

# ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT

Paws With A Cause



Paula and TUCKER



## 2019

Paws With A Cause enhances the independence and quality of life for people with disabilities nationally through custom-trained Assistance Dogs.



## PAWS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

**Greg Bonner**, Board Chair  
**Jane Hoggard**, Vice Chair  
**Bart Merkle**, Treasurer  
**Janey Ladd**, Secretary

### FULL BOARD:

**Douglas J. Dok, Jr.**  
**Faye Richardson-Green**  
**Molly Koroleski**  
**Sara Osterman**

**Chris Pucci**  
**Dave Smith**  
**Amanda Spore**  
**Scott Winters**  
**Melanie Yanchuk**

**PAWS**  
started with  
a simple goal:  
train one dog  
for one client.



PAWS started with a simple goal: train one dog for one client. Forty years later and what a wonderful 40th anniversary year it was, we are still guided by this same belief! This past June, clients, volunteers, staff, and community came together to celebrate our anniversary milestone and the impact PAWS has had over four decades. The celebration even included memories from our first clients, Dianne and Marty Jansen, and their Hearing Dog CRYSTAL.

From our humble beginning, PAWS has grown and now has over 425 active Assistance Dog Teams across the country. Each has its own wonderful story of independence and transformation, and you will read about a few of them on the next

pages. PAWS also celebrated a significant increase in PAWS Dog Volunteers this year. I am thrilled by how many of you have chosen to share your time, energy, and dollars with us!

I have been honored to serve on the PAWS Board of Directors for over half of the organization's lifetime. It has been a joy to watch PAWS rise to meet the challenges of an ever-changing world and to see the impact we have made in the lives of so many individuals, families, and communities. Thank you for everything you did in 2019 to make this one of our best years yet. I can't wait to see what we accomplish together in 2020.

**Douglas J. Dok Jr.**  
Immediate Past Board Chair



This is an exhilarating time to be a part of PAWS! As we look ahead to the next decade and beyond, we are committed

to keeping PAWS an industry leader. And we are charting new and groundbreaking paths to make us even stronger. We have a new application process for our clients, new partnerships, and even a new fiscal year.

As the new Board Chair, I want to thank you for making this possible. I pledge to keep the promise of PAWS alive, to continue the strong work of our Board of Directors, and to help build upon

our solid foundation as we enter this new decade and move toward the next milestone – our 50th anniversary!

I am inspired every day by the dedication, compassion, and vision we share of a more confident and independent world for our clients, their families, and their communities. The future looks bright, and it is all because of you! Thank you for investing in PAWS, for believing in our cause, and supporting our mission.

**Greg Bonner**  
Board Chair



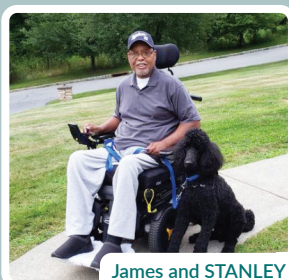
**OUR FIRST CLIENTS**  
**Dianne and Marty Jansen**



## 2019 PAWS ASSISTANCE DOG CERTIFICATIONS (from January 1st, 2019 - September 30th, 2019)



Rocco and OAKLEE



James and STANLEY



Carol and SHASTA



Kimberly and CJ



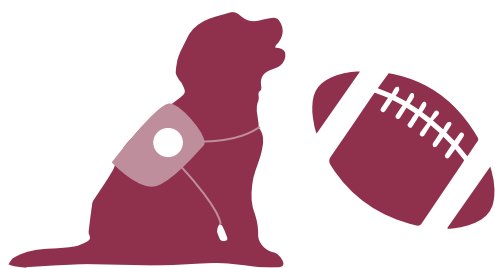
Asher and FUJI



Ethan and RUFUS

Anna and WHATLEY  
Antonio and PIKE  
April and PORSCHE  
Asher and FUJI  
Candice and DENALI  
Carol and SHASTA  
Cesar and DAPHNE  
Deb and LOKE  
Diane and OTIS  
Dustin and ANSEL  
Elizabeth and RIO  
Ethan and RUFUS  
Evan and VIXIE  
James and SAGE  
James and PHOENIX  
James and STANLEY  
Janet and GILLMOR

Jerry and THURMAN  
Kimberly and CJ  
Kyle and NOODLE  
Lauren and WILEY  
Leslie and TRIXIE  
Linda and BARLEY  
Logan and MOCHA  
Mason and BAYLOR  
Matt and FOZZIE  
Michael and SCOUT  
Michela and HENNE  
Paula and TUCKER  
Ray and JASPER  
Rocco and OAKLEE  
Sharon and CORAL  
Thomas and AJAX  
William and AVERY



# TEAM PUCCI FOR THE WIN

It is a long road to the Super Bowl.

We were glued to our TVs for Super Bowl 2019. The excitement was not because of who was playing, but because PAWS was about to be introduced to many new fans across West Michigan.

The long road began three years ago, when Chris Pucci volunteered to be one of PAWS' newest Foster Puppy Raisers with a Golden Retriever named KYTE. He told his dad, Greg, how wonderful PAWS was and last year Greg took home his own foster puppy, BYRON. If you're not familiar with the names Chris and Greg Pucci, you might be familiar with their company, Stanley Steemer, which provides floor cleaning solutions across West Michigan. No two people are better equipped to tackle the unique challenges that our Foster Puppy Raisers face!

Then came the Super Bowl.

Chris loved raising foster puppies so much he wanted to share the experience with others. Through his other company, Alabaster & Green Media Group, Chris volunteered to produce and donate four adorable commercials for PAWS. In a move that made him the MVP to PAWS fans everywhere, Chris arranged to have one of the PAWS commercials run in West Michigan markets during the 2019 Super Bowl.

The response was amazing! We received over 20 Foster Puppy Raiser applications just from that one Super Bowl ad. All four commercials continued to run in the weeks following and the applications kept rolling in. Chris was directly responsible for the outstanding increase in our PAWS Dog Volunteers in 2019 through

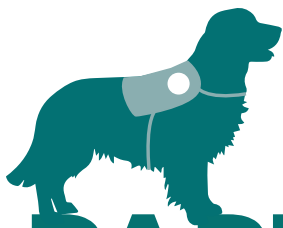
his generous and clever advertising. Ever a man of action, Chris just picked up his newest foster puppy. He and his dad Greg plan to co-foster a Golden Retriever named BALOO.

Chris is now taking his impressive marketing background and inspiring commitment to PAWS to the next level. He has been invited to serve as one of the newest members of the PAWS Board of Directors. He brings a fresh perspective and will be a tremendous resource as we continue to grow and thrive.

**CHRIS  
AND  
BALOO**



JAMES  
AND  
PHOENIX



# PARTNERS IN CHANGE

James has one goal: to help people. And to help James help others, his faithful Paws With A Cause Assistance Dog, PHOENIX, is always by his side. PHOENIX is a four-year-old black Labrador Retriever, and the perfect partner for all of James' adventures. Whether they are testing innovative assistive devices, talking someone through a hard time, or advising on national policy, these partners in change are focused on making the world a better place for people with disabilities.

Five years ago, James experienced a spinal cord injury after falling off a mountain bike. A year and a half into his recovery, he was taking community college classes when he

met another student, Colin, and his PAWS Assistance Dog, a yellow Labrador Retriever named DENVER. James asked Colin all about PAWS and life with a PAWS Dog. A few years later he now answers those same questions about PHOENIX. "PHOENIX is a great conversation starter," says James. "He's an icebreaker. People don't always approach you in a power wheelchair. It can intimidate people. But they see him, come right up, and ask all kinds of questions."

Of course, PHOENIX does more for James than break the ice. His two biggest jobs are opening doors and picking up dropped items in tight spaces. Before he teamed up with PHOENIX, James once had to make the choice between running over his glasses with his wheelchair, or not leaving the house, when he dropped them in a narrow hallway of his home. "When I got PHOENIX, I had just recently moved into my own apartment, so this was my first time living mostly alone since my injury. Having him there helped with a lot of little things that made a big difference."

As the Chief Innovation Officer of Wearologie, James knows all about how little things can make a big difference. His company makes Buttons2Button, which uses magnets to convert standard buttons into snaps, making it easier for people with dexterity limitations to get dressed. These simple snaps have the potential to help so many people that





**“Having PHOENIX there helped with a lot of little things that made a big difference.”**

Buttons2Button was featured on Good Morning America in June of 2019. And because they believe in paying it forward, Wearologie recently partnered with PAWS and will donate a portion of the proceeds from each sale that uses the promocode “4Paws” to Paws With A Cause. Eventually they may even raise enough money for PAWS to sponsor an Assistance Dog like PHOENIX for another client.

While he will be the first to tell you that details matter, James also keeps an eye on the big picture. When he and PHOENIX are not on the hunt for new Wearologie products and ideas, James serves on the national RAISE Family Caregiving Council, where he advises on recommendations to policymakers that help family caregivers of people with disabilities. The pair traveled to Washington, DC, in August of 2019, for the council’s inaugural meeting. “PHOENIX was not a fan of the airplane,” James laughs. “But we made it at the end.”

If that was not enough to keep them busy, James recently graduated from the University of Michigan with a Master’s degree in Social Work. He plans to focus his career on helping young adults who are working through injuries like his own, potentially in a hospital setting with rehabilitation and in-patient clients. And thanks to you, PHOENIX will be there to help, too.

# MEET PAULA & TUCKER!

Paula and her handsome Golden Retriever, TUCKER, have a lot of love to share. They were the perfect pair from their very first meeting. “It was evening time,” she remembers. “It was just, oh my gosh, he came up to me and he knew it was me. He was beautiful.”

TUCKER’S job is to provide peace of mind and get help for Paula when she needs it. Knowing that Paula has someone at home who can help her immediately if she becomes ill or falls relieves her husband’s worries when he is at work.

And for Paula, TUCKER has allowed her to become even more involved with one of her favorite activities, volunteering for her church. He helps her get to her meetings. She even has the confidence to volunteer as a church leader and speaker. “I guess I couldn’t do it before, confidence wise, but now I know if I get hurt, I am going to get help. I have the confidence to be part of the whole community. I wasn’t able to be involved, and now I am.”

Thank you for supporting Paula and TUCKER as they help to make the world a brighter and more confident place.





# THE PROMISE OF PAWS



Michele Suchovsky's office is littered with chew toys, water bowls, and a bright pink leash. She is a hands-on CEO, a believer in walking the walk, which now includes taking PROMISE, her first Paws With A Cause foster puppy, for walks every day. In March 2019, Michele brought PROMISE home to begin the year-long process of teaching her basic obedience and exposing her to public environments. They have been a nearly inseparable pair, with PROMISE joining Michele at meetings, hair appointments, and the grocery store.



PROMISE has been Michele's constant companion during her first year as the new CEO of PAWS. PROMISE was at Michele's side as they welcomed guests to the 40th Anniversary Open House bash on June 22nd at the organization's headquarters in Wayland, Michigan. She watched from her crate in Michele's office as Michele outlined her bold strategy to take PAWS into its next 40 years: a new office and training space for PAWS' Southeastern Michigan location, new technology to better assist our clients, an expansion of the Board of Directors, a strategy to increase PAWS Volunteer participation, and plans to turn PAWS from one of Michigan's best-kept secrets into one of the nation's top non-profits.

The two have even built a small fan following, delighting people with their ongoing adventures in Michele's monthly blog updates. They helped PAWS achieve record-breaking results in this year's PAWS To Be Thankful campaign, which featured several glamour shots of PROMISE and a financial match from Michele through her personal fundraising page. Together they are a focused, dedicated, and well-matched team— only a year-old Labrador Retriever puppy has the energy to keep up with Michele!



One of the most innovative ideas Michele and her DEO (Dog Executive Officer) have implemented is PAWS' new fiscal year. For decades PAWS has run on a traditional calendar fiscal year, which made sense from an accounting standpoint but made it difficult to forecast revenues and expenses. After a great deal of research and planning, as of October 1st, 2019, PAWS has transitioned to a new October 1st-September 30th fiscal year. In this new fiscal year, the largest share of PAWS' annual fundraising totals arrive in the first quarter, which enables a more strategic approach to planning.

PROMISE isn't sure what that means. But she knows that she is happiest when she is working hard with her Mom to make the world a more accessible and accommodating place for current and future PAWS clients - including her future forever family.



# PAWS IS IN THE TOP 13% OF NONPROFITS IN THE NATION!

We have received a full four-star rating from Charity Navigator for five consecutive years.



In 2019,  
PAWS' fiscal year  
changed to  
Oct. 1 - Sept. 30

In 2019, PAWS transitioned to a new fiscal year model.

Traditionally, the PAWS fiscal year has run from January 1st – December 31st.

As of 2019, it now runs October 1st – September 30th.

As a result of this change, the first fiscal year under this new model was only 9 months instead of the usual 12.

**The extraordinary generosity of our donors to all year-end giving opportunities from October-December 2019 is not reflected below and will instead be counted in our 2020 Fiscal Year reporting.**

## 2019 FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Number of Months	12 months	9 months
REVENUES	2018	2019
Contributions	\$ 1,513,741.00	553,485.00
Events	16,370.00	69,767.00
Direct Placements/Partnerships	0	38,050.00
Donor Restricted Funds	0	5,000.00
<b>General Contributions</b>	<b>1,530,111.00</b>	<b>666,302.00</b>
Local United Way Designations	575,344.00	180,201.00
Federal/State Combined Campaigns	44,188.00	84,368.00
<b>Workplace Campaigns</b>	<b>619,532.00</b>	<b>264,569.00</b>
<b>Planned Giving</b>	<b>1,270,195.00</b>	<b>1,249,946.00</b>
<b>Foundation Grants</b>	<b>376,861.00</b>	<b>50,212.00</b>
<b>In-Kind Contributions</b>	<b>558,180.00</b>	<b>188,153.00</b>
Investment/Gain/(Loss) Sale of Stocks	(136,416.00)	320,402.00
Miscellaneous Revenue	181,287.00	82,835.00
Endowment Revenue	11,608.00	16,000.00
<b>Miscellaneous Revenue</b>	<b>56,479.00</b>	<b>419,237.00</b>
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>4,411,358.00</b>	<b>2,838,419.00</b>

Number of Months	12 months	9 months
EXPENSES	2018	2019
Program Expenses	\$ 3,600,315.00	2,733,131.00
Education & Advocacy	245,984.00	179,413.00
Administration Costs	330,017.00	243,158.00
Fundraising Costs	505,904.00	316,829.00
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>4,682,220.00</b>	<b>3,472,531.00</b>

**CHANGE IN FUND BALANCE \$ (634,112)**

**ENDING NET ASSETS \$ 4,950,796.00**

If you would like to learn more about PAWS' annual finances, please visit [www.pawswithacause.org/financials](http://www.pawswithacause.org/financials) or call 616-877-7297 to request our detailed financial statement, 990 form, or audited financial statement.



**Paws With A Cause®**

4646 South Division  
Wayland, MI 49348  
[pawswithacause.org](http://pawswithacause.org)

# YEAR IN REVIEW

## 2019 COMMUNITY ACHIEVEMENTS

WE WELCOMED  
**253**  
PAWS PUPPIES  
INTO THE FAMILY

WHICH CAN BECOME

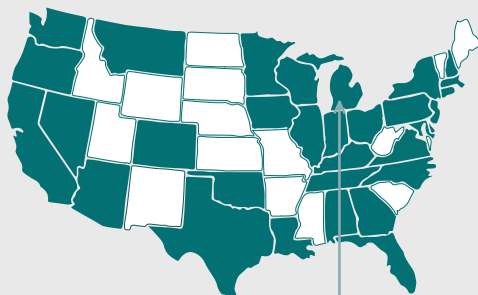
- SERVICE DOGS
- HEARING DOGS
- SEIZURE RESPONSE DOGS
- DOGS FOR CHILDREN WITH AUTISM

WHICH HELPS TO SERVE

**425**  
CLIENT - DOG  
PAWS CERTIFIED TEAMS  
AND GROWING!

# WE ARE HERE

PAWS IS CURRENTLY  
SERVING CLIENTS IN  
THESE 33 STATES



OUR NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS IS IN WAYLAND, MICHIGAN

PAWS TO CELEBRATE

# COME STAY GIVE

FRIDAY, APRIL 24  
6:30PM COCKTAIL HOUR  
7:30PM PROGRAM BEGINS

To purchase tickets and more information visit,  
[pawswithacause.org/pawstocelbrate](http://pawswithacause.org/pawstocelbrate)