

# PATRIOTPAWS

SERVICE DOGS



## FROM "INSIDE"

Graduation time at Patriot PAWS is always an event. When a fully-trained dog is finally teamed up with a disabled veteran, it's a cause for celebration. The inmate trainers play a crucial role in the training of these dogs yet are unable to attend their graduations in Rockwall, so Lori Stevens decided to take some of the graduations to them at the prison including the most recent.

In March, 3 veterans, 1 active duty soldier and 1 non-veteran received their dogs over the span of 2 weeks inside the prison in Gatesville. The recipients worked directly with the inmate trainers as well as with the other Patriot PAWS trainers and various staff members and volunteers. It's always an eye-opening experience for the recipients to meet the inmate trainers in the environment in which the dogs are trained. And it's a source of pride for the inmate trainers to meet those whom the dogs they trained and grew to love will now serve. It's a long time from application to receipt of a dog for the veteran, and an inmate trainer works with the dogs for 18 months to 2 years, so by the time Graduation Day arrives, recipients and inmate trainers alike are excited to finally experience what all the waiting and all the hard work was for. Many happy tears are shed on both sides, and a mutual respect for both service to country and service to others from behind bars is forged. It's a win-win situation for all concerned.

The wardens and officers play an important support role in Patriot PAWS' inmate trainer program, and to show how much they are appreciated, Patriot PAWS awarded them star plaques in a ceremony following the graduation. The cooperation of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice along with the support of the wardens and officers added to the hard work of the inmate trainers all help make Patriot PAWS the success that it is today.



## LETTER FROM LORI

**T**he dictionary defines a volunteer as “a person who undertakes some task or service of his own free will.”

A non-profit can't exist without the services of volunteers, and Patriot PAWS is certainly no exception. I have seen the number of our volunteers grow from being able to count them on one hand into a whole network of caring and talented people all working together toward our common goal. Our volunteers do everything from holding key administrative positions at the Rockwall training center to putting on demos and fundraisers all over the country to taking our dogs-in-training into their homes to socialize and so much more that I can't even begin to list it all in the space that I have here. They are many different ages and come from vastly different backgrounds and have a wide range of educational and life experiences to draw upon, but they all have one thing in common...they all give freely of their time and talents to help our disabled veterans. I am proud to know so many true patriots. I called you “angels unawares” in the last newsletter, but I am also glad to call you my friends, and I thank each and every one of you from the bottom of my heart.

## Spotlight On YOUTH VOLUNTEERS

**D**id you know that Patriot PAWS has youth volunteers? A number of young people who live locally come out in the summer to work on projects and help us out at the training center, but you don't have to live near Rockwall to help! Young people all over the country have raised money for us with everything from donation jars at their schools to bake sales to garage sales to asking for donations for us on their social networking pages to even asking for donations for Patriot PAWS in lieu of birthday presents for themselves. They've collected dog toys and dog treats and pet store gift cards. And in doing all that, they've helped to spread the word about Patriot PAWS' mission. It's the perfect project for your young person and their friends, church group or other organization. If interested, contact us and we'll mail you brochures and other promotional materials to distribute. Volunteering teaches service to others and pride in self-accomplishment, lessons that will last a lifetime. Here's to our youth volunteers!



## ELI'S CORNER

**Y**ou know, I just might have the answer to the age-old question of why the chicken crossed the road...I think it's because her trainer was on the other side waiting to “click & reward” her for crossing.

In March, Patriot PAWS was host to a “Chicken Camp” taught by renowned dog trainer and animal behaviorist Terry Ryan. The 22 participants included all of Patriot PAWS' trainers and several of our puppy raisers as well as other dog trainers and individuals with an interest in learning to train animals. We acquired 24 hens to be the training subjects, and each participant learned how to apply the clicker method of dog training to the hens. “Why chickens?” you may ask, as I did when first told about the event. Actually, my response was “You want me to train WHAT?” According to Ms. Ryan, chickens are the perfect species to learn animal training methods on because they learn quickly and have fast reaction times and don't have cute faces to distract you. Demonstrate a simple behavior repeatedly while gently urging the chicken to perform it, click the clicker and give a food reward when the behavior is performed, and pretty soon, chickens will learn to do just



about anything to hear that clicker and get their reward. And I thought chickens were only good for eating!

It was interesting having two dozen hens living at the training center for a few days, but I must say, I thought “wet dog” smell was bad until it rained on our temporary chicken shelter. They've all been adopted out now, though, so the hen party is over, and we're back to normal. I can't say I miss them, but I'll never look at a piece of chicken the same way again wondering if I once knew its Aunt Gladys or Cousin Mimi.

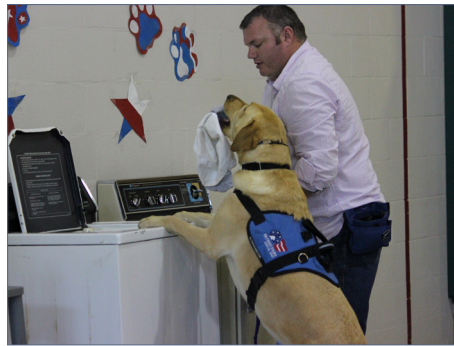
Until next time, dear friends.

*Eli*



**STAFF SERGEANT  
KEITH CAMPBELL AND STAR**

Army Staff Sergeant Keith Campbell of Leesville, LA, is still active duty after 19 years of service. He served two tours in Iraq and one in Afghanistan and was wounded by an IED on his second tour in Iraq. Keith suffers from post-concussive syndrome, migraines, a herniated disc in his back and PTSD. He heard about Patriot PAWS through the Army Wounded Warriors program and decided to apply. In March, 2012, Keith received Star, a female yellow Lab donated as a puppy to Patriot PAWS by the Order of the Eastern Star. Star helps Keith with routine everyday chores such as the laundry, brings him his phone, picks up dropped items so that he won't have to bend over and helps him get up and down. Keith wanted a service dog in part to help him with his social skills, to deal with stress and for companionship since he lives alone. Keith says, "She sleeps with me, so now I have better dreams. If I move about in my sleep, she will snuggle up to me and put her head on my chest." Service dog and companion, Star truly is a star in the life of Keith Campbell.



**VETERAN  
DAVID MISNER AND SERGEANT**

Army Specialist David Misner of Wichita Falls, TX, was in Bio-Medical Special Missions training prior to being deployed when he was diagnosed with MS. Eager to serve his country, David felt cheated by fate that his diagnosis rendered him non-deployable and resulted in his discharge in 2008. He became one of the first five participants in the Army Wounded Warriors program. David experiences tingling described as "pins and needles" throughout his entire body and must walk with a Canadian crutch and sometimes must use a wheelchair because of his weakened legs and chronic fatigue. Having lived in Gatesville at one time, David knew about Patriot PAWS, so he decided to apply and, in March 2012, received Sergeant, a male yellow Lab. Sergeant helps David with his mobility issues allowing him to be less dependent upon his wife and three children, something David very much wanted after having been self-reliant his whole life. Since stress worsens the symptoms of MS, having Sergeant also helps David by lessening his anxiety and depression. David says "Sergeant has changed my life so drastically for the better, words can't describe it...I feel like a kid in a candy store on Christmas morning."



**NON-VETERAN  
BRANDON SUTTON AND WILSON**

Brandon Sutton of Ft. Worth, TX is confined to a wheelchair. He was left paralyzed after surgery for a torn aorta which he suffered in an auto accident in October, 2008, a surgery which only has an approximate 5% survival rate. After his remarkable survival, Brandon found his life greatly changed. He suffers from PTSD from the accident, and since he can no longer work as a truck mechanic, Brandon is now a full-time student pursuing a mechanical engineering degree. Living alone while confined to a wheelchair presents many challenges, and after meeting Patriot PAWS recipient Mike McHale, also confined to a wheelchair, Brandon applied to Patriot PAWS for a service dog to help him.

Brandon received Wilson, a male yellow Lab, in March, 2012. Wilson is now Brandon's constant companion and helps him cope with the drastic changes in his life. According to Brandon, "I'm not alone anymore. Wilson gives me something else to think about except it's just another day with my injury. Wilson is the best thing to happen to me since my accident, and I'd like to thank everyone at Patriot PAWS and the prison for giving me such a wonderful dog."

Jason calm, something Jason no longer has to burden his daughter with. Parole also helps out with many everyday chores and makes Jason's life easier. According to Jason, "Parole has done so much for us," and when asked to sum up Parole in one word, Jason responded, "Incredible!"



**VETERAN  
JASON NORTH AND PAROLE**

Army Staff Sergeant Jason North of Killeen, TX, suffers from epileptic seizures brought on by a traumatic brain injury he received on October 22, 2008, during his second tour in Iraq. When the Humvee he was riding in fell into a pit trap after being lured to it by several Iraqis on horseback, Jason was slammed into both a 50-caliber machine gun in front of him and a 50-caliber ammo can behind him leaving him with a fractured face and broken vertebra and his first seizure. He must now take seizure medication daily and is 100% disabled. Jason depended upon his wife and even his young daughter at times to help him, so when he found Patriot PAWS on the internet, he decided to apply.

In March, 2012, Jason received Parole, a male yellow Lab. Now when Jason has a seizure, Parole alerts Jason's wife and keeps

# ALL WORK AND NO PLAY? NOT OUR DOGS!



## WHO IS PATRIOT PAWS SERVICE DOGS?

Patriot PAWS Service Dogs is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization. We provide service dogs to disabled veterans at no cost to the veteran. Caring for one of our dogs-in-training can cost up to \$30,000. Only through tax-deductible donations are we able to provide these service dogs to disabled veterans.

## ATTENTION BUSINESSES

Become a Patron for Patriot PAWS. Pledge an annual tax-deductible donation, up to any amount desired, per year for a 3-year period. Pledges enable Patriot PAWS to better plan for future expansion in order to place more dogs. We receive no Federal or VA funding.

## UPDATED WEBSITE

Our website now offers a new, informative and unique look at Patriot PAWS. Some new features include pictures, testimonials and a way to get to know our staff and board members. We also made it easier to locate our service dog application and to make an online donation. The QR Code located in the bottom right corner will take you directly to our website.

## DONATIONS CAN BE MADE AT: [WWW.PATRIOTPAWS.ORG](http://WWW.PATRIOTPAWS.ORG)

We accept all major credit cards (online or over the phone), cash, checks and money orders. A return envelope is enclosed for your convenience.

## ALSO CONSIDER:

- Setting up a recurring donation
- Honoring or memorializing someone with a donation (remember to send us information so that an acknowledgement can be sent)
- Matching your employee's donation
- Pledging for a 3-year period
- Becoming an Ambassador
- Conducting a fundraiser
- Volunteering/Becoming a Puppy Raiser

## • DID YOU KNOW?

- 46% of paroled inmates that were in the Patriot PAWS program are working in a dog-related field.
- 29 inmates are currently helping us train our service dogs.

PATRIOT PAWS SERVICE DOGS IS LOCATED AT 254 RANCH TRAIL ROCKWALL, TEXAS 75032  
FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT [PATRIOTPAWS.ORG](http://PATRIOTPAWS.ORG)  
OR CALL 972.772.3282



[WWW.PATRIOTPAWS.ORG](http://WWW.PATRIOTPAWS.ORG)