



**Meet CHECKERS, GERT, and the other
Facility Dogs changing lives inside!**

PAWS WITH A CAUSE NEWSLETTER | FALL 2022

Go Team PAWS!



Back-to-school season has me thinking about our amazing PAWS Dog Alumni, and the many paths they travel. While our primary focus is serving people with disabilities through custom-trained Assistance Dogs, not every PAWS puppy goes on to become a PAWS Assistance Dog. In fact, only about one-third of all PAWS dogs find a final career as either an Assistance Dog or as one of PAWS' breeding dogs. That leads to the question -- what happens to our dogs who change careers? With this newsletter, we are excited to explore this important question further.

PAWS carefully plans and tracks the career of each PAWS Dog. Our dogs love to work, and we believe it's important to find the right career for as many of them as possible. In fact, our goal is to have a 90% working career placement rate for all PAWS Dogs by 2030, and we are already very close to meeting this audacious goal! Some stay with PAWS as Mama and Papa Dogs or Ambassador Dogs, making sure that PAWS continues to grow and flourish. Many others move to partnering organizations to have exciting careers all over the country, working in everything from arson detection to supporting veterans with PTSD. Former PAWS Dogs were even part of the group that comforted survivors after the tragic Surfside Condo collapse in Florida last year.

PAWS has always had a long history of partnering with other highly-vetted organizations to find careers for our dogs, but in 2019 we asked, what are we missing? How can we be more strategic to ensure that each of our dogs find their best, highest purposeful placement. As part of our 40th anniversary celebration in 2019, we launched our PAWS Purposeful Placements, or “PurPI” program.

In the past three years, PurPI has grown from a dream into a thriving department with multiple, full-time staff dedicated to finding the best possible fit for each of our PAWS dogs, who do not become Assistance Dogs. From there, PAWS stayed true to our 40 year history of responding to community needs and, in Fall, 2019, placed our first PAWS Facility Dog with an elementary school in Michigan. **Facility Dogs are working dogs selected to provide specialized services that help more than one person in facilities like schools or hospitals.** As we do with all our PAWS Assistance Dogs, we remain committed to the highest quality of custom matching and support. Facilities that are interested in a PAWS Facility Dog follow a formal application process and must nominate a committed handler who promises to care for their PAWS Dog for the dog’s entire life. PAWS custom selects the dog that will meet the unique needs of each community it will serve and each handler goes through special training with a PAWS Field Representative. And like with our Assistance Dog Placements, PAWS remains alongside the new Facility Team to ensure that it is successful.

PAWS Facility Dogs are PAWS Alumni, just like our PAWS Assistance Dogs, and we are so proud of the work they do. In the next few pages, you’ll meet CHECKERS and GERT, who help kids at Phoenix Children’s Hospital in Arizona, TANNER, the first of four PAWS Facility Dogs placed with the Three Rivers School District here in Michigan (and they’re working on their fifth right now!), and SCOOTER, who carries on the proud PAWS tradition of assisting kids with autism and people with disabilities at Pioneer Resources. Each of these PAWS Facility Dogs is projected to improve the lives of thousands of people over the course of their careers, and all of them love their jobs and the humans they work with.

I am so proud of how our dogs are helping people and communities to live with dignity, companionship, and confidence. From Assistance Dogs to Ambassador Dogs and from PAWS breeding dogs to Facility Dogs, all our dogs are thriving. And YOU have entrusted PAWS with your time, generosity, and advocacy so that our PAWS dogs can continue changing the world for the better. Go Team PAWS!

With Deep Appreciation,



Michele Suchovsky

CEO & Head Cheerleader



Meet a few of our newest certified teams!



Donald & DUMPLING



Alessandra & TEDDY



Bonnie & OSCAR



David & SANTO



Dena & LEDGER



Lynn & RIO



Kaitlin & MAC



Kelsy & DUKE



Malia & LINCOLN



Pam & DILLY



Janet & CATO



Sarah & GOBLIN



Suzanne & SPIRIT



Cynthia & GAGE



Cynthia & MOCHA



Iris & JORDY



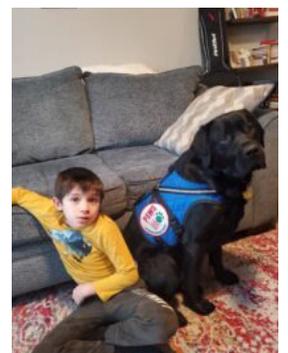
Lisa & FARGO



Tom & OAKLEY



Vern & IGLOO



William & TUG

“My life has changed drastically with TUESDAY. The help I receive from her makes me less dependent. I take her for a walk for at least 30 minutes twice a day; this forced me to get out of the house, something that I did not like to do before.

I learned to use the community bus with her to go to our condo’s club house, the supermarket, the mall, etc. Before TUESDAY I almost never went out. My life definitively changed a lot, I can say. It was a life before TUESDAY, but a more joyful life after TUESDAY arrived home.”

- PAWS Client Mauricio

MOST LIKELY TO...

Change the World



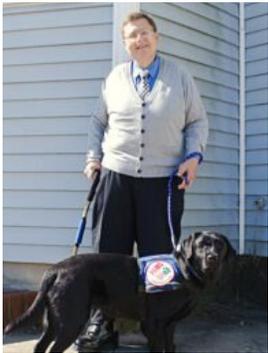
TUESDAY & Mauricio



Justin & WENDELL



Blake & COOPER



Steve & LIBBY



Suni & NAVY



Ethan & LONNIE



Emma & QUAKE



Toby & HAZEL



Larry & BAILEY



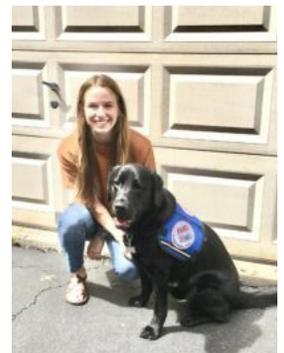
Lisa & GUNTHER



Colton & HEATH



Doreen & VIOLET



Lauren & IKE

Most Likely to Succeed

Hospitals can be scary and overwhelming, especially for kids. But what if you had a wiggly dog to teach you how to crawl or show you how to take your medicine? That's exactly what PAWS Facility Dogs CHECKERS and GERT do for the kids at Phoenix Children's Hospital in Arizona.

CHECKERS and her human partner, Lisa, specialize in rehabilitation. They work with kids on essential skills like crawling, walking, playing with balls, and more. Over the past several months the Rehab team has been tracking how long they can keep kids focused on the task they're working to master. The results have shown an average of four to five times improvement of duration—meaning kids are motivated to work longer sessions toward their goals when they have CHECKERS by their side.

CHECKERS is gentle and nurturing to kids of all ages and has a magic touch with infants. One baby she worked with had spent his whole life in the

hospital. He was trying to master laying on his stomach on the floor and holding his head up for 10 to 15 seconds at a time. This baby workout was to strengthen his muscles so he could eventually go home.

The baby hated it and was crying and rigid, until they put a sheet on CHECKERS and laid him on top of her. He had never seen a dog before and was absolutely fascinated. "It was amazing," Animal Assisted Therapy Program Coordinator and PAWS Foster Puppy Raiser Mary Lou remembers. "His mother was a little nervous, but the baby didn't care. He loved laying on CHECKERS and looking at her. They got him to do Tummy Time for four entire minutes! And one of the things we learned that we didn't even think about, was CHECKERS' breathing. As he lay against CHECKERS and had her breathing against him, his breathing began to regulate to match hers and he calmed down."



CHECKERS



GERT - CLASS CLOWN



GERT works in a different area of the hospital. She and her human partner Rachel specialize in working with kids who are going to be in the hospital for a long time and families forced to tackle difficult challenges. Together, GERT and Rachel comfort kids and help their families make special memories.

“Chronic patients,” says Mary Lou, “if they have been in the hospital over and over again, every time they have to go for a particular procedure, they can get more anxious about it.” But GERT will happily climb up on a child’s bed and cuddle with them. She’s there to comfort kids when they have a simple medical procedure like an IV removal. She lets them hold her paw or she will lay across their chest to make them feel safe and give them something else to focus on. It takes a special dog to be calm and comfortable around so many people and pieces of equipment in a hospital setting.

All of that is made easier for GERT because some parts of her job are particularly delicious. When kids must take a liquid medicine, GERT will show them how easy it is by swallowing a syringe full of Kool-Aid or chicken soup. She also sits with children who have eating disorders and shares her Cheerios. GERT has one, then they have one, until they’ve eaten an entire bowl together.

Because GERT’s job varies so much, it’s a little harder to track statistical data. But they know the

work she and Rachel do around the hospital has made an impact and improved patient outcomes, because requests for their help have skyrocketed.

At the beginning of July, the hospital threw a party for CHECKERS and GERT’s work anniversary and let them run around and chase each other. They both have offices near each other with a big open workspace, and they see each other throughout the day, visit each other’s areas, and steal each other’s toys. Both girls take time to rest and relax between patient visits, keeping them young so they can help the thousands of people they are projected to work with over the course of their careers!



Tummy Time!

TANNER



Mr. Popularity





In the evenings and on the weekends TANNER is a farm boy who lives on a ten-acre hobby farm with his best friend, Carrie, two human teenage brothers, some geese, ducks, other dogs, and farm equipment. During the day, TANNER works with Carrie, the Principal at Three Rivers High School (TRHS), where he high-fives people in the halls and helps friends when they have a hard day.

TANNER was born and raised through the Foster Puppy Program at PAWS. His Foster Puppy Raiser, Polly, remembers TANNER as, “A bright, smart, fun-loving puppy.” When TANNER returned to PAWS at a little over one year old, he met with the staff to determine his future career. He seemed like a perfect candidate for the Purposeful Placement (PurPI) program because of his passion to love as many people as possible!

Around the same time TANNER was determining his career, TRHS began the process of hiring a full-time PAWS Facility Dog. TRHS staff member, Michaela, had fostered a different PAWS Dog and would bring her to school as part of her training as a puppy. When the TRHS team saw the amazing impact a Foster Puppy had on their school and community, they knew they wanted their own full-time and fully-trained PAWS Facility Dog.

As Carrie puts it, “Mental health is an area of focus for staff and students. The last couple of years have been challenging for a number of reasons. TANNER is an excellent listener, and he doesn’t judge. Sometimes students just want a break and a few minutes of quiet. TANNER is adaptable and can go from quiet time with a student in the counseling office to playing fetch in the courtyard with the PE students without missing a beat.”

“The students *love* TANNER, and he *loves* them,” writes Carrie. And because TANNER is such an important part of the TRHS community, he even got to go to prom. “He wore a tuxedo and enjoyed walking around the dance floor. The best part was when he would walk between couples that were dancing!”

TANNER has changed the lives of the kids and staff at TRHS so much, the school district just brought in three more PAWS Facility Dogs: DOTTIE, LILO, and PEANUT. They will be helping at three of the district’s elementary schools—and the kids can’t wait to go back to school and meet them!

MOST LIKELY TO...

Do ALL the Jobs

“SCOOTER is kind of like the Pioneer celebrity. He attends different types of activities from working with the children to walking in a parade, from attending events for seniors to hanging out with clients of all ages and abilities,” says his human partner, Cindy.

Pioneer Resources has been changing lives in West Michigan since the 1940s. They started as a school providing special education and therapy and have grown into an organization that provides many different services for the whole community. Pioneer Resources is a dog-friendly organization, and two years ago they decided they wanted to add a full-time PAWS Facility Dog to their staff. They saw first-hand how visiting therapy dogs could help their clients, and they wanted to make sure a trained dog was always available when someone needed a helping paw.

Because they provide such a wide range of services, PAWS knew that Pioneer Resources would need a very special dog. Fortunately, SCOOTER was ready to work! SCOOTER is a black Poodle, and his less allergenic coat means that he can give lots of love without setting off anyone's allergies, while his boundless energy means he is able to play all day.



“We didn't really have any expectations, other than the kiddos in our program would enjoy him,” writes his human partner, Cindy. “He has exceeded our expectations in the way he is able to help the kiddos calm themselves down and they are more willing to work in therapy when they are working for a little ‘SCOOTER time.’”

Like many PAWS Dogs before him, SCOOTER excels at working with people with autism. He enjoys laying with kids to help them self-soothe, and he adores playing catch during their free time. But unlike a PAWS Service Dog for Children with Autism that lives with one child during their career, SCOOTER will help hundreds of kids during his time at Pioneer Resources.

Of course, just like Pioneer Resources, he helps lots of different people of all ages throughout the day. Whether he's visiting seniors during bingo or learning new safety processes alongside staff members, SCOOTER is a versatile boy who wears a lot of hats. Even a glittery bowler hat covered in shamrocks for a St. Patrick's Day parade—though that one didn't stay on too long.

With all the ways he helps people at Pioneer Resources, Cindy agrees that more places need a Facility Dog like SCOOTER. “Oh, my YES!!!! SCOOTER has helped our clients that are afraid of dogs turn into dog lovers. He can distract them from whatever may be going on and allows them to calm down and focus. If you are having a bad day, all you need is a dog to reassure you that everything is going to be ok!”





SCOOTER



Paws With A Cause

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the gift of...



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