

SIDE SIDE

dogsinc



ISSUE THIRTEEN

About Us

SIDE by SIDE is a publication of Dogs Inc.

Our dogs transform lives across the United States—at no cost to the recipients—thanks to the generosity of our supporters.

EXTRAORDINARY DOGS

Top-tier pedigrees, decades of research, and thousands of hours of training, care, and love prepare our dogs for life-changing destinies.

TRANSFORMING LIVES

Guide dogs light the way. Service dogs heal. Skilled companion dogs comfort. And therapy dogs uplift.

AT NO COST TO RECIPIENTS

We provide our clients with their loyal companions, expert training, and lifetime support, completely free of charge.



4210 77th St E, Palmetto, FL 34221
dogsinc.org | 941.729.5665

Hello

Dear Friend,

Finding the one, the perfect match. A bond that can't be forced—only felt.

The right dog. The right person. When it clicks, you can feel it. The way everything seems a little more possible.

Not just a match. The right match. The one that changes everything.

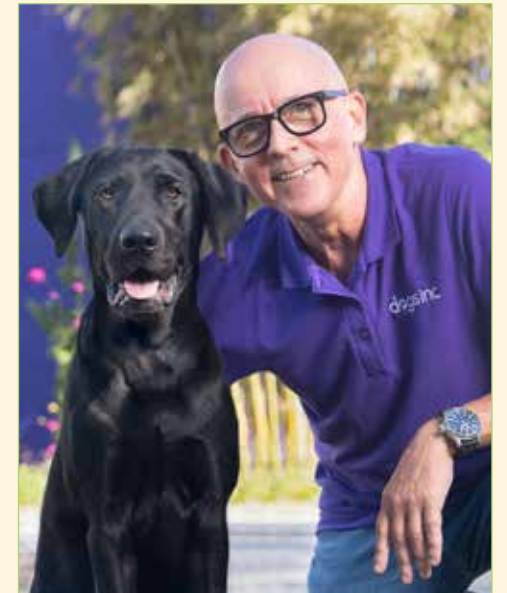
Made possible by you. Because you believe in the bond before they even meet.

Thank you—for your big heart.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in green ink that reads "Titus Herman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Titus" being more prominent.

Titus Herman
President and CEO



Our Dogs



Guide Dogs turn darkness to light.

- ▶ Freedom and confidence for teens, adults, and veterans with vision loss

WE PROVIDE OUR DOGS

& SERVICES AT NO COST



Service Dogs restore freedom.

- ▶ Hope for veterans healing from physical and invisible wounds
- ▶ Strength for Gold Star family members carrying the weight of sacrifice (coming soon)
- ▶ Lifesaving support for teens living with diabetes (coming soon)



Skilled Companion Dogs comfort in times of need.

- ▶ Friendship to children, teens, and adults with vision loss facing isolation
- ▶ Hope to veterans battling with loneliness
- ▶ Relief to military families grappling with stress
- ▶ Love to Gold Star families coping with grief



Therapy Dogs bring healing.

- ▶ Peace to patients and healthcare workers at military facilities across the U.S.
- ▶ Comfort to first responders at facilities in the Tampa Bay Area



Celebrate New Beginnings


OUR NEWEST GRADUATES



New Companions. New Hope.

A moment that changes everything—that's what our newest graduates experience when they first embrace their extraordinary dogs. And we know that this is only the beginning. Because every day, they'll find peace in their companions' presence, steadfast love in their eyes, and newfound freedom in their service.

Patrick Gilmer | Service Dog Miles

U.S. ARMY VETERAN 
CITRUS SPRINGS, FLORIDA

Some wounds don't bleed—but they never stop hurting. Patrick spent six years as a medic in active duty, witnessing devastation. He didn't fight on the front lines, but seeing the aftermath carved memories he couldn't forget.

Coming home, life grew heavier. As a single dad, Patrick carried more than his own battles. He cared for his parents through their final days, endured the loss of his beloved dog, and watched his son move away. It was loss after loss.

"I was all alone," says Patrick. "Every day blended into the next. I didn't want to be around people."

That's when Miles found his place at Patrick's side.

Miles jumpstarts their mornings, breaking the cycle of sleeping through sadness. When anxiety creeps in, it feels smaller with Miles close by. He knows when to climb into Patrick's lap. When to break the spiral before it starts. Miles helps Patrick escape nightmares with a soft, gentle bark—a lifeline in the darkness.

"Miles is incredible," Patrick says. "I'm going places that I haven't been to in years because I just feel safe. It's unreal how different my life is. I'm alive again."

Miles was raised by Melissa Creter, Matthew Gruber, and Jessica Trujillo.



**“Ross is
loyal,
always
there,
and
always
ready
to go.”**

Gary Hartline | Guide Dog Ross

BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA

Ross was raised by Pat Burke and the late Lew Eads.

**Chris Salter
Skilled Companion Dog Zen**

ROME, GEORGIA

*“It’s just the simple fact of not being alone.
Zen makes me laugh and helps bring a
bright spot to my day.”*

Zen was raised by Brian & Susan Cullum.



Kris Depuy | Guide Dog Sugar

FINDLAY, OHIO

*“There was a point where I didn’t think life was
worth living. I thought, I am not living like
this. It’s not worth it. Then I came home with
the best Christmas gift ever, a new dog, Sugar.
A dream come true.”*

Sugar was raised by Samantha Messner and Jackie Gould.



**Dr. Tiffany Castleman
Therapy Dog Captain**

WINDMOORE HEALTHCARE PATRIOT SUPPORT
PINELLAS PARK, FLORIDA

*“Captain does a really good job of doing
exactly what’s asked of her, which is to provide
comfort. She’s a great asset to the unit.”*

Captain was raised by Carrie Carpenter and Megan Manzie-Tappe.





Deanna Dezzi | Guide Dog Chris

SARASOTA, FLORIDA

“Having Chris with me makes it okay that the world is super blurry. He’s just made me feel okay about vision loss in a way that I have not felt in forever.”

Chris was raised by Sheri Scheutzow.



Peter Tong | Service Dog Ren

U.S. ARMY VETERAN 

WINTER HAVEN, FLORIDA

The hardest part wasn’t leaving war. It was learning how to live without it. Peter found civilian life disorienting and overwhelming. Without structure, even daily routines triggered anxiety and a sense of being lost. Then came Ren—a service dog whose quiet presence and constant check-ins brought calm and connection. “She’s a lifesaver,” Peter says.

Ren was raised by the Warman Family.



Evie Skilled Companion Dog Lucy

OAK PARK, ILLINOIS

Evie’s world is full of songs, twirls, and imagination—but blindness in her left eye often sent her tumbling. Now, with Lucy by her side, Evie dances with carefree joy. Lucy never leaves her, from listening to Evie’s guitar to cuddling at bedtime. “If Evie cries, Lucy puts her head on her shoulder,” her mom says. “It’s the cutest thing ever.”

Lucy was raised by Robyn Phillips.



"My mom was walking super ahead of me, and I didn't freak out. I didn't have to ask anybody anything. I knew Adele would get me there safely."

Hollie Fuller | Guide Dog Adele

DECATUR, ALABAMA

Adele was raised by Dana Mudd and Rick Kelly.



Sara Engels Service Dog Bailey

U.S. AIR FORCE VETERAN 🇺🇸
SARASOTA, FLORIDA

*"It's what she does for me internally.
She turns down the volume on my
internal static and settles my soul."*

Bailey was raised by Sara McMahon.

Mary Heath Guide Dog Murphy

PARRISH, FLORIDA

*"Once you take a hold of that
harness, and you don't have that
cane, it's a whole different feeling.
You feel free, because the cane
can only do so much for you.
A dog can do a lot more."*

Murphy was raised by Laura & Troy Ledbetter.



Les Cameron | Guide Dog Riley

CUMMING, GEORGIA

*"Riley's given me my freedom back.
He knows his job is to make sure that
I'm safe and to know where I'm going."*

Riley was raised by Olivia & Mary Beth Driskell
and Jessica White.



Theresa | Guide Dog Ace

FLORIDA

*"Ace is my ears and eyes, and I can feel the
world through him. He restored my independence,
and I don't even think about not trusting the
world around me."*

Ace was raised by Laura Kranzel.



Shawn Gross | Guide Dog Mimi

SPRINGFIELD, MISSOURI

*"Walking alone at night with Mimi—
it's a triumph for me. It feels like
an accomplishment."*

Mimi was raised by Dana & Bob Coston and
Teresa & Victor Luaces.



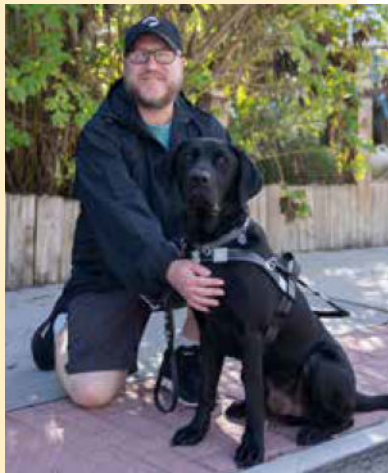


Nick | Guide Dog Morgan

ALABAMA

*“He’s the perfect dog. Everything we could have asked for with Morgan—
God answered our prayers.”*

Morgan was raised by Robert Kasperski.



Bruce Statler | Guide Dog Rich

CHAMBERSBURG, PENNSYLVANIA

“He’s really good at knowing when I tend to try to walk too fast, and he slows me down, keeping me safe.”

Rich was raised by Elaine Ebaugh.



**Matthew Zebroski
Guide Dog Hobey**

PANAMA CITY BEACH, FLORIDA

*“Hobey makes me very happy.
He gets me out of the house more.”*

Hobey was raised by John & Lindsay Goldsmith.



**Emma
Skilled Companion Dog Sloan**

DAYTON, OHIO

*“I don’t know where Emma would be without Sloan. He sees her for her.”
—Emma’s mom, Alexis*

Sloan was raised by Leslie Cechan.

**Tony Edwards
Guide Dog Gruber**
ELIZABETHTOWN, KENTUCKY
“Fun was not really in my vocabulary for a while. And I feel it again with Gruber. He gives me back the thrill of tomorrow’s opportunities!”

Gruber was raised by Parvathy Sarma & Kiki Ramaswamy.






Bob Volkerding | Guide Dog Marjack

BRADENTON, FLORIDA

"Marjack gives me a lot of love. Not only confidence and safety, but also motivation and emotional support."

Marjack was raised by Katie & Scott Tyler.

Eileen Skilled Companion Dog Rozelia

U.S. NAVY VETERAN 
NOKOMIS, FLORIDA

Back and forth. Back and forth. Five days after the 9/11 Pentagon attack, Navy veteran and FBI agent Eileen kept pace with her cadaver dog, scouring the rubble for any trace of human remains. She remained focused, driven by duty. Now retired, memories of those days quietly persist below the surface, easily sparked. Skilled companion dog Rozelia now offers a comforting presence that helps Eileen find peace amidst the echoes of the past.

Rozelia was raised by Eileen R.



"When I think of Betty, I get a big smile on my face. I'm just filled with joy to have her in my life."

Madalena Diosomito | Guide Dog Betty

NAPLES, FLORIDA


Betty was raised by Brenda Holfinger and April Cabral.





**"It felt like I was stuck,
chained to the floor,
while the rest of
the world moved
forward. Now, Grady
gives me what has
been missing—we
are starting to keep
up with the world
around me again."**

Kayla Bear | Service Dog Grady

U.S. MARINE VETERAN 
FLORIDA

Grady was raised by Jan Leaf and Barbara & Jim Flaherty.



Larry Skilled Companion Dog Stan Lee

PEACHTREE CITY, GEORGIA

"He is my buddy. I tell him that every night before we go to sleep. I tell him what a good dog he's been—how much I appreciate him. And he just sits there and listens."

Stan Lee was raised by Pamela Hennessey.



Chad Bagley | Guide Dog Nancy

MANCHESTER, TENNESSEE

The day Chad nearly fell into a trash can, he laughed with the crowd—but the reality wasn't funny. Vision loss turned everyday obstacles into hazards, and a cane wasn't enough.

Then came Nancy. A firecracker of a guide dog, eager and unstoppable. Now, Chad moves with confidence—not second-guessing, not being watched—just walking forward, with his partner by his side.

Nancy was raised by Nicole & Mira Balzano.



Linda Schuh | Therapy Dog Gator


126TH AIR REFUELING WING
SCOTT AIR FORCE BASE
ST. CLAIR COUNTY, ILLINOIS

"There's a stigma to mental health in the military. Gator helps break that stigma. He's opening doors for people."

Gator was raised by Kai & Karley Gallops.



Joseph Skilled Companion Dog Reese

U.S. AIR FORCE VETERAN 
NEW MARKET, ALABAMA

In 2018, hurricane Michael made catastrophic landfall near Tyndall Air Force Base, demolishing everything in its wake. Joseph and his family lost their home that day.

This U.S. Air Force veteran and his wife, Medea, stepped into the unknown, moving their family to temporary evacuation locations before settling in Alabama. His children mourned the comfort of their home, community, and friendships.

Then, they found themselves in the eye of another storm—Medea's mother was losing her battle with cancer.

Joseph held it together for his family, but a post-traumatic stress diagnosis left him feeling alone in the winds of the unknown.

"For the longest time I was struggling with events that happened while still in,

and then shortly after, the military. I ignored them for a long time, because my family was going through so much," Joseph says.

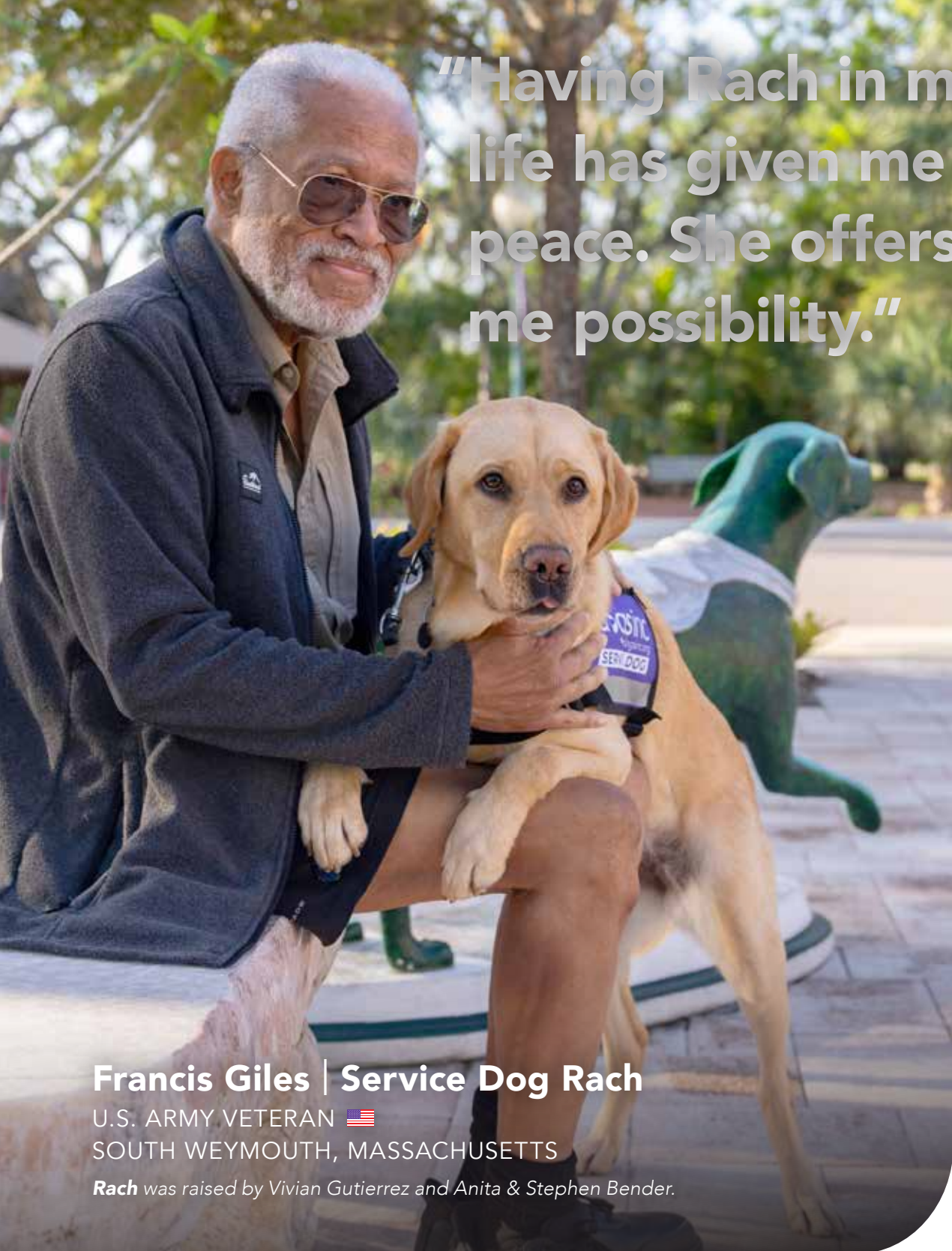
Reese came like a ray of sunshine. She's playful with their three children while offering peace and cuddles to Joseph and Medea—the best of both worlds.

"That alone feeling...it didn't feel so strong anymore," Joseph says.

Reese also brings a special companionship to their teen daughter, Mia, who has visual impairments and hopes to one day have a guide dog.

She offers love to an entire family, leading them from dark clouds to brighter horizons.

Reese was raised by Jackie Wolfinger-Zellinger.



"Having Rach in my life has given me peace. She offers me possibility."

Francis Giles | Service Dog Rach

U.S. ARMY VETERAN 

SOUTH WEYMOUTH, MASSACHUSETTS

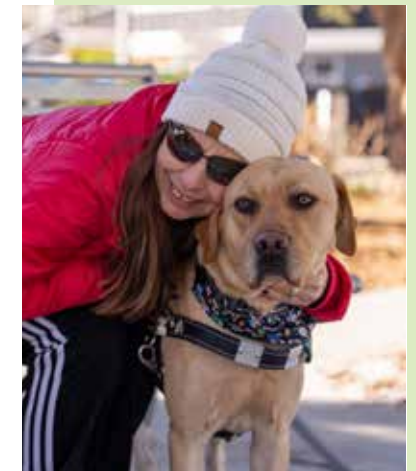
Rach was raised by Vivian Gutierrez and Anita & Stephen Bender.

**Yvonne Guettler
Guide Dog Fleury**

STOCKBRIGDE, GEORGIA

"Fleury gives me peace of mind and more independence. He's just so happy to be with me, and I am with him too."

Fleury was raised by Robin Sojcher.



Becky Redden | Guide Dog Ally

MCCONNELLS, SOUTH CAROLINA

"My mom said that since the day I got Ally, she has seen a smile on my face. He's my perfect match."

Ally was raised by Kayla Northcutt and Steven Fallon.



**Emersyn
Skilled Companion Dog Wilco**

PEYTON, COLORADO

"The atmosphere has felt more joyful and happier in our household. Wilco is a really good fit for us."
—Emersyn's mom, Alison

Wilco was raised by Jackie & Stanley Douglas.





Leah Smith | Guide Dog Shiraz

SNELLVILLE, GEORGIA

Leah weighs and measures each ingredient, working from memory and touch—she knows them by heart. The scale at the bakery reads the measurements aloud.

Leah spent years worrying that her cane would fail her. Terrified of falling. Over time, her vision declined, cloaking her world in shadows.

However, her first guide dog, Donna Bee, helped her start working at a local bakery. Hope began to rise.

Donna Bee loved to stick by Leah when she sang in her church choir every Sunday, but it came time for her first companion to settle into retirement.

Now, sprinkle in the zesty new ingredient to Leah's routine: Shiraz.

Leah knows she can pour complete trust into Shiraz. This pup stops on a dime when approaching a curb, keeping her safe. With a wagging tail and endless enthusiasm, Shiraz is mixing into Leah's life, learning the rhythms of the bakery and choir loft.

"She brings me joy and excitement," Leah says.

For Leah, Shiraz is more than a guide, she's a recipe for independence, safety, and confidence. With a fresh batch of goals and the sweet smell of potential in the air, together they are embracing a new journey.

Shiraz was named by Jo-Ski Theiler-Czerniawski & AJ Theiler.



Ashley Millar Service Dog Marcel

U.S. NAVY VETERAN 🇺🇸
STATESBORO, GEORGIA

"Marcel's hugs make me feel like he understands. I'm not by myself anymore. I feel like I can do a lot more now."

Marcel was raised by Sandra Wilkey and Gina Hagopian.

Chad Zinda Skilled Companion Dog Homer

U.S. ARMY VETERAN 🇺🇸
ST. PETERSBURG, FLORIDA

"It's a really good feeling when I come home and Homer wants to lay next to me. I'm really happy."

Homer was raised by Ryan Rudnitsky.





Elizabeth
Gold Star Family Dog Ryker

APEX, NORTH CAROLINA

*"We built a bond the day I met him.
I'm a lot happier now—he's a huge gift."*

Ryker was raised by Pam McClimans and Lynn & Frank Aquilon.



James Wiles
Skilled Companion Dog Hobbes

U.S. ARMY VETERAN 
RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA

"Hobbes may be the most loving dog."

Hobbes was raised by Phyllis & Phil Fox.



Jayne Tabb | Service Dog Ace

U.S. AIR FORCE VETERAN 
MERIDIAN, IDAHO

*"I felt like I didn't have anything to live for.
I had no joy in my life. Ace has brought joy,
laughter, and happiness back into my life.
I can't say thank you enough."*

Ace was raised by Amra Dillard Rickwa.

**"Fitzy keeps
me on my feet
and is always
up for new
adventures."**



Tyler Patskoski | Guide Dog Fitzy
GREENVILLE, SOUTH CAROLINA

Fitzy was raised by Donna Onishenko.



Kristin Sheriff Guide Dog Buckles

RIVIERA BEACH, FLORIDA

"Buckles has made a huge difference in my life. She's my independence again."

Buckles was raised by Rick & Jane Lewis.



Melanie Gold Star Family Dog MJ


TEXAS

While nothing can fill the space left behind, MJ helps hold this family together—one loving moment at a time.

MJ was raised by Jane Milheiser.



Ronnie Reid Service Dog Harmony

U.S. MARINE CORPS VETERAN 
VENICE, FLORIDA

"Harmony's woken up a softer side of me. She's given me my heart back . . . I've never felt like this."

Harmony was raised by Beverly Kramer.



Generosity
can live
forever.



HERITAGE SOCIETY

Join the Dogs Inc Heritage Society today
and leave a legacy that lasts.

The Heritage Society is a group of caring individuals committed to ensuring the long-term stability of our school through wills and bequests.

Remembering Dogs Inc in your will creates a legacy of kindness, and gifts of any size impact our extraordinary dogs.

Simply notify us that you have included Dogs Inc in your will by emailing heritagesociety@dogsinc.org, and find out more at dogsinc.org/HS.



Class Supporters

Thank you for your thoughtful and compassionate gift. We recognize your desire to make a difference and your ability to create a lasting impact through meaningful giving.

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The Margaret & Isaac Barpal Endowed Scholarship
The Pam Nuss and guide dog Roman Endowed Dog Scholarship

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The Dogs Inc **Cornerstone Society** is an exceptional community of like-minded friends. Members make a profound impact on our mission through a multi-year commitment.

You're invited to join the Cornerstone Society today.



Membership Levels

Partner | \$1,200–\$4,999 per year

Benefactor | \$5,000–\$9,999 per year

Visionary | \$10,000–\$49,999 per year

Guardian | \$50,000–\$99,999 per year

Founder | \$100,000+ per year



Enjoy exclusive events and other benefits.
Join at dogsinc.org/CS or call **941.729.5665**.

Can one dog change a life?

Just ask our alumni. New adventures, days of hope, nights of peace—the change these exceptional dogs make doesn’t end when they meet their soulmates. It grows. With every smile, act of love, and moment of freedom, these special bonds reach greater depths and soar to new heights.



Tom Fouts & Service Dog Opal
MATCHED 2021
“As we have grown together, Opal knows me sometimes better than I know myself. She takes care of me as much as I take care of her.”

Where are They Now?
ALUMNI UPDATE



Walt Gibson & Service Dog Bonzo
MATCHED 2020
“He gets me up every morning with a purpose and helps by forcing me to go outside with him no matter how cold or snowy the weather is. He has become my best and closest friend. I would be lost without my service dog Bonzo.”



Britt Leblanc Simard & Guide Dog Eddy
MATCHED 2024
“Eddy has made it where I’m comfortable traveling and shopping on my own once again. We have been on planes, trains, and many new places in the last year.”

Brittney Wright & Guide Dog Hayley

MATCHED 2023

"Hayley's my sunshine on a cloudy day, and I love her more than she will ever know. She's my Disney-loving partner. She gets so excited to meet characters. When I whip out Mickey ears, she gets such a big smile and jumps up in excitement."



ALUMNI UPDATE

David Caras & Service Dog Bobb

MATCHED 2015

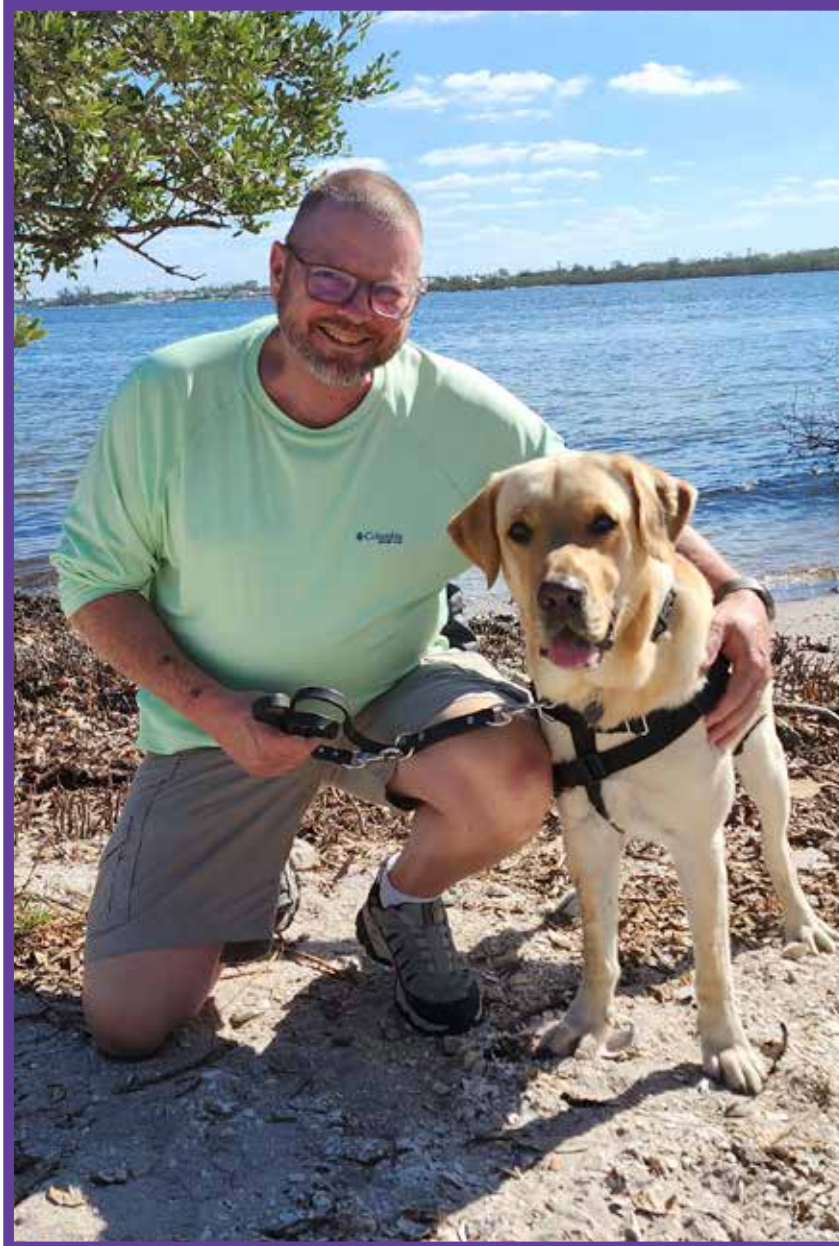
"Bobb has flown around the country with me over 300 times—he helps me stay active. He climbed a 12,000 foot mountain with me, accompanied me to sailing races on both coasts of America, Colorado, Wyoming, New Hampshire, and Maine for my Paralympic Nordic Biathlon training and competitions."



Karen Madore & Guide Dog Bubbles

MATCHED 2014

"For over 11 years, Bubbles has helped keep me safe and opened the world for me. She loves being on our boat with her life jacket on and sleeping on the bow."



James Wood & Service Dog Captain Mac

MATCHED 2024

"Before Captain Mac, I felt alone, misunderstood, and was afraid to leave my house. He understands and reacts to my anxiety, bad dreams, and frustrations—he grounds me. Captain Mac is my best friend and my superhero!"



John Scmillio & Skilled Companion Dog Kelce

MATCHED 2024

"Kelce brings an incredible amount of joy and companionship into my life. He's like a cheerful, playful shadow that makes every day brighter!"

Cathy Morris & Guide Dog Lu Lu

MATCHED 2017

"Lu Lu takes me places safely. She has given me my freedom back and has helped me gain my self-confidence back. Our trust in each other is extremely high. Her smile, tail wags, and happy eyes are truly an asset for both of us."



Becca & Skilled Companion Dog Rockwell

MATCHED 2022

"Rockwell helps me to not be afraid when I sleep at night. Rockwell is always right at my feet and follows me wherever I go. He's my constant friend."

More than Pros. Hope Givers.

