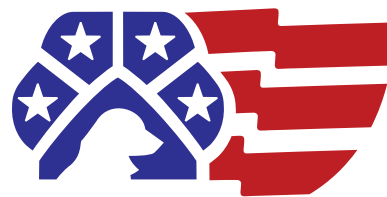


# PATRIOTPAWS

SERVICE DOGS



## ROCKY

### A CHAMPION'S STORY

**M**ost people associate the name Rocky with a movie about a fighter who came from the streets and became a champion. So when a dog named Rocky became the first rescue dog to not only complete the Patriot PAWS training program, but to do so in record time and be successfully custom-trained to meet a veteran's special needs, he definitely lived up to the name.

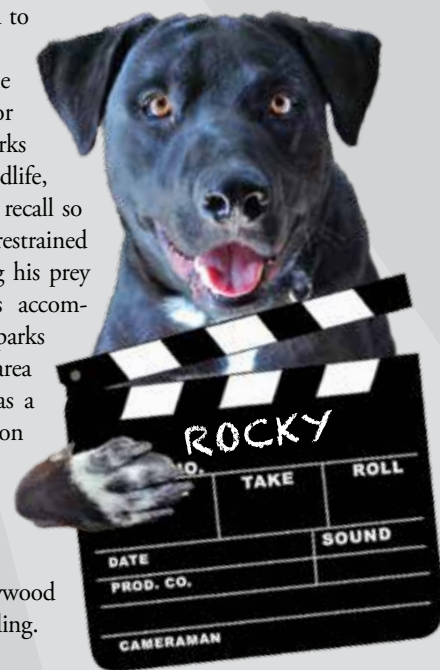
Highlighted in our Summer 2013 newsletter, Rocky was the first from an agreement between Patriot PAWS and the SPCA of Texas Jan Rees-Jones Animal Care Center in Dallas to take rescued dogs who meet certain criteria and train them to be service dogs. He is a male black Lab mix with most of his tail missing which gives him a tough, street-wise appearance. But Rocky is as sweet as they come, and as smart as they come, pedigreed or not. He quickly learned every behavior taught him as if not only determined to succeed, but to be the best, and by doing so, he set the bar extremely high for every dog who enters the program after him. Although he had only been in training since June, he was presented in the November 2013 graduation as a candidate for the four veterans who came to the prison to receive their dogs, and Rocky chose Al.

Al Harmata is missing his left arm and has a prosthetic left leg which, along with a problematic right leg, makes him unstable on his feet. Service dogs are trained to work from the left side, and their leash is usually held in the left hand, so when Al held Rocky's leash in his right hand, the leash draped across Al's body and created a trip hazard. It was also confusing to Rocky to try to work from the right since he had been taught that his place was on the left. Seeing how badly Rocky wanted to serve Al and how much Al needed Rocky, Lori Stevens came up with a plan.

Graduation Day was bittersweet for Al because, although he knew he was getting Rocky, he couldn't take him home. Not yet. Not without Rocky undergoing custom training. So Rocky stayed at the prison, and his custom training became the priority of a group of inmate trainers who worked with him daily over the next couple of months. They not only trained Rocky to work from the right, but also to be patient while his gentle leader was put on one-handed, and to patiently hold dropped items that he had picked up in his mouth until he was told to "give". But that wasn't all.

Rocky then returned to the training center in Rockwall for extensive off-leash training. Al works outdoors with eagles and other wildlife, so Rocky needed reliable off-leash recall so he could go to work with Al unrestrained and not wander away. Controlling his prey drive was emphasized. This was accomplished by working with him in parks and rural settings in the Rockwall area where he was exposed to cranes as a substitute for eagles, and his reaction to squirrels and other birds and wildlife was suppressed.

A rescue dog given a second chance by helping a disabled veteran who needed him...even Hollywood couldn't have written a happier ending.





## LETTER FROM LORI

### HEART V. HEAD... IT'S ALWAYS A DILEMMA FOR ME.

**T**here are times when a dog chooses his veteran, and I'm not sure he's the right dog for the job. When that happens, do I go with my heart and trust that the dog's desire to serve this person will overcome any potential problems, or do I go with my head which is telling me that this person may need a dog more skilled in a particular behavior than the dog who chose him? It's rare that a placed team doesn't work out, but it does happen, and when it does, we must start over finding another person for the dog and another dog for the person. Eventually, there's a happy ending for all, but getting there isn't easy. So every time this situation arises, I agonize over what to do because everyone has waited so long for their happy ending. Too bad this job didn't come with an instruction manual, but providing happy endings is a great job to have, and I wouldn't trade it for anything.

## ELI'S CORNER

Patriot PAWS is implementing a new volunteer program, and I, along with the rest of the staff, am very excited about it. As our organization continues to grow, we depend more and more upon those willing to help in a volunteer capacity, and since there is no shortage of work to go around, we've divided it into categories to clarify the ways in which volunteers can help.

Anyone wishing to help can apply to be an office assistant or a trainer's assistant or to assist at special events and fund raisers. We also have Kids Play where kids in the community can come to play with, and even help train, the dogs. This is especially helpful in socializing both the puppies and

adult dogs with children to prepare them for public exposure and eventual possible placement with a family. And anyone who lives too far away to volunteer in any of these categories can become a PAWS Ambassador and help us fund-raise and spread the word of our mission to those in their area.

Since we're spiffin' up our volunteer program, I thought I'd do a bit of spiffin' up myself to try to impress all the new folks I'll be meeting when they come in for orientation. After all, you only get to make a first impression once, no matter how many lives you have.

Until next time, dear friends.

*Eli*





### VETERAN PAT NELMS AND RANGO

Navy Yeoman Pat Nelms lives in Rochester, NH, where she enjoys fishing, camping and many other outdoor activities. Pat suffers from vascular disease, and complications after surgery eventually resulted in the loss of her right leg above the knee and left her in a wheelchair. She also suffers from PTSD issues.

In September 2013, at a special graduation held at the Rockwall training center, Pat received Rango, a male yellow Lab. According to Pat, "Rango has been the greatest thing in my life. He keeps me rolling. ...he knows when I need...a friend to make me smile...but most of all he lets me know that I am needed, too."



### VETERAN ANGEL KNIGHT AND MAJOR

Angel Knight was in the Air Force ROTC, served as a Navy Seaman and also as a PFC in the Army National Guard. She currently lives in Las Vegas, NV, where she is a chaplain with Fellowship Ministries. Angel suffers from PTSD issues including severe anxiety and insecurity, especially in crowds. Finding it difficult to even leave her home, she applied for a service dog to help her regain her freedom.

In September 2013, at a special graduation held at the Rockwall training center, Angel received Major, a male yellow Lab. According to Angel, "He gives me the kind of security that I have not had in a long time. ...I know that he has my 6. Because of him I get out of bed. He makes me laugh...even on the roughest days. He is my GUARDIAN ANGEL...".



### VETERAN DEREK LIU AND TRINITY

USMC Capt Derek Liu lives in Mountain View, CA, with his wife, Nicola. Derek served in combat in Iraq but became disabled when he suffered cardiac arrest at age 25 while home on leave. He was in a coma for 58 days and was left with an anoxic brain injury due to lack of oxygen. Derek is now visually impaired and must use a vision cane for mobility, and his voice has also been affected.

In November 2013, at a graduation held at the Gatesville prison, Derek received service dog Trinity, a female yellow Lab. According to Derek, "...my service dog, Trinity, has really changed my life...she just makes me more comfortable and confident when I am in public...the quality of my life has improved and I have Patriot PAWS to thank for that."



### VETERAN CHRIS DUNN AND HANNAH

USAF SSgt Christopher Dunn lives in Buffalo, NY, and has 2 children, Kyra and Ethan. He was in the Air Force for 12 years and served in Iraq where he was in a Humvee explosion in 2003. Chris received severe spinal injuries and a traumatic brain injury. He also has nerve damage in his hands and suffers from PTSD and depression.

In November 2013, at a graduation held at the Gatesville prison, Chris received service dog Hannah, a female yellow Lab. According to Chris, "My dog Hannah has been a blessing...No matter how bad my day is going, she is always up for...an ear to listen and a few grumbles as a reply... she provides a love that is constant and unwavering. She is awesome."



### VETERAN AL HARMATA AND ROCKY

Army SGT Alan Harmata lives in Bozeman, MT, with his wife, Melody. Al served in Vietnam where he was hit by a rocket-propelled grenade and lost his left arm and leg. He has a prosthetic left leg and no cartilage in his right knee, which together with sciatica and spinal stenosis, create severe balance and stability issues.

In November 2013, at a graduation held at the Gatesville prison, Al was chosen by service dog Rocky, a male black Lab mix, but was unable to take him home because additional training was needed for Rocky to adapt to Al's special needs. A follow-up to this very special pair's story will appear in our next newsletter.



### VETERAN ARMANDO ALONSO AND TAYLOR

Army CPL Armando Alonso lives in Las Vegas, NV, with his wife, Dorothy. He served in the Army for 2 years and in the Army Reserve for 4 years. Armando has been diagnosed with ALS, also known as Lou Gehrig's disease, and must use a scooter for mobility. He applied for a service dog for both physical and emotional support and to lessen the burden on Dorothy.

In November 2013, at a graduation held at the Gatesville prison, Armando received service dog Taylor, a male yellow Lab. According to Armando, "...he's being a life saver for me...I look forward (to) waking up every day just so I can spend time with Taylor...the best thing for me is, how happy he makes me...I'm so glad and so lucky to have gotten Taylor...".



# COMING SOON!

AN APP FOR DONATIONS...MORE GRADUATES...RESCUE DOGS...JAY'S DOGS...CAPITAL CAMPAIGN KICK-OFF

Amazon donates 0.5% of eligible purchases to us if you shop on Smile.Amazon.com

Patriot PAWS is the chosen charity of the Houston-based Hunting Art Prize for the year 2014!

Patriot PAWS has a Wish List on Amazon for shoppers who want to make in-kind donations.

If you use a Kroger Plus Card, Patriot PAWS will benefit, at no cost to you, when you link your card to our NPO number 80083.

If you use a Tom Thumb Rewards Card, Patriot PAWS will benefit, at no cost to you, when you link your card to the number 11819.

June 3rd – Third annual golf tournament at Canyon Creek CC benefiting PPAWS. Call us for details.



## WHO IS PATRIOT PAWS SERVICE DOGS?

Patriot PAWS Service Dogs is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Through our program disabled veterans, who receive service dogs **free of charge**, regain lost independence and emotional stability. Prison inmates, who have an active part in training the service dogs, have the opportunity to learn a new vocation and give back to society while incarcerated. Rescue and shelter dogs are given a new lease on life and will help to change people's lives. Caring for one of our dogs-in-training can cost up to \$27,000. **Only through tax-deductible donations are we able continue our mission of helping disabled veterans.**

## DONATE TODAY 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 in this newsletter for your convenience.

## ALSO CONSIDER:

- Setting up a recurring donation
- Honoring or memorializing someone with a donation (remember to send us information so an acknowledgment can be sent)
- Matching your employee's donation
- Pledging for a 3-year period
- Becoming an ambassador
- Conducting a fund raiser
- Volunteering or becoming a puppy raiser

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** • **CFC# 35710**



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