Bennett enjoys being more self-sufficient with Seizure Response Dog AGGIE by his side.
AT 14 YEARS OLD, Bennett Black’s life changed forever. It was a searing 96° on August 8, 1997, just outside of Phoenix, Arizona, where Bennett grew up. He was riding his motorized scooter to a nearby store – relishing the breeze on his face. He remembers stopping at the crosswalk. The store was right across the corner. No one knows for sure what happened next.

“I tested my luck,” says Bennett, “and I failed.” As he crossed the road, Bennett was hit by a car traveling 45 mph, leaving him with a traumatic brain injury.

As a result of the accident, over the course of the following year, Bennett developed epilepsy. He had his first grand mal seizure when he was 16. He went from an active boy, interested in airplanes and motorcycles, an aspiring marksman with dreams of enlisting in the Navy, to a young man nearly incapacitated by a half dozen or more seizures a day.

In 2004, Bennett had brain surgery in an attempt to bring his seizures under control. The surgery decreased the frequency of Bennett’s seizures; it also changed the types of seizures he did have, and left him with other physical challenges.

“I woke up and my left arm started shaking uncontrollably. To this day, it hasn’t stopped. Plus, I was still having hour-long grand mal seizures almost every day,” Bennett recalls. “It still took a while before I decided I needed further help from somewhere. I started looking, and my search led me to Assistance Dogs and finally to Paws With A Cause.”

At 28 years old, Bennett’s life changed again. It was a breezy 73°
Bennett enjoys spending time playing with AGGIE at the park near his home.

**WHAT DOES A SEIZURE FEEL LIKE?**

More than two million adults in the United States have been diagnosed with epilepsy or a similar seizure disorder. More than 150,000 new cases are diagnosed every year – that’s about 400 cases each day. Medicines and surgeries effectively control seizures for many, but, even with treatment, 25-30% of people with seizure disorders continue to experience regular seizure activity.

Seizures are essentially electrical storms in the brain. At least 30 different types of seizures exist, and no two people will experience them in quite the same way.

This is how Bennett describes what a seizure feels like for him:

My shortest seizure lasted three minutes, and my longest two hours. Most of the time, I have grand mal seizures and those last an hour or less. I have at least one, sometimes several, each week.

At the very beginning of a seizure, I start to look disoriented. I stare straight ahead without moving at all. Then I start to see colors in front of me, and feel like I’m spinning in circles. I feel as sick to my stomach as you can imagine and sense horrible tastes and smells that aren’t really there.

At that point, I usually fall down and start to convulse. Sometimes I lose consciousness. Afterward, I can only remember the first ten minutes or so of the seizure. It takes rest and time before I begin to feel better again.

---

**ABOUT SEIZURE RESPONSE DOGS**

PAWS® Seizure Response Dogs are custom-trained to help people who have epilepsy or another seizure disorder.

*During a client’s seizure,* a PAWS Dog may be trained to:
- Activate a life-alert system or notify another person to “get help”
- Retrieve a phone
- Provide tactile stimulation

*After a client’s seizure,* they may be trained to:
- Brace for a client to sit or stand up
- Retrieve a phone, medicine, or food
- Offer comfort

PAWS Seizure Response Dogs are **not** trained to:
- Provide protection during a seizure
- Predict seizure activity in advance

Applicants for a Seizure Response Dog must be at least 14 years old and have at least one seizure per month, in addition to meeting PAWS’ other eligibility criteria. You can find more information at pawswithacause.org or by calling 800-253-7297.
PAWS IS LAUNCHING A NEW WEBSITE

THE RESULTS of a successful partnership are unmistakable. We see them in our Assistance Dog teams every day.

This March, visit pawswithacause.org to see our revamped website, the result of PAWS’ successful partnership with Scott Allen Creative.

Now, we could tell you here all the exciting things you’ll find there – from news and events, to client stories and information, to ways to donate and get involved – but we’d really rather let you check it out for yourself.

Once you do, tell us what you think! What else would you like to see from PAWS? Use the feedback form on the Contact Us page to let us know!

NEW WEBSITE FEATURE: CORPORATE MATCHING GIFT SEARCH

DOES YOUR company have a matching gift program? Did you know nearly 50% of Fortune 500 companies do? On average, one in ten donors is eligible for matching charitable gifts through their employer.

Imagine what we could do if 10% of our donations were doubled.

In 2012, that would have been an extra $200,000-$300,000 invested to enhance the independence and quality of life for people with disabilities through custom-trained Assistance Dogs. Another way to look at it: that’s as many as 10 more Assistance Dog teams like Bennett and AGGIE.

When our new website launches in March, you can find out if your employer will match your gifts to PAWS – and even go ahead and make a gift – on our Donate page at pawswithacause.org.

Questions? Call Paula at 800-253-7297 or email: ppasma@pawswithacause.org. Thank you!

Some matching gift companies include:

- Johnson Controls
- Bank of America
- Pfizer

CORPORATE MATCHING GIFTS: DONATIONS FROM AN EMPLOYER THAT MATCH DONATIONS TO A CHARITABLE ORGANIZATION MADE BY AN EMPLOYEE

Paws With A Cause® | www.pawswithacause.org | 800-253-7297 | 4646 South Division, Wayland, MI 49348
PAWS FACTS

41

FIELD REPS

service 30 states, and provide training and support to our Assistance Dog teams where they live

CURRENTLY

40%

of applicants request a PAWS Seizure Response Dog

PAWS’ SPECIALLY DESIGNED TEMPERAMENT TEST

identifies dogs suitable for the Seizure Response Dog program

FROM PAWS’ FACEBOOK PAGE

Julie Conigliaro

PAWS has been supporting me for 16 years. I’m currently with my PAWS Successor Dog, JADE. PAWS has done an excellent job with matching both of my dogs to my personality and active lifestyle. There are no words to describe the gratitude I feel to everyone involved with PAWS every time JADE alerts me to a sound. There is no better gift than independence and of course the furry love that comes with it. :) Thank you everyone!

PAWS IS ACTIVE ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Please like us on Facebook, follow us on Twitter and connect with us on LinkedIn to stay up on all the latest PAWS news!
We had such a good time last year, we decided to do it again! Team PAWS is excited for our second year as a Tier I Charity Partner of the Fifth Third River Bank Run.

Did you know the 36th annual River Bank Run includes the only 25K Wheelchair Racing Division in the world? In fact, the world record in the Men's Division was set at it back in 2002!

Recruiting for Team PAWS is now underway. We're looking for racers at all levels (which span from a Community 5K Walk to 25K Run), fundraisers and volunteers for Race Day, May 11.

As a Team PAWS member, you’ll receive many benefits:

- Improved health and well-being
- Satisfaction of supporting a worthy cause
- Access to Charity Plaza on Race Day with your personal, private gear check-in and restrooms

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

Paws With A Cause®
4646 South Division
Wayland, MI 49348
www.pawswithacause.org

OUR MISSION
Paws With A Cause® enhances the independence and quality of life for people with disabilities nationally through custom-trained Assistance Dogs. PAWS® increases awareness of the rights and roles of Assistance Dog teams through education and advocacy.

GO GREEN
To receive PAWS communications electronically, email your request and name to: gogreen@pawswithacause.org

RUN.WALK.ROLL. give.
Join the Cause any way you can ~

Ready to get moving? For more information, visit our website or contact Erin: 800-253-7297, emaag@pawswithacause.org.

PAWS volunteers Missy Bonner and Angela Overbeek at the 2012 Community 5K Walk.

RACE DAY, MAY 11