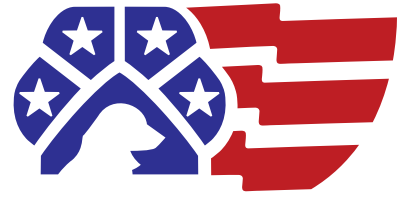


PATRIOTPAWS

SERVICE DOGS



HAVE YOU HEARD?

IT'S NO SECRET...LORI STEVENS IS RETIRING! WELL, SORT OF.

After the Fall Graduation in October, **Lori** will step down as Executive Director and turn the reins over to her son, **Rick Stevens**. Lori isn't going anywhere, though. In her "retirement", she will still office at the training center, serve on the Patriot PAWS Board of Directors, make herself available as an advisor, and travel as needed to conduct the annual re-certifications of our veteran/service dog teams. She will also assist with the Patriot PAWS 2025 recertification by Assistance Dogs International. The thing that Lori is most looking forward to, though, is being able to spend more quality time with her youngest grandchild.

Lori's journey from recognizing an unfulfilled need in the veteran community in 2005 to directing the thriving and impactful non-profit that Patriot PAWS Service Dogs is today has been nothing short of remarkable. When asked to reflect upon these past 19 years, here is what she had to say:

"I want to share something that's been on my heart for a long time. You see, in the beginning, I had a dream, a dream to help veterans through service dogs. But the truth is, Patriot PAWS Service Dogs would not be here today without the dedication, passion, and support of so many people, some that are still here, and so many who are not.

"It's easy to think that dreams are built by one person, but the reality is, they require a village, a family. I could train dogs, but it was all of you who brought this dream to life. Hundreds of you have spent countless hours helping to develop Patriot PAWS, and it would not be what it is today without each and every one of you.

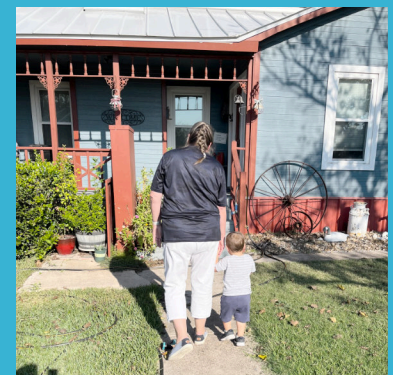
"You are the true heroes here. Your efforts, your commitment, your belief in this mission have built something far greater than I ever imagined. And that's the most important thing I've learned through this journey...Patriot PAWS is a family. It's a family of remarkable, special people who came together to create something wonderful.

"With all my heart, I want to thank you. Thank you for being part of this amazing family, for showing up, for putting in the hard work, and for believing in the impact we can have on veterans' lives. My retirement is a celebration of that collective effort.

"As for me, I'm not going far. I'll still be here, coming and going, but mostly, I'll be where my heart has always been, working directly with the veterans and their dogs, as long as the new leadership will have me.

"So again, from the bottom of my heart, thank you for making Patriot PAWS what it is today."

And thank YOU, Lori, for following your dream. Now, go spoil that grand-baby!



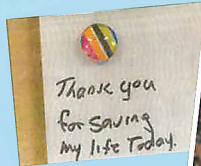


"Congratulations on your much deserved retirement! Patriot PAWS has been a gift to veterans and our community. Your love for God and country is a shining example that everyone should follow. You have truly been the hands and feet of heaven. Now it's your turn to enjoy life and spend lots of time fishing, camping, and playing with grandkids."

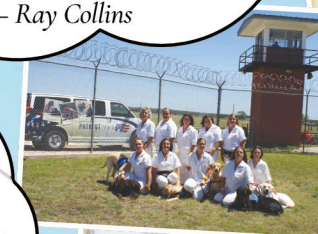
– Jill Tate

"Lori, through your commitment, countless lives have been touched in the veteran community. You have not only been the head of an organization, you have been the heart of it. You have been a source of inspiration to all who have had the privilege to work with you. As you step into this new phase of life, I hope it brings you the same joy, peace and fulfillment that you have so generously given to others. May this time be filled with all the happiness you so richly deserve!"

– William D. Perkins, PhD



"The impact made by Lori and her vision to help veterans by giving them opportunities to get their lives back through service dogs is life-changing and cannot be measured. Lori has made a difference in so many veterans' lives along with the lives of veterans' family members. Lori, Patriot PAWS always said that service dogs are angels sent by Heaven, and many of us know that you are the guiding angel for veterans and their service dogs."



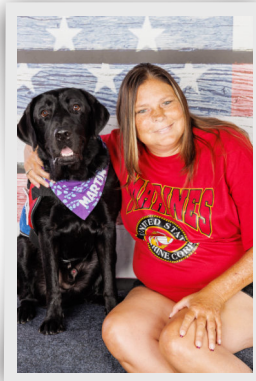
"I fell in love with the Patriot PAWS program when I arrived at the Murray Unit. I was blessed to get to know Lori during this time, and I found what a huge heart she has. I got to learn not only about dogs, but also fishing, life, and what true friendship is. Thank you for a friendship I will always cherish, and for Willow."

– Merry Craine, former TDCJ Warden

"From the time I met Lori, she had a passion for disabled veterans and had goals to start an organization that would train exceptional service dogs and provide them to veterans at no cost. Lori has made that dream come true through sheer perseverance, persistence, and extremely hard work. She is a great example of what it looks like to have a passionate goal for something exemplary and make it come true!"

– Rhonda Phillips Black, DVM





BEVERLY & MARTIN

Sgt **Beverly** served in the Marine Corps for 7 years. She was a combat engineer whose service took her abroad. She was one of the first four females ever to enter a combat MOS and was the first female to enter jungle evasion survival training.

Beverly applied to Patriot PAWS for a service dog to assist her with both her physical and mental health, and at the Summer 2024 Graduation, she received service dog **Martin**, a male black Lab. Beverly would like everyone to know, *“This has been a great experience and has taught me a lot. My dog is my best friend.”*



CATON & WINSTON

SSG **Caton** served in the Army for 22 years, 12 active duty, and 10 in the Army Reserve. He worked as a 91B mechanic and an 88M truck driver. Caton was deployed 4 times, including 2 tours in Iraq. His exposure to burn pits while deployed later resulted in cancer and the amputation of his right leg. He is a two-time cancer survivor.

At the Summer 2024 Graduation, Caton received service dog **Winston**, a male yellow Lab. Caton would like everyone to know, *“Winston has changed my life. He gets me out into public more. Thank you to Patriot PAWS for Winston. I am greatly thankful.”*



CLARA & MOOSE

PFC **Clara** had served in the Army for a little under 2 years when she was injured. She served Stateside as a 68X behavioral health technician. Clara entered the Army at age 18, just 2 weeks after graduating high school. After being injured and unable to live alone at such a young age, she turned to Patriot PAWS for help to try to live a normal life.

At the Summer 2024 Graduation, Clara received service dog **Moose**, a male black Lab. According to Clara, *“Moose is my shadow, which is civilian for battle buddy, someone who has your back no matter what. We have done things together that I never thought I’d be able to do again, and I will forever be grateful. Moose has truly changed my life.”*



PRESTON & HOLLY

SFC **Preston** served in the Army for 24 years, including deployment to Iraq. He has numerous mobility issues including his right hand, left knee, back and shoulders. In 2015, Preston received Patriot PAWS service dog **Murphy**. Murphy served Preston well for 8 years.

At the Summer 2024 Graduation, Preston received service dog **Holly**, a female yellow Lab. Preston would like everyone to know, *“Holly has been a wonderful friend, sister, and battle buddy in this short time that we’ve been together. I feel like we’ve been together for years. Holly is so sweet and loving, and I am so grateful for her. Thank you, Patriot PAWS.”*



JOHN & ABRAMS

John served in the Marine Corps for 22 years. He worked as a 0699 communications chief and served multiple tours in Iraq and Afghanistan. John has mobility issues and needed a service dog for both physical and emotional support.

At the Summer 2024 Graduation, John received service dog **Abrams**, a male Goldador. According to John, *“Abrams has been a blessing. He is always watching me in every situation. When I dislocated my shoulder, he helped me up, retrieved my shoes, socks and keys, and helped me get to the ER, where he was with me the entire time. He is truly always watching out for me.”*



JAMES & BLUE BELL

SFC **James** served in the Army for 21 years. He worked as a 19K armor crewman and served 3 tours in Iraq. James points out that while the military taught him everything he needed to know while in uniform, they didn’t teach him how to cope once he was out.

At the Summer 2024 Graduation, James received service dog **Blue Bell**, a female black Lab. According to James, *“Blue Bell has made such a huge difference in my life. With her by my side, I don’t feel broken or useless. With her, I can go anywhere I please, and I know I won’t be alone.”*

HONORING OUR "MISS LORI"

Following the 2024 Fall Graduation ceremony, the Patriot PAWS family came together to celebrate the legacy of Founder and Executive Director, Lori Stevens. Staff, volunteers, family, friends, sponsors, supporters and numerous veteran/service dog teams from all over the country gathered to congratulate Lori on her well-deserved retirement.

Part "This Is Your Life" and part Homecoming event, the evening featured videos and a slideshow of photos from throughout the years, but the highlight was the heartfelt remarks of veterans who, one by one, took the stage with their dog to tell "Miss Lori" how their dog had changed, or even saved, their life, and to thank her for being there for them when they needed help the most. The evening concluded with Lori taking the stage to graciously thank everyone who had a hand along the way in making her dream of helping veterans come true.

A legacy worth celebrating, indeed.



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.



Patriot PAWS is incredibly grateful to the Texas Veterans Commission for their generous \$500,000 grant. This vital support means the world to us and to the veterans we serve, as it will allow us to place more service dogs with the heroes who have sacrificed so much for our country. Our collaboration with the Texas Veterans Commission is more than just a partnership—it's a shared commitment to change lives. Together, we are making a real, personal impact by providing veterans with loyal, loving service dogs who offer independence, support, and unconditional companionship. Thank you, Texas Veterans Commission, for standing with us and our veterans.

IN MEMORIAM

It is with great sadness that we report the loss of three of our Patriot PAWS family members:

- Axle – service dog of Veteran Don Weintraub
- Camo – service dog of Veteran Arlie Matthews
- Eagle – service dog of Veteran Keith Young

Earth has no sorrow that Heaven cannot heal.

• 972-772-3282 •

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

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