

The Pathway

A KSDS Assistance Dogs, Inc. Publication

Spring 2024 - Volume 25, Issue 1



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In this issue...

-  2023 Fall Graduates
-  New Puppies
-  New Partnerships



94% of donations directly contribute to the development of KSDS dogs.

All donations received from this newsletter in April will be matched up to \$2,500. Thank you Modern Woodman.

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Meet our new Donor Manager!



Jenny Pachta
Donor Manager

A Republic County native, Jenny has an Associate of Applied Science Degree. She has volunteered and worked with non-profits for 25+ years. She is married to Garry Pachta and they have 4 children, three grandchildren, and many four-legged family members. She is involved in the family's hay business, Pachta Hay Farm, and they also raise cattle.

She served as the Treasurer of The Blair Center for the Arts Board for 8 years. After serving as Treasurer, she became the Executive Director for an additional 10 years. She has also served on the

Board of Directors for NCK CASA & Hope's Place CAC, Belleville Public Library, and USD 109 CARES. She, also, volunteers at St. Edward's Catholic Church and is very active with River Valley District 4-H. Welcome!

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Fall 2023 Graduates



DonnaJo Hunsinger & Adah
Wichita, KS
Facility Team #631
Puppy Raiser Andrew Wideman



Vicky Huntley & Victor
Oberlin, KS
Guide Team #632
Puppy Raiser Vaden Haddock



Austin Meyer & Reed
Salina, KS
Guide Team #633
Puppy Raiser Carla McGuire



Carley Popplewell & Mare
Cameron, MO
Guide Team #634
Puppy Raisers Randy Paxson &
Tonya Chester



Jennifer Pringle & Chick
Brandon, FL
Service Team #635
Puppy Raiser Karen Laybourne



Anne Davis & Charity
Topeka, KS
Service Team #636
Puppy Raisers Bob &
Sandy Bartkoski

Spring Graduation

Saturday April 13th @ 11 a.m.
West Training Building
702 D Street Washington, KS

Vicky, Victor, and RP

Vicky Huntley lives in Oberlin, KS, and has Retinitis Pigmentosa (RP), a genetic disease she inherited from her dad's side of the family.

"When my mom was 16, my grandmother was blind. I grew up around RP and watched my dad lose his eyesight," she explained.

RP is a group of rare eye diseases that affect the retina. It makes cells in the retina break down slowly over time, causing vision loss. RP is a genetic disease with symptoms usually starting in childhood, and most people eventually lose most of their sight. Early symptoms include loss of peripheral and night vision.

There is no cure for RP.

"Right now, I have 3% tunnel vision in both my eyes."

This means when Huntley looks at you, she can only see 3% of your face.

"I can see everything straight ahead

of me, but nowadays it's getting blurrier. I have cataracts now because of this disease," she explained.

After approaching KSDS at the Kansas State Fair, Huntley decided to apply and was approved to receive a canine assistant. She was paired with her first KSDS guide dog, Victor, in October 2023.

Huntley said, "Victor is going to make the most amazing impact."

"I stay at home or take the transportation bus. At night I was always on my husband's arm because I can't see when it's dark. When we did a night walk during class, I was nervous and had anxiety. Victor would stop and wait until I gathered myself and we'd keep going."

Huntley indicated she is looking forward to going home with more independence. "When I go outside at night, I'm going to say, 'let's go' and I know Victor won't lead me astray," she explained.

Huntley and Victor graduated from KSDS alongside two other guide teams, two service teams, and a facility team. Upon graduating, assistance dog teams are requested to return to campus for an annual re-certification. At minimum, teams are requested to be re-certified every five years.





Austin Meyer and guide dog Reed meet for the first time.

Meet Austin and Reed

Did you know blindness is a spectrum? It's not just black and white, or in this case, light and dark. For individuals like Vicky, who you read about on the last page, they may have some form of vision but are still considered blind.

Austin Meyer's vision is on a different part of the spectrum. He has what is known as Leber Congenital Amaurosis, the most severe retinal dystrophy causing blindness by the age of 1 year in most cases.

"This is how I like to describe it. Essentially what happens is your retina and optic nerves are not connected or communicating correctly when you are born," explained Meyer.

Meyer has been completely blind his entire life. He was working with a job coach who suggested he acquire a guide dog.

"I thought it was a pretty good idea. I heard some great things about guide dogs. Friends of mine from different Envision events have guide dogs so I thought this could be a good idea!"

Meyer received his first guide dog Reed in the fall of 2023. He applied in 2019, but the process was stalled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"But if you ask me, I think that was a good thing. I don't think I would have been as ready as I am now," he stated.

Depending on their vision, KSDS guide dog recipients can either be required or requested to undergo mobility training ahead of receiving a guide dog. Due to his total blindness, Meyer was required to undergo orientation and mobility training. That's learning how to use a white cane to get around.

"I must give my instructor Jim Lawlor credit. He taught me the majority of what I know with a cane. In fact, if you see me walking with my right hand extended out, I'm practicing a technique he taught me called Protection Technique," Meyer said.

He indicted that technique prevents him from potentially running into obstacles and injuring himself. Meyer used techniques and tools like a cane to get around, he still relied heavily on sighted guide in areas he didn't know.

"That of course changed for places I visit often like work and a music store in Salina. At church I wouldn't use my cane there, but you had your cane so you knew where the obstacles were so you could avoid them," he explained.

Continued on Page 5

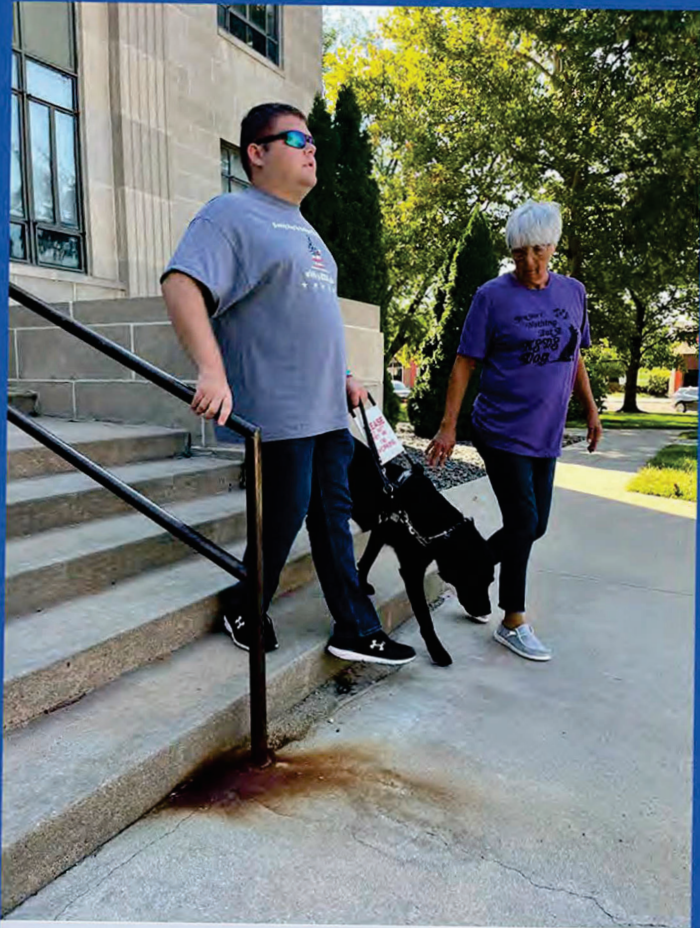
Continued from Page 4

“But with a guide dog, not only do I not have to worry about sighted guide, but you know where obstacles and curbs are. You can get from point A to point B, you can cross a street safely. You can do everything without having to worry about folding something up. It has been incredible.”

Guide dogs do exactly as their title states, they guide their handler. This means Meyer still needs to know where he is going.

“I still have to learn the routes, but I don’t have to worry about having people available 24 hours seven days a week to help me get around.”

After completing the two-week training at KSDS, Meyer and Reed returned home to Salina, KS, at the end of October.



Meyer & Reed descend the courthouse steps in Washington, KS. Lead Guide Dog Trainer, Debbie Tegethoff, gives instruction.



Austin Meyer rides the ferris wheel at Scheels in Lincoln, NE, during a training outing.



Fall 2023 Guide and Service class practicing a severe weather drill in one of the many severe storm shelters on campus.



Service Team, Anne & Charity, stroll through a store accompanied by apprentice trainer, Brooke Pfizenaier



Service Team, Jennifer & Chick, share a moment during a training outing.



Guide Team Carley & Mare meeting for the very first time at the beginning of class. From this moment, KSDS trainers hand-off the leash & training has begun.



New Arrivals!

It was a busy year for puppies! With nearly 50 pups whelped on campus, our staff had their hands full. Thank you to Freedom Service Dogs for donating two litters of puppies that were whelped on our campus. Thank you to the puppy raisers who volunteered to raise these future heroes.

We are ALWAYS in need of puppy raisers. Interested? Apply online at www.ksds.org. Our volunteer raisers are vital to our operations. No dog training experiences required as our staff will provide you with support, education and resources to successfully prepare those pups for a future working career.



Cities Litter: Fritz, Cotton, Denver, Skokie, Orlando, Judah, Gem, Art, and Mama Cheyenne.



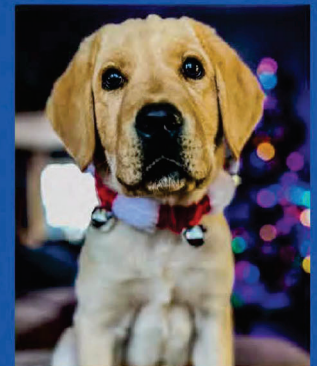
80's Rock Band litter: Queen, Aerosmith, Bon Jovi, Devo, Ozzy Osbourne, Motley Crue, Blondie, and Mama Journey.



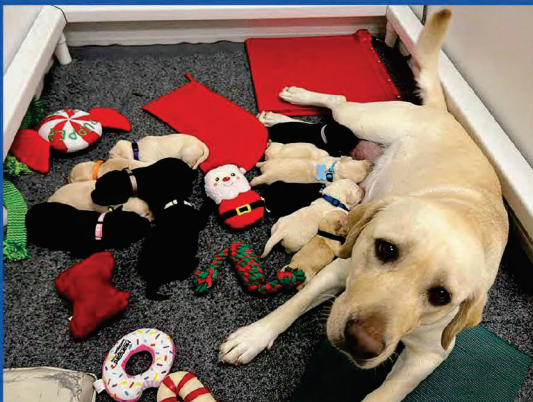
Exchange dog, Ziti, from ICAN in Indiana.



Back to the Future litter: McFly, Doc, Biff, Goldie, Lorraine and Mama Sprinkle. This litter was sponsored by Kelly Miller.



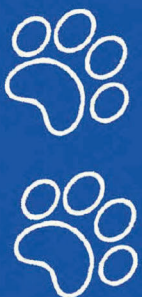
Exchange dog, Jephthah, (Jep) from Pilot Dogs in Ohio.



Breed of Horses litter: Brumby, Paso, Misaki, Paint, Mustang, Spiti, Trotter, Caspian, Pinto, Belgian, Draft, Clydesdale, and Mama Glaze.



Exchange dog, Penne, from NEADS in Massachusetts.



New Partnerships Benefit Puppy Raisers

bar« hosts Super Puppy Bowl

Our newest partner Bar K in Kansas City invited KSDS to participate in their fourth annual Super Puppy Bowl! Graduates, puppy raisers, and staff all attended the festivities the day before the Chiefs won another Super Bowl. Their facilities boast a modern bar, restaurant, event space and dog parks.

Bar K has generously committed their indoor and outdoor spaces for KSDS train and play sessions; that's a nearly \$1,000 monthly value. Puppy raisers and graduates can now grab a bite and beverage after working on obedience and commands together. Bar K has also invited KSDS to be a part of their Puppies Night Out held every Thursday.



KSDS pups in training participating in Bar K's fourth annual Super Puppy Bowl!



Facility Team Liz & Dove (left) Puppy Raiser Lisa and Pup in Training Canna (right)

PAWSIBLE

PRO

KSDS and Pawsible have been partnered since early in 2023. Pawsible is a nonprofit organization with a mission to provide financial assistance to puppy raisers! Although the organization is fairly new, it has already provided raiser starter kits and a spay reimbursement for KSDS puppy raisers. Just like KSDS clients who receive dogs at no cost, we are working to remove the financial obligations of puppy raising to make it more inclusive and attractive for volunteers.

Like assistance dog schools across the globe, KSDS is always in need of new and returning puppy raisers. Our operations are dependent on these volunteers who help prepare future heroes.

Pawsible not only provides monetary support to raisers, but they also promote KSDS by promoting our logo on their website. In 2023, KSDS became a Pawsible PRO member. The PRO program is an opportunity to improve our puppy raiser program through networking, insider knowledge and increased financial support.

Thank you for helping change lives one dog at a time!

Donations received from July 2, 2023 to Feb. 1, 2024 are included in this publication.

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The Magic House
The Nat'l WW1 Museum & Memorial
Topeka Correctional Facility
Towanda Lions Club
Trailridge Pet Hospital
USD 365
Union Station – KC
United Methodist Women-Axtell
US Charitable Gift Trust
Walsburg Women ELCA
Washington Pharmacy
Dan Wassenberg
Whole Foods Comm. Giving
Wichita Waterfront
Wilmington Trust

In Memory Of:

Andromeda Paula Hopkins

Marj Barker Randy Teske

Brina Karen Laybourne

Perry Beal (in honor of Linda Eaton) Alan Atterbury

Patty Balance
Melinda Beal
Mike Beal
Mary Birch
Linda Blandy
Jamie Brown
Kirk Carpenter
Joshua Galler
Linda Gilehrist
GKCCF
Sue Heley
Jewish Comm. Fdn. Of Greater KC
Shari Keilig
Norman Keller
Pam Kelly
Maria Kennedy
Sara Kiridly
Lindsay Kletke
William Kort
Laura Moore
Mary Nixon
Tracy Osterkamp
Heather Paxton
Marilyn Pflughoeft
Betty Scott
Brandon Stasiluk
Pamela Valentine
James VanZandt
Thomas VanZandt
Joe Vaughan
Kathleen Waller
Marilyn Wollard

Sara Pape Breuer Paula Pape

Chip DuWayne Metz

Doris Cole US Chart. Gift Trust

Cornelia Byrnes David Byrnes

Celica (Celly) Shelly Brandt

Karen Collier Cliff Collier Derry McGuire

Verda Drinkgern Drinkgern Family

David Eaton Melinda Beal Bette Conley Marlene DeCuir GKCCF Cindy Hensley Donna Kastl Sandra Knox Chris Woods

Emma Elliot Cynthia Beard

Diane Ebbert Jana Allen Nancy Beeman Donna Kastl Priscilla Woodliff

Wayne R. Elliot Janet Elliot

Andrew Eveloff Dan Finn

John Farquhar John T. Farquhar

Paula Farquhar

Pam Gillmore Beverly Krohn

John Gould Delores Dible Kent Dible Keith Gilbert Andy Harner Ken Johnston Mike Miller Dave Williams

Ron Gulick Jr. Susan Bizorik Susan Cowart

Libby & Charlie Hill Christopher Hill

Ben Hasney Rachel Dunn

Josie Hoover Mary Hoover Indigo Kelly Miller

Martin Jaron Tracy Johnson

Russell Johnston Richard Benjes Janice Marcum Mill Creek Homeowners

Chuck Kater Rebecca Floyd Joseph Henderlong Louis Stange Cathy Sweany

Kedzie Carla McGuire Derry McGuire

Keeper Phil Severson

Francis Joseph Linenberger Mark Linenberger

Regina Linenberger Marcia Funk Everett Lutjemeier Diane Smith Cindy Zimmerman

Marco Penny Schmeidler Richard York

Jim Mayer Donna Kastl

Viola Menzies Barbara Farber

Matt Nieman Martha Clock

Pat Nippert Ward Nippert

Rod Nogosek Lynn Schense

June O'Hara Pat Shalz

Glen Olson Janet Olson

Paris Judy Pascarella

Diana L. Price Janice Aaron Lenny Barnes Terry Bertels

Paula Jamison
Kevin Klenklen
Mary Newell
Patty O'Trimble
Ernie Porter
E. Pottorf
Nancy Powell
Mildred Robbins
Freda Roberson
Gordon Smith
Jan Smith
Victoria Vossler
Susan Wagner

Juanita Jean Shepherds-Phillips Karen Adams Debbie Botefur Toni Bradford Shirley Cunningham Gail Decker James Foley Patrick Grant Lizanne Guthrie Lowell Haddock Denis Lipsey Susan Lundy Harold Martin Bruce Miller Nikki Miller K. Nelson Richard Short E. Eileen Surridge

Roger Post George Avila Richard Carlisle

Hal Prester Nancy Prester

Joy Roth Scooby Roth

Roman Jeanne Meyer

Sam Shirley Walter

Samantha Judith Listrom

Vicki Slater Bill Slater

Cynthia Smith Carla McGuire

David Stigge Emilie Wacker

Michelle Studebaker Robbie Strahm

Sharon Tafreshi Beverly Krohn

Scott & Stephanie Taylor David Taylor

Mitzi Torrence Janet Jones Kara Jones Rhonda McBride Regina Ranein

Richard W. Verell Richard Verell

Mildren Woodworth Kimba Ralston

Christina Yohe Robin Kern

Kathleen Zamora
Charlene Hyland

In Honor Of:

Sandy Bartkoski Sherri Bryant

Chick Jennifer Pringle

Dundee Tony Matkovich

Linda Eaton Jeannine Beal

Fife Connie Kamps

Kristy Gordon Karla Gordon

Halo John Carter

Dancer & Trixie Haney Al Robert

Laura Heitman Linda Ruhnke

Bill Hillman & Boulder Doug Hillman

Sheila Johnson Jeanne Meyer

Jordy Jerry Josephson

Donna Kastl Norma Hein

Kay Knight Randy Teske

Sarah Krehbiel S. Krehbiel

Beverly Krohn Patricia Rankin

KSDS Staff Jeanne Meyer

Josh Lewis & Bing Wanda Morris

Lucy Leah Hill

Vicki & Thor Melicher Wayne Whitney

Austin Meyer & Reed Carla McGuire Derry McGuire

Kelly Miller & Emerald Molly McVicker

Morgan Derry McGuire

Sooky Lynn Kalemkarian

Lynda Symes Christopher Lette

Training Staff Nancy Maynard

Randy Teske Michael Otten Darrell Stroda

Nan Vail Preston Chapel Stephanie Wilkins

Birthdays:

Ree Carla McGuire Derry McGuire

Debbie Tegethoff Carla McGuire

Rebecca Williams Lisa Hamilton



KSDS Assistance Dogs, Inc.

120 W. 7th St.

Washington, KS 66968-2222

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Upcoming Events

March 16th	BPW State Convention
March 27th	Campus Easter Event
April 13th	Spring Graduation
April 28th	CCVI Trolley Run
May 22nd	Burgers on the Square
June 8th	KC VisionWalk



www.ksds.org

785-325-2256

Did You Know?

Research shows **volunteer puppy raisers** benefit physically & mentally from their experience, with improved companionship, exercise, wellbeing & social life.

Assistance Dogs International warns a surge in demand for all types of assistance dogs, combined with a fall-off in volunteers is disrupting the training of life-changing assistance dogs!

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer puppy raiser, give us a call or visit our website - Learn how **YOU** can help change lives one dog at a time.