

# News PRINTS

Vol. 22 / Issue 1 / Spring 2022



*Lead Trainer Shanen Cox with service dogs in training 11-month old black lab Rosie the Riveter, 4-month old yellow lab Swift, and 11-month old black lab Chip.*

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## What's New?

New lead trainer Shanen Cox joins Dogs For Life with a sincere level of patriotism and intense respect for veterans of the military. After an 11-year career working with marine mammals such as dolphins, whales, sea lions, seals, otters and penguins, Shanen brings her expertise in training with positive reinforcement to DFL.



Cocoa, a juvenile Atlantic bottlenose dolphin, plays with new DFL lead trainer Shanen Cox.

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*2021 Volunteer Award Recipients*



*Eddie Boatwright and service dog Rosie the Riveter.*

## From *the* President

In 2022, I began my tenure to serve as president of the board. I'm proud to be a founding member of the Dog Park in 2006 and to have become a member of the board of directors at Dogs For Life in 2020. Having been part of the journey for the past sixteen years, I'm extremely invested in the continued growth of DFL. The Dog Park is a beautiful place for people and their dogs to enjoy the outside while being in a safe, secure, and friendly environment. Our service dog programs continue to expand with the ever-growing veteran population. This organizational growth has influenced DFL's fund development efforts as we secure annual program costs and future capital campaign projects. If you see me in the Dog Park, please be sure to introduce yourself. I would welcome the opportunity to meet you and hear your feedback.

## From *the* Founder & CEO

The puppies keep coming, the programs keep growing, and this not-so-small organization is being recognized on a national and federal level. Dogs For Life Inc. recently became one of five organizations recognized by the Veterans Administration (VA) to become a pilot site of the PAWS for Veterans Therapy Act. Although this program is not funded through the VA, the DFL Board agreed to incorporate it with our current Veterans Training Veterans Program, which will be renamed Veterans Training Veterans Trainers Program. This program will educate even more veterans over the next five years on how to train service dogs. Last week's graduation ceremony truly humbles our troops as eight teams graduated with honors. The hard work of these individuals with their dogs, including some with puppies raised at DFL should make all our donors, volunteers, puppy raisers and staff proud. The love and dedication are evident in each team. We truly appreciate Quilts of Valor for their continued presentations to our veterans.



*Shelly Ferger and service dog St. Cloud.*



*Cynthia Ryan and Luna.*

## From *the* Executive Director

As we enter into spring, I have so much to be thankful for. Dogs For Life's Inaugural Patriots For Puppies event was an incredible success, raising \$100,000 to support service dog programs. It was with the extraordinary support and commitment from sponsors, committee volunteers and attendees that the event was so successful. DFL is already looking forward to next year's event. DFL is the proud recipient of two grants. First, the John's Island Foundation grant to install a generator will ensure the training center is fully functional even after a hurricane or power outage. This is especially important as it will allow our PTSD Support and Recovery meetings to continue uninterrupted. Indian River Community Foundation awarded DFL \$25,000 to help with funding the expanding PTSD Support and Recovery Programs. Thank you for giving DFL the support needed to positively impact change in our community.

# DFL Check Presentations



### **American Gold Star Mothers of Indian River County**

Michelle Dale, President of American Gold Star Mothers of Indian River County, presents Dogs For Life, Next Generation Veterans and Mental Health Association proceeds from AGSMIRC Suicide Awareness Walk-A-Thon.

From left: Doug Klock (USAF), Veterans Council Board Director; Chuck Gerrald (USA), First Sergeant, Next Generation Veterans of IRC; Amy Wagner, Mental Health Association Development Director; Angela Guzanski, Mental Health Association, COO; Michelle Dale, President, American Gold Star Mothers of Indian River County; Shelly Ferger, CEO and Founder, Dogs For Life; Cynthia Ryan, Executive Director, Dogs For Life.



### **Pilot Club of the Treasure Coast**

Cheryl Marshall (USAF, Ret.), accepts a check on behalf of Dogs For Life from Kathy Neville (right) of Community Projects with the Pilot Club of the Treasure Coast.



### **St. Sebastian Catholic Church Council of Catholic Women**

From left: Cheryl Marshall (USAF, Ret.), Dogs For Life Puppy Raiser with DFL puppy Swift; Earl Tindol (USAR), DFL Board Member with his service dog Arrow; and Ann Nolan, President of St. Sebastian Catholic Church Council of Catholic Women and Dogs For Life Administrative Assistant.



### **Indian River Community Foundation**

From left: Larry Salustro, Indian River Community Foundation Board Director with Dogs For Life puppy Rosie the Riveter; Cynthia Ryan, DFL Executive Director; Brooke Sauserman, IRCF Foundation Assistant with DFL puppy Chance; Chiaka Nwosu, IRCF Grants/Nonprofit Services Coordinator with DFL puppy Swift; and Toni Hamner, IRCF Director.

# Lead Trainer Shanen Cox

## Dolphins Versus Dogs

*By Katherine Bauman*

What do dolphins and dogs have in common with seals and sea lions? They're all species that can be trained by Dogs For Life's new Lead Trainer Shanen Cox.

The 33-year-old Cox came on board at Dogs For Life in February to help the non-profit's founder Shelly Ferger with training the service and hearing dogs. Cox brings to the job 11 years' experience in marine mammal training at Sea Life Park in Hawaii and Sea World in California. She graduated from Hawaii Pacific University with a bachelor's degree in marine biology.

"I worked very hard to graduate high school at 16 years old," said Cox. She was a junior in college when she was hired at Sea Life Park. She made the move to Sea World after she married and relocated to San Diego, where her husband Kevin's family lives.

The couple, married 10 years in September, made the move to Vero Beach when Shanen took a job at FAU Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute. Kevin, a real estate agent in California, is working on getting his Florida license. The couple settled in Vero Lake Estates with their dog, Darwin, a Rhodesian Ridgeback mix.

Cox made the jump to Dogs For Life when she

learned Ferger was in need of a lead trainer.

While dolphins and dogs are completely different, Shanen said, the same principle applies when training them: positive reinforcement.

"You reward the animal for good behavior. It's fish for dolphins and kibble for dogs," said Cox.

It's not dominance that works, she said. Training a dolphin or dog to do what you ask means learning their personality, picking it apart, building a relationship and earning their trust.

"Once a bond is made it's unbreakable," said Cox.

And while Ferger was impressed with her ability to train animals, she said she hired Cox because she also has experience teaching people how to train animals.

"I'm honored to learn from her," Cox said of working with Ferger. "The stuff she knows can't be learned from a book."

Cox, the daughter of an Air Force veteran, also was interested in the DFL training job because of its mission of improving the quality of life for veterans and individuals with disabilities.

"I'm proud of being able to play a small role in helping veterans find healing for their PTSD through their service dogs," said Cox. "We're providing them with one tool – their dogs – that offers them an improved quality of life."



*Shanen and Corky, an over 55-year-old female killer whale, at Sea World San Diego.*

*Michael C. Wright*

*US Army (Ret.) RCSWI/MCAP, Ordained Chaplain, IdDPMI*

# Celebrating 100th PTSD Meeting



It is with great pride that I pen this article celebrating the 100th meeting of the PTSD Monday evening veteran's group.

Was it not just "yesterday" that a group of

enthusiastic professionals, veterans, directors, and a principal director of Gold Star Mothers met to announce the beginning of this endeavor? No one could have imagined how the group would grow so much it had to be split in two to accommodate over 40-plus veterans at its height.

Even with the ebb and flow of participants that is common with such groups, this celebration represents the tenacity, integrity and camaraderie that holds former service members together. All five branches of the military services are represented. What is fascinating to observe is, without really knowing it, the vets support each other emotionally through each other's struggles, concerns and feelings whether negative or positive. Some say that the advice gleaned from the meetings is equally as helpful and cathartic as would be had from a professional.

Well, there are directors, like Shelly Ferger and Cynthia Ryan (former and current executive directors respectively of Dogs For Life). There are presidents, like Michelle Dale of Gold Star Mothers. There are former First Sergeants, like Chuck Gerrald. And there are professionals who happen to be vets like the ones they serve. To wit: Tom Metzinger, LCSW; Kris Hasenauer, PA, Trauma Doctor and Specialist; and lastly, this writer, Michael Wright, RCSWI/MCAP.

Still, we see ourselves in illustration, as an engine that may be needed to start the train and provide the initial boost to the rest of the cars. We can deduce that while these patriotic men and women never claimed to be anything other than vets helping vets, they have become a conduit for much greater things to happen amongst themselves.

1. Through the indispensable help of DFL Founder Shelly Ferger, local area vets found a home they can always come to for support.

2. Supportive therapeutic professional counseling was and is always available in each meeting with state-licensed professionals who are also veterans themselves.

3. Bonds and friendships were forged as a result of meeting each other and getting to know each other's story.

4. A strong female veteran meeting was born out a strong desire to see women veterans have their own space to discuss issues particular to females. Our cherished combat vet Mrs. Ingrid Hernandez peer leads this group twice monthly on Wednesdays.

5. As mentioned before, to properly accommodate the growing Monday group and allow their narratives to be heard without curtailment, the group was expanded to include a Thursday evening meeting led by Kris Hasenauer.

Extracurricular activities such as eating out together as a group, boating and fishing excursions, pottery and other activities have grown from these humble beginnings and it appears that we're on track for even greater things to happen, thank God.

So, in conclusion, this milestone did not happen by the will of one or two, but many who bound together by the common thread of patriotic service to this country. I thought it was beneficial to provide a place vets from all branches of service can meet and talk about themes and issues with all due respect to our civilian counterparts.

Nonetheless, we fully understand that without the help and backing of interested parties of all persuasions who have shown their support financially and otherwise time and time again, none of the aforementioned accomplishments could be listed here today. We, the vets, are eternally grateful to each and every one of you who are every bit as important to us reaching the road to our next milestone, whatever that might be. Isn't it exciting? May God bless you all and may He bless the USA.

*Michelle Dale, President  
American Gold Star Mothers of Indian River County*

# Unacceptable Inspired Unstoppable

Much has been happening with the American Gold Star Mothers of Indian River County the past few months. Our Walk-A-Thon for Military Veteran Suicide Awareness and Veteran Resource Expo at Riverside Park on November 7, 2021 was a huge success. Our hard work and perseverance enabled us to donate \$66,000 to our PTSD sessions at DFL with the Next Generation Veterans and MHA to continue helping our veterans struggling with the “Battle Within.” Next Generation Veterans, who monitor the sessions, know the veterans attending are opening up and getting the help they need to move forward in healing. One veteran suicide a day is a TRAGEDY. 22 a day is UNACCEPTABLE. Our AGSMIRC main focus will always be to lower this number and help save our veterans.

We participated in the Wings and Wheels event at the Vero Beach Airport in November. I had the honor to help host the Veteran Council of Indian River County’s first annual Army Cpl Dale J. Kridlo Veteran and Family Picnic in February, which this year was named in honor of my son, Dale. We attended the MHA Cheeseburger in Paradise fundraising event and were recognized for our donation to their PTSD sessions. And we thoroughly enjoyed being a part of the DFL Patriots for Puppies successful fundraising event at the Heritage Center. The Military Officers Association of America IRC recently had a fundraiser for us and donated \$8,700 to us to help kick start our 2022 WALK-A-THON!!

I am extremely grateful to our community for recognizing our Gold Star Mothers and all the work we do to help our veterans and their causes. As President of the American Gold Star Mothers of IRC, I will focus on the needs of our veterans – especially, those with PTSD. I will also be moving forward with the AGSM State Department of FL/ PR, stepping up as President. This gives me the opportunity to meet Gold Star Mothers from across our beautiful state and hopefully, expand into Puerto Rico. My plan for our semi-annual State meeting, which will be held in Vero Beach, is to have it in conjunction with our Walk-A-Thon in November

and involve those in attendance.

Recently, I attended an event in Tampa where I had the opportunity to meet an Army Command Sergeant Major of Task Force All American, 82d



Airborne Division at Fort Bragg NC. The story he told opened my eyes to what a soldier experiences when he witnesses the loss of one of his brothers; and as he stated, while in battle, it happens over and over again . . . and then over and over again while struggling with the “Battle Within.” I will keep my focus on PTSD and do everything I can to use our sessions here in Indian River County at DFL and MHA as examples to share with other Chapters how we, as Gold Star Mothers, can reach out and do what we do in IRC. It is not easy to put yourself out there and feel vulnerable, but just look at the reward . . . the possibility to save someone’s life.

I am forever grateful to Kathi G. Schumann and Shelly Ferger for giving me strength to start the Gold Star Mother Chapter of IRC. And they continue to support me because they also believe everything we do at Dogs For Life can help save the life of one of our beloved Veterans.



*Participating in the 2021 Walk-A-Thon are (l to r) Roma Anderson, AGSMIRC Vice President; Tammy Thurber Becker, AGSMIRC Chaplain; Michelle Dale, AGSMIRC President; Kathi G. Schumann, DFL Board Treasurer; and Diana D'Angelo, AGSMIRC Sec/Treasurer.*

*Chuck Gerrald, First Sergeant*  
*Next Generation Veterans of Indian River County*

## Commitment to our Veteran Community



The mission of Next Generation Veterans is the betterment of our veteran community. As the monument project is winding down, Next Gen is looking to the future. Where will it go next?

One of the group's duties is to help with storm mitigation. When a storm approaches, Next Gen members help to install storm window shutters for those who are not able to install them. After the storm, members disperse teams throughout the county with blue tarps, chain saws and ladders to mitigate further damages. We reduce and control the damages until the insurance companies arrive to evaluate the loss. Then Next Gen works with the Veterans Council to help the veterans get the services they need.

This year, Next Gen has restocked the inventory so that we will be ready to help during the next storm season. This program has and remains a top priority.

Next Gen started a PTSD program three years ago. We immediately partnered with Dogs For Life and Gold Star Mothers. Now the program has a five-member board representing Next Gen, Dogs For Life, Goldstar Mothers, Mental Health Association and Emerald Health. Together the board has developed a PTSD program that has been successful and grown into three weekly sessions.

To date, we have passed a milestone of over 100 group sessions. No other organization in the area has been able to put together such a program and sustain its growth. The general PTSD group meets at 7 p.m. every Monday and Thursday at Dogs For Life. The female-only veteran and first responder support groups meet at 7 p.m. the first and third Wednesdays of the month, facilitated by MHA at Dogs For Life.

Next Gen also is involved with many other veteran groups. We support events within the Goldstar Mothers, the Veterans Council, our local American Legion, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars. We offer Honor Guard services for events and funerals. We work behind the scenes on many programs often providing the physical manpower needed to host an event. Just look for the boot print on the back of a t-shirt at the next event.

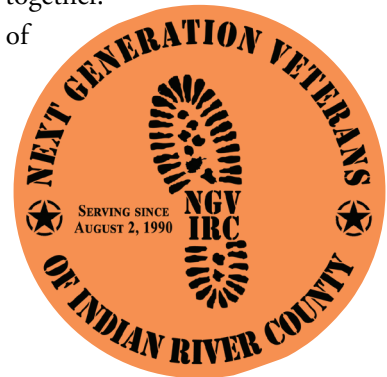
We have a strong commitment to our veteran community and to the programs we have developed. We also recognize the need for recreational programs for our veterans. All work and no play makes for a dull group.

Our PTSD program has demonstrated the value of offering opportunities for veterans to come together in a recreational setting. The results are powerful. Veterans can and do relate better with other veterans, and their time together is very therapeutic. Next Gen wants to create a social program that offers veterans and their families an opportunity to come together.

The young soldiers of yesterday now have families, therefore we will develop programs and events for all ages. We want the veterans to establish and develop a veteran community family; a family of soldiers helping

each other, playing together, and bonding in the process. The soldier's bond is strong, and it is the best part of being a soldier. You are never alone, and we bring the vets together to celebrate this bond. So many vets have forgotten how to enjoy life because they are carrying many burdens which we would like to put in the past.

This is our continued goal: We are striving to help the veterans find balance and support.





*Major Terry Treat, (USA) Ret.*  
*Vice President of the Military Officers Association of America*

# US Army Launches K-9 Corps

On March 13, 1942, the Quartermaster Corps (QMC) of the United States Army began training dogs for the newly established War Dog Program, or “K-9 Corps.”

Well over a million dogs served on both sides during World War I, carrying messages along the complex network of trenches and providing some measure of psychological comfort to the soldiers. The most famous dog to emerge from the war was Rin Tin Tin, an abandoned puppy of German war dogs found in France in 1918 and taken to the United States, where he made his film debut in the 1922 silent film, “The Man from Hell’s River.” As the first bona fide animal movie star, Rin Tin Tin made the little-known



*On July 5, 1916, this messenger dog used by the British Army in Flanders, Belgium runs to the front with urgent messages.*

German Shepherd breed famous across the country.

In the United States, the practice of training dogs for military purposes was largely abandoned after World War I. When the country entered World War II in December 1941, the American Kennel

Association and a group called Dogs for Defense began a movement to mobilize dog owners to donate healthy and capable animals to the Quartermaster Corps of the U.S. Army. Training began in March 1942, and that fall the QMC was given the task of training dogs for the U.S. Navy, Marines and Coast Guard as well.

The K-9 Corps initially accepted over 30 breeds of dogs, but the list was soon narrowed to seven: German Shepherds, Belgian sheep dogs, Doberman Pinschers, Collies, Siberian Huskies, Malamutes and Eskimo dogs.

Members of the K-9 Corps were trained for a total of 8 to 12 weeks. After basic obedience training, they

were sent through one of four specialized programs to prepare them for work as sentry dogs, scout or patrol dogs, messenger dogs or mine-detection dogs. In active combat duty, scout dogs proved especially essential



by alerting patrols to the approach of the enemy and preventing surprise attacks.

The top canine hero of World War II was Chips, a German Shepherd who served with the Army’s 3rd Infantry Division. Trained as a sentry dog, Chips broke away from his handlers and attacked an enemy machine gun nest in Italy, forcing the entire crew to surrender. The wounded Chips was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, Silver Star and the Purple Heart — all of which were later revoked due to an Army policy preventing official commendation of animals.

CONTRIBUTORS NOTE: The Army policy referenced above is but a precursor to a much more tragic policy decision regarding the disposition of the “used” war dogs from the Vietnam War. Article originally published 3/11/2020 by History.com, A&E Television Networks.



*US Marine dog handlers pose with their K-9s in the South Pacific, WWII.*

*Thomas R. Metzinger, LCSW, CCHT*  
*Therapist/Owner Suggestive Minds Center, PLLC*

## Cultivating Empathy



Empathy is not something you either have or don't have. It's a tool that you can use when you need to, when the situation or relationship requires it. Some of us have a

natural ability and some of us need to cultivate it.

Having empathy means having the ability to experience life through someone else's set of lenses, to be able to walk in their shoes and get an idea of what it's like to be them, and to feel what they are feeling. When we cultivate empathy and show it, others might be inspired to have empathy toward us. Having empathy for each other will help us to spread deeper understanding, compassion, and promote positivity.

Here are five ways in which to cultivate empathy:

- Be curious, ask. Ask lots of questions. Get to know who people truly are. Understand their hopes, their dreams, their trials and tribulations. Talk with a lot of different people and get an understanding of where they are coming from.
- Look at your own unique biases. How far are you willing to go? What are the things that upset you? What are the things that you don't agree with? What are the things that you struggle with?

Understanding these can help you understand where other people might have a bias.

- Be uncomfortable. Put yourself in challenging situations, situations where you must rise above. That way you can draw on that experience to help you understand the struggles of someone else.
- Work with others. Work with others on projects or to solve problems. By getting to know how other people operate and how other people work enables you to see things from a different perspective, from their perspective, and it helps you have more empathy.

- Read lots of stuff. Read articles. Read newspapers. Read books. By reading, you get to know how other people experience life. You get to see characters unfold. We are the main character in our own story and so it's helpful to see from another person's perspective since they are the main character in their story. Others navigate life in similar and different ways to our own ways.

We won't truly be able to understand what it's like to be somebody else, but we can at least get an idea by doing these five things: by being curious and asking questions, by understanding our own biases, by being uncomfortable and having to challenge ourselves, by working with others, and simply by reading. So, try these five things out and you will discover your ability to have and use empathy.



### ***Veterans Court Program Visit***

*Veterans Court is a specialty court just for military veterans who suffer from drug addiction and mental illness. The goal of these courts is to avoid "clients" from reoffending by changing their lives in a permanent, positive way. Judge Menz and the Veterans Court team provide intensive, individualized judicial team supervision aimed at rehabilitation. They do this to effect positive change in the lives of those impacted by these social problems.*

*Carlos Halcomb, Col., USAF (Ret)*

*Interim Executive Director, Veterans Council of Indian River County*

## Still Serving Since 1987

The Veterans Council of Indian River County continues to support veterans and families in need through Upward American Veterans, Veterans Helping Veterans and Veterans Outreach programs.

These programs rely on the generosity of volunteers from around our community to work with those in need, and at this time, we are actively seeking volunteers to assist program managers. Please contact the Veterans Council to volunteer or ask any questions about our wonderful programs.

The Veterans Council also is seeking a new Executive Director to manage this extensive charity. All experienced, talented and energetic folks from around our community are encouraged to review the job on the LinkedIn website; search for Executive Director and Veterans Council. The Board of Directors is looking to make a hiring decision by May 31, 2022.

The Veterans Council has also stood up a Transition Team to review, collaborate and revamp many operational areas of our wonderful charity. One of our many decisions is to expand our committees, which review, plan and coordinate with the Executive Director and Board of Directors on their specific tasks. The Veterans Council of Indian River County is seeking energetic folks to volunteer and serve on these committees as we plan to take the charity to the “next level.” Call us about details at 772-410-5820.

We lastly encourage our community of veterans and families to attend our General Council meetings to raise awareness of programs available to them, or others in need. The General Council meets the first Wednesday of each month at 1:30 p.m. at Indian River County Building A, Commissioners Chambers, Vero Beach.

## Eagle Scout Project

Since its inception in 1911, only four percent of Scouts have earned the rank of Eagle. The Eagle Scout must demonstrate Scout Spirit, an ideal attitude based upon the Scout Oath and Law, service, and leadership. The rank of Eagle Scout may be earned by a Scout who has been a Life Scout for at least six years and earned 21 merit badges. They also must plan, develop, and lead a service project or Eagle project.

Boy Scout Troop 513 had two boys at Eagle Scout rank that needed a project. Dogs For Life stepped up and offered multiple project ideas for the two boys. Trevor Morrow and Tomek Kiernan took the challenge and picked their projects.

Trevor Morrow took the idea of making a dog wash for Dogs For Life’s Dog Park. He had to come up with a concept that the dog owner could be near their dog and use both hands. It took one weekend for him and other Scouts to complete the project.

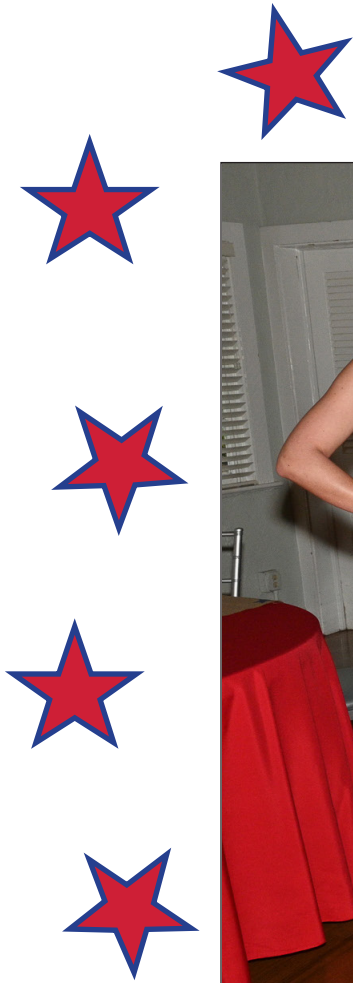
Tomek Kiernan developed a new enclosed news/memo board, repaired another one and fixed and painted the Dog Park’s agility area.

Both boys took this Dog Park to a new level with the dog wash and repairing the things that needed to be repaired. “I am very thankful to Dogs For Life for letting my Scouts do their projects at their Dog Park and to achieve the rank of Eagle Scout,” said Doug Klock, Committee Chairman of Troop 513 Vero Beach.



*Eagle Scout Trevor Morrow and DFL puppy Swift.*

# Patriots For Puppies –



*Almost Andrews Sisters with swing dancers.*



*DFL Founder and CEO Shelly Ferger, Army Captain Kris Hasenauer with his service dog Jasper, and DFL Executive Director Cynthia Ryan.*

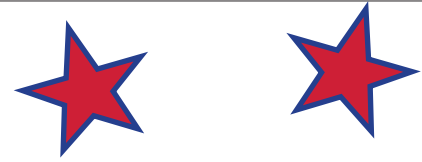


*Marine Corps Sgt. Rob Ryan, Army Captain Kris Hasenauer, Navy Chief Glenn Legwen IV, and Air Force Senior Airman Cliff Labbe.*

# A Night to Remember!

It was back to the 1940's for guests at DFL's Patriots For Puppies on February 26th, 2022. Live music from the "20th St Jazz Band," performances from the Almost Andrews Sisters and food catered by Wild Thyme were enjoyed by all.

DFL's incredible committee of volunteers in collaboration with our event sponsors, donors, and attendees were an integral part in helping DFL reach its goal of \$100,000, making Patriots For Puppies DFL's most successful event ever!



DFL Puppy Raisers Meg and Don Peterson (USA, Ret.) with Rosie the Riveter.

A 1940's USO Themed Dance & Show

## 1st Annual Patriots For Puppies

A Special Thank You To Our Sponsors

"Presenting"

Anonymous  
"In Honor of All Veterans"

"Puppy"




"Hero"







"Paws"










"Tail Wag"



















DFL Board Member Linda Barberi and Richie Keller (USMC) with Gigi.

*Andy Beebe, USAF Veteran with Truffle*

# A Family Affair

*By Meg Peterson*

Starting from an early age, retired U.S. Air Force veteran Andy Beebe knew he wanted to be an aircraft mechanic in the U.S. Air Force. As the son of a non-commissioned Army officer, he was familiar with the military lifestyle and knew the Air Force was the place for him.

After 20 years of service around the world, Andy was ready to retire in 2001, but 2001 turned out to be a pivotal year for Andy, as it was for many service men and women.

“When 9/11 happened, I was at Pope Air Force Base in North Carolina, about to retire. I had my paperwork turned in,” said Andy. Rather than retire though, he stayed in the Air Force and served his country for seven more years.



*Andy at home with DFL puppy Bradley, Truffle and Cocoa.*

“I moved to Maguire Air Force Base in New Jersey, met Laurie, my wife, and got promoted during those seven years, which shows that good things can come from otherwise difficult situations,” Andy said. From Maguire, Andy and Laurie moved to Scott Air Force Base in Illinois for Andy’s final assignment.

Andy earned an undergraduate degree in Professional Aeronautics, a master’s in Acquisition Management, and worked as a C130 Crew Chief and Weapon System Manager during his career. He served in Operations Desert Shield, Desert Storm and Enduring Freedom. He retired in 2009 as Chief of Acquisition Logistics for Air Mobility Command.

Andy took a job in Illinois as a contractor after retiring, but he and Laurie both loved Florida and decided to retire here seven years ago. They wanted to be in Southern Florida but away from the crowds, so Vero Beach was a perfect fit.

Andy and Laurie first connected with Dogs For Life at “Bark in the Park,” a local fundraiser. They trained their late yellow lab, Sadie, as a therapy dog. DFL awarded Laurie and Sadie the award “Therapy Partners of the Year” in 2017.

It was Laurie who first recognized Andy’s signs of post-traumatic stress (PTS) and suggested that a service dog could help. They joined the waiting list at a small family breeder called Legacy Labs in St. Cloud, Florida, hoping to get a puppy that could become Andy’s service dog.

Almost two years ago they brought home Truffle, a female black lab puppy, and she and Andy entered training at DFL. Andy and Truffle graduated together as a service dog team on April 23, 2022.

With Truffle by his side, Andy feels more comfortable going to public places. However, he wants readers to know that too many people lack understanding about service dogs, particularly service dogs that assist with the effects of PTS.

“When a blind person has a service dog, no one runs up and asks to pet the dog. Because the effects of PTS are not so obvious, many people ignore Truffle’s vest and make a big fuss over her,” Andy noted. It is an unfortunate irony: The unwanted attention caused by a service dog often triggers the PTS symptoms the dog is trained to mitigate. “A lot more education is needed,” said Andy.

Along with Truffle, the Beebes have Coco, a pet chocolate lab. They also volunteer with DFL’s Puppy Raising and Foster Dog Program to help care for and socialize DFL’s service puppies in training.

Interacting with Beebe’s older dogs teaches the pups good manners. “It’s not that hard to have multiple dogs in the house, and Truffle really enjoys the foster puppies on occasion,” Laurie said.

DFL congratulates Andy and Truffle on their graduation and sincerely thanks Laurie and Andy for opening their home to DFL’s foster pups.

# Service Dog Re-Certifications

Did you know that DFL re-certifies every service dog in our program every year? As part of the ADI Accreditation, owner and service dog must be performing their required public obedience and task work to maintain an annual certification status.

## Class of 2011

Joan Freeman and Daisy  
Fred Jones and Sissy Girl

## Class of 2015

Wanda Haaland and Lola

## Class of 2016

Bob Cheshire (USN) and Bo  
Chere McCoy (USAF) and Stella

## Class of 2017

Corinne Cruickshank and Aya  
Mark Pozioemek and Ranger  
Pamela Simon and Skye

## Class of 2018

Al Cabral (USA) and Coco  
Richie Keller (USMC) and Gigi  
Perry Martin (USAF) and Sassy  
Judith Ricard and Fitz  
Judy Schmidt (USAF) and Bentley

## Class of 2019

Eleanor Bengyak and Rufus  
Sue Bergman and Spencer  
Michael Bores (USA) and Bandit  
Barbara Gormas and Lola  
Bill Moruzzi (USA) and Remington  
Roxanne Pagliaroli and Swag

## Class of 2020

Lauren Carr and Coco  
Jessica Jacobs and Honey  
Tammie Mandeville and Poppy  
Elizabeth McGoldrick and Oliver  
Kimberley Mann-Day (USN) and Elvis  
Howard Rizio (USMC) and St. Cloud  
Earl Tindol (USAR) and Arrow  
Claude Vitali (USMC) and Beebe

## Class of 2021

Resharrd Coleman (USN) and Zoey  
Lauren Carr and Coco  
Kris Hasenauer (USA) and Jasper  
Diane Kimball (USN) and Ralfee  
Dani Ley and Ollie  
Dennis Och and Zoe  
Sean Timberlake (USA) and Judy

## Class of 2022

Chris Adams (USN) & Dozer  
Andrew Beebe (USAF) & Truffle  
Marisel Munoz Febo (USAF) & Honcho  
Martin Pillar & Mellie  
Julie Rollins & Dottie  
Beth Stryker & Grady  
Philip Tettleton & Sully  
Maureen Turner & Angus



Lauren Carr with Coco



Resharrd Coleman with Zoey.



Elizabeth McGoldrick with Oliver and Tammie Mandeville with Poppy.



Dennis Och with Zoe, Sean Timberlake (USA) with Judy and Diane Kimball (USN) with Ralfee.

# 2021 Volunteer Award Recipients

- Kathi G. Schumann Award* ..... Michelle Dale, President  
American Gold Star Mothers of IRC
- Military Veteran Volunteer of the Year Award* ..... Cheryl Marshall (US Air Force)
- Military Veteran Trainer of the Year Award* ..... Sean Timberlake (US Army)
- Volunteer Trainer of the Year Award*..... Sandra Moruzzi
- Volunteer of the Year Award* ..... Marisel Munoz Febo (US Air Force)
- Volunteer of the Year Award* ..... Braden Palmer
- Foster Dog Family Award*..... Meg and Don Peterson (US Army, Ret.)
- Foster Dog Family Award*..... Roxanna Hinzman
- Individual Philanthropist Award*..... Jack and Susie Ley
- Corporate Philanthropist Award*..... Devon Williams, Quilts of Valor
- Corporate Philanthropist Award*..... Poop 911



*Pictured from left: Marisel Munoz Febo, (US Air Force) and Honcho; Sean Timberlake (US Army) and Judy; Sandra Moruzzi; Devon Williams, Quilts of Valor; Michelle Dale, President, American Gold Star Mothers of IRC; Meg Peterson and Chance; Cheryl Marshall (US Air Force, Ret.); Roxanna Hinzman and Stryker; Jack and Susie Ley.*

## Trainers Workshop Joins VTV on Website

If you haven't been to the Dogs For Life website lately, as part of our ongoing and growing education programs, we've added the Dog Park Ambassador Program to the already existing educational programs.

These programs include Veterans Training Veterans, the Puppy Raising and Foster Dog Program; and as of June 2022, with the assistance of Citrus Three Marketing and Advertising, we'll be recording the PAWS For Veterans Training Program for future use over the next five years.

Thank you to the DFL Anonymous Sponsor for making it possible to put the DFL Educational Programs on the DFL website. Check it out at [www.dogsforlifevb.org](http://www.dogsforlifevb.org).





# 2022 Graduation at DFL



Everyone had a wonderful time at DFL's Service/Hearing Dog Graduation & Donor & Volunteer Appreciation Ceremony. Congratulations to our graduates, and a special thank you to all of the amazing donors and volunteers.

Chris Adams, (US Navy) & Dozer  
Andrew Beebe, (USAF) & Truffle  
Marisel Munoz Febo, (USAF) & Honcho  
Martin Pillar & Mellie

Julie Rollins & Dottie  
Beth Stryker & Grady  
Philip Tettleton & Sully  
Maureen Turner & Angus



*Trainer Sally Bricker and Beth Stryker with Grady.*



*Marisel Munoz Febo and Honcho.*



*Julie Rollins with Dottie and DFL Trainer Marcia Adache with Kai.*



*Andy Beebe with Truffle.*



*Philip and Kat Tettleton with Sully.*



*Maureen Turner with Angus.*



*Martin and Joleen Pillar with Mellie.*

# Puppy Sponsorships

Dogs For Life is extremely grateful for the commitment and dedication of our Puppy Sponsors. DFL puppies are lucky to have people like you sponsor their journey to becoming service dogs. Investment in the puppy sponsorship program ensures our veterans receive the benefits they have so honorably earned. Dogs For Life's trained and certified service dogs allow them the support that they need to live a more independent and fulfilling life.



*Puppy Sponsors Linda and Ed Duncan with Rosie the Riveter.*



*From left, Puppy Sponsors and Jeep Club members Lee Rech, Vice President; Denise Adams, President Emeritus; Dani Garofallo, Treasurer; and Jose Munoz with Marisel Munoz Febo and her service dog Honcho.*



*Puppy Sponsors Pablo Gonzalez-Menocal and Judy Hanson.*

# Puppies with a Purpose



As an accredited member of Assistance Dogs International (ADI), Dogs For Life has also joined the ADI American Breeding Cooperative (ABC).

DFL obtains purpose-bred puppies through their membership with a service dog breeding cooperative. Breeder dogs are specifically chosen based on temperament and physical confirmation as well as their willingness to learn and serve.

All breeder dogs and their puppies undergo health clearances, including testing of each dog's hips, elbows, eyes and heart. The goal of the cooperative is to place the healthiest dogs possible with the expectation that they will be able to assist their partner for eight to ten years.



# How Does One Puppy Save a Life?

With your Sponsorship “we can do it!”

Start with “ME,” a very special puppy

8 weeks of age  
\$1,500




Give “ME” love and a healthy start

Up to 6 months  
\$10,000



I get obedience and public access training

Up to 1 year  
\$8,500



Your sponsorship provides special training

Up to 1½ years  
\$20,000



I am matched with a Veteran and the transformation begins

Up to 2 years  
\$40,000



We make partners for life

Up to 8 years of Post Graduate Support  
\$13,000



Because of you, at no cost to our Clients.

# DFL Attends WWI Dedication on Veterans Day



WWI Monument Dough Boy reenactor, Col. Mike Discipio (USMC, Ret.), DFL Board Treasurer Kathi G. Schumann, John Matthews (USMC) & Col. Carlos Halcomb (USAF, Ret.).



Dogs For Life staff and service dog teams were honored to attend the 2021 Veterans Day Ceremony/WWI Monument dedication at Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary.

Pictured from left, DFL Executive Director Cynthia Ryan; Phil Tettleton with Sully; Marisel Munoz Febo (USAF) with Honcho; DFL Board Treasurer Kathi G. Schumann, Elizabeth McGoldrick with Oliver; DFL Founder and CEO Shelly Ferger; and Bill Moruzzi (USMC) with Remington.

# Christmas Party



Over 80 Dogs For Life clients (20 with service dogs), staff and key volunteers attended Mrs. Kathi G. Schumann's Annual Christmas Party at Pointe West on December 12. Thank you, Mrs. Schumann, for making our Christmas bright!

# Bidadoo employees jump at ‘Chance’ to transport puppy

What does it take to get a puppy from Connecticut to Florida on short notice? A team that knows something about logistics, that’s what!

Chance, one of Dogs For Life’s newest puppies, was donated by Torrington, Connecticut-based Educated Canines Assisting with Disabilities (ECAD). Donated pups often travel among Assistance Dog International-accredited organizations with American Airlines’ Puppies in Flight program. However, airline volunteers were unable to transport the dog during the busy spring break travel period.

It seemed Chance would be stuck at ECAD’s kennel indefinitely.

Chance’s luck changed when employees of Bidadoo, an equipment auction company, stepped in and offered their services. Casey Criswell, Bidadoo East Coast Production Manager, coordinated the operation.

“I fully support veteran causes, and I had heard about Dogs For Life from friends in Vero Beach. I knew my colleagues at Bidadoo would want to help too,” said Criswell, a U.S. Army veteran.

Criswell arranged for Mike Arnold, Bidadoo Production Representative, to transport Chance from ECAD to the Bidadoo Pennsylvania location managed by Dan Walker. From Pennsylvania, Criswell drove the pup to Virginia to meet up with Dogs For Life volunteers, Don and Meg Peterson, who brought Chance to Vero Beach.

“DFL greatly appreciates everyone’s willingness to help Chance get here safely so that he can start his life as a service pup in training,” said Shelly Ferger, founder and CEO of Dogs For Life.



*Above photo from left, Mike Arnold, Dan Walker holding Chance, and Casey Criswell.*



*Photo left: Foster dad Don Peterson meeting Chance in April 2022.*



*Chance playing with another service dog in training, Swift.*

# PTSD Studies

## *Research Shows Assistance Dogs Reduce Symptoms and Boost Wellbeing Among Veterans with PTSD*

Military veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) benefit from reduced symptoms and enhanced trauma treatments when they partner with assistance dogs and help with their training, according to a newly released review of evidence-based studies.

Seven scientific studies, published in peer-reviewed journals, found that assistance dog training and partnering produced “moderate-to-significant” lowering of PTSD symptom scores in line with those reported in gold-standard trials of trauma interventions supported by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

The studies, carried out over the past five years, looked at a range of programs, from partnering veterans with fully-trained assistance dogs to teaching veterans how to train assistance dogs. All seven studies found reduced PTSD symptoms after participants completed service dog handling instruction. Two others, which used follow-up measures, found long-term reduction in symptoms.



“Assistance dogs improve the lives of countless thousands of veterans around the world by helping with practical tasks, enhancing independence, and boosting wellbeing, dignity and confidence,” said Chris Diefenthaler, executive director of Assistance Dogs International (ADI). “These studies indicate that properly trained assistance dogs are both life-saving and life-changing for veterans suffering from PTSD. They are proof that assistance dogs have a major role to play in the treatment, rehabilitation and support of military veterans with severe combat trauma.”

A total of eleven assistance dog programs across the U.S., including eight accredited by ADI, participated in the studies, which were carried out by behavioral scientists, military psychologists, public health experts and social workers. Researchers

reported that “veterans benefit significantly from dog ownership in combination with a structured dog training program. Not only do they experience significant decreases in stress and post-traumatic stress symptoms but also they experience less isolation and self-judgment while also experiencing significant improvements in self-compassion.”

One study found “a statistically significant decrease in PTSD and depression symptoms ... participants reported significant reductions in anger and improvement in perceived social support and quality of life.” In another study, researchers working with veterans being treated for chronic severe combat trauma used eye tracking technology to measure the psychological effect of training a young assistance dog. The more time veterans spent in close contact with the dog, the less time they spent looking at threatening imagery and they paid more attention to “pleasant” images.

“The scientific evidence is conclusive,” said Rick Yount, founder and executive director of ADI member Warrior Canine Connection. “Assistance dogs are both popular and effective at reducing trauma symptoms and improving the quality of life for our veterans. PTSD is projected to remain a chronic and debilitating condition for thousands of veterans. It is imperative that assistance dogs for veterans with PTSD be fully integrated into military and veteran trauma care.”

The ADI accredited programs involved in the study were K9s For Warriors, Paws For Purple Hearts, Warrior Canine Connection, Paws Assisting Veterans (PAVE), Joys of Living Assistance Dogs (JLAD), Bergin University of Canine Studies, Paws for People and Clear Paths for Veterans.

Assistance Dogs International is the world’s leading standards-setter and accreditation body for training assistance dogs. As a worldwide coalition of nearly 150 non-profit member organizations, including Dogs For Life, spread across five continents, ADI is the world’s most diverse and inclusive assistance dog certification and standard-setting body. For more information visit <https://assistancedogsinternational.org>.

# Tributes and Memorial Gifts

In Memory  
of  
Robert G. Bowman  
And Robbie

## In Honor Of

### Arleen Arsenault's Birthday

Linda Barberi  
Eleanor Bengyak  
Shelly Ferger

### Linda Barberi's Birthday

Shelly Ferger  
Elisa & Matt Marra

### Eleanor Bengyak's Birthday

Linda Barberi  
Shelly Ferger

### Sue Bergmann's Birthday

Linda Barberi  
Eleanor Bengyak  
Shelly Ferger

### Kag Cagnoni

William Bitetto

### Muggins Challoner

Kay Ruma

### Brenda Daniels' Birthday

Linda Barberi  
Eleanor Bengyak  
Shelly Ferger

### Darryl Daniels' Birthday

Linda Barberi  
Shelly Ferger

### Gabriele "Gaby" Harrison's Birthday

Linda Barberi  
Shelly Ferger

### "Fergus" Higginbottom

Peter & Donna Polk

### Laurie Iodice's Birthday

Linda Barberi  
Shelly Ferger

## In Honor Of

### Richie Keller

William Heile

### Larry Kraus

Alison Alletto

### Alexander McDermott

Bob & Anne McDermott

### "Pepper" Mumford

Nancy & Dan Fackler

### Ann Nolan's Birthday

Linda Barberi  
Eleanor Bengyak  
Shelly Ferger

### Cynthia Ryan's Birthday

Linda Barberi  
Shelly Ferger

### Judy Schmidt & Bentley

Joan Schmidt

### Kathi G. Schumann

Shelly Ferger  
Mae Frances Garrett  
Gene & Martha Schumann  
Mark & Cheri Schumann  
Donovan Schumann  
Gene & Martha Schumann  
John & Kim Schumann III  
B.A. (Ann) Waggaman

### Harry Taylor's Birthday

Shelly Ferger

## In Memory Of

### Beverly Barger

Lee Reis-El Bara

### "Sunny" Ferger

Sue Bergmann  
Marc & Sharyl Ogle

Our Dogs Leave  
Paw Print Memories  
In Our  
Hearts Forever

## In Memory Of

### Patricia M. "Pat" O'Donnell

Matt & Ginny McAlarnen

### Bruce Pfaff

Suzanne Rivett-Peterson, Sebastian  
Duplicate Bridge Club

### Eva Sandlin

Earl & JoAnn Tindol

### Robert Saucerman

Margene Strange

### Donovan Schumann

Laura Bonney  
Kevin & Shanen Cox  
Shelly Ferger  
Gaby Harrison  
Daniel & Ann Nolan

### Michael Kenny Stone

William & Sheron Bolen  
Michael Bowen  
Lanier Brannen  
Marc & Marilyn Bruce  
Roger & Wendy Doty  
Shelly Ferger  
Cindy Gantt  
Rufus & Debbie Hendrix  
Richard & Jean Keith  
Kicklighter Law,  
Claude M. Kicklighter, Jr., PC  
Anne Moore  
Charles & Elizabeth Murphy  
Marlan & Jane Nichols  
Randy & Marcia Nichols  
W.R. Smith  
Melanie Smith  
Clyde & Cynthia Snyder II  
Kenny & Julie Stone  
Kathy Tucker  
Lauren Wright

### Betty White

Bonnie & Fritz Spitzmiller  
Bob & Macy Swift

# We're Going to the Dog Park

*By Katherine Bauman*

Eleanor Bengyak has had an enviable vantage point in witnessing Dogs For Life develop over the years. From this vantage point she's become one of the non-profit's biggest advocates.

Mrs. Bengyak has lived across the street from Dogs For Life for 58 years. She had a front-row seat when the former horse pasture was turned into a dog park. She watched as concrete blocks came together to form Dogs For Life's offices and training center. She witnessed the once dog obedience classes transform into training programs for hearing and service dogs for veterans and individuals with disabilities.

"When we first learned they wanted to put a dog park there and IR County Zoning wanted to put a concrete wall around it, I took a petition up and down the street against it.

So, instead of a wall, a fence was erected and there's now a gate in the fence right across from Mrs. Bengyak's house and concrete pavers leading the way to Shelly Ferger's office.

Mrs. Bengyak is an original member of the Dog Park, member and past president of the Board of Directors, and founder of the fundraising Bridge Tournament and Bengyak Legacy Society.

She and her late husband also were Service Dog Team members, receiving and training dogs to help them with stability, mobility, and other tasks. Taffy, a golden retriever, was Mrs. Bengyak's first service dog. Rufus, a 5-year-old golden retriever, is her current service dog.



*Eleanor Bengyak and her service dog Rufus.*

Mrs. Bengyak bought her house on 15th Avenue in 1964, raising her son there and eventually sharing it with her second husband, Victor, for 37 years. Victor, a retired New York City firefighter, died in 2014. She lost her son Patrick McCalister in January 2020.

Victor's obituary listed his "beloved service dog, Mitzi" as a survivor. The Bengyak Legacy Society was created at that time, with donations going to support Dogs For Life.

With her family's blessing, Mrs. Bengyak said her plans are to leave her home and property to Dogs For Life in her will. "It makes me happy knowing some day someone will be trotting little puppies from here to there," said Eleanor.

An avid bridge player and teacher of the game, Mrs. Bengyak started the Bridge Tournament to raise money for DFL's programs. The tournament started 10 years ago at the River House with six tables and 24 players, and before the pandemic had grown to over 25 tables and 100 players.

DFL supporter Kathi G. Schumann put together a popular silent auction in conjunction with the Bridge Tournament. She also donated orchids as prizes. "I think that's what the ladies fight for – the orchids – vs. the master points," said Eleanor.

She sees Dogs For Life continuing to grow. "I see it expanding and training more and more dogs for veterans with PTSD and anybody with hearing and mobility needs," Eleanor said. "I'm supportive of anything they want to do."