

# CANINE LISTENER

DOGS FOR BETTER LIVES • OCTOBER 2024 • NO.147

## MAKING INDEPENDENCE POSSIBLE



John and Certified Hearing Dog Chowder





## How Certified Hearing Dog Chowder Transformed a Teacher's Life

When John, a teacher at Innovation Academy Experiential Learning High School in Oregon, first met Certified Hearing Dog Chowder, he wasn't sure what to expect. After years of grappling with hearing loss, John had long resisted the idea of a Service Dog. But as he reflected on how he coped with missing everyday sounds and the limitations it brought to his life, he decided to apply. Eventually, the time came for a placement, and that's when Chowder entered John's world—and changed it forever.

From the very start, Chowder impressed John. His enthusiasm for training and his calm demeanor at home, especially around John's kids, led to an instant bond. Chowder quickly adapted to his new role, alerting John to important sounds like the door knock, oven timer, and alarm clock at home. And his method of alerting—a firm tap before leading John to the sound—made John burst out laughing every time. Chowder was not only a capable worker but also a joyful presence that made life at home lighter.

John was particularly excited about how Chowder would help him gain independence and companionship. Working as a teacher in a bustling classroom, it used to be hard for John to keep track of alarms or phone calls amidst the ambient chatter of his students. But Chowder made all the difference. "No matter what Chowder is doing, he'll perk up and zoom over to me anytime a sound goes off," John shared. With Chowder by his side, John feels a renewed sense of confidence in managing his environment, knowing that important sounds won't be missed.

Chowder became an integral part of John's classroom, both working quietly at his feet and serving as an educational tool for the students. John was eager to teach his class how Service Dogs can assist individuals with disabilities, and Chowder was the perfect example.

Reflecting on his journey to apply for a Hearing Dog, John admitted that he had initially resisted the idea.

**“ I just turned 50. The possibility of a Hearing Assistance Dog first came up for me when I was in my mid-20s. I was reluctant as a youngster for a variety of reasons—but pride was certainly one of them. I avoided accepting my limitations for a long time and paid a price for it. What changed for me was I wasn't able to cope like I used to, but also that I had less interest in pretending to be something I wasn't. I wish I'd opened up to the idea of a service dog sooner. Chow's not just a helper. He's a symbol of my acceptance of myself. ”**

One of the most touching examples was when Chowder began alerting to the whistle John's family uses to find each other in public. "Previously, I'd miss this sound quite a bit, but now Chowder alerts me anywhere in public and helps me figure out which of my family members is trying to find me," John said. "I didn't teach this to Chowder; he just started picking it up since the family does it so often."

John's journey with Chowder is not just about navigating the sounds of everyday life—it's about reclaiming independence, embracing his hearing loss, and finding a constant companion who understands his unique needs.

**“ He's validating my experience as someone who hears the way I do: inconsistently and imperfectly. Chowder has made me more independent. He's given me room to create some space for myself. As it turns out, this is a big deal. ”**



*John and his family make a training stop at the store with Chowder during placement week.*

## Ways to Give

While most think of making a gift by credit card, check, or cash, we offer additional ways to give that may have significant tax benefits. No matter HOW you give, 100% of donations go toward programmatic services, thanks to our long-standing endowment made possible by our Guardian Society donors.

**Donor Advised Funds:** Donor-advised funds (also known as DAF grants) offer a convenient way to support DBL while maximizing your tax benefits.

**Cryptocurrency:** Donating crypto is one of the most tax-efficient ways for individuals to support causes that matter to them. We are excited about what the future holds in the cryptocurrency space and believe that we've just scratched the surface of its true fundraising potential.

**Stock:** Making a stock donation to support Dogs for Better Lives makes it possible to train and place life-changing Service Dogs at ZERO cost to our clients.

**Estate giving:** Naming Dogs for Better Lives as a beneficiary in your will, IRA, life insurance policy or other financial accounts can be a simple way to ensure the future stability and growth of the mission you care about.

**Bandana subscription:** Show off your dog's sense of style while supporting our mission of rescuing, professionally training, and placing Assistance Dogs nationwide.



Learn more [dogsforbetterlives.org/ways-to-give](https://dogsforbetterlives.org/ways-to-give)

## 3 WAYS FACILITY DOGS HELP CHILDREN



### Promote Structure

Facility Dogs actively engage with kids to help promote structure and calm in a learning environment

### Reduce Fears

Children feel less fearful during medical visits when Facility Dogs provide gentle pressure and a calming presence

### Emotional Support

Children find it easier to talk to licensed therapists and professionals about challenging experiences when the Facility Dog is present. Facility Dogs can provide a social bridge between the child and the adult



Learn more and apply:  
[dogsforbetterlives.org/facility-dogs](https://dogsforbetterlives.org/facility-dogs)





## CHD Mañana and Samantha

It's been one year since Certified Hearing Dog Mañana was placed with Samantha in California, and they are thriving as a team! Samantha and her mom can't imagine life without Mañana, feeling safer and more secure with her by their side. They've had adventures at Huntington Beach, where Mañana wasn't too fond of the ocean, and down to San Diego, with a summer trip to Lake Tahoe on the horizon. They've even tackled the bustling aisles of Costco in Los Angeles like pros! Mañana is excelling at her tasks, alerting to the doorbell, door knock, smoke alarm, and cell phone, proving to be an invaluable part of their lives.

## CHD North and Kenneth

We recently visited Kenneth and Certified Hearing Dog North, who have been a remarkable team for four years. North continues to enthusiastically alert Kenneth to important sounds like the kitchen timer, name call, and phone, making everyday life much easier. Kenneth and his wife, Deann, are deeply grateful for North and the incredible support they've received from Dogs for Better Lives staff over the years, enriching their lives with North's companionship and assistance.



## CHD Guiana and Charlotte

In Texas, Charlotte and Certified Hearing Dog Guiana recently had their 3-year follow-up, and they continue to thrive as a team. Guiana eagerly alerts to the doorbell, door knock, Alexa timer, alarm clock, phone, and smoke alarm, clearly loving her work. Charlotte shares that Guiana has profoundly improved her life by providing essential sound awareness, companionship, and even acting as a social bridge with others. At the school where Charlotte works, Guiana is adored by both students and staff, with many stopping by just to spend time with her. While Guiana's primary role is as a Hearing Dog, she's also taken on the heartwarming role of part-time Facility Dog at Charlotte's workplace!



## FD Archie and Mackenzie

Mackenzie and Facility Dog Archie recently celebrated their one-year follow-up, and their bond continues to grow. Archie has become a beloved presence on the Central Washington University campus, at the station, and wherever Mackenzie's work takes her. One of Mackenzie's favorite parts of being Archie's handler is how he helps her build connections that might otherwise be difficult in her law enforcement role. A standout moment from the past year was when the campus theater group invited Archie so they could sing him "Happy Birthday" as a group. Mackenzie has also enjoyed seeing Archie's goofy side emerge, especially as his bond strengthens with her other pet dogs. Archie continues to work on lap, settle, place, and greetings, enhancing the impact he has on those around him.



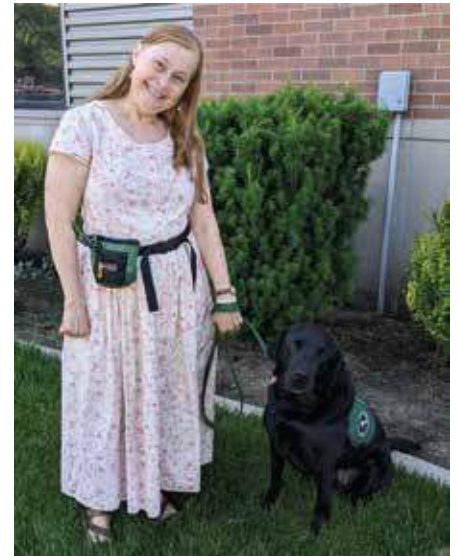


## AAD Taylor and James

At James and Autism Assistance Dog Taylor's 3-year follow-up, Erin, James' mom, expressed deep gratitude for the bond her son has formed with Taylor, who James lovingly refers to as his "doggy sister." Taylor is a nurturing presence, constantly by James' side, whether following him around the house or helping him read comics and draw on the bed. Taylor is excelling at tasks like squish, visit, settle, and place, offering invaluable support. Erin specifically thanked Dogs for Better Lives donors, saying her family could never have afforded a dog like Taylor, and she feels incredibly emotional knowing that someone's generosity made it possible for James to have his best friend.

## FD Rambler and Winifred

In Winifred and Facility Dog Rambler's follow-up, Winifred shared how much joy Rambler brings to everyone around him. Whether it's patients or staff, Rambler brightens their day and helps alleviate stress, making him an invaluable part of the practice. One patient even mentioned returning to the office just to see Rambler! His presence not only reduces patient anxiety during visits but also provides much-needed stress relief for the staff. Rambler has a special spot outside Winifred's office, where he receives constant compliments about how handsome and well-behaved he is. Working on tasks like place, shake, go say hi, and greetings, Rambler is loved by everyone, and Winifred feels overjoyed to have him as her companion.



## FD Kelly and Carla and Jessica

At the one-year follow-up with Facility Dog Kelly and his two handlers, Carla and Jessica in OR, it was clear that Kelly is thriving in his dual roles. With Carla at the Oregon Research Institute, Kelly helps patients feel more comfortable before medical procedures like blood draws. In Jessica's role as an Occupational Therapist, Kelly assists with deep pressure tasks, and the kids she works with love ending their sessions with a hand touch from Kelly as a fun goodbye. Kelly's skills in lap, squish, touch, and settle are seamless across both roles, and both handlers demonstrated flawless public access and task obedience. Outside of work, Kelly enjoys living with Carla and their other dog, Andy, with whom he shares playful mornings and evenings. Kelly has also adapted wonderfully to accompanying Carla to pet-friendly spots in Eugene and traveling around the Pacific Northwest. Both Carla and Jessica are thrilled with how well Kelly has adjusted and how fantastic he is in both his work and home life.

**CHD - Certified Hearing Dog:** Certified Hearing Dogs respond to sounds in the home and have public access with their person.

**AAD - Autism Assistance Dog:** Autism Assistance Dogs are specially trained to enhance the safety and well-being of children and families living with Autism by providing a minimum of three tasks to assist with keeping children grounded and focused while presenting a social bridge for relationships and friendships.

**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.



# FEATURED PLACEMENTS



## CHD Dax and Amanda

Certified Hearing Dog Dax has been placed with Amanda, who is currently pursuing a degree in Occupational Therapy. After waiting nearly two years for a Service Dog, Amanda was eager to start working with her new best friend, and Dax's natural abilities were quickly apparent. By the third day, she was confidently troubleshooting sound work on her own. We even visited Amanda's school, where Dax will accompany her, and he patiently sat under her desk as we pretended to be her teacher. At home, Dax will be alerting to important sounds such as name call, door knock, smoke alarm, and oven timer. Amanda is excited to eventually add her cell phone to Dax's skill set. For now, she is thrilled to finally sleep soundly, knowing that Dax will be there to alert her and provide confidence wherever she goes.

## CHD Emerald and Joyce

Certified Hearing Dog Emerald has been placed with Joyce in Washington. Joyce, a retired teacher, applied for a Hearing Dog after her previous privately trained dog passed away, and she was eager to begin working with Emerald. She fondly compared the differences between her former dog and Emerald, who quickly bonded with her and embraced the work. By the second day, Emerald was happily settling between Joyce's legs, enjoying the affection while we chatted. Both Joyce and her husband, Mike, were enthusiastic about adding name call to Emerald's list of sounds, and they enjoyed practicing it together. In public, Joyce is excited to have Emerald as a social bridge to help her engage with people more and as a signal of her hearing loss. At home, Emerald will be alerting to the oven timer, door knock, smoke alarm, and name call, helping Joyce feel confident and connected.



## HHD Annie and Anna Mary

Home Hearing Dog Annie has been placed with Anna Mary in Virginia, marking a special milestone as Annie is the first hearing dog from the shelter-to-service program in collaboration with Operation Kindness in Texas. Annie quickly settled into her new home and formed a strong bond with Anna Mary, as if she instinctively knew she was her person. Living in a neighborhood with great walking paths, Annie will enjoy plenty of exercise alongside her new companion. Annie is working on alerting to the kitchen timer, door knock, and name call, helping Anna Mary stay aware of important sounds. With two of Anna Mary's adult children currently living with her, along with five kids and three grandchildren in total, Annie is sure to be surrounded by plenty of love and attention in her new family!



## Regional Advisory Boards Spreading Awareness during National Service Dog Month

September was National Service Dog Month, a time dedicated to honoring the incredible work that Service Dogs do to transform lives. At DBL, National Service Dog Month is not only a celebration of these remarkable animals but also a testament to the dedication of our Regional Advisory Boards (RAB).

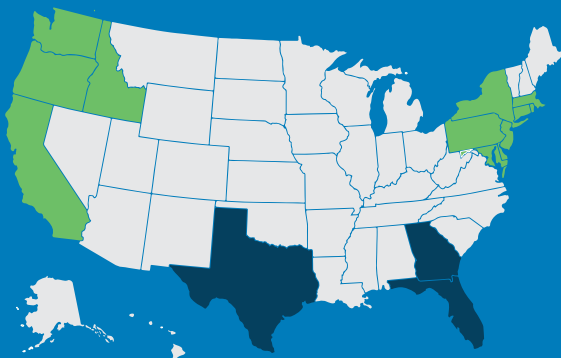
These volunteer-driven teams are at the heart of our outreach, advocacy, and fundraising efforts, making National Service Dog Month one of the busiest and most impactful times of the year for DBL.

“Serving on the Regional Advisory Board has been both a deeply rewarding experience and a valuable use of my time. As a mother of two young boys and a business co-owner, my schedule leaves little room for extra commitments. However, joining the RAB has given me the opportunity to give back to my community, learn about the incredible work of Service Dogs, and connect with passionate, like-minded individuals who share my desire to make a meaningful impact.” -Beth Cincotta, NE RAB member

DBL's Regional Advisory Boards (RAB) are comprised of like-minded individuals that share a passion for dogs and giving back to people with disabilities in their communities. Members are responsible for marketing the mission of DBL, participating in outreach events, as well as planning and fundraising through a variety of initiatives.

### Regional Advisory Boards are currently active in:

- RAB, Pacific Northwest (WA, OR, ID)
- RAB, Northeast (MA, NH, PA, ME, RI, NJ, NY)
- RAB, California



As DBL continues to grow, so too does the need for Regional Advisory Boards in other parts of the country. This year, we are excited to announce that plans are underway to establish new RABs in Texas and the Southeastern states of Florida and Georgia. These regions have seen a rising demand for Service Dogs, and we are confident that our new RABs will play a critical role in meeting this need.

What makes our Regional Advisory Boards so successful is the passion and dedication of our volunteers. Each RAB member brings a unique set of skills and experiences to the table, but they all share a common commitment to helping others. Their work is a testament to the power of volunteerism and the difference that a group of motivated individuals can make when they come together for a common cause.

RAB members often talk about the fulfillment they get from their involvement with DBL. “It’s inspiring to witness the enthusiasm and generous support from our community for service dogs and DBL,” said Rita Brennan, Chair of the Pacific Northwest Regional Advisory Board.

“Almost every person we meet shares a powerful story about the transformative impact their dog has had on their life, reminding us of the incredible bond between humans and their four-legged companions. Being part of such an exemplary organization is a privilege that fuels our passion and commitment to making a difference. Together, we’re helping make independence possible for more people.”



Join our Regional Advisory Boards by visiting [dogsforbetterlives.org/regional-advisory-board/](https://dogsforbetterlives.org/regional-advisory-board/)



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**AppéTREAT**

*Presented by*  
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**Save the Date**

**05.15.25**

Live Broadcast 7:30pm (ET) | 4:30pm (PT)

*Harry & David* National Watch Party Host

Learn more at [dogsforbetterlives.org/bone-appetreat](https://dogsforbetterlives.org/bone-appetreat)