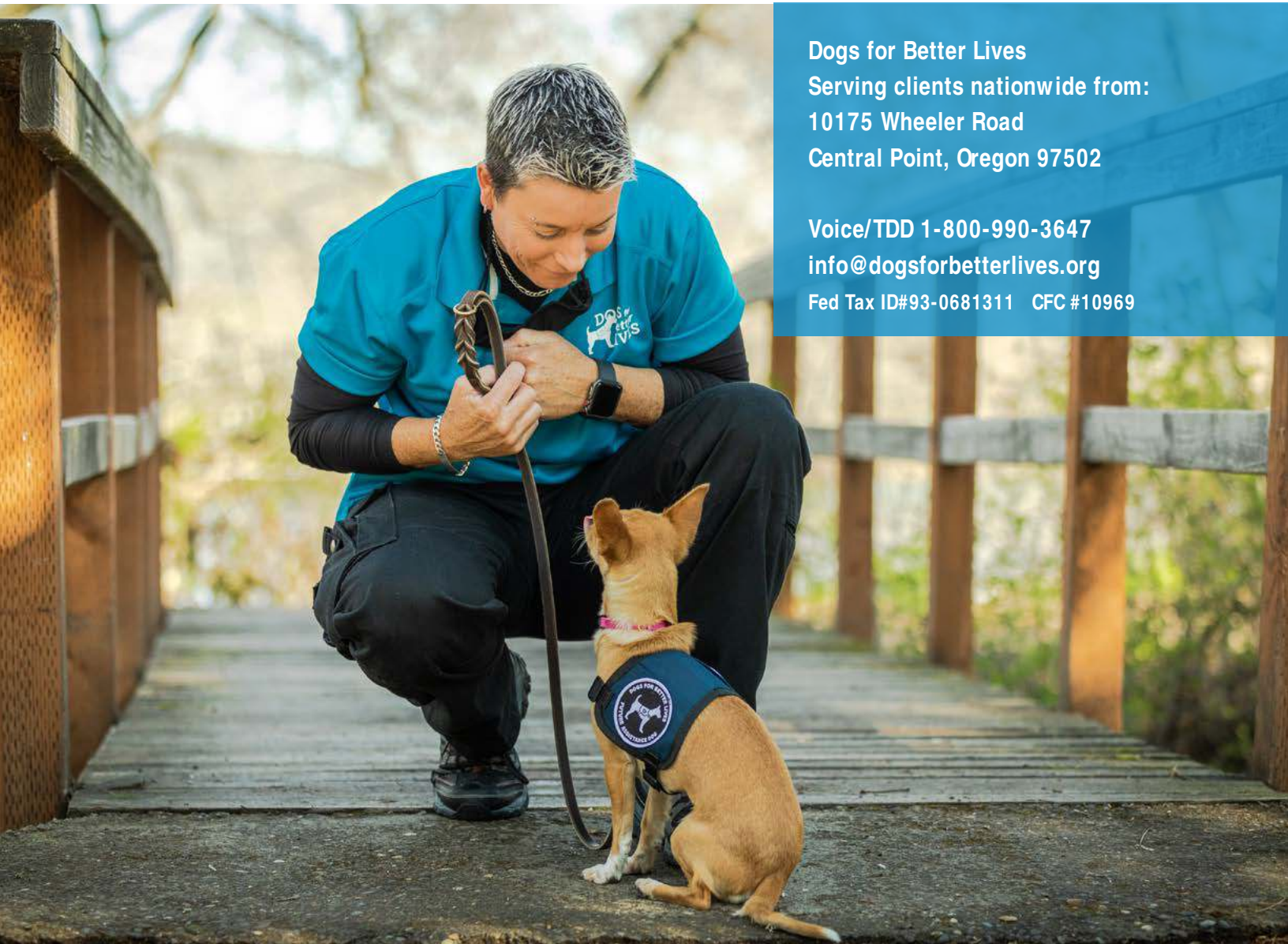
- Corey Wise** | Chair, YPB Member, & DBL Puppy Raiser
- Meghan Heims** | Vice Chair & YPB Member
- Stacie Bianco** | Treasurer & YPB Member
- Jordan Caballero** | Secretary & YPB Member
- Matty Walsh** | YPB Member
- Sara Torelli** | YPB Member

To learn more about the Young Professionals Board – PNW and opportunities to join YPBs in other regions of the country, visit:

www.dogsforbetterlives.org/young-professionals-board/



10175 Wheeler Rd., Central Point, OR 97502



Dogs for Better Lives
Serving clients nationwide from:
10175 Wheeler Road
Central Point, Oregon 97502

Voice/TDD 1-800-990-3647
info@dogsforbetterlives.org
Fed Tax ID#93-0681311 CFC #10969