Eight months ago, as of this writing, the world learned about a “novel coronavirus.” Novel, in this sense, means new – never before seen in humans. Coronavirus is a family of viruses, known for spikes on its surface that, under a microscope, give the appearance of a ‘corona’ or a circle of light. For the purposes of this article and clarity, the disease this virus causes is called COVID-19 – CO*rona V*irus D*isease – 2019, and will be referred to simply as COVID.

The next thing we knew, most countries around the world were in a lock-down – quarantine – given stay-at-home orders. Call it what you will, all of us were home, with our assistance dogs. At first, while I think we were concerned, we were generally ok. We followed directions from local governments of not using masks, not using gloves, and staying home other than for essential outings, like getting groceries. Even back then, we all started to look for ways to have things delivered and avoid going anywhere where there were other people.

As time passed, we learned that young people can get seriously ill from the disease too, and that many people have had it, of all ages, without any symptoms.

Fast forward to now – this article is being written early November 2020 – we, the community of people with disabilities with assistance dogs, have been home. At first, given we have disabilities and likely concerns about our risk of catching COVID, we stayed home and were doing ok. Now, months later, there are countless mixed messages of staying home, getting back to normal, stay home if you can but things need to open up, socially distance no matter what, outside is safer than inside, always wear a mask – unless you’re eating, avoid large groups, even family, and on and on and on.

We’ve found creative ways to use elevators, go shopping without touching anything, wear masks no matter what, greet dear friends with elbow bumps – if we even take the chance to see anyone. Some of us have developed small bubbles or pods of trusted people, who all limit their

As more time passed, we’ve learned that young people can get seriously ill from the disease too, and that many people have had it, of all ages, without any symptoms.
Editor’s Note

2020 has proven to be a difficult year where so many lives have been impacted by the global pandemic (Coronavirus/COVID-19), the aftermath of wildfires and other disasters, collective trauma, protests and civil unrest, election day struggles, and other unanticipated events. Many of us have been under orders of shelter-in-place, “social” distancing, mandatory masks, and other restrictions to mitigate risks of spreading the coronavirus pandemic now spiking in its 3rd wave.

One silver lining: increased connections and access to online virtual conferences, telecommuting, support groups, telehealth options, resources and activities through the internet for many. Even in 2020, however, some people do not have access to the internet by choice or circumstance.

Several conferences pivoted to online virtual platforms, waiving fees, democratizing access to many who might otherwise have had travel and other access barriers. This opened up networking and collaboration opportunities. For example, the 2nd annual event, Task Dog: A Service Dog Expo, scheduled for the Purina Event Center in Gray Summit, Missouri did an online conference connecting assistance dog organizations, trainers, advocates and teams around the globe who shared about exciting research, programs and advocates working in the field to establish and advance public access.

IAADP hosted its premiere online virtual meeting with dial-in and internet options to discuss updating the website and we look forward to more in the future. Thanks to our volunteer, Jane Schau, we were able to utilize the Google Meet platform with built-in closed captioning, video conferencing and more.

IAADP welcomes all the wonderful just-in-time volunteers joining our team! Thank you for answering the call and stepping up. We are still looking for volunteers in most areas and have included the call to action in this issue. IAADP also expresses appreciation for our global community of members, donors, funders and supporters who have supported the advocacy and growth of this organization.

Laura Rose

IAADP’s Wish List

Financial Contributions
• Newsletter Sponsor(s) (content, desktop publishing, print & audio publication, S&H, postage)
• Website Renovation
• Conference Scholarships (registration fees, travel, lodging, meals)

Volunteer Services / IAADP Teams
• Member Engagement • Fundraising
• Website • Newsletter
• Social Media • Information & Advocacy
• International Resources

Thank you, Dana, and all the volunteers that make it possible for all that we, the handlers, are given!

All of you will have angel wings!

~ Kelli Heimerl & “Justeen”

IAADP Website

This fall, assistance dog partners around the country expressing interest in volunteering to do work on the IAADP website joined an online virtual meeting to discuss many aspects. Work is underway on a sandbox prototype and project plan, addressing accessibility and much more.

If you would like to join these meetings and provide input, please email laurarose@iaadp.org.
Access our website at http://www.iaadp.org

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insights on COVID-19 and our dogs
Continued from page 1

activities and with whom we feel safe. For the most part though, many of us have been home, as much as we can be, with our dogs.

When we started staying home, I didn’t see it as such a big deal. My friends with assistance dogs didn’t either, until, as time passed, we started worrying about our dogs’ training, being bored, exhibiting behaviors that they didn’t in the ’before time’ – before COVID. My perfectly trained, amazing hearing dog Jannie, all of a sudden started to bark, over nothing, just seemingly attention-getting. I read stories on Facebook of dogs stopping to alert their humans to sounds, or of looking puzzled at commands that were so natural a few months ago. Human partners are not only worried about dogs losing skills and training, but the possibility of them becoming sick, or carrying the virus to others. We’re all wondering what we can do to protect our dogs – to keep them from getting sick, to keep their training up and to keep them as well behaved as they were several months ago.

To write this article, I researched many websites of assistance dog placement agencies, including, but not limited to, Canine Companions for Independence, Guide Dogs for the Blind, Dogs for Better Lives, Fideleco Guide Dog Federation, NEADS, and Paws with a Cause®. Not all provide information on COVID, while others have detailed information. I also checked the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) website, regarding COVID in general and dogs specifically.

The CDC recommends the following to protect our assistance dogs (Link: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/animals/service-therapy-animals.html):

- Service animals may need to be around other people and animals while working. When possible, both the handler and the animal should stay at least 6 feet away from others.
- If a service animal is sick, call a veterinarian, and do not go out in public with the animal.
- When possible, do not take a service animal into settings in which people are infected with COVID-19 or facilities where you cannot prevent interactions with people who may have COVID-19.
- Avoid contact between sick people and the service animal as much as possible. If contact cannot be avoided, the sick person should wear a mask when around the animal. (Link: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html)
- CDC recommends that people wear masks in public settings and when around people who don’t live in your household, especially when other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain. (Link: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/social-distancing.html)
- Clean and disinfect service animal collars, vests, leashes or harnesses, and other supplies frequently.
- Do not wipe or bathe your service animal with chemical disinfectants, alcohol, hydrogen peroxide, or other products, such as hand sanitizer, counter-cleaning wipes, or other industrial or surface cleaners. There is no evidence that the virus can spread to people from the skin, fur, or hair of animals. Talk to your veterinarian if you have questions about appropriate products for bathing or cleaning your animal.
- Do not put masks on service animals. Covering an animal’s face could harm them.

Can our dogs catch COVID? Per the CDC, as well as the College of Veterinary Medicine in Illinois (Link: https://vetmed.illinois.edu/pet_column/coronavirus-pets/), it’s rare, but it can happen. They state that in the few known cases, the animal caught the virus from an infected human in the household. They suggest isolation of the person with COVID from other people as well as animals; at this time, animals should not socialize with other people or animals outside the home or outside of your bubble or pod.

The CDC website (cdc.gov), under Guidance for Handlers of Service and Therapy Dogs states:

We are still learning about the virus that causes COVID-19, but it appears that the virus can spread from people to animals in some situations. CDC is aware of a small number of pets, including dogs and cats to be infected with the virus that causes COVID-19, mostly after close contact with people infected with COVID-19.

If you have a service or therapy animal, follow your local guidance for acceptable business and social practices. Consider local levels of COVID-19 transmission when evaluating the risk to yourself, your animal, and the people you might come into contact with.

Follow CDC’s general recommendations for protecting pets (Link: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/pets.htm) from infection, when possible. For example, avoid unnecessary contact with people or other animals outside the household. Use your best judgment when taking an animal into a location where it could be exposed to COVID-19.

For many of us, “avoiding unnecessary contact with people” isn’t easy. I know I go everywhere with my hearing dog – I’m never without her. I used to let people touch her – especially children. I’ve stopped that – I tell people, “no.” While the CDC site states that there’s no evidence of dog fur carrying the virus, they also state that fur can carry other germs so we need to practice good hygiene.

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Is it safe to take our dogs out? Per CDC, as well as several of our assistance dog placement agencies, if we don’t HAVE to take our dogs in public, we shouldn’t. If we are out, stay 6’ away from others as best as you and your dog can. Stay away from people who have COVID if at all possible. Canine Companions for Independence (CCI) also strongly advises to avoid dog parks at this time. When you do go out, it’s suggested to wipe down your dog with just plain water when you get home; however, do not use a household cleaner or household cleaning wipes on your dog. There are special anti-germ wipes for dogs, but be sure to check with your vet or your dogs’ placement agency (if you used one) to be sure it’s safe for your dog. Bathe your dog normally, and keep your dogs’ equipment clean. If possible, wash equipment with hot water and soap.

Some have wondered, if humans wear masks to protect each other from COVID, should dogs? The answer is that the CDC and EPA do not recommend masks for dogs. The College of Veterinary Medicine further states that masks may cause breathing issues for dogs. Keep in mind that dogs need to be able to pant in order to cool down and rid their body of excess heat, regulating their body temperature. Again, if you have a question about masks for your dog, contact your veterinarian, but the short answer to masks for dogs is ‘no’.

When I was working, staying home used to be a treat. Staying home now, after months of staying home as much as possible, is no longer the special day it used to be. Having a well trained service dog sitting home with me, is actually a bit stressful. I try to practice her skills – alerting me to sounds – by setting things up for her to alert me to, but, all of our dogs are likely used to going out, being around people, helping us at work, stores, activities, etc. and we are just not doing those things at this time. How do we keep our dogs training up? How do we keep them trained to even the basic commands?

I believe one key is to practice. When I graduated from CCI with Jannie, we were told to practice daily. My dog alerts me to so much during the day, there are some days I don’t practice – I admit it. During this pandemic though, I try harder than ever to practice – both sound work and behavior/commands – as much as I can. I also have a bad back and trained Jannie to “GET” things I drop; I then expanded that command to “GET” things out of the washing machine and dryer. All I need to say is “laundry” and she will come running – she loves working! Suffice to say, I do several extra washes a week to keep her busy.

I certainly don’t have all the answers, but setting up situations in your home that your dog can help with and ‘practice’ skills certainly will help your dog keep his/her skills up. I find just because of our current situation – being home more than ever – when I go out, even grocery shopping, Jannie may have a day where she is just not as sharp as usual. I do correct her; she’s very food motivated so she only gets her reward when she alerts me well. I need her to be accurate with her alerting – so if she misses an alert (if I know) – we redo it, or I set it up, and practice. We also play. Sometimes we just become two goofballs and play. If nothing else, play is a stress release and it keeps our bond growing strong.

Jannie is getting older and, like me, she is starting to slow up a bit. The bottom line is patience – something that doesn’t come easily to me – and many of us. We are all under the stress of this horrible virus. If we have underlying conditions, or a family member with underlying conditions, the stress is even worse. We love our dogs and want them to stay the wonderful assistance dogs they are with their amazing skills, intelligence, and temperament. We don’t want anything to put them at unnecessary risk of illness or injury. It goes without saying, but for their sake, we need to take extra care of ourselves, too. No one knows our dogs like we do. If you have any concerns, reach out and contact your placement agency, your trainer(s), IAADP or someone who knows you and your assistance dog. Know that we are in this together and one way or another, we will get through it. Even the most well trained dog feels our stress, misses going out like we do, and looks to you to provide as much calm as you can muster. Let us support one another through this journey, extending gratitude to people on the front lines, practicing patience with ourselves, and keeping our canine partners engaged, healthy and safe.

About the Author
Jane Schlau, Ed.D., is a retired school principal, and the mother of two grown children and grandmother of six. Jane has been involved in advocacy for many years as a former president and board member of the Association of Late-Deafened Adults, Inc., and as a member of the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services working group, Closing the Gap of Children and Youth with Hearing Loss. Jane hails from NYC but currently lives with her husband of 44 years and Jannie, her hearing dog, in Western New York. They ‘snowbird’ in Arizona.
Oregon Wildfires

by Helene DeMartinez

September 8th. A day like any other. Or so we had hoped. In retrospect, until this day, our Southern Oregon county had been fortunate. Sadly, we had been observers of other surrounding communities threatened or destroyed by wildfires. But now, our time had come. Days before, our weather reporters warned of high winds and “RED FLAG” warnings. Imagine a convection oven with obnoxiously high heat, mixed with hot dry winds, creating their own out of control swirling whirling power. This was our weather condition at 11am PST. All I knew of this day was that I was staying home. I planned to remain cool in my weatherized little house waiting out the heat wave.

It is September. We are almost done with Summer. A few weeks to go, then the coolness of Fall. Our region was edging closer to the end of fire season. Right? This year we had very few days of smoke compared to 2018, when large pieces of ash rained down from the sky for days, even weeks. Ash that accumulated on every surface, destroying the taste of all the edibles I grew that year. As I stood looking out my sliding glass door facing North, I recalled that in 2018 Breezy, my assistance dog, became so ill due to the ash in the environment. Her feet and skin erupted with inflammation – no matter how much I washed her feet or bathed her body. She became very sensitive to the ash falling from the sky and continues to react when toxins are in the air.

11:00 am PST. I began lunch and turned on the TV totally unaware that the direction I had been looking toward moments ago a disaster had begun.

11:07 am PST. We now know the first 911 phone call was received at emergency dispatch. FIRE had started in the northernmost area of Ashland, Oregon. It was later reported that an elderly couple discovered, reported, and then held the fire at bay with their garden hose until the fire responders arrived. They were able to save their home but the flames were swept through a field by winds absolutely out of control. The winds carried the fire rapidly North through more fields, along a public access pathway, and along Highway I-5, the main corridor to and from California. The flames jumped the highway! By the time the City of Ashland’s emergency reverse 911 system rang my phone, a few news reports were coming over the afternoon TV news shows. The reporters were on the perimeter of the fireline, while the fire departments were fighting a beast of a fire amidst hot dry winds making their own pathway through homes and businesses as flames spread with no rhyme or reason. Embers swirled within the winds only to land starting more fires, more mayhem. The wildfire flames jumped I-5 causing drivers traveling on I-5 to have to turn around mid-highway and run for their lives. Some vehicles were even abandoned on the highway because they could not turn around. The road that runs parallel to I-5, Highway 99, was used as an escape route only traveling North in all lanes to evacuate as many souls as possible – one way.

I-5 was closed. We were asked by the reverse 911 phone system to not travel any roads, so that evacuation routes would not be unnecessarily congested.

1:24 pm PST. The wildfire had now traveled 5 miles moving 2.5 mph, entering the City of Talent, Oregon’s Southern border. It is now known that first responders went door to door warning residents of the fire moving their way. People in this area of mobile home parks, apartments and small businesses had no idea what was coming their way! I watched glued to my antenna TV. Why I state this, is because many of my friends and neighbors lost all of their cell phone and broadband internet, TV, communication because this wildfire wiped out their whole fiber optic network system. I was, however, still receiving my telephone landline emergency 911 reverse phone calls updating me about the fire’s status. Because I have antenna TV, I was able to continuously receive information from the TV news reports, live. One thing that really shocked and amazed me as I went from channel to channel, checking out news footage updates – there were never Emergency Broadcast System (EBS) reports or alarms utilized on any TV channel. This is the system that breaks into the TV show you are watching, interrupting with their test of the Emergency Broadcast System message. Those of us disabled or retired, regularly see these tests weekly while watching TV. But, it was nowhere to be seen or heard when now it was needed most!

3:06 pm PST. The wildfires had now (split off/embers/spread) traveled 9 miles at 2.5 mph, entered the Southern border of the City of Phoenix, Oregon devouring everything in its path. Momentum allowed the fires to destroy communities and so many people’s lives. The wildfires continued to travel as night fell. Fear and uncertainty engulfed our region that night, not knowing if winds would shift bringing fire your way. Fear of the unknown in the midst of an ongoing disaster when you are mobility challenged or with a disability of any kind, and having an assistance dog is quite scary. But don’t forget, I have Misty also now. Misty is essential as my diabetic alert dog. So now I was on high alert for all of our sake – as well as a handful of elderly friends who were relying on me for emergency updates because I was the only one who had incoming emergency information that everyone of us was relying upon. Thankfully, I have had 40 years of disaster preparedness training. My car is packed with a ready-to-go-bag of essentials for me: from medication, clothes, food, water, communication devices, first aid emergency kits, one for me and one for the dogs, lanterns, tools, all dogs harnesses, leashes, their food, their water, their medical necessities including veterinarian medical duplicate reports, their creature comforts (dog travel beds, blankets, and a few toys), shampoo, towels and a container to soak their feet if needed. I even continued on page 6...
have paper maps, fire starters, electronic flares, and a telephone book. For the years that I was in charge of the City of Ashland’s phone tree for CERT (Citizen Emergency Response Team), it was always stated but few believed, the first communication to fail is always the cell phones and internet broadband. Telephone landline would always be the most reliable. With the HAM operators out-communicating us all, they are the stars of disaster communication.

September 9th. Sleep did not come as the winds continued to create mournful night noises as trees bent and leaves ripped from their limbs rustled against windows as the winds continued their destruction moving the wildfire throughout the night. Daylight came to a reality like no other. Roads, highways, and other areas were closed or totally shut down. News reports gradually revealed the destruction that had occurred. Drones were used for overhead camera shots of how the wildfire had traveled. There were still hotspots that fire crews were fighting, but the devastation of how much loss our community had endured was shocking. Slowly stories of how people escaped the fire emerged. Shock and disbelief of the survivors as they told of their experiences broke your heart. Somehow through every story told, one would hear the strength of healing emerge. Sharing of experiences connected community members. People provided to those that lost everything, while those that lost everything taught many of us of the enduring strength of the human spirit. Many are dealing with survivors’ guilt at this very time requiring professional counsel. The aftermath of the wildfire involves locating housing for those now without homes, not to mention every essential need imaginable needing to be fulfilled. Disaster recovery support systems such as FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency), state and local programs, American Red Cross, United Way, and many other essential groups stepped up to aid any and all needs.

Since that day. Cleanup is being overseen by the EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) who direct laboratory testing of the disaster area debris. The results of the testing provide guidelines as to how removal of the debris may be safely contained, then moved to mandated disposal sites. Health and safety are essential to protect our water resources. It was reported that a laboratory detected 20% residue revealed to contain hydrocarbons, heavy metals, and asbestos. As cleanup of the wildfire debris begins to occur, people living around the surrounding areas are noticing that they are experiencing coughing or breathing difficulties. Very few reports, if any, may correlate these challenges with the wildfire debris. However, as the weather changes bringing about Fall winds and rains, some of the ash along with the toxic particulates will be swept into our environment noticeably landing upon parked vehicles and outdoor furniture. The long-term effect of these wildfires, unless studied, may never be known. For some residents this disaster, known as the Alameda Fire, there has been a devastating realization of just how vulnerable we all are no matter how we may prepare.

For anyone with their eyes wide open, climate change is not a myth. In my life, I have seen the seasons evolve in extended lengths and intensity of Summers with more and more triple digit temperatures, while Spring rains diminish causing water shortages in some parts of our nation and floods in other parts. No longer may these and other warning signs and symptoms of climate stressors including the variety of disasters happening around the world be blindly ignored. For every cause there is an effect.

So just how may we as canine assistance teams prepare?

I found it helpful to review information from these two organizations websites:

American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) – Disaster Preparedness. Link: https://www.avma.org/disaster
American Veterinary Medical Foundation (AVMF) – Disaster Relief and Response
Link: https://www.avmf.org/programs/disaster-relief/

The American Veterinary Medical Foundation (AVMF) has a phenomenal disaster preparedness series, “Saving the Whole Family.” Their booklet outlines everything that all of us need to do when preparing our assistance canines and animal companion family. Then, practice, practice, practice, with our canines and other animal companions, how to evacuate the home during a disaster using keywords, doing the same repetitive actions over and over as training.

Then, have spontaneous training drills for everyone in your home so that these actions become 2nd nature. Depending on the area that you live in, take into consideration what disasters may be common to that area. Then, find your local CERT (Citizen Emergency Response Team) through your fire department and join the training. All of my previous assistance dogs went through our city’s training sessions. My assistance dog Brandy even went through the FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) disaster preparedness training after 9-11, put on by DHS (Homeland Security) earning a certificate. It is essential to learn how to take care of yourself, but also learn the inner workings of your community during a disaster. No, you may not be able to fill sandbags, but by becoming involved, you will then find how you and your canine assistance partner will fit in during a disaster. Become involved; that is how you will gain strength and knowledge as an assistance team.

The more you know, the better you are “prepared to go” at a moment’s notice when a disaster comes your way.

About the Author

Helene DeMartinez served in the law and justice field in both the public and private sector before retiring. She has been involved as a volunteer in disaster preparedness over the last forty years. Helene has taught on disaster psychology and served as a bereavement facilitator. She lives with her assistance dogs, Misty and Brandy.
Preparation for Unexpected Disasters, Planned Day Trips and Long Vacations

The instructions below focus on being prepared for an emergency. Most of the items on the list are equally important to include in a First Aid Kit that you take on day trips or vacations.

Disasters and the unexpected can happen. Being prepared ahead of time is essential to a successful evacuation for everyone, including your assistance dog and pets. Create an easily portable and waterproof tote/backpack with emergency supplies that is easily accessible for you to grab-and-go when you need to leave in minutes.

Include the following supplies and completed paperwork in a Go-Bag:

1. Food, Water and Medication(s): Place these items into waterproof containers with a week’s supply. Remember to pack drinking water, too!
2. Non-First Aid Necessary Supplies: Bowls, extra leashes, collapsible carriers or crates, cat litter/pan, manual can opener, favorite toy and treats.
3. Organize your assistance dog’s and pet(s)’ information:
   - Photos of your assistance dog and pet(s) plus photos of you with your assistance dog and pet(s). A description of your assistance dog and pet(s). Proof of ownership.
   - Microchip number: Verify your assistance dog’s and pet(s)’ microchip enrollment with AKC Reunite at 1-800-252-7894.
   - Your assistance dog’s and pet(s)’ veterinarian(s)’ contact information, along with your assistance dog’s and pet(s)’ medical and/or insurance records.
4. Easily readable map with potential evacuation routes highlighted.
5. Blankets, flashlights and batteries.
6. First Aid Kit:
   - Self-cling Bandage (bandage that stretches and sticks to itself but not to fur)
   - Muzzle or Strips of Cloth to Prevent Biting
   - Sterile Non-stick Absorbent Gauze Pads/Gauze Rolls for Bandage Wrap
   - Adhesive Tape
   - Antiseptic Wipes/Sterile Saline Solution for Cleaning Wounds/Hydrogen Peroxide
   - Foil Fire Retardant/Freezing Temperature Emergency Blankets
   - Cotton Balls and Swabs
   - Emergency Ice/Heat Pack(s)
   - Disposable Gloves
   - Petroleum Jelly
   - Scissors with Blunt Ends
   - Tweezers

Note: Check and replace the contents in your emergency Go-Bag along with alternate to evacuation plans and preparations on a regular basis by performing the following checklist:

- Check expiration dates on your emergency supplies: batteries, drinking water, blankets, non-perishable food items, and medications.
- Are your packed materials seasonally appropriate?
- Is your assistance dog’s and pet(s)’ microchip record(s) current?


REPORT A LOST OR FOUND PET TO AKC AT:
800-252-7894 or found@akcreunite.org

American Humane’s “Basic Animal Emergency Services” course: A comprehensive two-day session on the fundamentals of disaster response which is included in the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s (FEMA) catalogue of approved courses on emergency preparedness. For more information please call 800-227-4645 or email: amherb@americanhumane.org

Reminder!

IAADP does not train or certify assistance dogs! Partner Members must attest their assistance dog meets or exceeds IAADP’s Minimum Training Standards. Also, IAADP does not endorse or guarantee any products or services. See disclaimers throughout this newsletter for more information.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
Access Problem?

Contact: ADA Helpline at 800-514-0301
TTY: 800-514-0363
Email: complaint@usdoj.gov
**Newly Retired Guide Dog Jessie**

By Jessie, with assistance from Audrey Gunter

Hi, Dog Guide Family;

It’s me, Jessie coming to you all the way from sunny Charleston, SC. Some of you may remember meeting me last year at Top Dog! I was the handsome yellow gentleman guide by my mom’s side. She says I’m the best guide dog in the whole wide world and she’s way too big for me to argue with! I liked hanging out with my good buddies, Anders, Astro, Kyle, Wally, Fonzie, Houston and lots of others.

I’m writing to tell you about my new big promotion. Yep! That’s right, promotion! You are now communicating with the Executive Director of Homeland Security here at our house. Can you believe it? I get to scratch and lick anything and any time I want. When folks come to the door, I can greet them with my toys and get them to play with me. I get to bark, too...cept with this laryngeal paralysis, my Barker doesn’t work so good anymore. But I try, anyway. I get to sleep as long as I’d like, and I really like sleeping. Best of all, I don’t have to wear that darn raincoat anymore!

I suppose I’ll miss petting all those folks at church; but they surely did take a long time standing in line to shake Pastor Dick’s hand. Pastor Katie was cool. She would always ask my mom about me and then she’d talk directly with me. Miss Neva and Miss Carolyn are gonna miss stroking my handsome coat, though. Mom said it was alright ’cuz petting me always made them feel good.

In case you’re wondering why I got promoted, let me tell you...I have a baby brother, Bernie! What a kid! He came to live with us last month and boy, has he ever kept my mom busy! He’s a handsome yellow lab, just like me – only lots taller. I’ve been watching him and he seems to know what he’s doing. He’s been taking really good care of my mom and he’d better, too! I like to taunt him with one of my toys while he’s tethered to Mom. I know just how far he can go on that leash and I stand about 2 inches away and shake my toy in his face. He doesn’t say much. I guess he already knows that Jessie is in charge of barking. Smart boy! He turned 2 on the 23rd of last month and we all celebrated with yummy Frosty Paws.

So, there you have it, pups and peeps. I reckon ’cuz I’m not a working guide dog anymore I won’t be able to write you anymore. Just know that I really enjoyed meeting and hearing from you all and, if you’re ever back this way, please look me up. Just ask for Jessie, Executive Director of Homeland Security! Meanwhile, keep your paws prancing and your tails wagging.

Blessings,

Jessie (retired)

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**Thank You Notes to Nutramax**

We extend our gratitude to Nutramax for continued sponsorship of the VCP (Veterinary Care Partnership) and all the additional support provided for eligible assistance dog teams.

~ IAADP

My heartfelt thanks to Nutramax for their more than generous program of providing Dasuquin, and Welactin.

Over the past year, I have been giving my guide dog the above medications to keep her healthy and able to work and play.

I am so pleased with the quality of these medications, I am planning on purchasing Nutramax Laboratories Cranberry Pills for Dogs in the near future.

My veterinarian has recommended this medication to help prevent urinary tract infections with my current guide dog.

Many thanks to Nutramax for their more than generous support, especially during these uncertain times.

~ Phil and Ulene

Greetings,

Please forward my comment of appreciation to the wonderful people at Nutramax for their willingness to assist guide and other service dog users with their fantastic supplements. Largely because of the continued Nutramax generosity, I and many other people who depend on these wonderful service dogs, have been able to give our canine companions and helpers Welactin and Dasuquin.

~ Doug and Watson

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**Nominate IAADP to Receive Funding**

There are several online fundraising resources such as like Charitocracy, AmazonSmile, and GivingAssistant which help not-for-profit organizations like IAADP receive monies to sustain the ongoing mission work of our kind volunteers. You can nominate, vote for and/or designate IAADP as your “Charity of Choice” to receive funding. If you nominate IAADP for funding or awards, please let our Social Media Team leader (jill@iaadp.org) know so we can get the word out!
M y roommate James had to give up driving for a while when his back pain became overwhelming. I contacted Gogo Grandparent, a service providing Lyft and Uber rides for those of us who don’t have smartphones. To sign up, just dial toll-free 1-855-464-6872. Your home address and the places you travel to most often are recorded. You don’t pay in cash; rather you pay with your credit card on file. One day about six months ago, a dog loving driver picked up Adora and me, and we became friends. I always ask for this driver, because I know she won’t have dog issues. Speaking of my darling Adora, I just learned from Alexa that Dora means gift in Greek!! She truly is my very special gift!

Those who know me well know my birthday is my favorite holiday. I celebrate by giving myself a huge party, but it is also my intention to honor my friends and volunteers for being in my life. Last year’s luncheon was at a pizza restaurant, followed by New Wrinkles, Fresno’s senior citizen cabaret. This June, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, I skipped my special celebration.

Our almost 19-year-old cat Boots is dealing with kidney problems. My vet tech friend, Lynn, has been coming to the house every day to give Boots fluid treatments and a variety of pills. My calico girl, Smokey, is hanging in there, too. She was just diagnosed with hyperthyroidism, and we’ll see what medical interventions will be necessary. Sadly, Yancha’s (another cat!) 8th birthday was spent in the hospital receiving surgery to remove a bladder stone. At present, he is back to his active, naughty self! Yancha will be on a special diet for the rest of his life. Fortunately, he is a Golden Retriever when it comes to food and he has no problem eating the prescribed diet!

Thankfully, my almost perfect Golden Retriever guide dog is doing well. She just turned nine.

Happy 30th Birthday to the Americans With Disabilities Act originally signed into law on July 26, 1990.

I love theater productions, band and folk concerts, and I truly miss these events during the quarantine. I keep busy with friends, taking care of my Furrries and catching up with emails. I am in the process of upgrading my computer system, and despite the frustrations, I am benefitting from the computer gurus helping me through the process.

As we go through this pandemic, alone together, some of the loneliness is subsiding. One of the best things to happen during this stressful time was a visit from Jeanette Frey, Adora’s puppy raiser. I was so pleased with Adora’s sense of excitement when Jeanette entered the house. Couch potato Adora jumped on Jeanette and squealed for joy! Jeanette has two Goldens who were change-of-career guide dogs, and she brought Cilla with her. My generally calm and non-playing dog initiated the play, and the two cousins (some relatives in common) played and wrestled all day. We took the Goldens to neighbor Cindy’s pool, but these silly girls had no interest in swimming. Cindy has Labrador granddog who thrill to the pool when they visit. We are looking forward to Jeanette’s visit at Christmas time.

We also had the opportunity to visit Ed Crane. We haven’t seen him for almost a year, and it was good to see him again. Adora had the company of his two Labradors!

Yancha was the animal of the month. He had another medical issue and had a lump removed from his left hind leg, which gracefully, was benign. He had to wear what I call a cone of shame preventing him from pulling out his stitches. I am not sure who was more unhappy, Yancha or me! The apparatus was removed after a week, and we can now sleep together more comfortably!

Adora also had her time at the vet. Due to her Golden Retriever uveitis, a progressive eye condition. She is seen by an ophthalmologist twice a year. Unfortunately, Dr. Hamilton is a three-hour drive from Fresno. Now that James is driving again, we made a one-day trip to Fremont. We were not allowed in with Adora, but the vet techs took good care of her, and we enjoyed some fantastic pizza while we were waiting. The eye report was good, and we don’t have to return until January.

The American Council of the Blind and the National Federation of the Blind held their summer conventions on Zoom. It was nice not to have to fly, stay in a hotel and eat hotel food! On the phone or the Amazon Echo, I could come and go at will. The downside was that I couldn’t run into old friends in the elevator or hotel hallways and no hugs were forthcoming.

Speaking of Zoom, an online virtual meeting tool, James and I attended a play on Zoom. The Jewish Women’s Theater performed last year at Temple Beth Israel, and now the readings of For Goodness Sake were performed virtually. The play wasn’t top on my list, but I was glad we could do it. Speaking again of Zoom, our breast cancer breakfast group has been meeting every week on Zoom!

With all of my recent computer upgrades, I am getting tutoring from Tom Randall, Beth Shea and a long-time New York friend, Myrna Votta. I guess I will never stop complaining about computer glitches, but things are coming along!

Other than my continuing back pain, I’ve been in good health, with a recent visit to the dentist; just a routine cleaning!

I hope you are as committed to IAADP as I. When you order merchandise from Amazon, please sign up for Amazon Smile, and select IAADP as your charity of choice.

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Once that’s done, a portion of your purchases and orders on Amazon will go to IAADP, so long as you start your shopping trip at this web link: https://smile.amazon.com
Another online shopping tool that donates to IAADP is eScrip. When you use store loyalty cards, a portion can be donated to non-profits or schools, and reportedly eScrip has given $450 Million to date to nonprofits. Check out the eScrip FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) online at https://www.escrip.com/faq/. Even the smallest amounts of money benefit IAADP.
Please lend a hand to keep our organization viable.
In addition, IAADP needs volunteers. Do you have skills as a writer, editor, fundraiser, speaker or outreach coordinator? IAADP is an organization for all of us, and we need committed members to make us grow! Please call me at 559-446-1080, Pacific time, or e-mail me at teames559@gmail.com to let me know your skill set, volunteering interests and preferences. Please note that I do not send or receive SMS text messages.
What are you doing in these challenging times? I would like to hear from you. Drop me a line to keep in touch. teames559@gmail.com

Toni and Fur Family

IAADP expresses gratitude to our donors whose gifts afforded publication of this issue of Partners Forum providing news updates, highlights, insights and more for Assistance Dog Partnership Teams across the globe!

2020 EGDF Conference Postponed

We had hoped to have our conference in Greece this year, but in common with all other conferences, we have had to defer this to some date in the future, we will let you know as soon as we have better news.
For more information, go to the EGDF Link: https://mailchi.mp/015d99ae0026/news-letter-november-2020?e=89bb66d61e

New EGDF Executive Director Designate

Jane Richards joined us as Executive Director Designate on Monday 3rd August and looks forward making everyone’s acquaintance as the COVID-19 lockdown eases

JaneRichards@EGDFed.org

Judith Jones Retires

Back in 2013, Judith Jones stepped up to become Executive Director of the European Guide Dog Federation with a brief to finalise a European project that had been underway for nearly 3 years.
Seven years later she has decided it is finally time to retire and stepped down at the beginning of August.
During her tenure, Judith helped to build the membership so that it now covers over 40 organisations in 24 European countries. In addition she:
• Professionalised our conference organisation so that it became a valuable platform for all members and others close to our organisation
• Established the unique position of EGDF as an organisation which represents persons with disabilities so that our voice could be recognised across Europe.
• Developed Memorandums of Understanding with Assistance Dogs Europe and the International Guide Dog Federation, so that we could work together as a strong cohesive unit.
• Formed strong membership relationships with the European Disability Forum which represents 100 million persons with disabilities across Europe and the European Blind Union which represents over 30 million people with sight loss in the same area.
• Took a prominent role in helping to establish the first guide dog school in Turkey.

Following an initiative from Darinka Lecnik-Urbanc in Slovenia, Judith was instrumental in establishing a movement to develop the first European Standard for Assistance Dogs CEN/TC/452 which is still in development.
We wish Judith all the best in her well deserved retirement and hope to see her attending our next conference, whenever that is allowed to take place.
DOT Announces Final Rule on Traveling by Air with Service Animals

As this edition of Partners Forum went to the printer, we learned that changes to the ACAA (Air Carriers Access Act) rules under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) were finalized as outlined in the chart below.

Thank you for all who took the time to submit public comments to the US DOT regarding this rulemaking, including but not limited to IAADPs board, volunteers and members.

Direct from the U.S. Department of Transportation:
The U.S. Department of Transportation (Department or DOT) is issuing a final rule to amend the Department’s Air Carrier Access Act (ACAA) regulation on the transport of service animals by air. This final rule is intended to ensure that our air transportation system is safe for the traveling public and accessible to individuals with disabilities.

Summary of the Major Provisions:

DEFINITION OF SERVICE ANIMAL
A service animal is as a dog, regardless of breed or type, that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of a qualified individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, or other mental disability.

EMOTIONAL SUPPORT ANIMALS
Carriers are not required to recognize emotional support animals as service animals and may treat them as pets.

TREATMENT OF PSYCHIATRIC SERVICE ANIMALS
Psychiatric service animals are treated the same as other service animals that are individually trained to do work or perform a task for the benefit of a qualified individual with a disability.

SPECIES
Carriers are permitted to limit service animals to dogs.

HEALTH, BEHAVIOR AND TRAINING FORM
Carriers are permitted to require passengers to remit a completed hardcopy or electronic version of the Department’s “U.S. Department of Transportation Service Animal Air Transportation Form” as a condition of transportation.

NUMBER OF SERVICE ANIMALS PER PASSENGER
Carriers are permitted to limit the number of service animals traveling with a single passenger with a disability to two service animals.

LARGE SERVICE ANIMALS
Carriers are permitted to require a service animal to fit on their handler’s lap or within its handler’s foot space on the aircraft.

CONTROL OF SERVICE ANIMALS
Carriers are permitted to require a service animal to be harnessed, leashed, or otherwise tethered in areas of the airport that they own, lease, or control, and on the aircraft.

SERVICE ANIMAL BREED OR TYPE
Carriers are prohibited from refusing to transport a service animal based solely on breed or generalized physical type, as distinct from an individualized assessment of the animal’s behavior and health.

CHECK-IN REQUIREMENTS
Carriers are not permitted to require a passenger with a disability to physically check-in at the airport, rather than using the online check-in process, on the basis that the individual is traveling with a service animal. Airlines may require a passenger with a disability seeking to travel with a service animal to provide the service animal form(s) at the passenger’s departure gate on the date of travel.

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ADVANCE NOTICE REQUIREMENTS

Carriers may require individuals traveling with a service animal to provide a U.S. Department of Transportation Service Animal Air Transportation Form and, if applicable, a U.S. Department of Transportation Service Animal Relief Attestation, up to 48 hours in advance of the date of travel if the passenger’s reservation was made prior to that time.

More information will likely be discussed further in an upcoming issue of *Partners Forum* and may be found at: https://www.transportation.gov/sites/dot.gov/files/2020-12/Final%20Service%20Animal%20Rule.pdf

Robin Downing Receives the Leo K. Bustad Companion Animal Veterinarian of the Year Award

Greetings, all - -

I want to share some amazing news. I was recently informed that I am the recipient of the 2020 Leo K. Bustad Companion Animal Veterinarian of the Year Award from the AVMA (American Veterinary Medicine Association), sponsored by our corporate partner, Merck Animal Health. Link: https://youtu.be/Dyw-iOywol.

The award is named for the late Leo K. Bustad, DVM, PhD, a former dean of the College of Veterinary Medicine at Washington State University and founder of the Delta Society (now Pet Partners). Leo Bustad embodied the very best of honoring the human-animal bond, and is credited with helping the veterinary profession develop a laser-beam focus on that bond. This award recognizes the outstanding work of veterinarians in preserving and protecting the human-animal bond.

In order to be considered for the Bustad Award, a veterinarian must have been active for at least five years in practice with a special sensitivity to the human-companion animal bond, working with a variety of clients including children, the elderly, people with disabilities, those grieving the loss of a pet, or other at-risk populations. Other areas of consideration include leadership in community service illuminating the importance of the human-animal bond, teaching with a focus on the human-animal bond and related issues, and any research related to increasing the understanding of the human-animal bond and its critical role in veterinary medicine and society.

As most of you know, I have dedicated my entire career to facilitating, enhancing, lengthening, and strengthening the precious family-pet relationship, both within and outside my actual practice and patient care. Over three plus decades, this work has addressed many topics including pets with disabilities, clients with disabilities, pets with cancer (which resulted in the first book for clients whose pets have cancer), advancing animal pain management, applying the principles of palliative care and hospice to companion animals, and now translating the principles and practices of clinical bioethics for application to clinical veterinary practice. What has been most rewarding has been the opportunity to teach and mentor both students and post-graduate professionals. It is all well and good that I have been able to influence the lives of my own patients and their human companions, but it is at least as meaningful to me to have had the privilege to expand that influence and impact to benefit the lives of families and their furry friends who I will never know, by way of my caring colleagues.

This is very humbling, and is, for me, the most meaningful recognition I have received during my career. I hope that I shall be afforded the opportunity to make a public thank you about this honor at the 2021 AVMA Convention in Minneapolis since the 2020 meeting has been cancelled due to the pandemic.

Thank you for allowing me to share this good news with you! Please stay safe.

Celebrating, protecting, and sharing the special love of animals,

Robin

Robin Downing, DVM
MS, Clinical Bioethics
Diplomate for American Academy of Pain Management and American College of Veterinary Sports Medicine and Rehabilitation
Certified Veterinary Pain Practitioner, Canine Rehabilitation Practitioner, Veterinary Acupuncturist, Veterinary Chiropractic (IVCA), and Certified Pain Educator (ASPE)
Fear Free Certified Professional & Practices

Hospital Director, Windsor Veterinary Clinic, PC
The Downing Center for Animal Pain Management, LLC
415 Main Street, Windsor, CO 80550
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Follow me on Twitter @DrRobinDVM
Global News & Events

China
News Story
China has 8 Million Blind People, but Only 200 Guide Dogs.

Detailed article highlights the scarcity of guide dogs in China – 1 dog per 85,000 blind persons compared to 1 per 50 in the USA, 1 per 36 in the UK. It mentioned The China Dalian Guide Dog Training Center, 1 of 2 recognized by IGDF (International Guide Dog Federation), operating with 30 instructors and 100 dogs in various stages of training, has received over 50,000 requests. Per the article, public access remains variable across the country, though more common for public transportation in urban cities, though hotels and air travel can still be difficult. In addition, poor road conditions with dropoffs, etc. result in avoidable injuries each year. Yang Kang was featured with his Labrador guide dog, Dick, for whom he waited 5 years and now opens opportunities for participating in races and more.

Excerpt(s):

The Law on the Protection of Disabled Persons says “blind persons shall comply with relevant state regulations when entering public places with guide dogs,” but it doesn’t specify what the “relevant state regulations” are.

Some cities have issued their own policies to allow guide dogs in public places and transports, but enforcement can be spotty.”

Croatia
Conference
September 12-15, 2021 Assistance Dogs International Conference. Details to be determined.

Europe
Standards
The EU (European Union) is taking steps to move forward and centralize assistance dog efforts. People with lived experience as assistance dog partners need their voice and perspective to be included and appear to be invited.


Judith Jones, Executive Director of EGDF and Convenor of CEN/TC452/WG6 ‘Assistance Dogs Accessibility and Universal Access’ recently published an article for the EBU (European Blind Union) Focus online mentioning the development of new standards.


In December 2019, Version 3.1 of the CEN/TC 452 Business Plan ‘Assistance Dogs’ was published (8 pages, PDF format) by the European Committee for Standardization (CEN) from Brussels, Belgium. Last viewed online at: https://standards.cen.eu/bp/2181734.pdf

Excerpt(s):

…A survey conducted by EGDF in 2013 revealed that there are 14,299 guide dogs and 4,105 other types of assistance dogs in Europe and these numbers are steadily increasing.

…The objective of CEN/TC 452 is to develop a standard(s) in the field of assistance dogs which will include at least:
• terminology
• general dog management, training and assessment for assistance dogs
• user assessments & matching; user training & after care
• competencies and education of training staff in line with national and European systems for qualification
• dog care and lifetime welfare
• accessibility

…Please note that Assistance dog is the umbrella term. Examples of assistance dogs are autism assistance dogs, developmental disorder assistance dogs, diabetes assistance dogs, guide dogs, hearing dogs, medical alert/response assistance dogs, mobility assistance dogs, PTSD assistance dogs, seizure assistance dogs. An assistance dog may be trained to perform a combination of tasks of the above mentioned types of assistance dogs.

…An assistance dog is permanently paired with a person with a disability to perform on a one-to-one basis tasks to mitigate the limitations of this person or to perform these tasks under the guidance of an additional support person such as a parent or a spouse. If the third partner in the assistance dog team is also legally responsible for the dog and the person with a disability, the team is called a triad team.

…At the moment there are 41 assistance dog schools accredited by ADI and 54 guide dog schools accredited by IGDF (some of them are accredited both by ADI and by IGDF because they train all types of assistance dogs) in Europe, but there are no publicly available statistics on how many other schools/individuals in Europe train assistance dogs.

…While the existing assistance dog standards developed...
Global News & Events
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by the professional umbrella organizations (ADEu/ADI and IGDF) are highly credible and provide well-established benchmarks for schools training assistance dogs, a new European standard will enhance this further, especially in terms of accessibility/liability/comparability, as the standard would need to be met by all service providers, no matter which professional organizations they are members of.

Any new European Standard would affect the following stakeholders:
• Providers of assistance dogs (e.g. schools, trainers, instructors, support staff )
• Users
• Businesses (e.g. restaurants, supermarkets, hotels)
• Public authorities
• General public
• Financial supporters (e.g. health insurance, funders)
• Academia (e.g. universities).

Anyone wishing to participate in the activities of CEN/TC 452 should contact the national standards organization in their country.

Germany
Research
Email excerpt(s):
We are currently conducting a research study about assistance dogs in cooperation with Sigmund Freud University in Vienna, Austria. The University will publish the study end of 2020 or 2021. We would love IAADP assistance dog partners to contribute to this study. Could IAADP post the information and link to this study on your facebook page or send it to the members? Link: https://www.soscisurvey.de/assistance_dogs_research/

~ Jana Bosch

ISRAEL
Research, Policy and Advocacy
Ella Ben-Nun, CEO of Dogs that Do Good (Klavim Sheosim Tov) in Tel-Aviv Israel shared and presented at the Task Dogs: A Service Dog Expo virtual online event on September 26, 2020. She shared that work is underway to build awareness through advocacy, education and public policy regarding public access for assistance dog teams. She also shared about research demonstrating benefits of assistance dogs and particularly the impact on sleep for children experiencing autism.

JAMAICA
Travel Information needs Corrective Retraction
IAADP does not certify dogs for travel. IAADP recently discovered a document, Guidelines for the Importation of Dogs and Cats into Jamaica from the United States of America, published on the USDA website (United States Department of Agriculture) that mentions IAADP incorrectly.

AUSTRALIA
Wildfires
Assistance Dogs Helping Brushfire First Responders by Laura Kewley tells the story of a first responder who developed PTSD in the course of first responder work amidst Australia’s brushfire. Mark Thomas of Code 9 Foundation, a charity that supports first responders with PTSD, shared that they began to sponsor assistance dogs in the last year. Ambulance Victoria started a Peer Support Dog Program in 2018 to help the mental health and well being of paramedics. Mentions that a new generation of assistance dogs are being trained for first responders with PTSD and other disabling conditions. Assistance Dogs Australia, headed by Richard Lord who currently chairs ADI and the ADI Oceania Regional Chapter, raises the funds – currently $40,000 per dog – to provide dogs at no cost to the people with disabilities who become assistance dog partners.

Links:

ABC:

CANBERRA TIMES: Life is Better with an Assistance Dog

ASSISTANCE DOGS AUSTRALIA
http://www.assistancedogs.org.au

ADI (ASSISTANCE DOGS INTERNATIONAL)
OCEANA REGIONAL CHAPTER
https://assistancedogsinternational.org/resources/assistance-dogs-international-oceania-regional-chapter-oceania/

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MEMBERSHIP QUESTIONS?
CHANGE OF ADDRESS or DOG?
Contact
Membership Coordinator at
888-54-IAADP 888-544-2237
membership@iaadp.org
USA
U.S. HUD (Housing and Urban Development) Releases New Document Addressing Assistance Dogs in Housing


Special thanks to Veronica Morris, PhD, Psychiatric Service Dog Partners, for her summary, reprinted with permission:

New guidance document by HUD!

This is a much better written document summarizing assistance animals (SDs and ESAs) in housing. Before, people had to follow the DOJ’s ADA for service animals only in housing providers that fell under a place of public accommodation. Now people must do it for ALL housing providers. This is a BIG change.

A few interesting quotes:

While it is not necessary to submit a written request or to use the words “reasonable accommodation,” “assistance animal,” or any other special words to request a reasonable accommodation under the FHA, persons making a request are encouraged to do so.

I did not know that the request could be oral! However by later things in the document it is clear that the oral request would only work for a visible disability.

[Document from the internet is not, by itself, sufficient to reliably establish that an individual has a non-observable disability or disability-related need for an assistance animal. By contrast, many legitimate, licensed health care professionals deliver services remotely, including over the internet. One reliable form of documentation is a note from a person's health care professional that confirms a person's disability and/or need for an animal when the provider has personal knowledge of the individual.

We are glad they’re making a stand against internet scams!

Check out this new document by HUD!

Pending Legislation
Puppies Assisting Wounded Service Members (PAWS) Act of 2019

Northeast Florida Congressman John Rutherford [R-FL-4] introduced a bill June 5, 2019, that would require the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to provide service dogs to military veterans diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) called the Puppies Assisting Wounded Service Members (PAWS) Act of 2019. [U.S. Congress - Senate Bill 2949 and House Bill 3103 links below.]

If passed, the PAWS Act would require the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to carry out a five-year program awarding grants to nonprofits providing assistance dogs to veterans who suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder. Costs covered could include veterinary health insurance policies for the dogs, hardware required for the dog to perform the tasks necessary to assist the veteran, and payments for travel expenses. Data collection for measuring improvement in psychosocial function and changes in dependence on prescription narcotics is also included.

Links:


Additional Article Links:


NOTE: As many have commented, there appears to be some misunderstanding and/or misapplication of terminology. We promote a clear distinction, particularly as pertains to public access, between assistance dogs (guide, hearing and service dogs including but not limited to alert, mobility, and psychiatric service dogs), therapy dogs (including but not limited to court dogs) and emotional support dogs. Education regarding the concepts, definitions and standards remains an ongoing necessity.

PAWS for Veterans Therapy Act

A similar bill, HR 4305, the PAWS for Veterans Therapy Act, calling for a pilot project, had over 250 sponsors, passed in the House in February 2020 and awaits the Senate.

Links:

GovTrack Updates on HR4305 https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/116/hr4305


full text (PDF, 10 pages) https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/BILLS-116hr4305rfs/pdf/BILLS-116hr4305rfs.pdf

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First Dogs

It appears Major and Champ, German Shepherds, will soon be moving with President Elect Joe Biden and Dr. Jill Biden as “First-Dogs” into the U.S. White House after Biden’s inauguration ceremony in January 2021. According to NBC News, Major will be the first shelter rescue dog with that title. The Biden family provided a foster home, fell in love, and adopted Major in 2018. Champ who has prior experience accompanying Joe Biden at the U.S. White House and Major seem poised for this transition.

Over 30 years ago, Biden co-sponsored the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act). In a campaign speech he stated: “Every policy I pursue…will be created with the full inclusion and dignity of Americans with disabilities in mind. As we seek to recover from a devastating public health crisis that is disproportionately impacting people with disabilities, it is more important than ever that we fulfill the promise of the ADA and build a more equal and inclusive society.”

Major at Delaware Human Association dated 11/7/2020 at: https://www.facebook.com/delawarehumane/photos/a.10152292109066153/10158646787101153/

Look for updates from the IAADP Board, Advocacy Team and more in coming issues.

Sister Pauline Quinn, 1942-2020

Sister Pauline Quinn, formerly known as Kathleen (Kathy), died on Friday, March 13, 2020, at the Dominican Life Center in Adrian, Michigan. She was 77 years of age. Sister Pauline, a privately vowed Dominican, made her final profession of vows to Bishop Raúl Vera López, OP, in 1996.

Sister Pauline was born December 10, 1942, in Hollywood, California, to Joseph and Rosemary (Hodges) Quinn. As a young woman, Sister Pauline experienced much trauma and homelessness. Her discovery of the unconditional love of a dog companion provided her a sense of safety, self-confidence, and belonging. For Sister Pauline, dog was God spelled backward.

In 1981, she initiated a dog-training program in prisons, creating the Prison Pet Partnership in the Washington State Corrections Center for Women. In the early 1980s, Sister ministered in Italy, where she helped refugees at a Salvation Army house in Rome. Sister continued her Prison Pet Partnership mission by giving talks around the world.

In 1985, she founded Pathways to Hope and later Bridges and Pathways of Courage, which encompasses the many projects with which Sister was involved. Sister Pauline’s other ministries have included volunteering with the Comboni Refugee Center in Rome, where she arranged medical care and transportation for the victims of the Bosnian and Gulf wars, as well as assisting refugees from Angola, Ethiopia, and Somalia. She traveled to Haiti after the 2010 earthquake and undertook many other global missions of mercy.

May she rest in peace
Anastasia Pagonis, 16, and Radar the Guide Dog, are currently at the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, Colorado. September is National Service Dog Month, but that’s not even the biggest news in Radar’s life.

The Labrador Retriever Guide Dog was recently matched with his owner Anastasia Pagonis, a blind 16-year-old who quickly succeeded at competitive swimming after losing her eyesight two years ago. Two weeks after being introduced, Radar and Pagonis are residing at the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, Colorado, where Pagonis, one of the top athletes on the U.S. Paralympic Swimming Team, is training for a chance to compete in the 2020 Paralympics in Tokyo – now rescheduled to 2021 due to the coronavirus pandemic. (Link: https://people.com/tag/coronavirus/)

Even though the pair only knew each other for 4 days before the trip from Pagonis’ home in Long Island, New York, to Colorado, the swimmer says that Radar handled travel “really well.” Having Radar by her side was a welcomed change for Pagonis, who had to “rely on other people” for almost everything before being paired with the guide dog.

“Honestly, I couldn’t be like my own person and so now that I have him, I feel so independent,” the teen tells People about how Radar has already rapidly reshaped her life.

“I’m gonna conquer the world with him,” she adds.

Pagonis already conquered quite a bit before meeting Radar. At 11, Pagonis, then playing soccer, was starting to lose her vision due to a genetic disease, and while she could see “pretty well at the time” she had a blind spot that caused her to “get kicked in the face too much with the ball.” Dedicated to keeping athletics as part of her life, Pagonis spoke to her doctor about a different sport she could try that was better suited to her vision loss. Her doctor suggested swimming.

“When I got in the water, I fell in love with it,” Pagonis says of starting the sport. “It was a place where I felt free, where I didn’t need any help getting around, and I didn’t need anything.”

Unfortunately, in 2018, Pagonis’ vision “completely blew” suddenly, leaving her only able to distinguish some variations in light.

“We didn’t understand why this was happening or what was going on,” Pagonis says of the overwhelming moment.

“I went back to the doctor and I came back with autoimmune retinopathy, which is another disease on top of my genetic disease. How lucky am I?”

The sudden loss of her vision understandably rattled Pagonis who stopped swimming and went through “a really dark time” as she grappled with what this change meant for her future. With help from her supportive family, Pagonis focused on her mental health and got the help she needed to be ready to start swimming again.

“Then, we could not find a coach that wanted to train me because nobody wanted to train the blind girl,” she says of trying to restart swimming. “Nobody had faith in me.”

Until Marc Danin of Islander Aquatics happily agreed to train Pagonis, even blacking out his goggles to get a better understanding of how Pagonis experiences swimming.

“I figured it out and I got back into it and now it’s my happy place. I love it so much again. It’s honestly my favorite time of the day. My favorite time of everything. It’s my life now,” Pagonis shares.

This passion, and the support of Coach Danin and her team, has helped Pagonis rise to the position she is in now: training for a potential spot in the Paralympics. Pagonis has also embraced her vision loss and has become an advocate for blind people and everything they can achieve, using her Instagram (@anastasia_k_p) (Link: https://www.instagram.com/anastasia_k_p/?hl=en) to show her support and enthusiastically educate others on what living life as a blind person is really like.

Pagonis says it is not uncommon for followers to slide into her DM [i.e. Direct Messaging, sending a private message to her on a social media platform] to question if she is really blind because of her appearance and everything she has achieved, an impressive amount for any 16-year-old. She relishes replying to these doubters, explaining to them how real blind people, like her, rarely match the helpless stereotypes many have in their heads.

“I get put in a box all the time. I get put in a box that I can’t do this. I can’t do that,” she says. “I just feel like blindness has such a stereotype where you have to look a certain way, and act a certain way, and you can’t be an elite athlete, and you can’t wear makeup, and you can’t dress up. You just have to be what they want you to be.”

Having Radar by her side only makes her feel more fierce and unstoppable.

“He is literally amazing and he is the smartest dog in the world,” she says of the pooch, who goes with her everywhere, including the pool.

“He’ll just sit on the side of the deck and he’ll just chill there.”

If Pagonis heads to Tokyo in 2021 for the Paralympics, continued on page 18...
Radar will be there too, and he is uniquely prepared for the crowds, sounds, and chaos that comes with big events.

Radar, a guide dog trained by the Guide Dog Foundation, (Link: https://www.guidedog.org/) was raised by the New York Islanders hockey team. While Radar was born at the Guide Dog Foundation’s campus in Long Island, New York, and was later trained by their professionals and matched with Pagonis free of charge, the non-profit relies on volunteers to help raise and socialize their puppies before they return to campus for more advanced training.

The New York Islanders, who had partnered with the Guide Dog Foundation before to raise funds for their efforts, decided to take their support one step further by helping the foundation raise puppies, and Radar was their first. The precious pup attended Islanders games, met fans, pawed around the office, and was regularly immersed in all the sounds and sensations that come with a major sports game.

“Essentially a huge portion of what the first few months of guide dog training is includes socializing the puppy and introducing them to new things,” says Ann Rina, the senior director of community relations for the Islanders. “And what better way to do that? We have a captive audience of 15,000 fans in our arena, so why not?”

Radar quickly became a team favorite during his puppy raising period with the Islanders, and Rina says the team, and their fans, are overjoyed to see the dog grown up and already making an impact on his owner’s life. The NHL team was so smitten with being part of the process, they are in the process of raising another service puppy, this time for the Guide Dog Foundation’s sister organization, America’s VetDogs. Link: https://www.vetdogs.org/

“Our organization can make a difference in someone’s life through these animals that create a huge difference in other’s lives,” Rina says of the Islanders’ puppy raising journey. “We’re talking about creating independence for someone. That’s something we are on board with and will continue to help with.”

This continued support from puppy raisers is key to the Guide Dog Foundation’s ability to provide guide dogs to those in need free of charge. According to the foundation’s CEO and president, John Miller, “we always need more puppy raisers”, especially during the pandemic.

If you are interested in showing the world to a future service dog and helping radically change someone’s life, visit the Guide Dog Foundation’s website to learn more about puppy raising and to apply to raise your own Radar.

Link: https://www.guidedog.org/GD/Help/Puppy_Raising/GD/DogPrograms/puppyraiser.aspx?hkey=160488e7-ee05-4ec1-8c0a-4241cd79e2b2

To keep track of Pagonis’ Paralympics journey, which hopefully ends with a gold medal for her and Radar, follow her on Instagram. Link: https://www.instagram.com/anastasia_k_p/?hl=en

Going Nowhere to Get Somewhere

By Lori Powers

In 2020, I learned there are times we have to go nowhere to get somewhere we are supposed to be.

London, my Freedom Service Dogs teammate, and I have been together for just over a year now. This Labradoodle rocks my world. Our first three months together were wonderful and there was no stopping Team Lo-Lo, as we are affectionately known. I have had spinal problems for several months now and started getting a little more gimp’y, though we were still able to get around and do what we needed and wanted to do. I could still get my manual wheelchair in and out of the car on my own and play with my Labradoodle, roughhousing and snuggling on the floor with her.

Then April happened.

The pandemic wasn’t what slowed us down. I had been working from home already. However, my spinal problems became a huge issue. With pain increasing day by day, our window to the world started closing. I could not longer haul my manual wheelchair in and out of our car. “Well, no worries,” I thought. “I still have my power wheelchair and we are blessed to have three parks within a quarter-mile of our apartment complex.” We would rotate traveling to the parks as a team in my power wheelchair. At times, we even reached two park adventures in a single day.

Then May, June, July and August happened.

The pain and disability were getting to be too much. I had faithfully attended PT (physical therapy) sessions, used heat, ice, and pain relievers. I even thought I had found the cure-all: steroid injections that would decrease pain and inflammation by almost 50% for approximately two weeks at a time. However, it was not enough. I was slithering out of bed. I could no longer get down on the floor with London for our snuggle and bonding time. It hurt to train with her. It hurt to shower. Our walls were closing in. I didn’t

continued on page 19...
recognize I was in the middle of nowhere. I kept thinking if I could push myself we could make it. Sadly, the lug nuts of our lives were wearing down to the point we had little quality of life.

Then September happened.

In the first part of September, the pain progressed to the point I could no longer dress myself. I taught London to assist me and we made a game of it which made it more bearable for me. I could no longer cook for myself and so cereal and Ensure became my friends. Best friends. BFFs times infinity. Having been a counselor, I recognized the classic symptoms of depression into which I was diving head first. I contemplated returning my beloved teammate to Freedom Service Dogs, afraid I would no longer be able to give her the life she deserved. When I slithered out of bed and hit the floor on September 7th of this year, I realized the lug nuts of our lives were too worn out. Lying there I took physical inventory to make sure all parts were in working order and they were except my back, of course. I called Dispatch Health, an urgent care on wheels to come out and do an evaluation. Yes, they do house calls! They called an ambulance and helped me get packed to go with London who was picked up by a friend who met us at the hospital. Diagnostic tests showed a couple of fractures that had been there awhile and many other disorders, spinal stenosis being the worst. My spinal cord was being squeezed, causing not only pain but weakness in my right leg, similar to a spinal cord injury causing paralysis. I was admitted to the hospital and administered pain medication.

I grieved my separation from London more than I grieved my physical situation. The Americans with Disabilities Act allows an assistance dog to stay with their handler during hospitalization as long as the handler/patient provides all care for the dog including feeding, watering and toileting. If the handler cannot do this independently, s/he may have another person do this but I had no one available to help out. At the time, I could not provide for myself, much less my precious canine teammate. I knew in my heart that London was in a better place but my mind still needed convincing.

My friend kindly texted photos and videos multiple times a day of London romping in her huge backyard with her golden retriever, going for walks, or hiking and camping in the mountains. She took time out from her work schedule to bring London for short visits at the hospital. I kept a 4x6 inch photo of London under my pillow so that I could dream about her. I even kept one of her smelliest, stickiest stuffed toys with me so I could feel closer to her. Note to self: wash that toy when we get home. Those were my only substitutes while we were apart. I desperately tried to convince myself that I could be happy because London was. My attempt failed miserably. I longed for her sloppy kisses and missed rubbing her tummy. I would close my eyes and remember the feeling of my fingers running through her wiry coat.

Another spinal procedure was attempted at the hospital but failed, necessitating a neurosurgeon. Two days later I was in the operating room where two vertebrae were fused together with rods and screws in a 4-hour surgery. As soon as I woke up, I could tell our Team Lo-Lo’s quality of life was coming back and soon we would be able to do all the things we did before, plus much, much more. It will take several months of intense rehabilitation to get to that point, but we are on track. The best part? After thirty-two days, London and I were finally reunited! We went nowhere and now we can get to that somewhere we are supposed to be!

About the Author
Lori Powers is a writer, a poet and a counselor. London is her 4th service dog trained through the Freedom Service Dogs of America program where she volunteers with community relations and writes from her lived experience viewpoint as an assistance dog partner. She also moderates an online social media page for graduates of the program. Lori responded to the IAADP’s Call for Volunteers to assist the Newsletter Team.

Thank You Note from IAADP Board to Our Beloved Supporters
Dear IAADP Supporters,
Thank you for your kind and generous donations. As board members of this vibrant cross-disability consumer advocacy organization, we are thrilled by its expanding membership and influence. Only a portion of IAADP’s annual operating budget is met by member dues and corporate sponsorships. Because of people like YOU we are able to continue providing support for both our members, and the general public, in the assistance dog field. We are in your debt!

The IAADP Board

Thank you to all our awesome members, volunteers, supporters and allies in the 25+ year history of IAADP in the assistance dog movement!!
Independent Film Draws Attention to the PAWS for Veterans Therapy Act

To Be of Service, the independent film by Producer/Director Josh Aronson, profiles veterans and their service dogs. The team at TBOS recently shared updates regarding a Congressional Screening in the USA and legislation H.R. 4035, the PAWS for Veterans Therapy Act.

Below is the text from their email:

Dear Friends of To Be of Service film:

November was a wonderfully eventful month.

We want to take this opportunity to express our gratitude, to you, who have followed the film on this journey and cheered it on, and to everyone who has contributed to helping us fulfill our expanding goals for To Be of Service.

CONGRESSIONAL SCREENING

The most remarkable event to take place was the screening on Capitol Hill before Congress on November 20. We’re grateful to many partners who made this event a huge success: Representative Mikie Sherrill, her assistant, David Michaels, Congressman Steve Stivers, and Speaker Nancy Pelosi, who honored To Be of Service with a heartfelt speech about the need to bring forth ideas like those presented in the film through imagination and art.

Three of our veterans, Phil, Sylvia and Walter, came to Washington DC for the event and spoke movingly after the screening about their life experiences. And we are most grateful to Purina Dog Chow, who sponsored the reception.

Aside from this momentous occasion, what has also been remarkable is the feedback we’re receiving on a daily basis from viewers, individuals who have seen the film in theaters, in their communities or online. Not to mention the many organizations that have contacted us to set up community screenings or partner with us in other ways.

Many people have asked how they can contribute. All the organizations that appear in the film are mentioned on our website and now have a donate button which goes right to their own respective donation platforms. If you would like to support any of them, go to our Dog Trainers page. (https://www.tobeofservicefilm.com/dog-trainers.html)

continued on page 21...
WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING

Here are some examples of the feedback we’ve been receiving:

“This is going to be a must-watch documentary.”

“I just saw Bon Jovi’s video for this film and what it stands for means the world to me. As an Iraq War Veteran I can relate to this and I would recommend this 100%. The music that I love led me here.”

“A documentary that will hit you right in the feels.”

MOVING FORWARD

We’re delighted to report partnerships and screenings lining up for 2020.

We’re also on another greater mission: to raise further awareness about the H.R. 4035, the PAWS for Veterans Therapy Act, which is currently in review in Congress. …If you feel strongly about helping veterans to heal and lead meaningful civilian lives through the use of a service dog, please contact your local representative and encourage him or her to co-sponsor this bill.

To Be of Service is now available on iTunes and Amazon Prime.

Thank you for supporting our film.

Warmly,

The TBOS Team

Bon Jovi released a new single called “Unbroken” on the 1st of November. It’s from the documentary titled, “To Be Of Service,” which looks at the relationships between veterans from the Afghanistan, Iraq, and Vietnam wars and their service dogs. After its theatrical release in New York last Friday, the film will be out in theatres in Los Angeles on November 8th, and released on Netflix on Veterans Day the 11th of November.


Assistance Dog Loss Committee

At some point all of us will face the retirement, illness, or passing of our beloved canine partners. Many have found that it helps to share their feelings with others who have experienced similar feelings.

IAADP’s Assistance Dog Loss Committee (ADLC) is here to help support you during your time of loss through our peer facilitated outreach. ADLC has a monthly call where participants can share about their loss, express their feelings, ask and answer questions, and discuss ideas for coping. People are encouraged to help themselves and support each other in an environment where they can safely share their thoughts and feelings. Attendees often discover that while each person’s loss is unique, there are common experiences of assistance dog partnership that they share, and that they are not alone. Learning how others heal in their grief journey also offers hope for the future.

If you are interested in participating, please email ADLC@iaadp.org and include:
1) background and type of loss you are experiencing
2) phone number with area code and time zone
3) best days and times to reach you
4) any special communication considerations

One of our ADLC members will try to reach out to you after receiving your email.

Jacki Helen Pearce-Dorge
July 17, 1944 - December 2, 2020

Jacki was, as the Assistance Dog Club of Puget Sound describes her, “a guiding force” in the assistance dog movement. She passed away in her sleep peacefully at Tacoma General Hospital on December 2, 2020. She was a board member, editor and webmaster for the Assistance Dog Club of Puget Sound which she joined in 1999. Prior to retirement she worked at the University of Puget Sound, founding and providing leadership for the Community Involvement Action Center and Kids Can Do! She was a strong disability advocate and maintained close contact with families from Special Olympics and specialized recreation programs of Metro Parks.

On her family’s social media page, it states:

Thank you to each and every one of you who helped her

She treasured her friends and appreciated you all.

~ May she rest in peace ~
The Justice Department announced today that it reached an agreement with the Gates Chili Central School District in Rochester, New York, to resolve the department’s lawsuit alleging disability discrimination in violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The department’s complaint alleges that the School District denied a student with disabilities equal access to school by conditioning her use of a service dog on her parent providing a full-time dog handler, despite the student’s demonstrated ability to control and handle her service dog with minimal assistance and the service dog’s extensive training to serve and respond to the student and follow school routines.

Under the settlement agreement, the School District revised its Service Animal Policy and agreed to provide reasonable modifications to facilitate the use of a service dog by a student with a disability. Such modifications include the types of minimal assistance the School District refused to provide the student in this case, such as helping to tether or untether a service dog, assisting a student to get water for a service dog, and prompting a student to issue commands to a service dog. In addition, the School District will pay the student’s mother $42,000 for out-of-pocket expenses and damages for emotional distress.

For more information, please call the department’s toll-free ADA Information Line at 800-514-0301 (TDD 800-514-0383) or visit www.ADA.gov.

SOURCES:
Article Link: https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/justice-department-settles-gates-chili-central-school-district-ensure-equal-access-students
Complaint Link: https://www.ada.gov/gateschili/gateschili_complaint.html
Settlement Agreement Link: https://www.ada.gov/gateschili/gates-chili_sa.html
U.S. Department of Justice ADA Requirements - Service Animals Link: https://www.ada.gov/service_animals_2010.htm
How can I tell if an animal is really a service animal and not just a pet? Link: https://adata.org/faq/how-can-i-tell-if-animal-really-service-animal-and-not-just-pet

Discrimination and accessibility issues should always be addressed and never be ignored.

This was a great document that could simply be put in the hand of businesses, or sent by email, to educate them about the ADA and assistance dog law. Unfortunately, this document is outdated and should no longer be used. Let’s contact the “U.S. Department of Justice” and request that an updated version of this document be produced and placed online. We may need to apply pressure to our Representatives to accomplish this effort. Please speak up, call or write today!

U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Civil Rights Division, Disability Rights Section NYA
Washington, D.C. 20530-0001
Ph: 1-202-307-0663 or 1-202-353-1555 for Comment Line or 1-800-877-8339 TTY/ASCII/TDD

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You can file an ADA complaint online or send a letter to the address above. It may take two (2) weeks to receive a response. Link: https://www.ada.gov/filing_complaint.htm

Provide the following information:
1. Your full name, address, the telephone numbers where we can reach you during the day and evening, and the name of the party discriminated against (if known);
2. The name and address of the business, organization, institution, or person that you believe has committed the discrimination;
3. A brief description of the acts of discrimination, the dates they occurred, and the names of individuals involved;
4. Other information you believe necessary to support your complaint, including copies (not originals) of relevant documents; and
5. Information about how to communicate with you effectively. Please let us know if you want written communications in a specific format (e.g., large print, Braille, electronic documents) or require communications by video phone or TTY.

If you are unable to write and need to schedule an appointment, or if you have other questions, you can call the U.S. Department of Justice ADA Information Line at 1-800-514-0301 (voice) or 1-800-514-0383 (TTY).

To find your federal and state representatives in the USA, you can enter your address information online at: https://www.usa.gov/elected-officials or call 1-844-USA-GOV1 (1-844-872-4681).

Layers of Loss and Grief

By Helene DeMartinez

loss of a loved one is so very devastating. Grieving that loss may emerge and re-emerge at unexpected times throughout our lives. With each loved one that passes, we remember those who have gone before. Winter, when we are not as active or the weather itself brings about memories of long ago. The pain and sorrow triggers many feelings that sometimes, we can dismiss when we are too busy. But, with certain seasons, we come face to face with thoughts that otherwise would be pushed aside.

This is normal. Reaching out to talk to someone is vital. Whether a professional or a trusted confidante share your thoughts and your feelings. Then, you, too, may find that you are helping another person in sharing within that connection.

This is also true for those of us within the community of persons with disabilities. We have losses that many people cannot relate to. Yes, it is devastating beyond words when our assistance canine partner dies. For, very few people truly understand the impact of that loss to our lives. That life partner who provides skills, companionship and unconditional love like no other. Then, to be alone. Not lonely, but alone until, and if, you can find another canine assistance partner. Some of us will go through many, many canine assistance partners through our lives.

Some click. And others, not quite like the one who was very special. No, people who have not experienced a disability with a canine assistance partner, they do not really understand this type of loss.

However, if I may take one further step. For all of us to have gotten where we are, we have also experienced another sometimes life-shattering loss.

Loss of sight, hearing, physical mobility, physical ability, all of which affects our mental health and wellbeing. The loss of who we once were, or what we once could do, can be devastating to our self-identity. Then, to struggle to find a new footing or a new normal can be a long, exhausting, lonely road.

Nothing is more comforting than finding someone who has gone through the same loss. The first time I went to a brain injury group meeting was like finally finding people who I did not have to explain myself to. And, who I also could relate to with unconditional understanding.

Just to know that there are others who are at varying life stages within their life-changing health experience is a revelation of hope for oneself. Medical professionals, family and friends can only do so much. It is you that must take whatever your loss is and embrace it, shifting the paradigm into TASK to somehow help another who needs you to share in your experience. Life lessons are just that. Lessons to be learned from. Thus, providing a purpose for that person to, in effect, impact someone’s life by sharing and connecting experiences. Then, the loss, whatever it may be, will become more than just a loss. It will be less of a burden because you are not carrying it all by yourself. So, talk, talk, talk. Share, share, share. What you have to say needs to be heard. We all are learners as well as teachers in our life’s journey. We at IAADP are all there for you and depend on you to pass it on.
Canadian Press reporter Michelle McQuigge has invited all of her colleagues to a grand retirement party— for her guide dog.

Reva, the 11-year-old black Labrador — dubbed “the world’s best broadcast dog,” is hanging up her harness after almost a decade of duty by McQuigge’s side.

McQuigge spoke to As It Happens guest host Gillian Findlay about Reva’s distinguished career and what it’s like to plan a party for a pooch. (Note: Q&A has been edited for length and clarity.)

**Findlay:** Michelle, how are you feeling as you’re planning Reva’s retirement party?

**McQuigge:** Very emotional. This is a very exhausting process in a whole variety of ways, as the process of detaching from a guide dog who’s been with me virtually 24 hours a day for almost a decade is not something that I’m finding terribly easy.

At the same time, though, she deserves a really good retirement. She’s been an incredible guide dog, and she’s in her twilight years and she’s still healthy enough to enjoy them. So I owe it to her to let her go and do exactly that.

**Findlay:** So how do you mark the occasion for a guide dog? Tell me what this party you’re planning is going to look like.

**McQuigge:** [Laughs] You really should be speaking to my co-workers in a lot of ways, because they’re the ones who got emotional about it even before I did. And they said we’ve got to do something. She’s part of the team. She’s been with us all this time. So we need to do something to honour her. She’s like a human co-worker. Let’s send her off.

So this party that’s taking shape is just an informal thing. We’ll get together. There will be human cake and puppy cake. I’m ordering that as we speak.

**Findlay:** So tell me a little bit about Reva. You’ve had her for almost 10 years. What does she do for you?

**McQuigge:** She allows me to navigate the world safely. So, in downtown Toronto, where there’s no end of obstacles and no lack of traffic, she’s invaluable. She helps me navigate the streets, get me around both the stationary and the moving obstacles that crop up all around here. Because of her, I can walk at a much more comfortable, faster pace and not feel like I’m being hemmed in by the crowds.

She helps me feel more confident on surface transit and feel more confident on routes that I might not necessarily have taken before. Generally, she’s a confidence booster. And she can help keep me safe even in situations where there may be changing factors.

**Findlay:** How would you describe her personality?

**McQuigge:** She’s frisky and playful. Even at age 11½, she still quite often acts like a puppy and loves to play. She loves attention. She assumes that everyone’s role on Earth is to pet her and love her and tell her she’s wonderful. [Editor’s note: It is.]

She’ll make eyes at people in elevators without ever actually making real advances. She’ll come and lay her head on me sometimes when I’m working or when I’m just around my home.

She loves to play with toys, but only when it’s her idea. If you introduce a toy to her, she won’t take it up. But when she brings it to you, you’re expected to drop everything and get down to business playing with her.

She’s a really fun, cheerful presence to have around any workplace or home.

**Findlay:** I can appreciate that after a decade, the decision to retire her, as it were, must have been a very difficult one. How did you do that?

**McQuigge:** There’s no fixed date on when a guide dog retires. It’s totally contingent on their health and how they’re doing on the job. So I knew it was coming. It’s a numbers game at this point.

She’s still in good health. She can still go at a pretty good clip. But her pace has slowed down some. Her energy level isn’t quite as high as it used to be. And I figured it was time to spare her from another summer of hot, crowded streets and the joys of our local transit system.

And it was time for her to be able to enjoy herself and go and unwind and be in the country, where she’s going to have a lot more leisure time and space and opportunities to just be a puppy.

**Findlay:** And where will that be? What kind of place is she going to?

**McQuigge:** I have family members living east of Toronto and they have a lovely rural property out there, and she’s going to go live with them.

**Findlay:** So she’s going to kick back, maybe take up golf?

**McQuigge:** Exactly. She’s probably going to have a better retirement than me at this point.

Source:
If you have a story or photo to share, please send to editor@iaadp.org

WANTED
Articles, Stories, Photos and Updates from Members Around the Globe
If you have a story or photo to share, please send to editor@iaadp.org

IAADP Needs You!

IAADP (International Association of Assistance Dog Partners) is an all-volunteer organization and in order to continue this vital advocacy work, we need your help now. Volunteers are needed in all facets of our organization, including but not limited to:

1. Newsletter Production – to create and publish IAADP’s quarterly newsletter, Partners Forum.

2. Public Relations – to publicize our organization to government officials, the media, leaders in transportation and housing, and others who can help our assistance dog partners achieve equal access with their assistance dogs.

3. Resource Development – to write grants, to develop fundraising drives, and to communicate with corporations, small businesses and individual supporters for ongoing and expanded financial support, discounts, and benefits.

4. Peer Support Group (Co)Facilitators – to serve on our Assistance Dog Loss Committee (ADLC) in support of assistance dog partners going through retirement and/or passing of their canine partner.

5. Web Development & Social Media – website builders, developers, content managers, SEO and social media gurus for (re)design and management of our website with accessibility features.

6. Our Board of Directors also needs volunteers willing to guide IAADP into the future.

Please consider donating any time you can to help with any of these tasks. It is imperative that IAADP receive additional volunteers for the future and vitality of our organization. In recent years we have lost several valuable volunteers due to ongoing health issues, and the responsibility has become too much for just a few to carry. Many hands make light work, and we need you! :) Send your interest to Toni Ann Eames, IAADP President and Co-Founder, by e-mail at teames559@gmail.com or by phone 559-446-1080 Pacific time.

I look forward to expanding our outreach and benefits.

#1 Viewed Dog Movie on Amazon Prime

Life Love Dogs was the #1 movie viewed on Amazon Prime six months straight. The movie is also a Kickstarter Movie, A Molly Dog Films, and soon will be coming to TubiTV (generally with ads).

THANK YOU for supporting LIFE·LOVE·DOGS over the last two years! The release of the film six months ago was a huge milestone for us! Thanks to YOU, the film has been a HUGE success, and viewership continues to grow in leaps and bounds!

From Producers Michael and Oreet: THANK YOU. We hope YOU and your DOGS have a wonderful, warm and safe NEW YEAR! There is NO life that can’t be made BETTER by the LOVE of a DOG.

Links to the movie can be found at:


Amazon Prime: https://www.amazon.com/Life-Love-Dogs-Jenn-Ware/dp/B07T8BTFX3


Molly Dog Films: https://mollydogfilms.com/life-love-dogs

Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/lifelovedogsmovie/
Please Support IAADP With Monthly Donations

Please consider making a pledge to support the mission of IAADP financially each month.
$1 $5 $10 $100 or more
Every dollar and act of kindness counts!

https://give.iaadp.org

Leaders never stop being mentors, no matter how exhausting
Guide Dog placement agencies often work with volunteer puppy raisers who socialize and provide basic training to puppies to become guide dogs. Once a puppy reaches an appropriate age, usually around 18 months, the dog is returned to their agency for advanced training. By this time, the puppy raiser has imparted all the socialization, love, obedience, care and discipline to allow the dog to continue the rigorous and challenging harness training and hopefully exhibit the required qualifications to become a guide dog.

Yup, folks, it is canine college and the dog will graduate with an advanced degree in intelligent disobedience. What this means is a dog will disobey a command given by the blind handler if it is unsafe. Think of a car coming out of a driveway as the team is walking toward it. The dog will see the car pulling out and stop, then continue when it has judged it to be safe. If the handler tries to give the command to proceed before the dog judges it safe, the dog will ignore the command.

This is, of course, after months of formal harness training with a qualified GDMI (Guide Dog Mobility Instructor) – during which time the dog learns how to guide and learn other commands, like directions (left, right, forward) and targeting (to the door, steps, bus, elevator,) among others.

One time Bailey even stopped to show me a fiber optic wire hanging from the ceiling in the hallway leading to our office. Avoiding an overhead obstacle is the most difficult task to teach a dog; I was impressed, for sure.

But, for the second time in this post, I digress.

Today we made the hour-long bus ride to visit Guiding Eyes For the Blind’s main campus and visit Bailey’s first Mom, Pat Bailey Webber. He just about lost his mind, spinning and doing some excited barking. He carried on, yodeling, rubbing, and licking Pat for at least ten minutes. This is the person who he bonded with, who saw him through all stages of puppyhood, some of it pretty gross and annoying, if I must say so.

Witnessing the bond with Pat is just so special, so rewarding, I believe it makes my bond with Bailey even stronger. While he loves Pat and would go with her, he also willingly comes to me and does his job. He switches his attention, applies his training, and has the adaptability to get it done.

I have written before about the Spirit of Dog, what it means contextually; this is an example. The Spirit of Dog is loyal, adaptable, and talented. How could a person not admire these qualities in an animal? How could I deny Bailey the pleasure of visiting with his first family? I am honored and humbled after these visits. I am a recipient of a very special gift; it is the spirit of dog that brings people together.

About the Author:

Ann Chiappetta is an artist, a poet, and author honing her talent in various mediums. Recently she has served as a readjustment and trauma counselor for combat veterans and their families. A guide dog handler and advocate, Ann volunteers her time representing people with visual impairments and guide dog users on various National, State and local boards of directors. A consultant and guest presenter, Ann visits schools promoting awareness and equality for people with disabilities. In 2015 she received the WDOM Spirit of Independence award. Thanks to her retired guide dog, Verona, Ann also visits libraries and assisted living centers offering pet assisted therapy. For more information, visit her website at: http://www.annchiappetta.com/
About IAADP

The International Association of Assistance Dog Partners (IAADP), founded in 1993, is the premier disability rights advocacy organization with the mission to preserve and expand public access rights for persons with disabilities partnered with assistance dogs (guide, hearing, and/or service dogs). IAADP accomplishes this mission through:

- public education and outreach
- advocacy to preserve and expand public access rights
- informing public policy, rule making and case law at all levels
- promotion of minimum training standards
- information and resource sharing via our newsletter, referral line, website, social media sites, special events and more
- benefits for eligible assistance dog teams
- answering questions by phone, email, mail, etc.

Representatives from IAADP have a strong history of connecting with community leaders at all levels of government and private sector to explain how assistance dogs help our members experience full and meaningful lives with greater independence and social inclusion across the globe.

We invite you to sign-up as a volunteer with IAADP creating the path forward for assistance dog teams. Email Toni Ann Eames, IAADP President, at: teames559@gmail.com or call: +1 (559) 446-1080 Pacific Time.