

PATRIOTPAWS

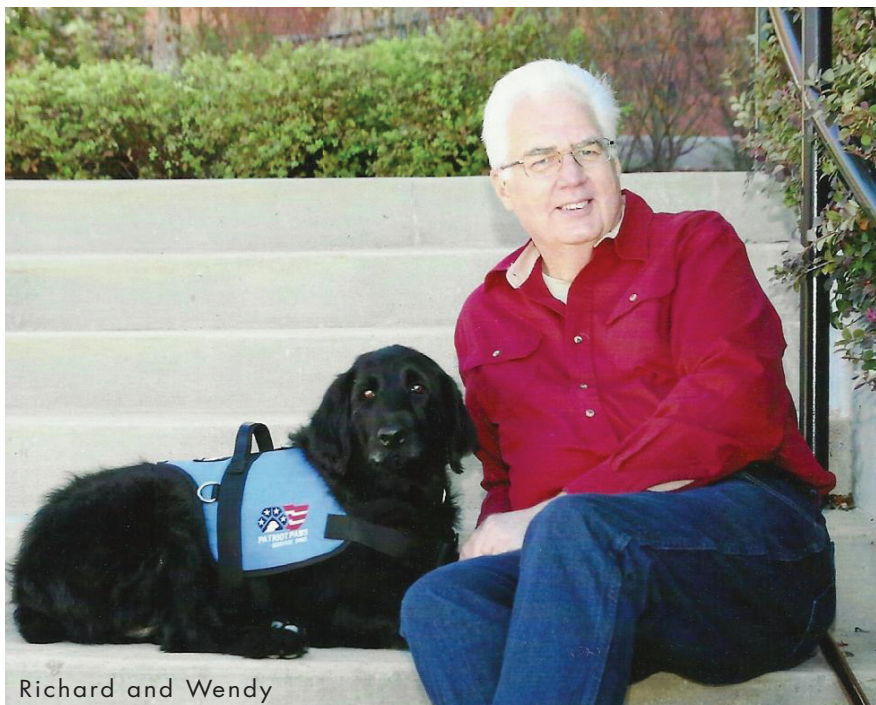
SERVICE DOGS



SERVICE DOG HEROES: GOING ABOVE AND BEYOND THEIR TRAINING

Patriot PAWS' service dogs are trained to do many things to assist disabled veterans and are even trained to perform certain potentially life-saving tasks when needed; however, two of our placed dogs recently went above and beyond their training and ended up saving lives.

Richard Heath of Rowlett, TX, served in both the Navy and the Army and received his service dog, Wendy, a black Labradoodle, from Patriot PAWS in December, 2009. In July, 2011, Richard had a stroke while home alone with Wendy. He was sitting at his computer one moment and found himself on the floor and unable to move the next. Richard isn't totally clear about what happened over the next few minutes, but somehow, Wendy was able to drag Richard to his chair in the next room so he could crawl up onto it and get himself off the floor. Wendy also brought him his phone without being told, offering it to his right hand as usual. When Wendy realized that Richard's right hand wasn't working, she offered it to his left hand instead, something she had not been trained to do. Richard managed to call his wife, Elaine, who was at work, and as soon as Elaine heard Richard's garbled speech, she knew he was in trouble. Richard has



Richard and Wendy

since mostly recovered from the effects of his stroke and credits Wendy with saving his life. The fact that Wendy relocated Richard to help him get off the floor, brought him his phone on her own and had the intuition to see if he could dial the phone with his left hand when she saw that he couldn't with his right is a prime example of how a service dog's connection to her person goes way beyond her training. Dog and person think and act as one, and fortunately for Richard, Wendy was able to think and act for both of them.



Charles and Summit

Navy veteran Charles Trask and his service dog Summit, featured in our last newsletter, have their own amazing story to tell. One chilly afternoon in December, 2011, Charles and Summit were at their community dog park in Ocala, FL, when Summit ran to the fence and began barking. Charles thought this unusual as Summit doesn't bark much, so he walked over to the fence to see what she was barking at. In the distance, Charles could see a person lying in the gutter. When Charles and Summit went to investigate, they found a 92-year-old lady who had fallen backwards and hit her head on the pavement while trying to pull weeds. Summit stopped barking as soon as they reached the lady. Charles immediately called 9-1-1 and then covered the lady with his coat until the ambulance arrived. The lady was hospitalized briefly and then transferred to rehab, but she owes her life to Charles' black Lab, Summit. As Charles' service dog, Summit was trained to take care of him and possibly save his life, but the fact that Summit alerted Charles to a stranger in trouble can only be attributed to Summit's outstanding sense of responsibility and innate desire to serve as well as her deep bond with Charles that, in this case, enabled them to work together to save another person's life.

So here's to Wendy and Summit, service dog heroes! We're proud of you!



LETTER FROM LORI

Recently, a young lady came up to me and asked if she could ask me a few questions about me and my work at Patriot PAWS Service Dogs, so of course, I said yes. I'm always happy to talk with young people about how our dogs help disabled veterans. But then she told me why she wanted to talk to me...she said she had chosen me as her hero...me, a hero? I had to give that one some thought.

In fact, I gave it a lot of thought and came to the conclusion that what I am is not a hero but a person who is blessed beyond belief. I am getting to spend my life meeting the most amazing people, true heroes, people who gave so much for others they never even met. And when I get to meet these real-life heroes, I can't believe that I am getting to hear their stories of service and sacrifice and that I am now going to get the chance to be a part of their lives. What a privilege. What an honor.

And it doesn't stop there...God has also blessed me with another amazing group of people who, like me, want to give back to those who have given so much for us, to help those who now need our help. They freely give of their time and resources to work with me towards our common goal. Hebrews 13:2 says: "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares." I believe that.

So me, a hero? Definitely not. But I am privileged to know a lot of heroes and a lot of angels unawares, and for that, I am truly, truly blessed.

Spotlight On PUPPY RAISERS

Patriot PAWS' Puppy Raiser Program began in 2009 with just 4 participants. It currently has grown to 14, and according to Patriot PAWS trainer and program director Rhonda Lee: "Our goal is 20 by the end of the year."

Puppy raisers act as temporary foster homes to expose the dogs-in-training to home, work and social environments. The dogs go everywhere with the puppy raisers, just as they will someday go everywhere with the disabled veterans they will serve. Each potential puppy raiser is carefully screened before being entrusted with such a valuable animal and is instructed in how to work the dog to keep up his skills. Some puppy raisers take their dogs to fund-raising events on behalf of Patriot PAWS, and all act as ambassadors in getting word of Patriot PAWS' mission out to the public.

Long-time participant Kathleen McCullough says: "Having a hand in raising service dogs is



one of the most rewarding things I've ever done. (It's) my way of giving back to the soldiers that gave so much for me." Another participant, Debbie Bringhurst, says: "Working with these wonderful dogs...gives me a deep satisfaction knowing they are answers to many people's prayers. I feel grateful to share my love and home with these...four-legged heroes!"

To all of our puppy raisers, thank you for opening up your hearts and your homes to help us help our disabled veterans! We couldn't do it without you!

ELI'S CORNER

People often ask us what it takes to train our dogs. The answer is...a village...not a brick and mortar town, but a varied collection of people, and of course yours truly, working together with a common goal.

We start with puppies. I evaluate each puppy's perception of cats...does he see me as a playmate or as the enemy? Even if he wants to play, I must endure his puppyhood antics, like when his idea of fun is to try to get my entire head in his mouth. And then there are the puddles (ugh) which are twice as hard for me to try to avoid stepping in because I have four feet. You bipeds don't know how easy you've got it.

Over the next eighteen to twenty-four months, the puppies are rotated between two groups of people, the inmate trainers who do the actual training and the puppy raisers who socialize them



to the world outside the prison. Periodically, the puppies are brought back to the training center here in Rockwall for evaluation where we trainers make sure they are learning everything they need to know and haven't picked up any bad habits like, for example, chasing cats.

When the dogs are fully trained, they are brought together in a group with a group of veterans so each dog can work with each veteran until each veteran is chosen by a dog. We trainers observe and advise, but ultimately, one dog bonds with each veteran making it clear that this is the person he wants to serve. They train together for several days, and then we have Graduation Day when the dog/veteran teams leave us to begin their new lives together. At this point, there's usually not a dry human eye in the place, but I, of course, maintain my composure at all times (Cattitude Rule # 7). After all, there's always another day and another dog to train. Sometimes I think that twenty hours of sleep a day just won't be enough, but I always manage to make it through somehow...which reminds me... it's time for my nap.

Until next time, dear friends.

Eli



VETERAN CYLE HARRIS & MUSTANG

Army Infantryman William Cyle Harris proudly served with the 10th Mountain Division in Mogadishu, Somalia and was a part of the 1994 invasion of Port-au-Prince, Haiti. After serving his country from 1991-1995, Cyle went on to a different form of service by joining the Sherwood, AR Fire Department where he served as a Captain and EMT for 10 years; however, in 2008, he was diagnosed with ALS also known as Lou Gehrig's Disease.

Cyle's wife Michelle works away from home part-time which leaves Cyle alone. As his disease progressed, he began having more and more difficulty doing everyday things and knew he needed help. While researching service dogs on the computer one day, Cyle came across Patriot PAWS and decided to apply for a service dog to help him.

In November, 2011, Cyle received his service dog, a yellow Lab named Mustang. As Cyle's disease progresses, Mustang will become increasingly more important in assisting Cyle with those things he can no longer physically do as well as be there for companionship and emotional support. Mustang already assists Cyle with picking up dropped items, allows Cyle to brace on him to stand up, assists him with undressing, open doors and in general helps him deal with the effects of his disease. Cyle also has choking episodes, and Mustang can go get help or push a panic button if Cyle is alone.

It is said that a picture is worth a thousand words...Cyle's speech has been affected by his disease and his ability to communicate orally has been diminished, but seeing the bond of mutual love and respect of Cyle and Mustang working together as one communicates much more than mere words ever could. Writes Cyle: "He is part of our family...We love Mustang so much!"



VETERAN GARY FINCHER & MEMPHIS

Marine Corp. Sergeant E-5 Gary Fincher served two tours in Vietnam where he received gunshot wounds from which he was fortunate enough to recover. After serving his country, Gary went on to a career as a Director of Admissions and Records at the University level. At age 50, however, he was diagnosed with delayed-onset PTSD and is now 100% disabled from its severity.

Gary lives with his wife near San Diego, California. After being a workaholic working some 60-70 hours per week, Gary struggled with his retirement. He found himself with no responsibilities and far too much idle time. He became isolated, rarely left the house and found it difficult to interact with the public when he did. He felt debilitated but couldn't explain why. So when Gary heard about Patriot PAWS Service Dogs at his local VA, he realized that he had found a possible source of help. Gary already knew what great service companions dogs can be, so he applied.

In November, 2011, Gary received his service dog, Memphis, a Golden Retriever. Memphis instantly became Gary's new best friend and fishing buddy. Gary now has the responsibility of caring for Memphis, and together, they get out of the house and interact with the public. Gary suffers from flashbacks and nightmares and can now depend upon Memphis to redirect his attention away from the bad memories and back to the present, something Memphis did for the first time only days after going home with Gary, a testament to the strong bond between service dog and person. Gary says: "He brings joy to my life."

Gary believes that dogs are underutilized in helping people with disabilities and that they can change lives for the better. And that is exactly what Memphis has done...changed Gary's life for the better.



VETERAN TINA HOLLOWAY & PATTY

Army National Guard PFC Tina Holloway didn't join the Guard until she was 35 years old. While serving at Fort Leonard Wood, MO, she received multiple closed and stress fractures to both feet while marching on ice in improperly fitting boots. The fractures did not heal correctly resulting in nerve damage and severe foot pain and a disfigured right foot which left Tina unable to walk and dependent upon a wheelchair or scooter to get around.

Although Tina's mother Mary has been and continues to be a great source of help and support to Tina, Tina wanted to be more independent but lacked the ability or the means to do so. Then one day, while on her computer, Tina found the Patriot PAWS website and decided to apply for a service dog to help her.

In November, 2011, Tina received her new service dog, a mixed-breed named Patty. Patty was selected from a litter of puppies being offered on a Walmart parking lot and is a great example of the variety of dogs other than pure-breeds that Patriot PAWS trains to become service dogs. Tina's outlook on life is now considerably brighter than it once was: "I feel safe and more free than I have in years with Patty." She has the confidence she needs to go out in public more and is more independent with Patty being there to pick up dropped items, help her do everyday chores and bring her the phone or go get help if she falls. In fact, having Patty relieves much of the burden of caring for her from her mother and her whole family, something Tina very much wanted to achieve.

Tina makes her home in the state of Washington and quips that "I love to shop at Walmart, so Patty is the perfect dog for me!"



PATRIOT PAWS SERVICE DOG WINS AWARD

Patriot PAWS is proud to announce that Veteran Brian Field's service dog, Justice, was named the 2011 winner of The Texas Veterinary Medical Foundation's Companion Texas Animal Hall of Fame Award. Justice, a female yellow Lab, was placed with Brian by Patriot PAWS in 2010. Brian lost both legs while serving in Iraq in 2007. He has two prosthetic legs and must also use a wheelchair at times. Justice not only helps Brian with his mobility issues but helps him cope with his PTSD issues and makes his life better in general. From everyone at Patriot PAWS: Congratulations Brian and Justice!

SUPPORT

Patriot PAWS Service Dogs is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Caring for one of the dogs-in-training can cost \$20,000 - \$30,000. Only through donations (tax deductible) and volunteers are we able to provide these dogs to disabled veterans in need at no cost to the veterans.

If your donation is in honor or memory of someone, please e-mail the information to: patriotpaws@aol.com.

Make donations to Patriot PAWS using PayPal - it's fast, free and secure! If you have not used the PayPal system before, it only takes a moment to register. All major credit cards may be used on PayPal in a safe, secure environment.

ALL DONATIONS ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE!

DONATIONS CAN BE MADE AT: WWW.PATRIOTPAWS.ORG

We accept: PayPal, credit cards, checks and money orders (please use the enclosed envelope to mail your donation)

ALSO CONSIDER:

- Setting up a recurring donation
- Making a donation as a gift in someone's honor or memory
- Matching your employees/club members donations
- Conducting a fundraiser
- Becoming an Ambassador (we can send you as many brochures as you can hand out)
- Volunteering
- Becoming a Puppy Raiser

DID YOU KNOW?

- There are 43 applicants on our waiting list
- Our 2012 goal is to place 20 dogs
- We are updating our website-stay tuned for exciting changes!
- In May we will hire our second released inmate to work as a trainer in our Rockwall facility



MEET DAKOTA

Hi! My name is Dakota, and I'm going to be a Patriot PAWS service dog when I grow up! There's a whole lot to learn, and I'm studying real hard, but I could use your help. It costs a lot of money to train me and feed me and provide for my medical care for the eighteen months to two years that I'll be in training, and everyone at Patriot PAWS works real hard to see that I have everything I need so that when I graduate, I can help a disabled veteran have a better life. But in order to do all that, we need donations, and that's where you come in! Please help me and all the other hard-working puppies here at Patriot PAWS become service dogs to give back to those who have given so much for all of us. Thanks!

PATRIOT PAWS SERVICE DOGS IS LOCATED AT 254 RANCH TRAIL ROCKWALL, TEXAS 75032
FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT PATRIOTPAWS.ORG
OR CALL 972.772.3282

