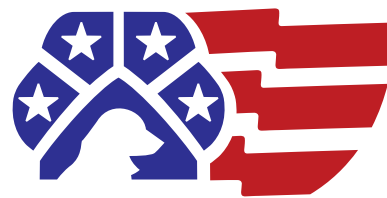


# PATRIOTPAWS

SERVICE DOGS



## A+ REPORT CARD

When Lori Stevens founded Patriot PAWS in 2006 in a tiny storefront in Rockwall, she had no idea that it would grow into a 3.2-acre campus with a satellite campus in College Station, or that it would have such a positive impact on our nation's disabled veterans and others, as well as on those who are incarcerated in Texas. The total numbers as of the end of 2023 speak for themselves.

### NUMBER OF DOGS PLACED:

- Certified full service dogs — 171
- In-home working dogs — 135
- Dogs in training — 83

Patriot PAWS dogs have now been placed in 43 states. Any dog who does not succeed in our program is either found another type of working dog career that better suits their abilities or is adopted out to a loving forever home. At Patriot PAWS, no dog is ever considered a failure.

### NUMBER OF TEXAS PRISON UNITS TRAINING PATRIOT PAWS DOGS:

- Three women's units — Cristina Melton Crane Unit, Lane Murray Unit and Patrick L. O'Daniel Unit — 128 trainers paroled
- One men's unit — Boyd Unit — 10 trainers paroled

### STATS OF PAROLED INMATE TRAINERS:

- Less than 1% reoffended, compared to the state average of over 20%
- 22% went on to work in animal-related fields

As proud as we are of our success, the sobering fact is that the need is still great while the costs for training continue to rise. **The total cost to train a full service dog has skyrocketed to \$46,000** per dog over the course of their 18–24 months of training, and there are over 70 disabled veterans on our wait list, each having to wait an average of 2–3 years for their dog. We owe these veterans the highest-quality service dogs possible, so cutting corners or hurrying the training are not options. A poorly trained “service dog” is a liability, not an asset, and we remain committed to providing the best service dog possible to meet each veteran's individual needs at **no cost to the veteran**.

As we look forward, one thing is clear... **we cannot continue to do what we do without your kind support**. So please, help us help those who have served and sacrificed for us all as we continue onward and upward\*, four paws at a time.

*\*Stay Tuned*

*for exciting news coming in our Summer issue!*





**LETTER FROM LORI**

I have always been proud of the success of our prison programs, so when we were approached by the Texas Department of Criminal Justice to add the Patrick L. O’Daniel Unit to the other two women’s units and one men’s unit that were already participating, we were happy to do so.

The O’Daniel Unit is different in that the female inmates there are all veterans. Any veteran will tell you that it takes a veteran to understand a veteran, so these women have a bond with each other beyond the fact that they are all incarcerated. They share the experience of service to our country not only with each other, but with the disabled veterans whom we serve as well.

It is my hope that this personal insight into our program’s mission will not only serve to enhance their dog training skills for us but also positively influence their life after parole. Of all the inmates who participated in our prison program since its inception in 2008 who were later paroled, less than 1% have reoffended, far less than the statewide recidivism rate of over 20%. If serving other veterans can be the inspiration this newest group of inmate trainers needs to turn their lives around, then all the better. I just love a Win-Win scenario.

**SPOTLIGHT**

**On New Aggieland Student Training Center**

As participation in our Patriot PAWS of Aggieland student puppy raiser program has increased, so has our need for training center space. The solution came in the form of an approximately 1900 sq. ft. storefront in a revitalized College Station mall.

The mall location is ideal for socialization opportunities and also to increase community awareness of our program. Participating students without their own transportation can ride the bus from the A&M campus to work with the trainers, attend group meetings, participate in group classes or just hang out with each other and the dogs. We are grateful to mall management for graciously working with us to create a designated dog potty area outdoors. No dogs will be housed at the center overnight.

Enjoy your new training center Patriot PAWS of Aggieland!



**Cattitudes**

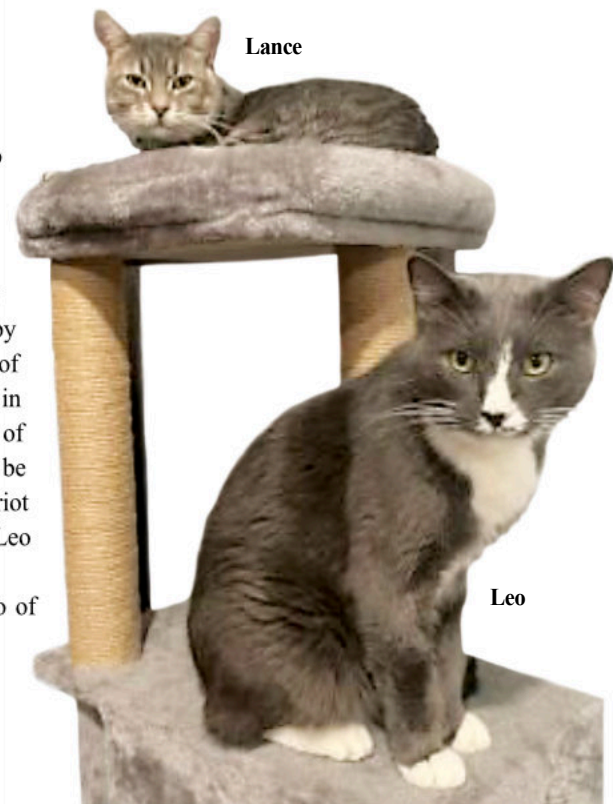
It is my sad task to report that Leo passed away late in December. We were all shocked by the news of his illness and greatly saddened by his loss.

It now falls to me to fill the giant pawprints of my two predecessors by carrying on their dedication to the job of teaching feline tolerance to our pups in training. This small yet important part of their training fills me with great pride to be a part of such a fine organization as Patriot PAWS, and I will do my best to make Leo proud of me.

Here is my favorite photo of the two of us. Rest in peace, dear Leo.

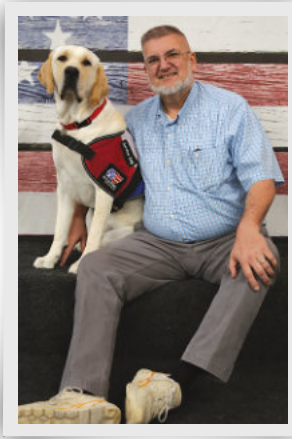
Until next time, y’all take care.

*Lance*



Lance

Leo



## DAVID & PORKCHOP

SGM **David** served in the Army for 22 years. He worked in maintenance and logistics and learned **Russian** to become an interpreter and interrogator. His numerous deployments notably include Panama for the capture of Manuel Noriega, as well as Operation Desert Shield and Operation Desert Storm.

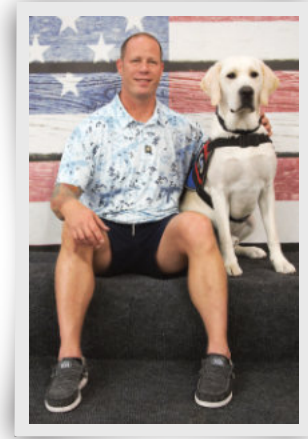
David suffers from back issues and received service dog **Porkchop**, a male yellow Lab, at our Fall 2023 Graduation. According to David, "I cannot imagine my life now without Porkchop. He has become an integral part of our family. My wife says the best part about having him is that she no longer has to be a 'retriever wife'."



## DAVID & MATRIX

MAJ **David** served in the Army for 20 years. He was a Logistics Officer whose deployments include Somalia, Bosnia, Croatia and Iraq. David has mobility issues, as well as chronic post-traumatic stress issues.

At our Fall 2023 Graduation, David received service dog **Matrix**, a male yellow Lab. According to David, "Matrix has truly been a blessing to me and my family. When I'm starting to stress, my boy will come place his head on my thigh or his paw on my shoe relaying, 'I got you'. That action truly grounds me and makes me realize that I'm safe and everything is going to be alright."



## JASON & DUCK

Sgt **Jason** served in the Marine Corps for 8 years. He was a Stinger Missile Gunner whose deployments include Operation Desert Storm, Somalia and Iraq. Jason has both mobility issues and post-traumatic stress issues.

At our Fall 2023 Graduation, Jason received service dog **Duck**, a male yellow Lab. According to Jason, "Since I received my service dog, Duck, I now have a permanent battle buddy. Until we became a paired team, I didn't realize just how much help I needed. Most importantly, he has given me my confidence back. I am forever grateful for Duck. He truly is a blessing and changed my life forever."

## JENNIFER & YANCEY

CPL **Jennifer** served in the Army for 3½ years before being medically retired. She worked as an Intelligence Analyst with a specialty in Cryptography. Jennifer's mobility issues are progressive and necessitate her use of a wheelchair.

At our Fall 2023 Graduation, Jennifer received service dog **Yancey**, a female black Lab. According to Jennifer, "Yancey is my second service dog, but the first from Patriot PAWS. Since getting matched with her, she has blown my expectations out of the water. Yancey has helped bring my husband some peace of mind about my safety since she can 'get help' when I fall. Yancey has really helped me regain my independence."



## TRICIA & HOGE

PFC **Tricia** served in the Army 1976–1977 before being injured. She was a 76P Key-punch Operator and served in Miesau, Germany.

At our Fall 2023 Graduation, Tricia received service dog **Hoge**, a female black Lab. According to Tricia, "I won't say I did not have a life without Hoge, but I have more confidence, more energy and a lot more happiness since this little girl matched me. I never wanted a dog. I needed a helper. I think I found both. There was Hoge, and I just fell in love. All the training does not prepare you for the growth of your heart. A big thank you to Patriot PAWS!"



## IN TRIBUTE: *Service Dog Barney*



Patriot PAWS Veteran Trainer and Navy Veteran, **Bonnie Hoard**, recently lost her service dog, **Barney**, affectionately called Barney Sue. Barney was not only an important part of Bonnie's life, he was instrumental in the early success of Patriot PAWS as well, so we thought it only fitting for Bonnie to share his story.

"I had just started volunteering at Patriot PAWS when I became Barney's puppy raiser. He came to us at eight weeks old with his sister, Pebbles. After he became my service dog, we traveled together to events nationwide, both driving and flying, representing Patriot PAWS along with Lori Stevens and her dog, Jazz. We even met President George W. Bush together. He was also in two movies, 'Another Front Line' and 'The Greatest Bond'.

Barney touched so many lives other than my own. He demonstrated cues during veteran training and still appears on the cue flash drive that we give to the veterans. Barney was often the first Patriot PAWS K-9 face that veterans met during facility or in-home visits. He was also a favorite in prison, teaching cues to the inmate trainers, and he even taught the young pups through observational training.

Barney was always taking care of me through my life's trials and tribulations. His unconditional love helped me as I transitioned from active duty to becoming a civilian. Barney ALWAYS had his eye on me. Even at the end of his life, he kept his eye on me and gave me comforting licks. He was my boy, and I was his person, and there will never be another like him!"

### Missing any newsletters?

No worries, all of our previous issues are archived on our website. Just go to [patriotpaws.org](http://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

We are sad to report that the following members of the Patriot PAWS family have passed away.

- Andy** — service dog of Veteran Chad Boudreaux
- Barney** — service dog of Veteran Bonnie Hoard
- Chief** — service dog of Veteran Aaron Mixell
- Dillinger** — service dog of Veteran Juan Amaris
- Haven** — service dog of Veteran Loren Childress
- Major** — service dog of Veteran Angel Knight
- Mr. Wilson** — service dog of Brandon Sutton
- Murphy** — service dog of Veteran Preston Smith
- Leo** — Patriot PAWS feline tolerance trainer

*Earth has no sorrow that  
Heaven cannot heal.*

— Author Unknown

**PATRIOTPAWS**  
SERVICE DOGS

**JOIN US**  
1st Annual  
**Patriot PAWS**  
Sporting Clay Shoot

Friday, April 5, 2024  
First Flight - 9 AM / Second Flight - 1 PM  
Dallas Gun Club -  
3601 Stemmons Fwy Lewisville, TX  
75067

Register Today!

• 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](http://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