

# CANINE LISTENER

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## RESCUING DOGS, CHANGING LIVES



Training shelter and rescue dogs has always been a part of our mission at Dogs for Better Lives (DBL), and it always will be. We've had to be more creative in locating shelter dogs since the start of the pandemic. In this issue of the Canine Listener, West Program Director, Kim Hyde, shares the stories of three of our recent rescues who have big dreams of one day becoming an Assistance Dog for someone in need. All of us at DBL are honored to give these rescue dogs a second chance at a happy and fulfilled life as a working dog. We're committed to them for the rest of their lives, and they'll never be at risk of ending up in a shelter again!

### **Meet Sushi**

While I was visiting Washington and assessing some dogs in area shelters, I checked Facebook Marketplace and found Sushi, a 1-year-old mini-schnauzer, needing to be rehomed.

When I met Sushi, she was matted, had fleas, and worms, and seemed to act older than her age. Still, she was friendly, responded well to handling, was alert to sounds, and LOVED treats. Her owners told me they had bought her from a pet store during COVID and then had both lost their jobs and housing. They recognized Sushi needed more than they were able to offer her, so they were willing to rehome her to DBL.

Within a week she was acting like she felt a lot better, and we saw the young dog she is appear. Sushi has continued to pass all of her initial training evaluations and has started formal training.

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### **Meet Charlie**

We found Charlie, a Wheaten Terrier/Poodle mix, through an ad on Craigslist and asked to meet him. Charlie was matted and had fleas, but he was still happy and so silly. Charlie’s owners were displaced by recent wildfires and could not take any pets to their new location. Mom and daughter were heartbroken to give him up and sobbed when they said goodbye, but they hoped Charlie would make a difference in someone’s life. Charlie was immediately seen by the vet and groomed. He did great in his initial assessments and his response to sounds is going well. We all adore his sweet and playful personality, and he loves all his new dog friends too.



### **Meet Mabel**

We were introduced to Mabel when visiting the Klamath Animal Shelter in Oregon. Mabel is a medium-sized Springer Spaniel mix. She was in a kennel with several other dogs, and we almost missed her! Luckily, one of our Certified Trainers noticed her and asked to take her out and evaluate her. Mabel suddenly became a shining star and excelled during her initial assessments. Mabel passed her physical, handling, and temperament tests and is now in the final stages of training to be placed as a Hearing Dog this year!



Follow us on social media or opt into our eNewsletter for updates on all our dogs, including shelter dogs, as they go through training!

**Visit [dogsforbetterlives.org](https://dogsforbetterlives.org) for more details.**

## **DBL DEBUTS NEW VESTS**

**Dr. Danielle Rose, DBL Board Chair, shares how she met Jori Jordan, a generous donor who made new vests possible for all of our dogs.**

I had the pleasure of meeting with long-time donor Jori Jordan this summer. She donated funds for our new Service Dog vests. The new vests are bright green, and better unify our three service dog types to our Dogs for Better Lives brand and logo.

Jori bubbles over when talking about her travels over the years to support Dogs for Better Lives fundraising events and to visit our Oregon training center. She loves all service dogs and once visited all existing US service dog training centers as part of her passion for supporting service dogs.

She said she wanted a picture to show her friends what she had done for Dogs for Better Lives and hopes that they will also be inspired to donate. It is clear to see her support of our service dogs brings her much joy. Delight, Cameron, and I very much enjoyed our visit. Thank you, Jori, for your inspiration and for all you have done for Dogs for Better Lives.



# LIFE IN TECHNICOLOR

**Hearing Assistance Dog Client, Amy, talks about how her life changed since Mindy was placed with her four years ago.**

Several years after I had cochlear implants bilaterally implanted, I still disliked wearing them. I was living with my parents, was employed part-time at a minimum wage job, and didn't feel like my life was going anywhere. I was at a loss how to change anything. I began working with a therapist for depression and anxiety, who after many sessions and personal growth, encouraged me to get a dog to have something else to focus on and to take care of responsibly.

I was still somewhat reluctant because I never had a dog before, but the idea had definitely taken root. Ultimately, I decided to apply for a Certified Hearing Assistance Dog from DBL so the dog could accompany me everywhere.

## **Meeting Mindy**

I received an email from DBL in November of 2018 stating, "We have a dog that has finished her Hearing Dog training and we think she is a good match for you!" I immediately said, "yes!" I couldn't have been more excited to welcome Mindy and to work with DBL. There was a great deal of anxiety, anticipation, and excitement leading into the first meeting. I had all of Mindy's things ready for her and worried that she wouldn't like something, or she wouldn't like me, or that I'd do something wrong.

When Mindy arrived, we were both a little cautious. There was some sniffing on her part and tentative pets on mine. Mindy was a little shy and preferred to remain close to her trainer, Jess. Fortunately, Jess was the most amazing matchmaker, breaking the ice between human and dog before ensuring that Mindy and I were going to be successful together.

## **From Gray to Technicolor**

Mindy has infinitely changed my life for the better - I don't have the words to express it. She is more than simply my Certified Hearing Assistance Dog; she is my second half. My life before and after Mindy is a lot like



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**-Amy, Hearing Dog Client**

the classic movie, *The Wizard of Oz*. Before Mindy, my world was very sedentary and gray. After Mindy came into my life, it was as though it has exploded in technicolor. Unlike Dorothy, I never want to wake up.

Mindy has made me so much more aware of the world around me. I look up more and I even hold myself differently when I walk with her. I no longer feel so nervous or oblivious, because all I have to do is look at her body language and the little twitches in her ears to know if there's something that requires some kind of reaction from me. With Mindy by my side, I have the confidence to go out and enjoy life.

# FEATURED PLACEMENTS



## HHD Fiddler and Eryn

Eryn had been wearing her hearing aids for eight years straight, only removing them to shower. She wanted a Home Hearing Dog to feel secure enough to remove her hearing aids throughout the day to allow her ears to breathe. Eryn and Fiddler made a great team right from the start. Eryn read Fiddler well, knowing how far to push him and giving encouragement when he needed help. Eryn taught Fiddler the fourth sound on her own after just two days of placement - alerting to her cell phone alarm.

## AAD Elijah and Luke

The family enjoys the outdoors and Elijah will be accompanying them on many walks, hikes, and swims to the river. Tasks trained were squish, settle, lap, and visit. Luke enjoys holding the handle on Elijah's vest on walks. The parents were thrilled with Elijah stating he was the perfect dog for Luke.



## CHD Ganache and Lauren

Lauren sought out DBL after her previous hearing dog passed away unexpectedly in January. Lauren felt ready to find a new partnership because she missed having 'her ears' around to help her feel confident in new spaces. Ganache immediately bonded to Lauren and spent any free moment of placement snuggled against her. After the first public outing, Lauren mentioned that she didn't realize how emotional it would be for her to take a dog into a store and finally feel safe again. By the end of placement Lauren confidently went into a busy grocery store and navigated the store with Ganache by her side, which she hadn't been able to do without a friend/partner in a very long time.



### **FD Filbert and Stacie**

Stacie is a member of DBL's Regional Advisory Board - Pacific Northwest, and has been a Puppy Raiser for DBL in the past. Stacie has had an enthusiasm for DBL and wanted to spread our mission and the work that we do further by becoming a facility dog handler. Stacie will be working in a volunteer capacity for a variable amount of facilities that serve people ranging from young children to senior citizens. Filbert will be working lap, settle, and touch to help lower stress levels and build connections between people. Filbert will also be going to events to demonstrate his various tasks and also work an oven timer! Stacie is beyond thrilled with Filbert and his calm demeanor.

### **FD Lander and Jessica**

Jessica and Lander immediately bonded and were excited to work together. Jessica works as a psychologist at an elementary school and will have Lander assist her in helping children learn to regulate their emotions and find ways to connect. They will be using lap, squish, touch, and settle. Lander fit immediately into the household and will be the first dog that Jessica's kids have had! Jessica loves Lander's sweet and soft personality.



### **CHD Thumper and Hannah**

Hannah decided to take the leap and apply for a hearing dog when they realized that they were ready to consider living alone but didn't feel that they could for safety reasons. Hannah fell in love with Thumper's 'go go go' personality and says that he'll be a perfect fit for their lifestyle of working on an urban farm and moving around various meeting spots in the city for work. After only having been in the home with Hannah for a day and just being introduced to the alarm clock for one practice session, the next morning Thumper alerted and woke the client up to their alarm clock with zero prompting or assistance. Hannah will also enjoy taking Thumper on hikes to relax and decompress.

# FEATURED FOLLOW-UPS



## HHD Nanuq and Bonnie

Bonnie and Home Hearing Dog Nanuq just had their ten-year follow-up! The team is still thriving with Nanuq working the oven timer, door knock, doorbell, phone, landline, name call, and a variety of sounds around the home that Nanuq has picked up. Nanuq has also begun alerting Bonnie to sounds behind her in public and when traffic is about to pass her on walks. Bonnie has been incredibly consistent in practicing Nanuq's obedience, and their public access test was next to flawless. The team is beyond happy with the pairing and Bonnie mentioned that she enjoys spoiling Nanuq with all the toys, pets, and soft beds he could ever desire.

## HHD Widget and Sandy

We recently did a five-year follow up with Home Hearing Dog team Sandy and Widget. Widget is currently working the door knock and smoke alarm for Sandy. She says that she feels much more secure with him around. Sandy and Widget live in an independent living senior community. Widget brings great joy to the residents who live there. He visits the common room daily where he gets lots of attention.



## CHD Tracy and Michele

Michele and Certified Hearing Dog Tracy recently had their five-year follow-up with our team. Tracy works the smoke alarm, cell phone, oven timer, and name call at home. Tracy works the smoke alarm in their RV on camping trips as well. They are well traveled and have been all over the US. They are a great team and doing so well.



### CHD Cookie and David

David and Cookie just had their seven-year follow-up (we missed the five-year due to COVID). The team is doing well with Cookie working the alarm clock, oven timer, phone, door knock, and the smoke alarm. The client loves Cookie dearly and is so happy she is in his life. David and Cookie had a great public access test and passed. David mentioned that Cookie is amazing and still does all her obedience skills with such enthusiasm. David showed us Cookie's recall and she ran so fast! It was great to see the client and dog so bonded to one another.

### HHD Roux and Candice

Candice and Roux have been a team for six years, and they're still doing extremely well! Roux works name call, alarm clock, and oven timer. Candice mentioned that Roux has learned to alert her to cars passing in her neighborhood and has provided a strong sense of security. Candice loves the fact that she can bake something and fold laundry upstairs without worrying that she is going to miss it. Roux is exuberant about his work and gets a different toy for each sound that he works for Candice. Last year they took Roux on a two-week road trip and brought along his sounds for him to practice and Roux never missed a beat, no matter what house they stayed in or if there were other people or dogs around to distract him. Candice had a photo taken of Roux by a family friend. That photo now hangs above their fireplace in the living room.



#### CHD – Certified Hearing Dog

Certified Hearing Dogs respond to sounds in the home and have Public Access with their person.

#### HHD – Home Hearing Dog

Home Hearing Dogs are trained to respond to sounds in the home but are not trained/certified to accompany their person in public.

#### FD – Facility Dog

Facility Dogs go to work with and assist professionals such as physicians, teachers, counselors, police officers, and child advocates.

#### AAD – Autism Assistance Dog

Autism Assistance Dogs are trained to enhance the safety of children with autism by acting as an anchor and preventing the child from bolting.

# RAISING PUPPIES WITH PURPOSE

**Three-time Puppy Raiser Tammy shares what keeps her raising puppies for DBL.**

I was first introduced to DBL when I went to Deaf Expo with my daughter. I was intrigued to learn more about the program, because I had never heard of Hearing Assistance Dogs.

I liked that DBL puppies choose different career paths based on their personalities, and that the organization uses positive training methods.

I had been a Puppy Raiser with a different organization before having kids. Since my (now teenage) children are becoming increasingly self-sufficient, I decided to welcome a new puppy into our lives again to give back to the community. It has been such a rewarding addition to our lives.

Each puppy has been a very different individual that I have loved getting to know. Our first puppy, Coal, was a total momma's boy and a smart puppy who really liked working and picked up new commands very quickly. We had fun training a few "party tricks" in addition to his normal curriculum. My favorite was when I would fake sneeze and he would bring me a tissue.

Freya came to our family at 7 months old, and was little bit afraid of the world at first. She quickly came out of her shell and was amazing at just chilling in public. She was a Daddy's girl and won the hearts of all the people she met.

Petunia is our current puppy, and we are getting to know her. She is a feisty and bold puppy who seems to pick up on new things quickly.



I won't sugar coat the fact that puppy raising can be difficult. Especially at the beginning, when a new puppy needs to go outside in the middle of the night, and you really can't let them out of your sight or they will find some trouble. However, it is all worth it when you watch them experience new things, or when you laugh at them because they are having random zoomies through the house. It is amazing to watch them grow into confident dogs who are ready to go out in the world and help people. It also doesn't hurt that they are super cute, and puppy snuggles are amazing.

**Learn about becoming a Puppy Raiser at [dogsforbetterlives.org/get-involved](https://dogsforbetterlives.org/get-involved)**



## REDUCING OUR CARBON PAWPRINT

The Canine Listener magazine has been in publication for 43 years, and with the costs of printing and mailing skyrocketing recently, we reached out to some of our readers for feedback. The responses were consistent. You want uplifting stories about our dogs and clients in your mailbox, but you don't want us to divert funds away from training and placing dogs. With that in mind, we streamlined the publication into a format that uses less paper and ink - reducing our carbon pawprint, and is less expensive to distribute.

**Help us keep our costs and environmental impact down by receiving the Canine Listener digitally. Visit [dogsforbetterlives.org/magazine](https://dogsforbetterlives.org/magazine) to subscribe.**