In “You Needed Me,” PAWS Assistance Dog ARCHER shares his journey from birth to being placed with his partner, Jill.

DOGS FOR DIGNITY
Stories of the Journey to Independence

SUMMER 2018 NEWSLETTER

A PUP’S PERSPECTIVE
She gives me the ability to give. I give her the ability to live more independently.
My name is SAWYER and I’ll be the first to admit that the day I came into this world – August 3, 2012 – was quite exciting. They called me Mr. Green, identified by the green ribbon tied around my tiny neck to set me apart from the other ten puppies. I spent several weeks with my mama learning all the things good dogs must do – mostly being patient and waiting my turn.

Then one fine day I was taken to a strange place with all kinds of barking dogs and new scents. It was a little scary at first. But I was cuddled and hugged by every human I saw. Soon after I got there, I was given to a special human with a soft voice and tender touch that set me at ease right away. I didn’t know it at the time, but she was my PAWS® Foster Puppy Raiser.

I lived with my new family for almost 18 months. While I was with my family, I learned so many things—like every time I did a “sit,” or a “stay,” or an “under,” I could get them to give me treats. It was like taking kibble from a puppy. Sometimes, I even got a treat for just looking into their eyes! We practiced every week at the place where the barking dogs lived until I got really good.

I visited schools which I loved. Little humans are the best! They were giggly, and wiggly, and always so quick with belly rubs. I even visited them in the hospital. I gave gentle cuddles to humans who I sensed needed snuggles. It just seemed like the right thing for a pup to do.

Mama often left me with “aunts” and “uncles” for visits. This was always so exciting because it meant I was in for a new adventure—from stitches in my head to green marker stains in my fur—sometimes you get in trouble when you hang out with humans. They taught me so much. Eventually, I learned to be good wherever I went, comfortable and attentive, no matter the surroundings or who I was with.

One day Mama took me back to the place with the barking dogs, but this time was different. Everyone was quiet and sad. Mama cradled my face in her hands and explained that my time with her and her family was done. Her voice was soft and tender, just like the day we met. She said I was going to do great and wonderful things for someone special. We hugged and whined, and she handed my leash to someone new and watched as I walked away. We were
both brave, and I went where I was destined to go.
After that day, I went to a special school with other half-grown pups, right there where all the barking dogs lived. The humans watched me all the time and taught me to do more and more things. I got better, smarter, and bigger. I felt confident that I could do all things and live a life of service and love for someone special, no matter what or where.

Soon after, the humans came and got me. They led me out into the big room and they all stood around looking at me. I was told “free” and walked about, trying to figure out what was happening.

And then I knew.

There was a human in a power chair all by herself. I didn’t want her to be alone so I went to her to right away and knew she was special. She was nervous, quiet, excited, and sweet all at once. I sniffed her . . . she touched me . . . I said hi and she spoke softly to me. And then we knew. She was for me and I was for her—my forever friend!

I went back into training after that day, learning new things that matched my human’s needs. Even though there were other dogs living with me at PAWS, we weren’t all learning the same things. I was taught specific tasks that would help my forever friend. It was hard work, but I was excited because I knew I was going to help her.

Six months later, we were together again. Now I get to be with her all of the time, helping her whenever she asks. I open doors for her – even the refrigerator door. If she drops something, I retrieve it and place it in her lap. Sometimes it’s easy and other times it’s tough. Speaking from experience, it’s tricky to pick up a credit card on a slippery floor, but I realized if I push it to the grout, it’s a lot easier to pick up.

The other human who lives with us tells me that he feels comfortable when he leaves my forever friend at home now. He knows if she ever needs to get out of the house, I am there to help.

I have loved everyone that I have met along the way. While at times it was hard to say goodbye, I know that I am exactly where I am supposed to be. She needs me and I love being there for her, no matter where we go. She gives me the ability to give, and I give her the ability to live more independently. We’re a perfect match.

We are beyond grateful to the PAWS Dog Volunteers and donors who make matches like this possible. Will you consider donating or becoming a PAWS Dog Volunteer to bring love into the homes of others through trained Assistance Dogs?
Visit pawswithacause.org to learn more.
We estimate it costs over $30,000 to raise, train, and provide lifelong support to a PAWS Team. With generous donors like you, PAWS is able to provide Assistance Dogs at no cost to our clients.

So what happens when a client experiences the life-changing impact of an Assistance Dog and decides to pay it forward to help others? You get a donor like Josee.

Josee is a PAWS Client who has her fourth Hearing Dog – and she is a loyal donor. In fact, since Josee has started giving to PAWS, she has given the second highest number of gifts!

Josee first heard about Ears for the Deaf® (PAWS predecessor) in the early 1980s when someone mentioned reading about it in the newspaper. Josee has always been happy with her Hearing Dogs and says she “can talk for hours to anyone who wants to know about my dogs and PAWS.”

In the earlier years, Josee said Assistance Dogs were often rejected by restaurants and businesses, so she found herself in an education and advocacy role. “Now people are much more accepting and aware of how to treat them,” said Josee.

Josee started donating to Paws With A Cause when she got her first PAWS Dog over 30 years ago. She is a charter member of the Golden PAW Society, a special recognition for donors who have given $10,000 or more cumulatively.

“I give to PAWS because I see the good that these dogs do. And I give to PAWS because I know that my money is being used well and helping a lot of people,” she shared.

Thank you Josee for giving back and continuing to make a difference in the lives of others.
Last year Blum Animal Hospital in Chicago, Illinois, decided to give back to the community by establishing the Blum Fund. For one year they would raise money and awareness for a single nonprofit organization. Their goal? Raise $30,000 to place an Assistance Dog with a child with Autism. The campaign kicked off during National Autism Awareness month in April 2017.

“We are a very family-oriented practice, and we know the importance and the role that dogs can play in children’s lives,” shared Siri, Office Manager at Blum Animal Hospital. Blum asked for donations through social media, email, and during client checkouts. “Our clients really took to it, and we had some who donated every time they visited,” explained Siri. Plus, Blum clients stepped up to help the animal hospital host a paint your pet event and fundraising brunch.

Then Blum’s staff took it to a new level. Instead of receiving a holiday gift, they asked to donate the money to Paws With A Cause®.

It is inspiring to see the amazing things that can happen when the community unites to make a difference. Not only did Blum achieve their goal, but the end of their generosity is nowhere in sight: Blum Animal Hospital has agreed to pay the vet costs for the Service Dog for Children with Autism that they made possible.

When the community unites:
Blum Animal Hospital

When individuals come together to support a cause they believe in, there is no limit to the difference they can make.

Thank you
Blum Veterinary Hospital.

Your generosity will be life changing as it enhances the independence and quality of life for a child with Autism and their family.
Paws With A Cause®
4646 South Division
Wayland, MI 49348
pawswithacause.org

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.

OUR MISSION

People are waiting for their love story to begin. You can make it possible. Visit pawswithacause.org/volunteer

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