“When SYLVAN looks into my eyes and I look into his eyes, 95% of the time I know exactly what he’s thinking.”
For a Paws With A Cause® Assistance Dog, performing the tasks they are trained to do is easy. But performing those tasks in a new place, with a person they just met, is often challenging. Similarly, owning a dog is a new and sometimes daunting experience for many PAWS® Clients.

PAWS Client Chase experienced this firsthand with his Service Dog SYLVAN. “He was so friendly and nice and a lot of my fears went away at first when I met SYLVAN, until we went home and then I realized, ‘Oh boy, I have a dog now!’”

The PAWS goal is to make this a smooth transition and Field Representatives help make that possible. Once a client brings their dog home, a Field Rep works closely with the team to establish a bond and practice their tasks. After the team becomes certified, the Field Rep is available for support and to answer questions a client might have.

Chase’s Field Rep, Connie, was with the team from day one to assist with the basics: setting up a crate, establishing a routine, and helping them get to know each other. Connie initially visited with Chase and SYLVAN twice a week to work on obedience tasks. As time went on, they began working on the specific tasks SYLVAN was trained to perform for Chase. “Connie is an excellent Field Rep – she was always there when I needed her, and very flexible on her schedule,” said Chase. “She was always just a phone call away. If SYLVAN was acting funny, I could give her a call at 9:00 at night and she would answer.”

As Chase gained more confidence working with SYLVAN, Connie provided them with additional tools to be successful as a team. “Chase was a lot of fun,” said Connie. “He was a young kid, with a big truck, and didn’t let anything stop him.”

They practiced loading SYLVAN into Chase’s extremely tall truck using a lift and discussed how this routine would transfer to Chase’s camper. They
practiced retrieving dropped items, which Chase converted to SYLVAN putting dishes into the sink. It became a pattern: Connie would give the team the tools and information they needed, and Chase and SYLVAN would practice and perfect each task.

Now, there is little that Chase and SYLVAN cannot do together. The pair happily spend their days hunting, camping, swimming, and taking naps. “When SYLVAN looks into my eyes and I look into his eyes, 95% of the time I know exactly what he’s thinking,” said Chase.

Connie saw this in action when working with the team on their recertification in August. As they walked down a grocery store aisle brimming with school supplies, Connie saw a pencil on the ground up ahead. In a matter of seconds, Chase glanced at SYLVAN, SYLVAN glanced at Chase, and SYLVAN picked up the pencil and gave it to Chase. No words were needed. “They have really meshed as a team,” shared Connie. “Two years later, it’s effortless when they’re working. They just roll.”

Chase knows he can look forward to a lifetime of independence – and the support of a PAWS Field Rep – because of your generosity. THANK YOU!

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A LASTING LEGACY

Bruce Shannon was a hardworking man, a visionary, and a philanthropist. He was passionate about supporting local nonprofit organizations and inspiring others to do the same. With this in mind, he established the Shannon Family Foundation.

Bruce’s granddaughter, Katie King, suggested the foundation support Paws With A Cause shortly after she became a PAWS Dog Volunteer. Since 2006, the foundation has supported a variety of PAWS projects ranging from veterinary equipment to building renovations. Katie said, “We’ve been long-time donors, and we wouldn’t continue doing that if we weren’t confident in the organization being good stewards of the money.”

Last year, the Shannon Family Foundation honored Bruce’s legacy by matching gifts, dollar for dollar, during PAWS To Be Thankful. “We are really happy and excited when any of the organizations that we donate to can take advantage of our donation to encourage other people to donate even more,” said Katie.

The campaign, which took place last November and culminated on Giving Tuesday, raised over $76,000 to renovate all three grooming rooms at PAWS! Grooming is now easier, quicker, and more comfortable for PAWS Dogs and staff alike.

PAWS is grateful to the Shannon Family Foundation and the many individuals who participated in the 2018 PAWS To Be Thankful campaign.

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS**

**PAWS To Be Thankful 2019**

**November 19 - December 3**
MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR DOLLARS WITH AN IRA ROLLOVER

If you are more than 70½ years old, you could benefit from an IRA charitable rollover while furthering the mission of PAWS.

To learn more, contact Development Director Colette Beighley at 616-877-7297 ext. 213.