“Changing Lives One Dog at a Time”

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Recent Graduates — Fall 2020

Graduate Teams (left—right): Karla & Kappy, Tammy & Harley, Matt & Pistachio, Erin & Kiah, Kathy & Tucumcari, Sarah & Joy, Scott & Gatsby

Facility Teams
Karla Hartlep & Kappy
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* Sponsored by Janice Lair in honor of her brother, William R. Lair

Upcoming Graduation

KSDS will continue placing dogs in a 1-1 format through the spring. We will assess the potential to host a fall graduation later this year.
When they received their first KSDS service dogs in 1997, Jeff and Jennifer (Jen) Pringle had no idea how much of an impact KSDS would have on their lives. At the time, they just appreciated KSDS for saying yes to them as a husband and wife who could both use service dogs to maintain their independence. Over the past 24 years, the couple has received seven service dogs, combined: Girard, Freemont, Dankin, Flash, McLaren, Prince, and Frito. Though no two dogs have been exactly alike, they have all provided immense assistance to the Pringles.

Recently, we were able to speak with Jeff and Jen about their experiences with KSDS. When asked about Prince, Frito, and their past service dogs, Jen shared that most importantly they have helped increase their confidence, independence and mobility. She added that their service dogs have also helped in other, less noticeable areas of their lives. In Jeff’s case, Frito helps with his depression by giving him something positive to care for and focus on; but in Jen’s life, Prince has given her the confidence to break out of her shell and make friends she otherwise may not have. As service dogs, Prince and Frito also provide a helping hand around the house. As Jen recently shared, “Prince and Frito have had a positive impact on us by always being there to help sometimes even before we ask. They are already there waiting to brace or hand us something we have dropped.”

Despite being a constant source of help around the house, Prince and Frito do get to take some time each day to just be dogs. As Jen shared, “when they are not working, they are each other’s best friend. They wrestle, they chase each other, and they play with toys.” Away from the house, the dogs love to go on golf cart rides with Jen’s dad, especially when they’re going to the groomer. When the pair sees Jeff’s mom and step dad, they know they’re in for a treat - constant pets and belly rubs! Even though they work hard, there are times when they play even harder.
As working dogs, Prince and Frito are given full public access. They accompany Jeff and Jen to work, the grocery store, and any other public place where they may travel. While out in public, the pair positively represents KSDS by properly heeling next to Jeff and Jen’s wheelchairs, calmly walking on a leash, and laying quietly under their table at restaurants. Although their primary jobs are to assist Jeff and Jen, Prince and Frito have also helped to make their family members more comfortable.

Two specific family members that Prince and Frito have helped are their autistic nephews. As Jen shared, when the boys come to visit, Prince and Frito always go right to them and stay by their sides. Like we have seen with many of our other assistance dogs, the pair does this to help give the boys something to focus on and to help them to interact with Jeff and Jen. Jeff also noted that, “the more they are able to pet Prince and Frito the more relaxed they are.” This gives them the chance to focus on being with the family. As anyone who has lived with an autistic family member can relate to, their presence helps to make family gatherings more enjoyable for everyone involved.

Since their first application was submitted in the mid-1990s, at least one of the two has had to submit an application for a new service dog every 6 - 8 years. Given the frequency in which they have applied, Jeff and Jen understand the stresses of applying for a new service dog better than most. Despite the long process of filling out paperwork, requesting references, interviewing, and training at KSDS, the pair agrees the dogs are worth the wait.

When asked for a final comment, Jeff and Jen shared that the dogs display the true definition of selflessness. In just a short time, you become so bonded with your dog, and they give you such independence. Despite all they give to you, all they ask for in return is love and affection. If you or someone you know would benefit from a service dog for mobility, please consider visiting www.ksds.org and fill out a “service dog inquiry.” The application inquiry is free and could lead to a long-lasting partnership like the one shared between Jen and Prince or Jeff and Frito. We look forward to helping you change your life one dog at a time.
Ways to Support KSDS

1. Enroll in a monthly ACH

Payments withdrawn on the 5th of each month.
Enroll at www.ksds.org/support/more-ways-to-give

2. Online giving

www.ksds.org/support
Pay Pal: mfunke@ksds.org

3. Gift in your will

Gifts received will be used to fund the placement of assistance dogs for years to come.
Questions? Call KSDS at (785) 325-2256 or email amayer@ksds.org.

Thank you, Letha Nelson! Enjoy your retirement!

KSDS would like to congratulate Letha Nelson on her recent retirement! We cannot say thank you enough for all the hard work and dedication she gave to KSDS and the dogs throughout her KSDS career. Letha retired December 11, 2020, soon after finalizing placement of her last facility dog teams.

Letha will be missed, but we appreciate everything she did to advance our organization from day one. We are especially appreciative of the facility dogs she trained who have helped change lives nationwide. Letha looks forward to spending more time riding horses, caring for her dog, Tess, and visiting with family during her retirement. We wish her the best in her future endeavors!

KSDS’ Captain helps Natasha Braun earn Gold Award

KSDS would like to congratulate Natasha Braun for earning her Girl Scout Gold Award. As the final service project for her Gold Award, Natasha gathered information about KSDS and what we do. She then worked with KSDS puppy raiser Coleena Post and her puppy in training, Captain, to continue to learn about what goes into training a dog to be a successful assistance dog. While working with Captain, she put together a presentation that highlighted KSDS and the overarching assistance dog industry.

During her Gold Award project, Natasha received a first-hand understanding of the different mannerisms that are seen in KSDS’ guide, service and facility dogs. She also learned the difference between the behavior of an ADI accredited assistance dog and ones that were owner trained.
Help us to welcome our newest litters!

On August 11, 2020, Betty Boop and Holden welcomed a litter of nine golden retriever puppies – five males and four females. Meet our Kansas Lakes litter: Milford, Perry, Tuttle, Wilson, Kirwin, Waconda, Afton, Kanopolis and Webster.

Meet Wabash! She was born on June 25, 2020 and came to KSDS in August 2020 from Joys of Living Assistance Dogs. A former guide graduate’s parents donated $1,000 to name Wabash as a way to commemorate their love of Kansas State and its Wabash Cannonball tradition.

Meet Nash! He was born on December 18, 2020 and came to KSDS in February 2021 from Circle Tail, Inc. His name was selected by a generous donor after their $1,000 donation to KSDS.

On December 21, 2020, Marley and Solar welcomed a litter of five puppies—all yellows labs. Based on the results of our name game, their theme was selected as Brands of Soap. Meet males Suave and Johnson, and females Dial, Dove and Dawn.
Changes at KSDS

Congratulations to Kristi Myers, our new Facility Dog Trainer!

Following Letha Nelson’s retirement in December 2020, Kristi Myers was promoted to the Facility Dog Trainer position at KSDS. Kristi has been with KSDS as the Canine Housing Unit Coordinator since September 2016. She is a Certified Canine Training and Behavior Specialist from Starmark Academy in Hutto, Texas. Kristi has always had a love for animals, as well as a desire and passion to help people; this led Kristi to pursue a career in assistance dog training. No matter the weather, Kristi’s favorite part of the day is spending time with the dogs in group play and seeing their personalities shine! Kristi also enjoys spending time with her personal dog, Chloe, a Jack Russell/Chihuahua mix.

Meet Sandy Nutsch, our new Office Manager/Client Services Coordinator!

Sandy began working at KSDS in September of 2020. Having grown up in Washington, she knew of the KSDS business and programs. In 2006, she spent a year working in the KSDS office as a member of the AmeriCorps VISTA program. That experience showed her the importance and benefit that service dogs have in a person’s life.

Sandy has an Associate Degree in Medical Records Technology and worked in that field at various hospitals or clinics for almost twenty years. Her work as an Administrative Assistant/Secretary led her to other opportunities such as The Rocky Mountain Conservancy in Estes Park. The mountains are something she loves, so Colorado is a favorite spot. Helping people, volunteering, traveling, spending time with family, and reading are ways she likes to enjoy her free time.

Meet Eliza Benteman, our new Canine Housing Unit Coordinator!

Eliza is originally from the Waterville, KS area. She attended the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture where she double majored in Veterinary Technology and Equine Health. She went on to become a certified veterinary technician in Kansas and Nebraska. Prior to joining the KSDS team in December of 2020, Eliza had worked as a vet tech in several mixed animal vet clinics.

Growing up on a farm, Eliza has always had a passion for animals of all shapes and sizes. She looks forward to combining her passion for animals with her desire to help people become more independent as she begins her journey at KSDS. Outside of work, she enjoys spending time with her furry friends, Junior and Roper, who are Australian Shepherds, and her cat, Princess. She also enjoys riding her horses, Lacey and Sage, kayaking and spending time with family and friends.
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In the Next Issue
What goes into raising an assistance dog?
Hybrids – a new venture in KSDS genetics
Pumpkins & Pups Ticket Information

We want to extend our deepest appreciation to Diane for her significant donation to our turf project! Diane is an avid dog lover and learned about KSDS after a longtime friendship with a fellow rescue dog lover turned KSDS graduate's mother. The turf was installed in October 2020 by SynLawn. Diane named the play yard Teddy’s Turf after her beloved rescue dog. The dogs thoroughly enjoy Teddy’s Turf and cannot say thank you enough! It will be their favorite place to play for years to come!