

PATRIOTPAWS

SERVICE DOGS



IN PURSUIT OF A DREAM

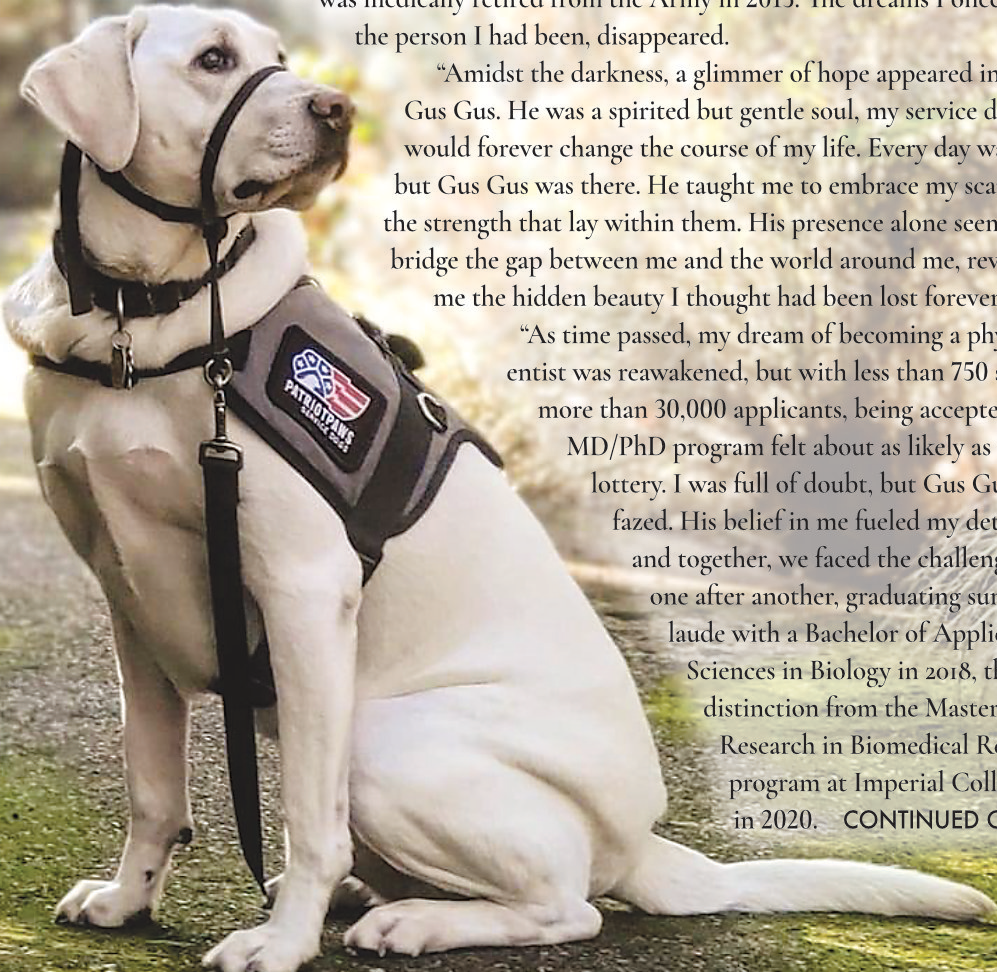
EVERY DISABLED VETERAN WHO HAS RECEIVED A PATRIOT PAWS SERVICE DOG HAS A STORY TO TELL ABOUT HOW THEIR DOG CHANGED THEIR LIFE, BUT ONE SUCH STORY IS SO INSPIRATIONAL THAT WE WANTED TO SHARE IT WITH YOU IN THE VETERAN'S OWN WORDS.

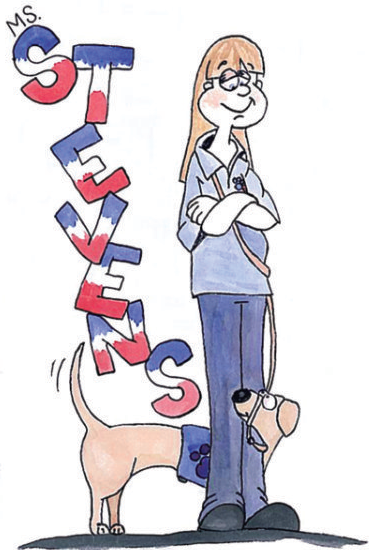
"My name is Freedom Green, and like my name, my journey has been anything but ordinary.

"Once upon a time, I wore the uniform, a combat medic with big dreams. Then, in the blink of an eye, it was all gone. I sustained injuries that left me physically and emotionally wounded and was medically retired from the Army in 2015. The dreams I once had, and the person I had been, disappeared.

"Amidst the darkness, a glimmer of hope appeared in the form of Gus Gus. He was a spirited but gentle soul, my service dog, who would forever change the course of my life. Every day was a battle, but Gus Gus was there. He taught me to embrace my scars and to see the strength that lay within them. His presence alone seemed to bridge the gap between me and the world around me, revealing to me the hidden beauty I thought had been lost forever.

"As time passed, my dream of becoming a physician scientist was reawakened, but with less than 750 seats and more than 30,000 applicants, being accepted to an MD/PhD program felt about as likely as winning the lottery. I was full of doubt, but Gus Gus wasn't fazed. His belief in me fueled my determination, and together, we faced the challenges head-on, one after another, graduating summa cum laude with a Bachelor of Applied Arts and Sciences in Biology in 2018, then with distinction from the Master of Research in Biomedical Research program at Imperial College London in 2020. **CONTINUED ON PAGE 3**





LETTER FROM LORI

I have noticed that some of the veterans arriving to be placed with a service dog experience anxiety over being in a new place, especially with so many people around. Some of them have told me that prior to coming here, they hadn't left their house in over a year, sometimes longer. And the discomfort in their body language when dealing with our trainers and staff is evident. It just breaks my heart.

But the flip side of that is, I also get to see what a miracle looks like. Usually, by Graduation Day, their anxiety is already lessening, and their discomfort is relaxing because their new canine partner is showing them that, together, new possibilities lie ahead for a much brighter future.

And seeing them again in the future is how I know that miracles really do occur. Their anxiety and discomfort have been replaced with security and confidence. Now they can spend quality time with their family, be gainfully employed, go back to school, enjoy a hobby or do almost anything else that they want to do but couldn't before receiving their dog. Our four-legged miracle workers give them their lives back and forever connect them to the Patriot PAWS family, sometimes the only family they have.

So, with your support, we'll keep on doing what we're doing because if there's one thing the world needs right now, it's more miracles.

SPOTLIGHT

On Veteran Volunteers

It has been said that it takes a veteran to understand a veteran, so who better to volunteer at Patriot PAWS than veterans?

Our veteran volunteers assist the Veteran Coordinators with keeping in touch not only with those who have already received their service dog, but also with those who are on our waiting list, as well as assisting with paperwork and taking incoming calls. Some veterans volunteer in the kennels, and several of our local veteran/service dog teams serve as Ambassadors doing demos and giving first-hand testimony as to how their dog changed their life.

From veteran recipients paying it forward for other veterans to receive a dog, to veterans simply wanting to serve the veteran community, all of our veteran volunteers do important work, and we appreciate all that they do — thank you!



CATTITUDES

Hello! My name is Sir Lancelot, but please, call me Lance.

I am very happy to have joined the Patriot PAWS staff as a dog trainer. The Boss had an opening and very kindly gave me this chance. I had no home, just a lot of street smarts, so she thought I would be able to handle myself teaching feline tolerance to canines. And my colleague, Leo, has been very helpful, mentoring me like his mentor, Eli, did for him. It's a great job for a cat of the world like me, room and board with all meals and medical included.

Not bad, huh?

Leo and I are excited to have this new newsletter column and are looking forward to sharing our adventures with you. See you in the next issue!

Until then, y'all take care.

Lance





DAVID & JAXXON

Army SPC **David** served for 3 years Stateside as an infantryman and SAW gunner. A broken back and other injuries have left him with mobility disabilities.

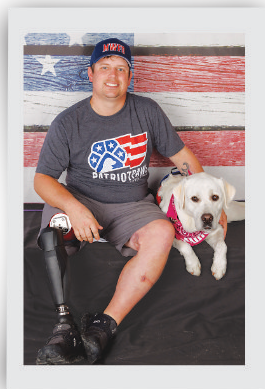
At the Spring 2023 Graduation, David received service dog **Jaxxon**, a female black Lab. David says, "Jaxxon has changed my life. I sleep well and am working hard to change my life with the support of her next to me. Ever since we were together, a lot of good things have happened, so I believe that she's my lucky charm. Thank you, Patriot PAWS, for bringing Jaxxon into my life."



STEVE & VENUS

USAF SSgt **Steve** served for 12 years, including as a part of Operation Desert Storm. He was an OSI special agent. A stroke left Steve with mobility issues.

At the Spring 2023 Graduation, Steve received service dog **Venus**, a female black Lab. Steve says, "Venus is amazing. She is a great companion, and I love her." Steve's wife, Michelle, adds, "Having Venus has really increased his motivation for independence. Beginning the week after they became a certified service dog team, we began taking trips, some of which Steve would have likely opted out of before Venus. She has been a wonderful addition to our family."



CODY & MILLIE

Cody served for 11 years as a volunteer firefighter. In 2020, while on his job as a heavy equipment operator, his vehicle was hit by a texting driver. Cody suffered traumatic brain injury and the loss of his right leg. His heart stopped 4 times, but Cody fought his way back each time, determined to survive for his young son.

At the Spring 2023 Graduation, Cody received service dog **Millie**, a female yellow Lab. Cody says, "Millie has been a true blessing to me. She's helped me so much in my daily activities and also with the stress of my 911 dispatcher job. She's a wonderful dog, and I absolutely love her to pieces."



JOHN & SOMPS

USMC Cpl **John** served for 4 years as a recon sniper. He became a POW, spending 9 months in a 4x4 cage at the "Hanoi Hilton" before miraculously escaping and crawling for 3 months across the DMZ to rejoin his unit. The ordeal left him 100% disabled. John's first Patriot PAWS service dog, Gen. Patton, served him well for 6 years.

At the Spring 2023 Graduation, John received service dog **Somps**, a male black Lab. John says, "With Patriot PAWS, their dogs come out better every year." John's wife, Lynn, adds, "This dog has brought out such a love reaction from John. They are constant companions. Somps has brought about less stress for all 3 of us!"

IN PURSUIT OF A DREAM, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1



"And then in December 2022, five years after being paired with Gus Gus, I received my first MD/PhD acceptance. We finally made it. Joy, relief, and gratitude washed over me like a tidal wave. Gus Gus, sensing the significance of the moment, celebrated with me in his own special way, tail wagging and paws tippy tapping with boundless excitement.

"The road here hasn't been smooth. We've encountered skepticism, ignorance, and even pity from some who couldn't see beyond my disabilities. There are still a few curious glances, and lingering doubts I'm sure, but every time we step foot (and paw) on campus, Gus Gus and I are breaking barriers.

"I know the next eight years won't be easy. But with Gus Gus by my side, I am armed with the strength of a thousand soldiers. He is not just my service dog; he is my inspiration, my driving force, and my living proof that love and acceptance have the power to save lives. Through our story, I hope to inspire others to embrace their own differences, to find their own strength, and to believe that no dream is too big, especially with a four-legged guardian angel by your side.

"Thank you for your love and support. We wouldn't be here without you."

Freedom and Gus Gus



Come ready to party for *Paws & Stars 2023: An Evening in Emerald City!* This fun packed event will be held at The Venue at Boyd Farm with America's #1 Party Band, Emerald City, providing the evening's entertainment. All proceeds will fuel our mission of placing Service Dogs with Veterans, at no cost to them. Call our office today at 972-772-3282 to secure your tickets, while they last!

Missing any newsletters?

No worries, all of our previous issues are archived on our website. Just go to patriotpaws.org and click on Newsletters & Events. You'll see all the good news about our mission and how you help us serve our veterans.



IN MEMORIAM

Earth has no sorrow that Heaven cannot heal.
– Author Unknown

Our hearts go out to the family of Veteran Charles Trask for the loss of his service dog, **Summit**, and to Veteran Carl Joiner for the loss of his service dog, **2 Sox**.

972-772-3282

Consider today what you can do to help us help them...



"The atmosphere here is unreal and reinforces the fact of how great it is to be an American veteran! What is really amazing is how the commitment of Patriot PAWS never ends. They are here forever for each veteran who receives one of their great animals..." – Arlie Matthews, 2016 Graduate

PLEASE DONATE TODAY

- We accept all major credit cards on our website at www.patriotpaws.org
- Cash, checks and money orders by mail or in person. Address: 254 Ranch Trail Rockwall, TX 75032

ALSO CONSIDER:

- Setting up a recurring donation
- Honoring or memorializing someone
- Matching your employee's donation
- Pledging for a 3-year period
- Becoming a Patriot PAWS ambassador
- Conducting a fundraiser
- Volunteering or becoming a puppy raiser
- If you are a Federal employee, you may make donations using our CFC# 35710