

Service Dogs in Training . . . *How do these animals touch your life?*

Service dogs have really added character to our workplace! Several soldiers at Camp Dodge have volunteered to train these dogs to serve our veterans in need. Paws and Effect is the agency that distributes these pets and educates the volun-



LTC Steve Boesen - Being a puppy raiser for our puppy Ridge of the Land Navigation litter along with my wife and family, has been an absolute joy. It has been an honor to be able to do a small thing to give back to our Army by raising and training an outstanding puppy through Paws and Effect, who will be a service dog for a disabled warrior. These disabled Warriors have given so much for their country and deserve the best care we can give them. I am enjoying the process so much, that I decided to volunteer on the board of Paws and Effect, a non-profit company, to assist them in fundraising and community outreach. This non-profit is a great example of a group of great Americans volunteering for an amazing cause and I am proud to be a part of it.

teers on how to train their dogs. Nicole Shumate is the Executive Director and Head Dog Trainer. Everyone who has volunteered for this has said the experience has greatly enriched their lives. It is common to see boxes and bowls of "doggie treats" in various offices around Camp Dodge & JFHQ. The following are stories and comments by dog training volunteers and office personnel touched by these animals.



SSG Diana Raymond



Audrey Giese - As the Deputy State Youth Coordinator I am used to working in some chaotic situations and supervising groups of children who are hyped up on sugar or bouncing about with excitement as we talk about an upcoming return of a loved one from deployment. However even working with groups of over 40 youth at once didn't prepare me for the energy that came in a little bundle named Pacey.

Pacey is one of the newest Paws and Effects puppies and having her for the past 2.5 months has been incredibly rewarding but also challenging. I had to learn how to balance my work duties with the needs of a puppy, i.e. frequent potty breaks and wanting lots of attention. Each week has gotten a bit easier as her training has increased, and we've gotten into more of a routine. Having supportive colleagues has also helped as they have volunteered to take her out at times and often come and visit her for short play breaks. Pacey loves it when people come to visit her, but she loves it even more when we get to visit any of the numerous employees who have started stocking dog treats at their desks. Pacey knows where all of the best treats are in JFHQ and loves to visit and show off her training to earn some yummy rewards.

Pacey has also gotten to venture out with me for some presentations and youth events. She is always a hit and loves interacting with kids whenever she gets the chance. Recently she got a chance to attend a Yellow Ribbon event and came with me for some presentations at a Des Moines high school. It has been great to have her along as people seem to really respond positively to her. I've found that she helps people feel more comfortable opening up about topics that can be difficult such sharing feelings regarding a parent's upcoming deployment.

While I am raising Pacey so that she can help a Veteran, she has been a help to me in lots of ways. Despite some of the complications that come with having a puppy at work, she has been an asset in working with Military Families and she has loved every second of it!

Rebecca T. Seehusen - I was fortunate enough to see the effect these service dogs in training. I worked at Camp Dodge during their recent PDHRA's during the



SFC Rob Ballantyne - Although I only have him for a short time, Recon is part of my family. He goes everywhere and loves to ride in cars and trucks. He loves to wander around AMEDD and make his rounds. First it is LTC Sutton, who always has encouraging words, hugs and treats. Down through Janis Adams and Michelle Gossard for tail wagging and more hugs. Lindsay Nelson plays tug of war or whatever he is in the mood for. Then, we are off to the Bullpen, straight to Sheryl Kock and her cornucopia of treats and affection. Once he is done with Sheryl, it is over to Julie Parsons for cuddling under computer desk. And of course, I have to be the bad guy and take him back to my office where he lays under my desk and makes me smile. Recon is well known around S70, he is a proud member of the 186 MP Company. Recon does a great job of lifting the spirits of anyone he comes in contact with wherever he goes.

It is an honor to take care of Recon, I am glad to have the opportunity to do my part for Paws and Effect. I am always asked how will I be able to give him up when the time comes. Having been a dog lover for many years, I know it will be a challenge. But my love for dogs and respect for what the program is meant to accomplish will persevere and get me through the heartache of seeing Recon go. Of course, I could always raise another one!

months of Oct-Dec. Scramble was our first visitor. SSG Bobby Jones brought her in; and the love affair began. Our staff fell head over heels for her, but the most marked change was in the soldiers.



SSG Bobby Jones

As the days progressed, SSG Jones felt comfortable leaving her (kennel and all) with us for hours at a time. As she played with the soldiers, allowed them to hold and pet her, we saw them relax and soften in manner. Becky Coady brought Justice in, and he really put a show on for them. He caught balls mid-

air, sat, dropped, backed up and entertained better than Wayne Newton. One day, SSG Mark Banta brought in Ryder, Audrey Giese brought in Pacey, Scramble was with us, as was Justice. It was more fun than the NY Rockettes!!

While there was fun to be had by all (dogs included,) having the dogs in our room allowed us to "identify" soldiers with varying degrees of Behavioral Health Issues. Usually, even the most broken soldier would lighten up and play with the dogs when the dog came near them. There were several who showed no emotion, what-so-ever, when the dogs would drop the ball or sit in front of them. And it wasn't fear of the dogs, who could be afraid of Pacey or



SSG Mark Banta



LTC Greg Hapgood - Liberty came to our family when she was eight weeks old. She is an absolutely wonderful dog-smart, obedient, loving, and so much fun. Seeing her grow into a remarkable service dog capable of changing a veteran's life has been truly inspiring for our family. Although it will be incredibly difficult to hand off Liberty to her Soldier, it is a profound honor to be a part of something so much bigger than any of us.

Scramble? I want to relate two stories to you regarding how Scramble helped two soldiers.

We had a Captain who played with and held Scramble the entire time he was in the Drill Hall with us. During the screening event, he shared many of the horrific things he had witnessed and been involved with during his recent deployment. When he left the room to check out

with Lindsey Nelson, he finally relinquished Scramble to another soldier. The next day in the hallway, he stopped our Lead Provider, Lou Parker in the hallway



WO3 Terry Stufflebeem

to "thank her for letting him play with her dog, it had helped him through that process." On another occasion, one of the unit Chaplains came in to see me. He had been to the hospital with a soldier for an MRI the previous day. The Chaplain wanted to see what "all this dog talk was about." Evidently, the soldier had been with us in the drill hall that prior day. On the ride to the hospital, all he talked about was how much fun he had with the dogs in the drill hall. He told the chaplain it helped him talk about his deployment, and made him relax. The Chaplain got to see first hand how the dogs interacted with the soldiers while he and I were talking. I think our entire LHI team enjoyed the dogs; and interaction not only with the soldiers, but with us. It helped us through some very stressful days.

Some of these units had very high combat involvement, with physical and behavioral issues. Scramble was all of our favorites, getting to watch her grow (boy did she grow!) and mature was something we all looked forward to. It was a pleasure and an honor to serve these troops along side the four-legged troops and their handlers. Thank you again for your guidance of the handlers and training of the animals.

So this wraps it up! Thank you to everyone who contributed to this article sharing their experiences. Bottom line, these dogs are a tremendous asset for everyone!



Becky Coady



LISTINGS FOR JUNE RACES, RUNS & MARATHONS

<http://fitnesssports.com/races.jan.html>