

**Paws With A Cause**

# **2022 Annual Impact Report**



**Meet Serenity,  
BISHOP, and all  
the people who  
helped bring them  
together on page 4**

# Changing The World One Life At A Time

## You Make It Possible

What a year! Here at PAWS, we've been working hard to expand our operations to meet the ever-growing need for PAWS Dogs across the country. We brought together 51 new PAWS Dog Teams, including Serenity & BISHOP and Max, Jack, & TEEMU, which you can read about on page 3. We also grew our Purposeful Placements program, placing 27 PAWS Facility Dogs in schools, hospitals, and places like the Children's Advocacy Center of Kent County.

I was lucky to travel across the country this year, meeting members of the PAWS Community in places like South Carolina, Pennsylvania, Arizona, and more. On one of my trips, I was eating breakfast with my PAWS Ambassador Dog, MADGE, when a woman approached me and asked if I was with Paws With A Cause. She'd seen our PAWS van in the parking lot and recognized MADGE's distinctive blue cape across the dining room. She began to cry as she pulled a photo of a young man next to a black Labrador Retriever out of her purse and told me about her

son's two amazing PAWS Dogs. His disease has progressed to the point where he lives in a long-term care facility, and she was on her way to see him. She told me stories about how much joy and companionship his PAWS Dogs had brought him in the early years of his illness, and how they'd given him extra time and independence.

I heard so many moving stories like this last year. Over and over, in many different ways, the PAWS Community and our wide network of friends come together to support our Clients, our volunteers, and each other. The work we're able to do together is incredible, and I appreciate the support you have given to make it possible.

With gratitude,

  
Michele Suchovsky  
PAWS CEO



## Building Tomorrow Together

The number of applications we get for PAWS Dogs has grown steadily over the years, and in 2022 we received over 400. As you'll see in the Community Impact Numbers on page 9, we celebrated 51 newly certified Teams this year. Although it's not enough to meet the demand for a PAWS Dog, it's a huge number compared to many other Service Dog groups and puts us in the top 11% of Assistance Dog organizations worldwide. And each one of those PAWS Dogs represents thousands of hours of love and care by Breeding Host Home volunteers, Foster Puppy Raisers, our Prison Partners Program, Staff Trainers, Field Representatives, and everyone who believes in our mission.

But we all want to do more. Which is why we set some ambitious 10 Year Goals in 2020, and we're steadily working toward them today. One of which is our commitment to doubling the number of individual PAWS Assistance Dog placements by 2030. I'm currently co-raising my fourth Foster Puppy, KILO, and after all the late-night requests to go outside, mountains of chew toys, and quests for the perfect training treats, I know exactly how much work it's going to be to meet that 10 year goal. As the new Chair of the Board of Directors, I can't wait to dig in!

Our single greatest asset here at PAWS is each other. Whether it's experienced Clients reaching out to new Teams to offer advice, our AMVETS and AMVETS Ladies Auxiliary partners making teams-in-training feel right at home, or Foster Puppy Raisers swapping teething tips, the community we've built is something I'm looking forward to sharing and expanding. There's a very clear need for our life-changing work, and I'm glad to be doing it with you.

Sincerely,

*Sara Osterman*

Sara Osterman  
New Board Chair



**"I'm currently co-raising my fourth Foster Puppy, KILO, and after all the late-night requests to go outside, mountains of chew toys, and quests for the perfect training treats, I know exactly how much work it's going to be to meet that 10 year goal. As the new Chair of the Board of Directors, I can't wait to dig in!"**

# Community In Action

Keeping promises is important to PAWS. As our supporters, you allow us to follow through on them, especially when children need the service of a PAWS Dog!



Two different military families living hundreds of miles apart applied for a PAWS Service Dog for Children with Autism (SDA). Both were approved, joined the waiting list, went through our multi-part process to build a custom training plan for their PAWS Dog, and were eagerly awaiting the day their dog came home.

While they were waiting, both families were relocated by the military to areas outside the reach of our PAWS Field Representatives. Field Reps are an important part of the unique PAWS Training Process. They are responsible for working with new Clients on the final step of the training journey. Field Reps visit Clients in their homes for months to make sure each Client/Dog Team is working together smoothly and prepare them for their official certification as an Assistance Dog Team. Therefore, Clients must live within the designated service areas of a Field Rep.

But PAWS is committed to keeping our promises and supporting our active and retired military service members. The dogs for these two families were so close to finishing their training that it

didn't make sense to tell the families we could no longer serve them. PAWS decided to take an old idea and make it new again. We invited the families to the PAWS Headquarters, in Michigan, to be trained with their brand-new PAWS Dogs!

Serenity welcomed BISHOP, a black Poodle trained as her Service Dog for a Child with Autism. She specifically needed a Poodle because she has an allergy to dogs, which is the reason PAWS uses this breed. Serenity's mom Shaney said, "The training was a lot more intense than I thought. Trying to remember commands and how to maneuver BISHOP was challenging. It was similar to learning a new language and trying to exercise a muscle I never knew I had. I took a lot of pride in making mistakes because it allowed me to get more practice. I somehow would always run out of treats."

**"The team at PAWS was great when we showed up, and everyone at the local veterans' office took very good care of us,"**

Nick's two boys, Jack and Max, were paired with a Golden Retriever named TEEMU. Typically, a PAWS Service Dog only works with one individual Client. But Jack and Max both have Autism, and TEEMU has lots of love to give. "Max really enjoys the deep pressure she provides by laying on him," says Nick, "and Jack enjoys the sensory input of being able to pet her as much as he can since she is so calm."

"The team at PAWS was great when we showed up, and everyone at the local veterans' office took very good care of us," confirms Nick. AMVETS Post 126 volunteered to host training sessions at their facility and AMVETS Ladies Auxiliary Post 23 provided welcome baskets which included cash, gift cards to local restaurants and toys for the children. Everyone is grateful for the support they gave to these two families and PAWS.

Nick and his wife Heidi were inspired to apply for a PAWS Dog for the boys after Nick's experience

seeing working dogs. “I previously participated in a study at Walter Reed Army Medical Center after a deployment and they had Service Dogs at the hospital. I saw how fast and how much they could help people with needs. I mainly wanted to find something long-term that would help our boys, knowing how much of an impact a Service Dog could have.”

Shaney agrees. She began researching Service Dogs after seeing a video online. “Serenity would engage in maladaptive behaviors during public outings in the community, summer camps, school, and after-school activities. She also struggled with sleeping by herself. From behavioral programs to medications, I’ve noticed that they didn’t target the root cause of her behaviors.”

Both Teams grew by leaps and bounds during their time in Michigan through practice in the real world at a local outlet mall, a grocery store, a pizza place, and a park. After each family headed home and had time to settle into their new routine, PAWS Staff made special trips to their new homes to help complete their training process, and both families will continue to get lots of support virtually. “It’s been great,” says Nick. “The main adjustment has just been to having a dog.”

BISHOP is, unfortunately, burdened with being incredibly handsome and people often try to



distract or pet him when Shaney, Serenity, and BISHOP go out together. “This is one thing I never thought about experiencing,” says Shaney. But she reports he still does a great job. “BISHOP and I have our Team dynamic. While at home and in public, he does well performing his duties and listening to commands.”

But mostly, it’s about the playtime. “Serenity and BISHOP play tag, dress up, read books, go hiking, swimming, and fishing. Serenity likes to put clothes on BISHOP, and BISHOP likes it when Serenity lays on him. Serenity sometimes acts like a ‘service human’ for BISHOP,” says Shaney.

**“...We are blessed that your organization finds it in its heart to work with us.”**

Nick tells a similar story. “We get monthly Bark Boxes that come with toys that the boys and TEEMU love to play with together. Also, throwing tennis balls with her in the back yard. When the boys are on their bikes or playing in the front yard, I will have TEEMU outside with us, sitting on the sidewalk, and the boys will take breaks and come up to lay on her or pet her.”

PAWS is incredibly fortunate to have supporters like you to help us keep our promises and change people’s lives for the better. “As I reflect on the moments leading up to acquiring a service animal,” writes Shaney, “it brings tears to my eyes to know that everything has a purpose, including Serenity having allergies. Despite military obligations, we are blessed that your organization finds it in its heart to work with us and match BISHOP with us so he can fulfill his purpose.”




# 2022 Financial Statement

REVENUES	2021	2022
Contributions	\$ 2,117,136.00	1,852,008.00
Capital Campaign Contributions		2,435,021.00
Events	94,537.00	82,327.00
Direct Placements/Partnerships	122,750.00	141,358.00
Donor Restricted Funds	39,850.00	
<b>General Contributions</b>	<b>2,374,273.00</b>	<b>4,510,714.00</b>
United Way Designations	322,157.00	575,695.00
Federal/State Combined Campaigns	45,108.00	53,383.00
<b>Workplace Campaigns</b>	<b>367,265.00</b>	<b>629,078.00</b>
<b>Planned Giving</b>	<b>2,080,368.00</b>	<b>1,380,533.00</b>
<b>Foundation/Grants</b>	<b>436,558.00</b>	<b>516,533.00</b>
<b>In-Kind Contributions</b>	<b>167,754.00</b>	<b>68,356.00</b>
Investment/Gain/(Loss) Sale of Stocks	522,849.00	(656,682.00)
Miscellaneous Revenue	0	72,221.00
Endowment Revenue	10,177.00	16,150.00
<b>Miscellaneous Revenue</b>	<b>533,026.00</b>	<b>(568,311.00)</b>
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>5,959,244.00</b>	<b>6,536,903.00</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>
Program Expenses	\$ 3,477,267.00	3,426,078.00
Education & Advocacy	52,170.00	11,107.00
Administration Costs	282,397.00	291,291.00
Fundraising Costs	620,387.00	947,135.00
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>4,432,221.00</b>	<b>4,675,611.00</b>

**CHANGE IN FUND BALANCE      \$ 1,861,292.00**

**ENDING NET ASSETS      \$ 8,512,983.00**

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.



**“Public access for PAWS Puppies is important because it allows for our puppies to learn about the world they’ll later be expected to assist their handler in,”**

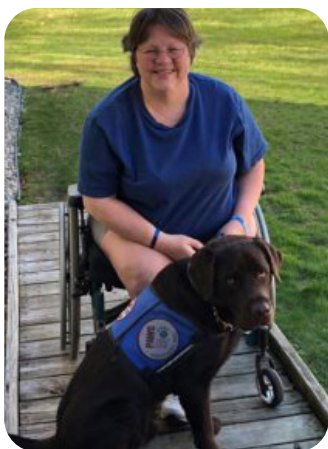
## Michigan ♥s Service Dogs in Training

Trivia time! Can you name all the states where Service Dogs in Training are not guaranteed the same public access as fully certified Service Dogs? If you guessed Hawaii, Washington, and Wyoming, you’re correct.

Until 2022, PAWS’ home state of Michigan was also on that list. But thanks to the hard work and dedication of many people, as well as a few guest appearances by PAWS Dogs and staff at the state capital, all PAWS Foster Puppies now have the same access to public spaces as fully trained PAWS Service Dogs.

“Public access for PAWS Puppies is important because it allows our puppies to learn about the world they’ll later be expected to assist their handler in,” says Staff Trainer Haley Gorenflo. “We want them to experience the sights, sounds, and smells of places outside the home so that when they’re working dogs later in life, nothing takes them by surprise.”

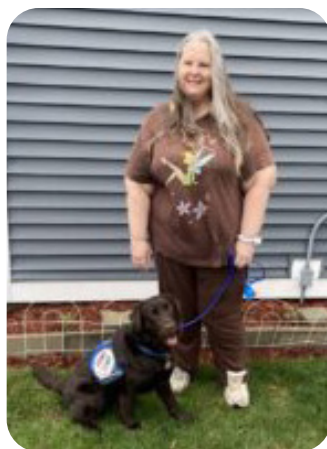
If you’re interested in becoming a PAWS Foster Puppy Raiser and introducing a puppy to all of your favorite places, please contact [paws@pawswithacause.org](mailto:paws@pawswithacause.org) today!



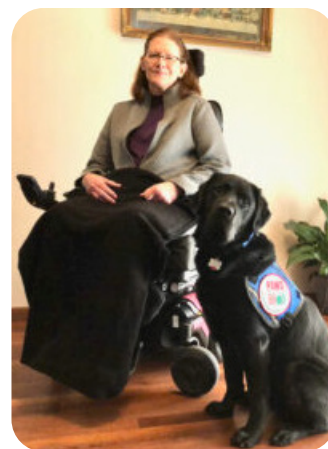
**Lisa & KERWIN**



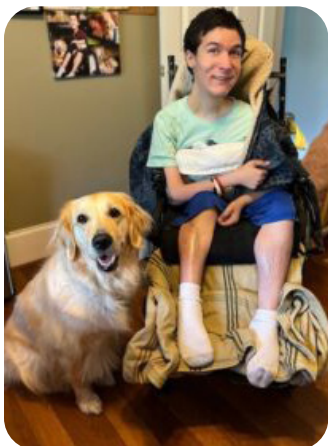
**Saran & FINDLEY**



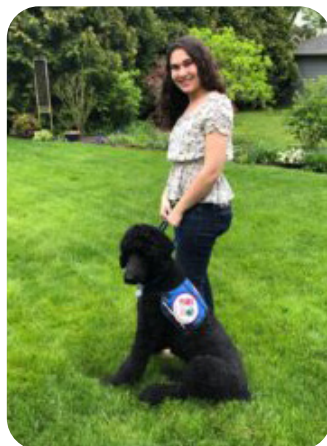
**Debra & BOO**



**Linda & ODIE**



**Justin & PATCH**



**Helen & VEGA**



**Keyera & YARROW**



**Vivian & LINCOLN**

## Celebrate With Us!

One of the big milestones in any Team's journey is getting their official certification. Each team works together with their local Field Rep for months, practicing their skills and becoming a perfect working pair. Once they receive their official team certification the whole PAWS Family celebrates! You can follow our monthly Certification Celebrations over on the PAWS blog at <https://www.pawswithacause.org/blog/>.



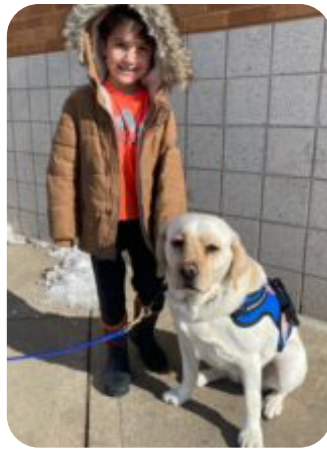
**Kelly & CHEZLEIGH**



**Lynda & PRINCESS**



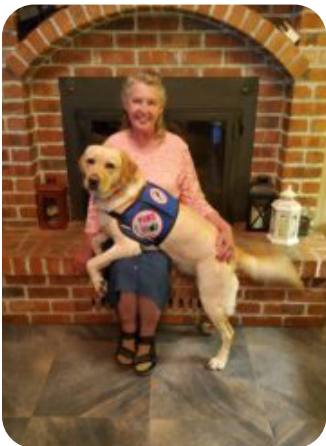
Stephanie & JOY



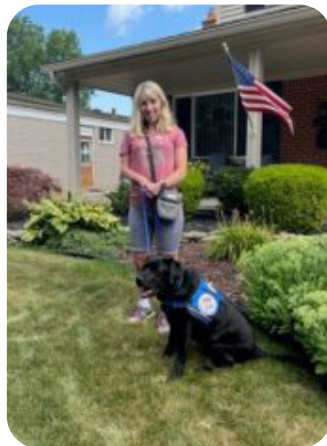
Evan & ARES

"ARES has had her first trip—we went to Myrtle Beach. We had people compliment us on how well she did in restaurants. She went to the aquarium and loved the penguins. She watched those penguins intently. Evan would love on her throughout our outings and it was wonderful to see her help calm him when he was starting to become overwhelmed."

--Katie, Evan's Mom



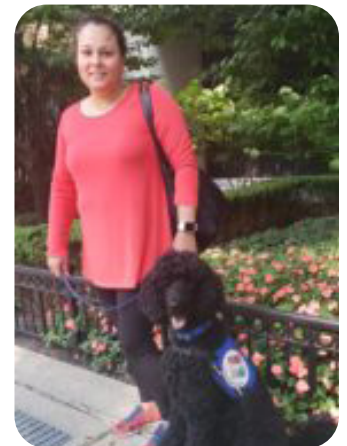
Linda & BLAIR



Katie & BLUE



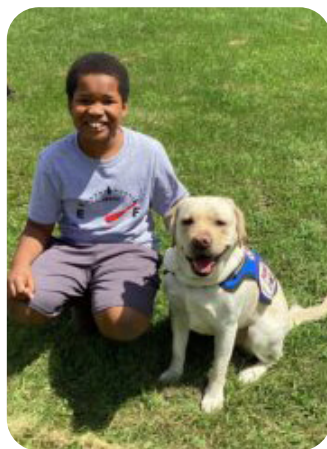
Lauren & DOTTIE



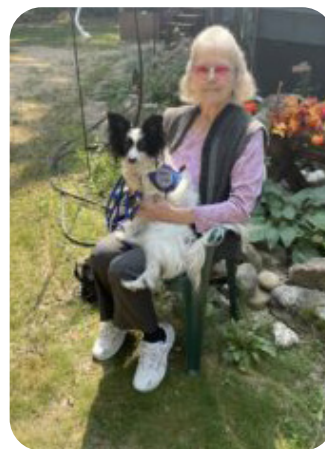
Sandra & BONGO



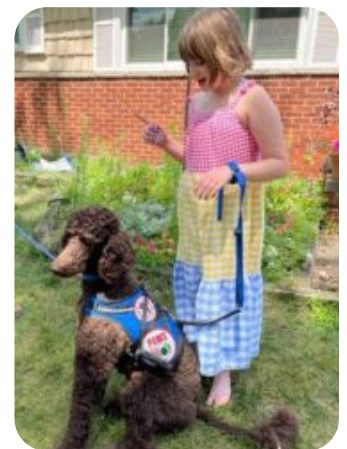
Jack, Max, & TEEMU



Matthew & VERNA



Joyce & WAFER



Sterling & FALCON

# 2022 Community Impact

**51** New Dogs  
Placed  
with  
Clients

**51** Newly  
Certified  
Teams



## What's the Difference?

### Newly Certified vs. Newly Placed Teams

A Newly Placed Team is a Client who has just received their PAWS Dog. After the placement they are required to earn their certification to prove they are a well-functioning team in public. This certification takes about six months to earn initially, and means that a PAWS Dog can go everywhere their human can go. It's one of our favorite milestones to celebrate with our Teams!

**10** New Mama  
and Papa  
Dogs

**27** Facility Dogs  
placed directly  
through PAWS

**71** PAWS Dogs  
in other  
working  
placements

**67** Re-Certified  
Teams

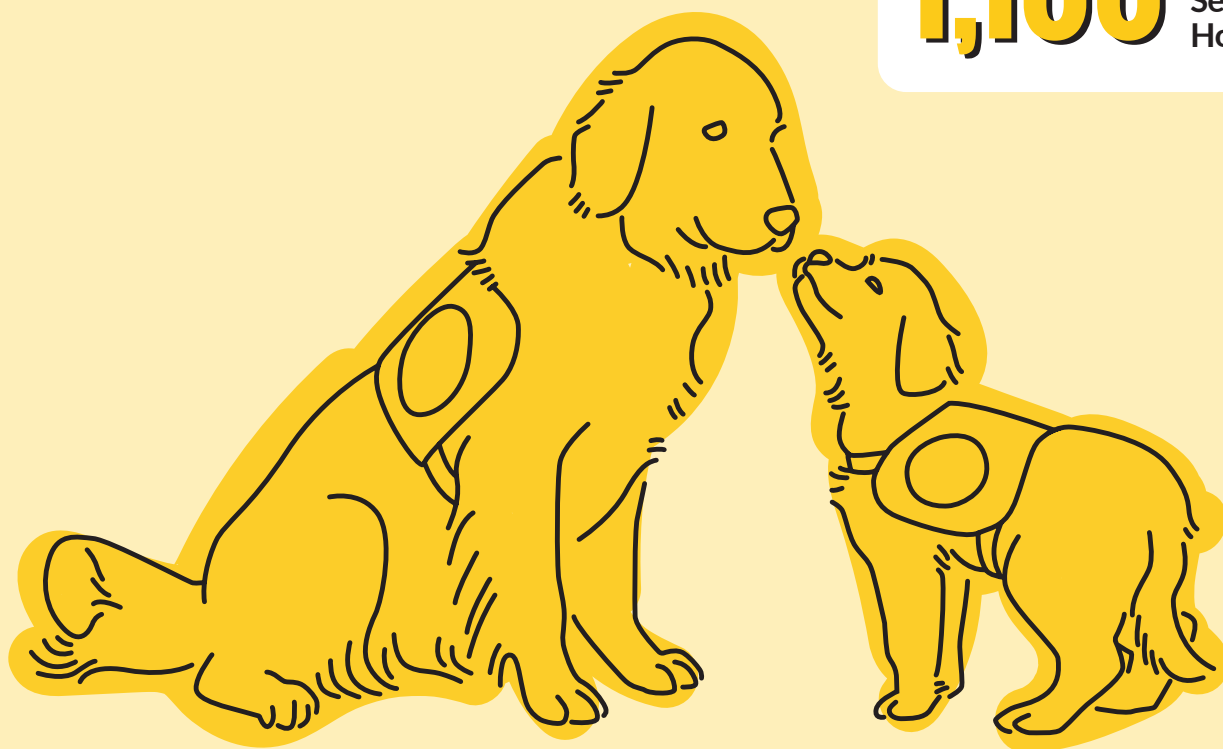
**104** Breeding  
Host  
Volunteer  
Homes

**196** Active Foster  
Puppy Raiser  
Volunteer  
Homes

**357** Client/  
Dog  
Teams

**156** Puppies  
Born  
into the  
PAWS  
Family

**1,100** On-Campus  
Volunteer  
Service  
Hours



# Home is Where the Heart Is

“A Field Representative is the connection between PAWS and the Clients out in the field,” explains Ellen, a PAWS Field Rep who covers much of New England. “We help Dogs and Clients bond and learn to work together as a team. Above all we listen, coach, repeat, and sometimes act as therapist to both.”

The PAWS Field Rep network is made up of highly trained people all over the country who handle the final stage of training for every PAWS Team. They go into each Client’s home once their PAWS Dog arrives and they coach each Team through their first few months together in the real world. As Ellen puts it, “PAWS is unique because we adapt to our Clients’ needs. PAWS works with the Client at home more than most programs, to fit the needs of our Clients in their own environment.”

While most of our Field Reps are long-time contractors who work as needed, sometimes we have Field Reps that do so much work for us that it makes better financial sense to bring them on as a staff member. Ellen in New England and Laurie in Florida just joined the PAWS Staff, and they are both incredibly excited to do even more work with our Clients and represent PAWS in their local communities. “Delivering a PAWS Assistance Dog to the Client,” says Laurie, “and training alongside

them through team certification has been the most gratifying and purposeful experience in my training career.”

Ellen says her favorite part of her work is the transformation of each team. “Each Client has a special moment that they go from ‘Are you sure this will work?’ to ‘It worked!’ I just keep reminding them to trust the process.” Laurie agrees, “When the Client first sees their dog perform their most critically needed task! Like when a Hearing Dog alerts to their child’s cry for help, or when a Client with a Service Dog is out of their power chair in their lift and the Dog retrieves the dropped lift remote. Both true stories and nothing short of watching something miraculous occur!”

**“PAWS is unique because we adapt to our Clients’ needs.”**

Ellen loves the work she does. “A good relationship with your Clients is very important because you’re there for a life changing event. And while yes, you must be professional, you also must understand that they are accepting you into their homes on a very personal level. You are changing their life for years to come. That comes with a lot of trust and respect.”



Ellen

**“Delivering a PAWS Assistance Dog to the Client,” says Laurie, “and training alongside them through team certification has been the most gratifying and purposeful experience in my training career.”**



Laurie



**Paws With A Cause**

4646 Division  
Wayland, MI 49348  
pawswithacause.org

[Addressee]  
[Organization Name]  
[Address Block]  
[City], [State] [Zip]

A close-up, low-angle shot of a happy yellow Labrador puppy running towards the camera in a field of dry, golden-brown grass. The puppy's mouth is open, showing its pink tongue and teeth, and its ears are perked up. The background is a soft-focus field of similar grass.

# Help Us Cross The Finish Line!

This May, PAWS is partnering with the Amway River Bank Run in Grand Rapids to cheer people on as they roll, walk, and run toward the finish line. We want everyone to be a part of the fun. On Saturday, May 13th, PAWS will be hosting a virtual walk so you (and your dog) can join us from anywhere in the world. Visit <https://www.pawswithacause.org/2023-river-bank-run/> to learn more and sign up today!