In “You Needed Me”, PAWS® Assistance Dog ARCHER shares his journey from birth to being placed with his partner, Jill.
HOW DO YOU TELL PAWS' story in a way that friends from five years old to 85 years young can understand and enjoy?

That was the challenge posed by volunteer Katie King to PAWS staff and our marketing partner Scott Allen Creative more than a year ago.

We went to the drawing board and the concept of filming PAWS' tale from the perspective of one of our dogs caught on. As much as we loved the idea, we didn’t have two years to chronicle one dog’s journey from birth to placement on a Client Dog Team. We had six months to complete video production, so we took a page from Hollywood and put out a casting call for some stand-ins. This is how Assistance Dog ARCHER’s story came to be.

One of our Breeding Stock Hosts, the Fles family, volunteered PAWS Mama Dog ADEL and her three-week-old babies to play puppy ARCHER and his family. ADEL and the puppies were excellent actors for us in these opening scenes. And the
GETTING TO KNOW JILL AND ARCHER

In “YOU NEEDED ME”, you see ARCHER’s growth and training from newly-born pup to working Service Dog through his eyes. You watch how he helps his partner Jill open doors, pick up dropped items and get the phone. You discover how he makes it possible for Jill to do many things she would otherwise have a tough time doing on her own.

When we set out to tell PAWS’ story from the dog’s point of view, we knew Jill and ARCHER would be the perfect pair to play our “grown up” Client Dog Team. That’s because “You Needed Me” essentially captures a day in their life – and when they’re not busy playing themselves in the video, they’re busy living that life!

Jill, who has low-level quadriplegia as a result of a birth injury, works full-time at a West Michigan college coordinating tutors and other educational services. She’s also working towards her second Master’s Degree. Jill has traveled in the U.S. and Europe, drives her own car, and cooks a tasty lemon chicken. The physical limitations of her disability mean she has to have an attendant come to help her in the mornings, but otherwise Jill lives on her own, in her own condo with ARCHER.

Whether you watch them on video, or meet them in real life, it’s clear ARCHER does more than bring Jill physical independence. He provides emotional freedom and confidence. Truly, they need each other. And that’s a story we’ll never get tired of telling!

ARCHER PROVIDES JILL WITH THE CONFIDENCE TO LIVE INDEPENDENTLY

Archer provides Jill with the confidence to live independently.

PAWS - Providing Assistance With Service Dogs

Jill with her Service Dog, Archer.
KATIE'S VISION

KATIE'S A PRESCHOOL teacher. She’s also a donor and long-time volunteer for PAWS. She, her husband Chuck and her family have raised Foster Puppies and host PAWS Mama Dog SCOUT. Katie has helped in the office, and regularly talks about PAWS’ work at schools and to other community groups.

Because of her close involvement with PAWS, Katie gets to see the impact of her efforts first-hand. She hears a client’s excitement when we call to say their Assistance Dog is ready. She knows PAWS Dogs make “miracles” happen every day for our clients.

She also realized our presentation materials weren’t as effective at sharing PAWS’ story as they could be. “I do a lot of presentations at schools,” Katie explained. “Kids want to see what Assistance Dogs can do – specific tasks – and the video we had didn’t really include scenes like that.”

Katie’s vision was to create an updated PAWS video that followed the journey of one puppy from birth to placement with a client. She wanted a video that told the PAWS story in a way that better engaged school kids, but that was appropriate for adults, too.

Then she and her family foundation stepped in, approving a grant for PAWS to produce a new video. “It’s important to our family to donate where we’re invested. We want to be able to see the impact, or the outcome, of our giving.”

In this case, “You Needed Me” is the result. And Katie couldn’t be more thrilled. “You nailed it!” she smiled, after viewing it the first time. “It’s funny, and emotional...it’s PAWS’ story exactly how I knew it could be told!”

We’re thrilled with it, too. And we thank Katie and Chuck King and their family for their tremendous support in making “You Needed Me” possible.
Our second PAWS To Celebrate event was exciting – and not just because we got to premiere “You Needed Me” that night!

As part of our effort to host events rooted in our mission, guests enjoyed a unique opportunity to engage with PAWS staff and volunteers during the Cocktails and Activities program. Interactive stations showcased the work of our Training, Foster Puppy, Breeding and Vet, and Innovation (R&D) Teams. Of course, the puppies were a huge draw!

The formal program included the presentation of the Candye Sapp Tribute Award, which PAWS established in 2012 to “recognize individuals and organizations for their continued commitment to supporting those with disabilities.” Our 2013 honoree was Jamie Mills of the Mills Benefit Group, a longtime, dedicated friend of PAWS and philanthropy in West Michigan.

Our congratulations to Jamie, and special thanks to Presenting Sponsor, Lighthouse Group Insurance & Title, and to Candye Sapp Tribute Award Sponsor, John and Nancy Kennedy, for their support of the evening.

You can find more pictures of PAWS To Celebrate 2013 on Facebook: facebook.com/pawswithacause. We hope you’ll join us at PAWS To Celebrate 2014!
Paws With A Cause®
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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.

IF YOU COULD name a PAWS Puppy, what would you call him (or her)? Naming a future Assistance Dog is a unique way to honor a special friend, family member, pet or occasion while supporting the work of Paws With A Cause®.

With a gift of $2,000, you can name a PAWS Puppy! In return, you and/or your honoree will receive a certificate of naming and regular updates on the puppy throughout the training and placement process. (Please note: PAWS cannot guarantee that your specially named puppy will be placed as an Assistance Dog. Dogs may join our elite Breeding Stock. Others may enter alternate “working” careers or find adoptive homes. Regardless of outcome, we can only name one PAWS Puppy per request.)

The guidelines for naming a PAWS Puppy are simple. We recommend easy-to-say names; most two-syllable names are acceptable. You can select a name yourself, or choose one from our approved name list.

To learn more about naming a PAWS Puppy, please contact Joe Dulin, Director of Advancement, at jdulin@pawswithacause.org or 800-253-7297.

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

NAME A PAWS PUPPY
MAKE A GIFT
NAME A PUPPY
CHANGE A LIFE