

SOUTHEASTERN GUIDE DOGS NEWS

Impact

SPRING 2019



Heroes

Sean and Pella find freedom together

Ellie Mae touches lives at
Walter Reed Medical Center

After tragedy, our Gold Star dogs deliver smiles



Southeastern Guide Dogs

contents



3 From the CEO

4 Sean Brown and Service Dog Pella

6 Patty Barry and Facility Therapy Dog Ellie Mae

8 From the Chairman of the Board

9 About Our Veterans Programs



10 Katie, Shannon and Gold Star Family Dog Pez

12 Steve Battenberg and Guide Dog Marlo



14 Double Your Impact with Our Heroes Challenge

15 Introducing the Heroes Council

16 Born to Serve



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from the CEO

Dear Friends,

“Heroes” come in all shapes and sizes. Heroes are the American men and women who serve our country in every branch of the armed forces. They are the spouses and children who follow along or stay behind when deployments call.

Heroes are the extraordinary dogs that offer freedom and hope to veterans with vision loss and other disabilities. They are the dogs offering comfort to those who have lost loved ones in service to the nation. And they are the dogs stationed at military facilities around the country, delivering smiles without measure.

Through our veterans programs, we offer these highly skilled dogs at no cost, and our dogs enrich lives in ways that money can’t measure. That’s why your friendship and support have never been more important.

When you stand behind Southeastern Guide Dogs, you become a hero to these heroes. And for this, we thank you.

Warm regards,

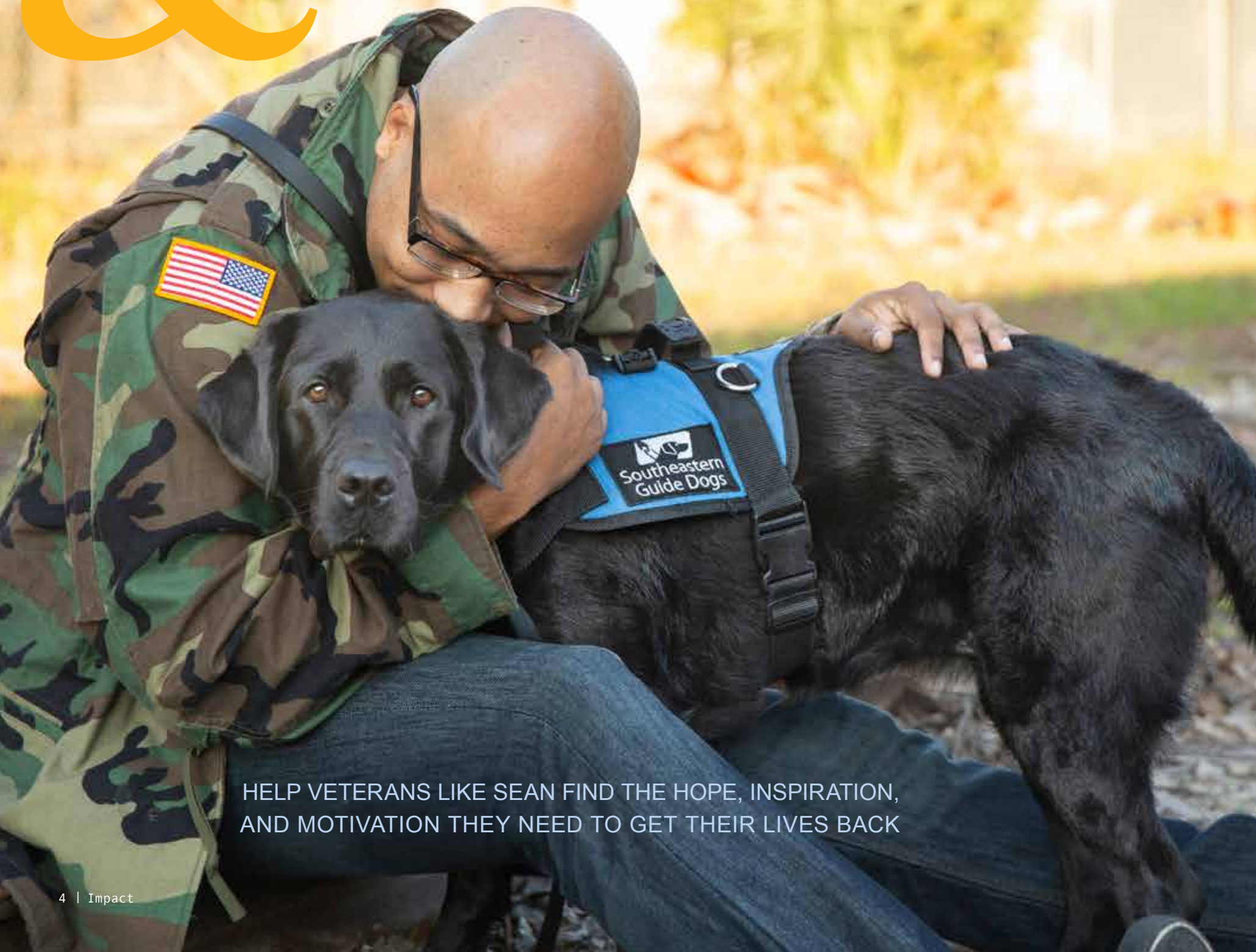
Titus Herman
Chief Executive Officer



BE A HERO FOR OUR HEROES

Sean Brown & Service Dog Pella

SAVANNAH, GEORGIA



HELP VETERANS LIKE SEAN FIND THE HOPE, INSPIRATION,
AND MOTIVATION THEY NEED TO GET THEIR LIVES BACK

Between 2006 and 2013, veteran Sean Brown lived some of the best times of his life, yet he also suffered more than most people endure in a lifetime. After seven years in the Army in both the Intelligence Corps and Quartermaster Corps, injuries cut Sean's time in the service short. Here's how Sean tells it:

SEAN BROWN (SB): The Army blessed me with the ability to travel the world, experience new cultures and ideologies, and also challenged me to push myself to a limit I couldn't have dreamed of physically and mentally. But then it all ended. On March 27th, 2013 I received my medical discharge at 100% disability. Physical and mental pain from service controlled my life and forced me to learn how to live behind a mask.

Sean stayed busy giving the outside world the illusion that everything was okay. As a sports announcer, radio show host, musician, church member, father of two kids, and the voice of the Savannah State Tigers, he was on the go. Yet he spent too much of his energy avoiding crowds and situations that triggered his anxiety and hyper-reaction from post-traumatic stress disorder.

SB: I started avoiding a lot of life. I was terrified that my peers and superiors would find out the truth about my challenges. None of my family really knew my anguish. All they could tell was that I was different, even though I looked good. My only relief came from the throttle of a motorcycle.

Motorcycles became both his escape and therapy with the "thrill of the road" easing his ever-growing issues. But when his body could no longer take the stress of riding and his doctor warned him to stop, he knew it was time to find help . . . and fast. And that's when a sweet black Lab named Pella came into Sean's life. She's the gentle, attentive service dog at his side, and she has steadily eased him back into the lifestyle he craves.

SB: She's keeping me calm. My family has noticed—I keep smiling—my smile is back. Her personality and her love for me and my well-being have endeared her to the hearts of everyone around me.

I have to give Pella credit for getting me back on my feet and active again as well as just being an understanding presence in my life. It's because of Pella that I have been able to go to busy department stores on a Saturday and know that I'm going to be okay, because she 'has my six.'

It's because of Pella that I'm able to sense when I'm losing my bearing and she's right by my side ready for a hug. Often when we are in the doctor's office, she will move from my side and lay in front of me just so she can have eyes on me. When I'm having a bad medical day, Pella NEVER leaves my side. Security cameras in my house have caught her nudging me in my sleep just to make sure I'm OK.

I wouldn't trade Pella for the world. I've lived under a mask for the last seven years and I had to hide everything. Now I can take the mask off. I can be me.

Patty Barry & Ellie Mae

Facility Therapy Dog
BETHESDA, MARYLAND



WALTER REED
NATIONAL
MILITARY MEDICAL
CENTER



The team at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center

The Walter Reed National Military Medical Center is known as the first stop in the continental United States for the care of the wounded, ill, and injured from global conflicts. Here, Patty Barry directs Walter Reed's facility therapy dog program and serves as the primary staff handler for their newest facility therapy dog, golden retriever Ellie Mae. Patty's career as a civilian with the Department of Defense spans 30 years, and she's also supported the therapy dog program since its inception in 2007.

Ellie Mae is the sixth Southeastern Guide Dogs facility therapy dog placed at Walter Reed, and her work is cut out for her. She impacts the lives of not just patients, but staff too, because in Ellie Mae's world, she showers anyone in her path with affection.

A therapy dog's joy is infectious, and Ellie Mae is learning from the best as she shadows Goldie, another one of our facility therapy dogs hosted by Patty. Depending on Ellie Mae's personality, she could find herself giving out friendship, love, and support in many areas around the base, including wounded warriors, pediatrics, behavior health, or on an obstetrics ward. This beautiful and sweet golden retriever touches lives as she provides comfort and service to the veterans, families, and staff members in the Walter Reed Bethesda community.

**YOUR SUPPORT HELPS US PLACE MORE
FACILITY THERAPY DOGS AROUND THE NATION**



from the
chairman of
the board

Dear Friends,

I've devoted my entire career to organizations that serve others, and now serving as the Southeastern Guide Dogs chairman of the board is something that I count as a privilege. This organization is a breed apart in its mission, integrity, and focus, and it is one that is worthy of complete trust.

What an exciting time! We're continuing our quest for excellence and are making some exciting enhancements to our programs this year. For example, we'll soon break ground on our Canine Aquatic Center to augment our canine conditioning program. And we'll place more dogs than ever this year, especially those serving veterans and those serving children with significant challenges such as vision loss or the loss of a parent in the military.

Standing with veterans has never been more important, especially those who face the challenges of post-traumatic stress disorder and other disabilities. The need is great, and with your help we stand ready to serve by providing the best dogs in the industry. Thank you for your ongoing support.

Warm regards,

Raymond W. Bishop
Chairman of the Board



GUIDE DOGS

Our guide dogs offer independence and freedom to visually impaired veterans, restoring confidence and dignity. Veterans live and learn on campus for 20 days with help from their new companions. Gone are tentative steps and white canes, replaced by heads held high and brisk paces.



About Our Veterans PROGRAMS

◀◀ SERVICE DOGS

Our service dogs help veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and other disabilities. With unconditional love and loyalty, they respond to commands that help restore stability and well-being. After our 11-day class, veterans report powerful stories of reconnecting with family and society once again.



◀◀ FACILITY THERAPY DOGS

Our facility therapy dogs are hand-picked to live with facility staff members and provide therapeutic comfort to veterans and families being treated in military medical facilities or working in high-stress military environments across the nation.



GOLD STAR FAMILY DOGS

Our Gold Star Family dogs give the gift of comforting friendship. Recognizing the sacrifices made when a family member dies in service to the nation, Southeastern Guide Dogs offers well-behaved, loving companion dogs to Gold Star families in need.



EMOTIONAL SUPPORT DOGS

Our skilled emotional support dogs benefit veterans, offering therapeutic companionship and helping to restore a more active lifestyle. These affectionate dogs improve veterans' physical, social, and emotional well-being and are provided at the recommendation of a medical professional.

JOIN ME IN THE WORTHWHILE MISSION OF SERVING
THOSE WHO SERVED. WE CAN'T DO IT WITHOUT YOU



Katie, Shannon & Gold Star Family Dog Pez

SAVANNAH, GEORGIA

Katie was madly in love with her high school sweetheart, an Army Sergeant First Class named Chris. The two married and started a family. But in July 2018, Chris was killed after coming under enemy small-arms fire while supporting a medical evacuation landing zone in eastern Afghanistan. Through the tears, Katie's top priority is now their eight-year-old daughter, Shannon.

Katie heard about Southeastern Guide Dogs through a fellow Army Ranger's family who saw a Facebook post about our Gold Star Family dogs. She applied for a dog, and they recently welcomed home Pez, an energetic and loving yellow Labrador.

Shannon, who is a lot like her dad and persistently optimistic, requested a "cuddly" dog. And the minute Shannon met Pez, she exploded into giggles while Pez covered her in puppy kisses. Pez shares Chris's ability to make everyone's day a little brighter, and Katie notices the difference this sweet dog makes.

"Shannon tells Pez her secrets; it's good for her," she says. "Shannon's more content and she has a friend again." But it's not only Shannon that Pez is cheering up. "Whenever I'm feeling upset, Pez comes and loves on me," Katie says. "Shannon loves her so much . . . Pez is such a blessing."

**WHEN YOU GIVE THE GIFT OF HOPE,
THE WORLD BECOMES A BRIGHTER PLACE**

Steve & Guide Dog Marlo Battenberg

KALAMAZOO, MICHIGAN

If someone tells Navy veteran Steve Battenberg, “It’s terrible that you lost your vision,” he’s likely to retort, “I’m the luckiest person you ever met in your life—I should be dead several times over!”

Like the time a 90-foot wave crashed over his ship during a rescue mission and a wall of water crushed his head into the side of the deck. After surgical removal of part of his temporal lobe, doctors warned him that he would need assisted care and may only live to 40. The traumatic brain injury left him vulnerable to the infection that blinded him just before his 50th birthday. After surviving the Gulf War and his misadventures at sea, Steve is happy to be alive, but he wasn’t happy when his wife, Lori, had to become his guide.

That’s why he’s thrilled that an energetic, affectionate, and fun yellow Lab named Marlo has restored his independence—and Lori’s peace of mind. “Marlo is perfect—they couldn’t have picked a better guide dog for me,” he says. “Now Lori and I can go back to living our lives.” Training with Marlo energized Steve’s outlook, too. “I have purpose again,” he says. “And at no cost to me—this is unbelievable!”

INVEST IN INDEPENDENCE FOR VETERANS LIKE STEVE





Gerardo Sosa and service dog Ginny

There has never been a better time to give, and we can't do it without you!

Introducing the **HEROES** Council

Dear Friends,

In the U.S. Armed Forces, the warrior ethos says that no one is left behind, and that includes the veterans who need us now. We stand ready to help.

We are a band of individuals who have pooled our resources to accomplish something together, and now we need your help. We've each committed \$25,000 or more, and together, we've amassed a heroes' challenge grant of \$250,000 that we're offering to Southeastern Guide Dogs. With this grant, we plan to match all donations dollar-for-dollar, up to \$250,000, which means that you can double your donation with each gift.

Southeastern Guide Dogs has an ambitious plan to serve more veterans than ever during 2019, and we want to help them accomplish their goals. Giving veterans the dogs they need to improve their lives is meaningful and worthwhile, and we're glad to be part of something so important. Can we count on you to join us?

With gratitude,
The Heroes Council

All donations are tax deductible as allowed by law. A copy of the official registration and financial information may be obtained from the Division of Consumer Services by calling toll free 1.800.435.7352 within the state. Registration does not imply endorsement, approval, or recommendation by the state. Registration number CH0475.

Double Your Impact with Our Heroes Challenge

Double your donation and multiply your impact! Your gift can go twice as far because a caring group of friends have come together to create our Heroes Challenge. Our Heroes Council will **match your gift (up to \$250,000)** with all proceeds supporting our programs for veterans.

Send your best gift by **June 30, 2019**. To double your donations, please use the special enclosed envelope or donate online at GuideDogs.org/challenge

Heroes Council Members

Bob Basham

Warren and Kate Coopersmith

Nancy and Bill Gacioch

George and Mary Graner

Jim Barge and Dawn McKnight

John and Susan Rapp

The Sam M. Scituro
Family Foundation

Lester and Diana Shapiro

Brian and Sherry Soucy

Born to Serve



I may look like an ordinary dog,
But I was born for something more.
To one day be your forever friend,
Eyes to see your world,
Paws to hold your hand,
With my heart beating close to yours.

Together, we'll make a way
To freedom, hope,
And a better future.
I'm a Southeastern Guide Dog,
And my heart belongs to a veteran.

THEY SERVED US. NOW IT'S OUR TURN.
JOIN US IN SERVING OUR VETERANS