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Statement of activities

Mission

Dogs for Better Lives is a 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.

On the Cover: Weston, Home Hearing Assistance Dog, helps his hearing impaired person live independently and confidently.

2020-2021

BY THE NUMBERS



1,600+
dogs placed
since 1977





122
active client teams
in 33 states



128,278

dog kisses



11,530

hours logged by professional trainers





54,906

hours logged by volunteers,

equivalent to 26 full-time employees

2.1 million tail wags



WELCOME

While writing this letter for our Fiscal Year 2021 Annual Report, I felt a case of déjà vu. Although this recent year brought some exciting changes and improvements, many of the challenges we faced two years ago persist. Even though we ended the year with more placements than we did in the previous year, it was still below pre-COVID levels. We continue to face significant challenges within our shelter dog program, with facilities having very few dogs or being completely empty. COVID concerns continue to impact operations, specifically how we acquire, train, and place dogs. There still were no in-person fundraising events, and our development staff remains limited in meeting with our passionate donors.

Despite the challenges, we see light at the end of the tunnel. Our breeding program has grown thanks to more puppy raisers volunteering than we have ever had before. Our partnerships with purpose-bred organizations like Guide Dogs for the Blind continues to expand and grow, and our placement success rate was higher than previous years, at 44%. Our shelter dog pilot program continues to explore better ways to find and train dogs we rescue, focusing on the health and well-being of the dogs—particularly regarding kennel stress.

This fiscal year's donation revenue exceeded the amount raised in the previous five fiscal years, and our investment revenue remains strong enough to cover all administrative and fundraising expenses. This allows us to allocate 100% of donations to programmatic services. The Board remains committed to a fiscally conservative approach so that DBL (Dogs for Better Lives) remains on a strong financial footing.

Along with considerable progress in the areas listed above, Dogs for Better Lives made a historic purchase in Massachusetts, adding a second training campus for the first time in the organization's history. This expansion allows us to serve our clients across the country more cost-effectively. Currently, the campus is undergoing renovations in preparation of welcoming our first Assistance Dogs into training. The first puppies have already arrived in the Northeast with puppy raisers and plans to expand our partnerships to acquire dogs from other organizations are already underway. The DBL Board, including Board Chair David Hollingsworth and the Executive Committee, showed incredible support for this expansion.

It is an exciting time of growth for DBL as we remain hopeful for a record number of placements next fiscal year and beyond. The vision for growth developed in partnership with the Board continues to progress with staff now located in eight different states, allowing for more efficient placements and service to our amazing clients.

During this time of giving thanks, I am incredibly grateful to work with a Board that supports the mission and the leadership team and provides invaluable guidance in making the best decisions for the future of DBL. The organization is poised with leadership to effectively grow the mission into the foreseeable future. I am also grateful to serve a passionate staff that show every day that they are dedicated to the mission. When we experience an extended period of challenging times like we have over the past two years, working with a dedicated and supportive group of people makes all the difference in the world. And that includes our volunteers, donors, clients, puppy raisers, ambassadors—and everyone else is proud to be a part of the DBL family.

I hope you enjoy reading about the successes we experienced as an organization in this annual report. Because all our support comes from the generosity of the donors that believe in the mission, none of what was accomplished would be possible without you.

Sincerely,

Bryan Williams President & CEO









THE RIGHT DOG FINDS THE RIGHT PERSON

MAJOR GIFTS

Running a volunteer rescue from their home, Peggy and Bob Buehler saved 488 abandoned dogs over a 10-year period. And as one of their adopters said, they also saved 488 people who needed dogs.

"We always felt there was a higher being putting the person that needed the dog in our path," Peggy says.

The Buehlers focused on rescuing shih tzus, but Bob's soft heart meant they sometimes came home from shelters with other dogs that also needed saving. When Bob died last year, Peggy gave a significant gift to Dogs for Better Lives in his memory, entrusting the organization to find a meaningful use for the donation. The gift will supply a vehicle to service the Northeast region from the new location in Falmouth, Massachusetts.

The Buehlers are longtime donors to DBL, understanding the challenges of rescuing and training dogs. Peggy said they also saw the connection between their volunteer rescue and DBL's mission to connect the right dog to the right person.

"Emptying out shelters and helping people are missions I believe in," she says. "The link between a service dog and its' person is an incredibly profound connection. I have hearing issues now and both my daughters-in-law are audiologists. The more I learn about Dogs for Better Lives, the more enthralled I am."

Retired from active rescues, Peggy and her two companion dogs, Ozzie and Cooper, live in Ephrata, Pennsylvania. All their rescue dogs found loving homes.

FAMILY'S LEGACY LIVES ON

FOUNDATION GIVING

Since 2012, the Carrico Family Foundation has given grants to nonprofits in the Southern Oregon area. The foundation honors the lives and work of Antonio and Trinidad Carrico by providing enriching and supportive services for local youth and families.

In 2019, the Carrico Family Foundation contributed to building the Cynthia Perlman Puppy Sensory Park at DBL's west campus. In 2020, the foundation sponsored recreation yards for the dogs in training, creating a grassy, secure place to play during breaks. This year, the foundation has provided funding that will cover one-third of the total veterinary costs of care that DBL incurs.

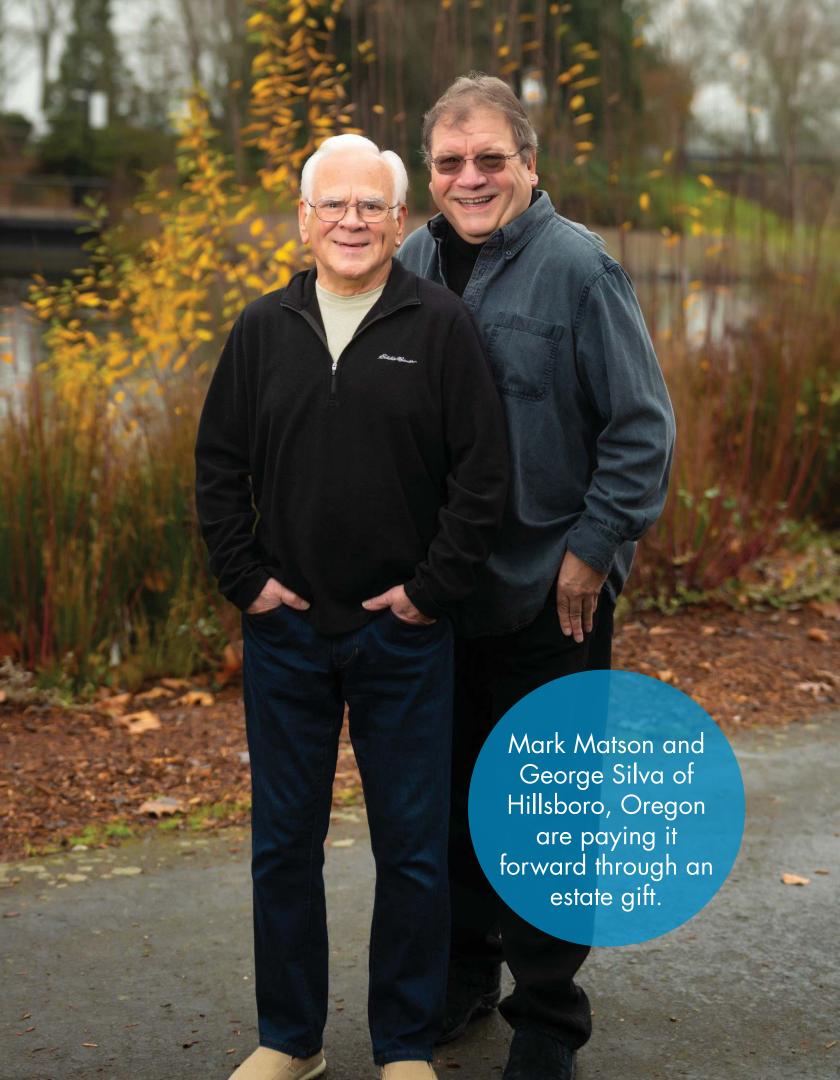
Addie Deupree, administrator of the Carrico Family Foundation, believes their mission to provide opportunities for people to thrive aligns with DBL.

"The first time I visited Dogs for Better Lives, I was surprised by the size and breadth of the campus and services," she says. "I had never given much thought to how much work goes into training a service dog. Also, I didn't think it was possible to rescue shelter dogs to become service dogs."

Deupree noted that in considering DBL's grant applications, it is clear to her that the organization is making an impact.

"I have been fortunate to meet some of the families who have received dogs and learned about how their lives changed for the better," she says. "It's heartwarming, and it makes me happy to see what is happening at Dogs for Better Lives."





INVESTING TODAY FOR TOMORROW

GUARDIAN SOCIETY

Mark Matson and George Silva of Hillsboro, Oregon found the isolation of the pandemic an ideal time to look for a four-legged friend. They were feeling a gap in their lives since the death of their beloved dog. Mark began surfing websites of rescue organizations. Though he didn't find a dog (yet), he did find Dogs for Better Lives.

"While searching available dogs, I happened to come across Dogs for Better Lives," he says. "With the pandemic, we had filled out advance directives and begun thinking through those end-of-life decisions. We have done conscious saving throughout our lives, and it just seemed like it was time for us to share and give back to benefit someone else."

The couple researched DBL and then contacted the staff about visiting. The tour and demonstrations solidified their decision to make DBL the beneficiary of their full estate.

"We came away absolutely impressed," Mark says. "We stood there with our mouths open when one of the trainers showed us what a dog can do for a

hearing-challenged person. The companionship of a dog is always a huge plus, but we saw that one of these dogs offers a real chance of minimizing a disability for a person. It was awe-inspiring." George was impressed with the training relationship.

"The critical part for me was the care and intensity of the interaction between dogs and trainers with the full intention of that animal helping another individual potentially lifesaving help," he says.

After consideration, the couple decided that DBL offers "bang for your buck," Mark says. They established DBL as their beneficiary and chose not to restrict the gift.

"We didn't want to think that we know what's best, and we see how things can change overnight - look at COVID-19," Mark says. "Tomorrow DBL may have a huge need for something we can't foresee. We feel that giving our estate to Dogs for Better Lives isn't giving it to an organization but sharing it with people who really need it."

"We feel that giving our estate to Dogs for Better Lives isn't giving it to an organization but sharing it with people who really need it."

- Mark Matson



In the last fiscal year, Dogs for Better Lives received \$1,120,227 from individuals who chose to support our life-changing mission by making a future gift through their will or trust. For more information on how you can become a member of our Guardian Society, contact Wanda Cockey at (541) 423-8385 or wanda@dogsforbetterlives.org.



LABOR-OF-LOVE GIFT KEEPS GIVING

CORPORATE PARTNERS

Linda Donovan learned all about service dogs when she was growing up. Because her great aunt was blind, her family was involved with an organization that provided guide dogs. Donovan's parents even fostered puppies for the organization.

"I didn't realize until recently that we have a national organization doing that kind of work right here in Central Point," she says. "I drive by Dogs for Better Lives when I'm checking my vineyards. I just love the amazing work they are doing."

Linda is one of a handful of women winemakers. She owns the largest custom-crush winemaking business in the region, Pallet Wine Co. in Medford, Oregon.

She makes wines for dozens of clients, from small batches to 50,000 cases. She also makes wine under her own label, L. Donovan Wines. When she discovered DBL, she decided to donate some of her products to help raise money for the nonprofit. She customized and gave three varieties of wine, including the bottles, labels and labor.

Those wines are available for sale on her website. DBL has also used the wine as gifts for donors and volunteers as well as rewards for contests.

"This is just a personal labor of love for me," Linda says. "It makes me feel so good to help Dogs for Better Lives, so that's why I keep doing it. Dogs can improve everybody's lives. Everyone involved in the organization that I've met is so caring."



Sip and support!

Dogs for Better Lives receives 100% from the purchase of specially crafted vintages by L. Donovan Wines. Enjoy one yourself or give as gifts. Local pickup is available in Medford, Oregon. Wine can also be shipped within Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Idaho, Illinois, Minnesota, Missouri, Nevada, New York, Oregon, Tennessee, Texas, Washington and Washington, D. C.

- 2015 Rosé of Syrah (\$20) featuring Hearing Assistance Dog Jeremiah
- •2016 Tempranillo (\$39) featuring **Facility Dog Nelson**
- •2015 Viognier (\$25) featuring Autism Assistance Dog lan

Visit: www.dogsforbetterlives.org/dbl-wine-fundraiser



SMALL ACTS MAKE A BIG IMPACT

COMMUNITY CLUBS

"The people who love the lifestyle offered by recreational vehicles also tend to be animal lovers in general and dog fans especially," says Pamela Elliott, the vice president of Sam's Radio Hams. This chapter of the Good Sam Club has been active for 41 years and fundraising for DBL for 30 years.

"We had a member who was deaf, and our group wanted to support Dogs for Better Lives for that reason," she says. "We've all had someone we've known who could benefit from one of these service dogs. It's a great organization to support."

Their chapter of about 50 RVs is distinct because the members are also licensed amateur (or "ham") radio operators. The group has monthly campouts ranging around California, Oregon, Idaho and Arizona. When they meet up, they often have a fundraiser of some type for DBL.

"One of our member's sells plants and another makes and sells the most fantastic breakfast sandwiches," Pamela says. "One member donated a quilt for a drawing. We have a banquet at Christmas every year and all the donations go to Dogs for Better Lives."

These small acts of service and donation add up. The Sam's Radio Hams chapter has donated almost \$100,000 to DBL since 1992.

Some of the club members visited DBL last year for a training demonstration and tour.

"It's what the staff do and how they do it that's very impressive," Pamela says. "From getting the rescue dogs and the selective training to how they make the dogs available to the people who need them. It's all funded through donations."

SOOTHING OOLONG CALMS HER BOY

AUTISM ASSISTANCE DOGS

Simon Smithling, 7, has a form of autism described as nonverbal, meaning he doesn't use language easily. When he was a preschooler, his parents noticed that dogs caused Simon to light up.

"We thought it would be very therapeutic to have a service animal to bring Simon out of his shell socially and maybe encourage him to talk more," says Janel Smithling, Simon's mom.

The family heard about DBL at an annual walk to support autism in Portland, Oregon where they live. The Smithlings applied for a service dog and waited hopefully. After the pandemic began, the isolation and disruption in routine affected Simon deeply. He would sometimes scream for hours. Then Oolong joined the family in November 2020.

"She brings Simon joy," Janel says. "Having Oolong around has improved Simon's mental health, because he's more

regulated than before she came into his life. For example, car rides are stressful for Simon. But now that Oolong is lying in the seat next to him, it has eliminated the screaming on rides, and I can even hear him giggling sometimes."

There has been a lot of adjustment for everyone in the family, including Oolong. She has had to adjust her training to work with Simon, Janel describes.

"Simon is constantly moving, so sometimes Oolong will watch until he holds still for a moment, and then she will 'squish' him, one of her skills for calming," Janel says. "Simon enjoys having her near him. Oolong knows if Simon is upset or when he needs extra support. Simon fell in the backyard and was crying the other day. Oolong got to him before I did to check that he was OK. When he gets home from school, Oolong is the first to greet him and follows him around the house."

"She brings Simon joy. Having Oolong around has improved Simon's mental health, because he's more regulated than before she came into his life."

- Janel Smithling



Oolong lives in Portland, Oregon with her family.





COMPANIONSHIP, SAFETY AND CONNECTION

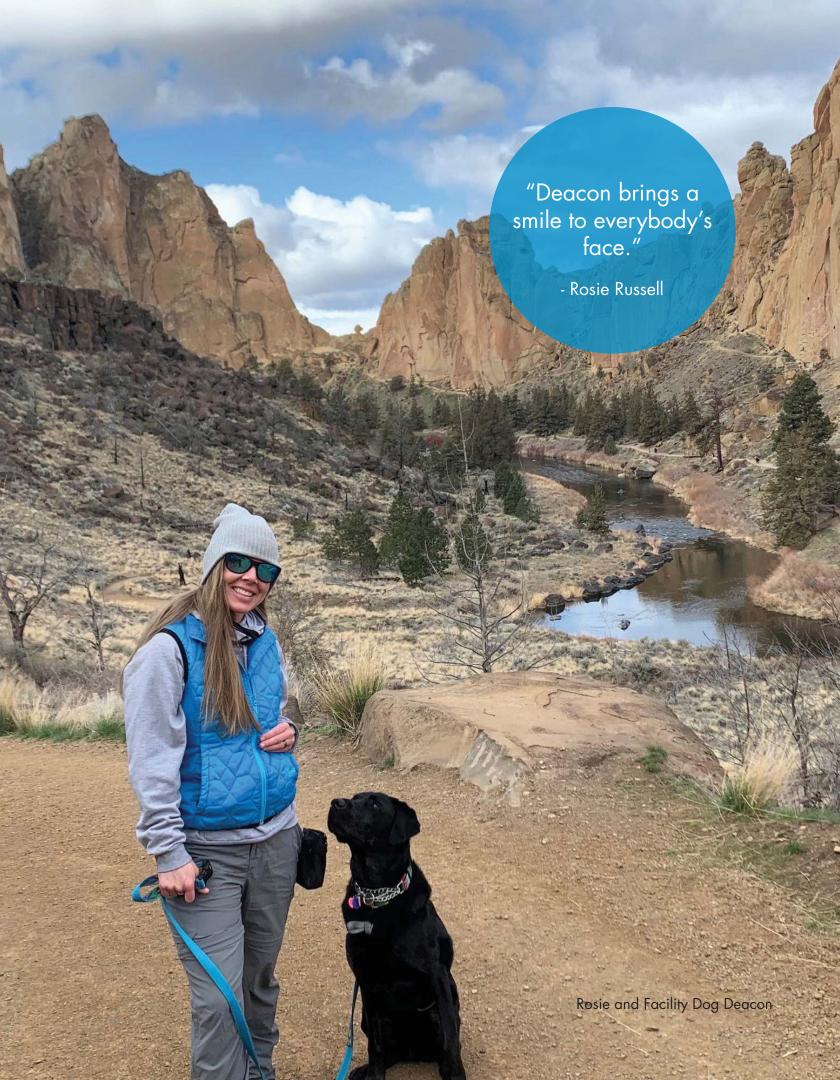
HEARING ASSISTANCE DOGS

Home Hearing Dog Weston excels at cuddling and play, but he knows his job is to use his acute hearing to help Allison Stefancin stay safe in their Harrisburg, Virginia home. Allison has severe hearing loss in both ears. Without hearing aids, she can't hear at all.

"As a single woman, Weston gives me confidence that I can live on my own, because he serves as a second set of ears for me," she says. "I never thought having a hearing service dog would be possible yet now I can't imagine my life without one. I no longer worry about not hearing the smoke detector or doorbells as Weston will make sure I know something's happening."

Weston is a home hearing service dog rather than a certified Hearing Assistance Dog. He is trained to help around the house, alerting to sounds like timers, door knocks, phone calls and more. Allison appreciates the ongoing support DBL staff provide and enjoys the monthly virtual meetings with other handlers across the U.S. Her partnership with Weston is still new, so she likes having an ongoing opportunity to learn from others. Now that she has a service dog, Allison sees how it opens new doors.

"Weston is a great conversation starter between the hearing world and the deaf/hard-of-hearing world for me," she says. "People have asked me about how much I had to pay for Weston. They are shocked that there wasn't a fee. I will be forever grateful to the awesome donors and supporters of Dogs for Better Lives."



DEACON FINDS HIS HAPPY PLACE

FACILITY DOGS

"When there is a dog in the classroom, you can feel a difference in the atmosphere," says Rosie Russell, a special education teacher at Ashland Middle School in Oregon.

"It's a calming, unifying thing," she says. "Deacon brings a smile to everybody's face."

Rosie requested a Facility Dog at about the same time the pandemic began. Deacon had come to DBL through a career change from another service organization because he got fearful around traffic. When DBL paired Deacon with Rosie, his first service role was supporting the educators coping with online and hybrid learning.

"It's still a stressful time in education," Rosie says. "My colleagues are excited to see Deacon. They will stop by my classroom for some Deacon time."

Rosie introduced her students to Deacon over video last year. She mostly works with students who have learning disabilities, anxiety, ADHD and/or autism.

Now that in-person school is back, the children are thrilled to get to be with Deacon.

Rosie says Deacon has lots of helpful skills. On command, he can give a high-five or lay his head in a lap. He can lay under a desk or next to an anxious child. At 70 pounds, he's a big boy but very relaxed and calm.

"He loves the kids," Rosie says. "When it's allowed, Deacon loves to zigzag through a classroom to sniff and meet every kid in the room. Interacting with kids is his happy place. That, and rolling in the grass during his lunch break."

Deacon is popular with all the students; even the children who don't have a class with Rosie know Deacon. He provides a perfect icebreaker for shy children and a reassuring presence for anxious children who need a diversion.

"Deacon just brings joy to everyone he's around," Russell says.





A LITTLE BIT OF LOVE AND COURAGE

CAREER CHANGE DOGS

Sweet little Bitzy loves walks and sleeping next to her person, Fredda Turner of Merlin, Oregon. At 10 years old, Bitzy has a safe and loving home after several stops and

In 2013, DBL staff found Bitzy at the Madera County Animal Shelter in California. They brought her back to DBL for training to become a Hearing Assistance Dog. After a couple of months, staff decided she wasn't meant to be a working dog. Instead, a local couple adopted her.

She lived with them for eight years. But when the wife died, the husband couldn't care for Bitzy. She was loved, but unintentionally neglected. When she came back to DBL, she was very underweight, covered in fleas, and in desperate need of dental care. DBL staff nursed her back to health before offering her for adoption again.

Meanwhile, Fredda had recently lost her two toy poodles.

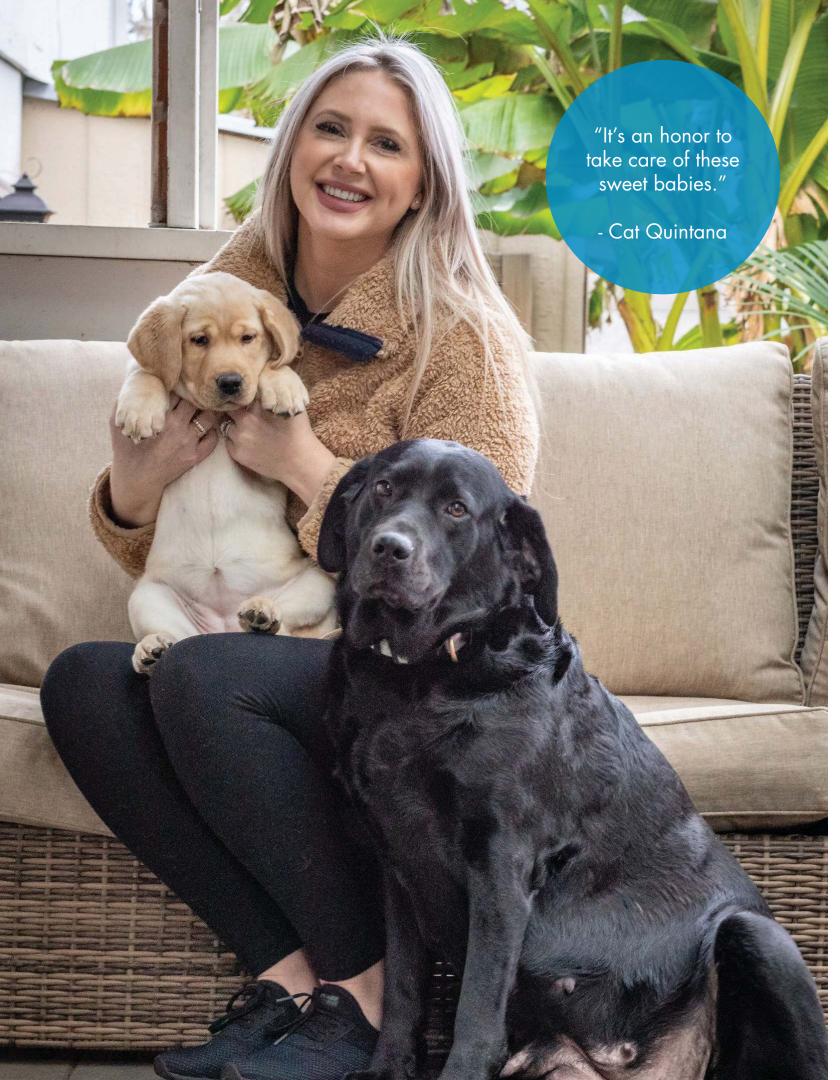
"When both died, I was stricken," she says. "I needed something to fill that hole in my heart. I started watching the career change dogs on the Dogs for Better Lives website. When I saw Bitzy, I thought she might be perfect for me. With hope in my heart, I applied. When I got the call that I could have her, I took her home that same day."

The interview process for adoption was comprehensive, Fredda says. DBL didn't ask for an adoption fee, but Fredda chose to give a donation as a thank you. She also signed a contract that if there ever comes a time she can't care for a dog, she will return Bitzy to DBL.

In her new home, Bitzy gets to play with two other companion dogs, a toy poodle and a miniature dachshund. Bitzy might be a Pomeranian mix, but nobody is sure.

"It doesn't matter to me what she is, because she is perfect for me," says Fredda.





REPLICATING PERFECTION

BREEDER CARETAKER/PUPPY RAISER

Pepper is perfect, according to her foster mom, Cat Quintana of Medford, Oregon. Pepper is so perfect that DBL chose her to be the matriarch of a generation of service dogs.

"Pepper came to DBL as an 8-week-old puppy from another service organization," Cat says. "Pepper is one of a kind; her personality is so sweet. So, there was a hard decision to make: would she be perfect for one client, or should they breed her to get more Peppers in this world?"

Cat is DBL's volunteer caretaker of the organization's only breeder dog. She went through extensive training to learn how to care for Pepper during pregnancy and the care and socializing of the puppies. Pepper has had two litters thus far, producing 17 puppies for DBL. The first litter is in the final stages of training and will soon be going home with clients.

The second litter lives with their puppy raisers. Pepper will have one more litter, then she will retire and live her best life as a companion pet for the Quintana family.

"Taking care of the puppies is a big effort of time, love and lots and lots of cleaning," Cat says. "But it's rewarding, and it's an honor to take care of these sweet babies."

The training begins when the pups are only 3 days old. Cat and her family handle the puppies in specific ways to prepare them for their future work, especially as potential Autism Assistance Dogs. After eight weeks, the puppies move to foster homes.

"We do get attached to the puppies, but these amazing animals are going to do such great things, I'm excited to see them flourish," Cat says.

Producing Service Dogs

DBL's board and leadership are committed to the efforts to train shelter dogs. This will always be a part of DBL's mission. But the pandemic has made it

challenging to find enough dogs that meet the qualifications due to shelter shutdowns and high adoption rates. Also, some types of training begin at birth. That's the work Cat Quintana is doing with Pepper's puppies to ensure they are ready to become service dogs when they grow up. Pepper receives the best veterinary supervision and breeding decisions are deeply researched.



STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

2020-2021 FINANCIALS

Support and Revenue

Donations: \$1,528,719 Bequests: \$1,120,227 \$195,810 Gifts in Kind: Other Support \$58,290

\$2,903,046 **TOTAL SUPPORT** INVESTMENTS INCOME AND OTHER REVENUE: \$3,344,362 **TOTAL SUPPORT & REVENUE:** \$6,247,408

Expenses

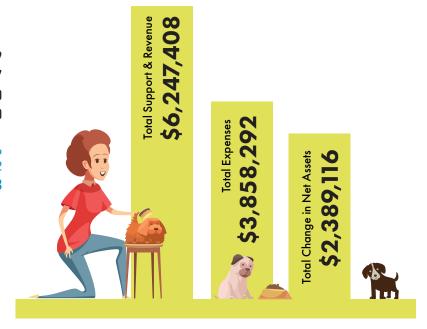
\$ 98,515 Administration: Fund Development: \$ 406,138 Public Education: \$ 884,596 Training: \$ 2,336,235 Ranch & Boarding: \$132,808

\$3,858,292 **TOTAL EXPENSES**

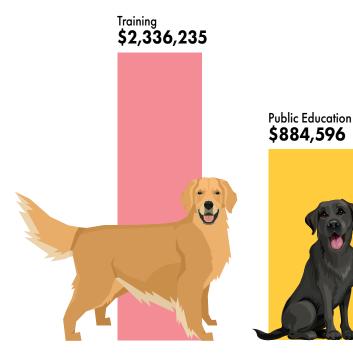
Net Assets

Net Assets Beginning of the Year: \$16,738,685 Net Assets End of the Year: \$19,127,801

TOTAL CHANGE IN NET ASSETS \$2,389,116



*All figures are based on our 2020-2021 financial statement and auditor's report by Aiken & Sanders, Inc., Montesano, Washington. To view a copy of this report and our IRS Form 990, visit our website at dogsforbetterlives.org/financials/. Dogs for Better Lives is a national 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, founded in 1977. Federal tax ID number: 93-0681311



Fund Development \$406,138

Administration \$98,515

GUARDIAN SOCIETY

The Guardian Society honors the community of dedicated people who support Dogs for Better Lives through their estate plans. Contact Wanda Cockey to learn how you can make an impact through Planned Giving at (541) 423-8385.

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Mrs. Igneanne Archighle Mr. Doug L. Armstrong Ms. Elinor K. Avenatti Ms. Linda Bailev Donald Bennett

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For more information on how you can become a member of our Guardian Society, contact Wanda Cockey at (541) 423-8385 or wanda@dogsforbetterlives.org.

BEQUESTS

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

Ms. Marao J. Adams The Estate Of Mamie E. Beard The Mary Ellen Bell Charitable Trust The Estates Of Kathy J. Biddle David Andrew Clair Helen V. Desilets The Colleen Eatherton Trust Lucille H. Edgerton Charitable Trust Ms. Barbara Mae Gordon Kathryn Hein The Trust Of Arthur S. and Katharine Hyde Irwin The Estate Of LaVerne Ann Kibler

The William E. Kuster Trust Mr. Victor La Rocca Mrs. Kathleen Pamela Laverty Trust James Herschel Miller The Josephine H. Overdick Trust The Mary M. Renner Estate Mrs. Joyce E. Wilson Trust



100% of Your Donation Supports Programmatic Services

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