



Welcome to **PAW PRINTS** Newsletter of Missouri Patriot Paws

1st Qtr 2020



WHY WE DO THIS --

Thomas was a police officer in Independence, MO when he was shot and now must use a wheelchair. His service dog, Tary, helps make everyday living easier and helps Thomas be more independent.



In 2020 MPP will be training a service dog/therapy dog for a Kansas City firefighter. This dog will be used for dual purposes: helping this firefighter and helping people suffering trauma during fire calls.

So far 54 PTSD service dog teams have graduated. Our goal is helping dogs find a loving home, helping veterans and first responders, and making friends along the way.

MISSOURI PATRIOT PAWS **573-578-2141**
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DIRECTOR'S CORNER --

SUSAN HINKLE

Welcome to the first issue of our newsletter. We plan on highlighting certified service dog teams, Board members and all the groups, organizations, businesses, and friends that have helped make Missouri Patriot Paws a success.

There's no way MPP could exist without the support of those willing to donate their time and money. I thank you for providing hope and help for veterans, first responders, and dogs!!

UPCOMING EVENTS

Due to the quarantine, all events have been postponed.

For more info, go to mopatriotpaws.com or visit us on facebook at **Missouri Patriot Paws**.

MEET OUR TREASURER -- Caren Whites has been part of MPP since 2013, playing a major part in our success. Spending endless hours paying bills, updating financials, attending events, training, and numerous meetings each month, she also has the job of keeping MPP in compliance with all federal and state laws for non-profits. No small task!

Recently Caren had the pleasure of attending the graduation of our service dogs from the Northeastern Correctional Institution in Bowling Green, MO.

Caren says, "I have been a dog lover for as long as I can remember. Partner that with being an Army brat and you see why being a part of MPP is a perfect fit for me. My father and brother both served in the Army and are both Vietnam veterans. Being raised in the military I know firsthand the sacrifices that these service men and women (and their families) make so that we might enjoy the freedom we have in this country. I will always be grateful to them. I have been in the banking business for many, many years and currently serve as Treasurer for MPP. It is my honor to do this small part to help our veterans and first responders."



Caren and Abby

Missouri Patriot Paws has grown way above anything we could have dreamed for this organization. No way it would have been possible without the hard work and dedication of Caren Whites. Thank you, Caren, for the years of friendship and dedication to Missouri Patriot Paws.

KANSAS CITY EXPANSION -- In February 2019, Mark Heimkes, CEO of Battle Buddy Service Dogs of Kansas City, contacted MPP about taking over their mission of providing service dogs to veterans in the Kansas City area. He and Kevin Owens had been running Battle Buddy Service Dogs of Kansas City for several years and were ready to retire.

Our mission statement allows coverage of the state of Missouri, so MPP was the perfect fit to take over the responsibility of training and certifying PTSD service dogs for Missouri veterans and first responders there. Kansas City has been very welcoming and accommodating to MPP. Sandra and Jay Sindeldecker have accepted board and trainer positions for the Kansas City area. Due to their hard work, MPP is having great success in the KC area.

Battle Buddy's procedures for training and certifying dogs are similar to ours. The main difference, and something we hope to transfer to the rest of our state, is the companionship and commitment to each other that Battle Buddy fostered. Our KC group is dedicated to attending fundraisers, educational opportunities, and training with each other. This brings a kinship that many participants miss from their years of being in the military, or as first responders. Many thanks to Mark Heimkes and Kevin Owens for their work in establishing such a professional organization.



Christian & Hero Haven



Hank & Chief



John & Abby



Marty & Delilah



HOW TO GET INVOLVED

School challenges, contributing to auctions, sponsoring an event and so many more ways. Please visit us on Facebook or our website at www.mopatriotpaws.org for more ideas **OR** send us your new ideas.

WE NEED YOUR INPUT

What would you like to see in future issues of this newsletter? Send ideas, articles and photos to susan@mopatriotpaws.org. As always -- we can't do it without you!

1ST QUARTER'S BENEFACTORS

- The PETCO Foundation
- Network for Good
- Salem Lutheran Church
- Durkin Family Gift Fund
- Cass Co. R-VIII School District
- Donna Solombrino
- Deborah McKay
- COL Donald & Joan Olson
- Carma Baldwin
- Lisa McCartney
- Carolyn Edwards

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MEET OUR PROGRAM DIRECTOR – SUSAN HINKLE

With a passion for working with dogs, I have been a tester for certified therapy dogs with Alliance of Therapy Dogs for the past 18 years. As a result, in 2011 I was approached by a non-profit organization in San Antonio, TX to get involved in service dog work. Due to the challenges associated with training service dog teams in Missouri but certifying them through an organization located in Texas, I considered starting a Missouri-based service dog organization.

After leaving the Texas non-profit, I took six months off to pray and decide whether to start a service dog organization in Missouri. It became clear that the Lord wanted me to create and run an organization for Missouri's veterans. As a result, Missouri Patriot Paws was chartered in January 2013.

In June 2016, a PTSD veteran/Fireman asked MPP for help in training a service dog. Becoming aware of the number of first responders suffering from PTSD/TBI, MPP Board Members expanded MPP's mission to include providing service dogs for first responders. It has been a pleasure working with several first responders in their treatment plan for PTSD.

In June 2018, Missouri Patriot Paws (MPP) entered a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for Service Dog Training between the MO Department of Corrections, Northeast Correctional Institution in Bowling Green, MO. This enables us to send dogs into the prison for months of training with inmates. Most of these dogs come from the Hannibal Animal Shelter. We are extremely pleased with the quality of training received here. The advantage of this partnership is the total amount of hours inmates spend training dogs seven days per week. All dogs graduate with the minimum of passing the AKC Canine Good Citizen (CGC) test. Dogs are also trained on tasks under the American with Disabilities Act (ADA). The beauty of this program is it helps change the lives of inmates, veterans/first responders, and rescue dogs. A complete win/win situation!

In our newsletter, we will highlight Board members, certified service dog teams, and all groups, organizations, businesses, and friends who have made us a success. There's no way MPP could exist without the support of those willing to donate their time and money. I thank God for you all for providing hope and help for veterans, first responders, and dogs!



Susan with Jenna and Jaxson



Chris with Venus

Hagan with Best Man, Indy



Axel



Proud MPP Teams

PETCO FOUNDATION --

Petco has consistently supported Missouri Patriot Paws since 2016. Grants provided through the Petco Foundation Helping Heroes program have been vital to Missouri Patriot Paws carrying on its mission of providing trained service dogs to Missouri's veterans and first responders.

All funds from the grants were used to pay for training costs, veterinarian bills and supplies for training service dog teams. From 2016 to 2019, Missouri Patriot Paws received grants totaling \$20,500. The most recent grant for \$8,000 was received in the fall of 2019.

Thanks to the Petco Foundation's continued support 12 dogs graduated from service dog training in 2019. Currently, there are 14 dogs in training or scheduled to start training in 2020. Remaining funds from the Petco Foundation grant will be applied to 2020 training costs.



John and Apollo



MY STORY --

John Meir is a 24-year Army Veteran who served in the Infantry, Chemical Corp, and was commissioned into the Military Police, retiring as a Captain. He had twelve deployments over his career, including Desert Shield/Storm, Bosnia, Kosovo, Iraq, and Afghanistan. After retiring from the Army in 2010, he served for six years as a police officer.

John suffers from PTSD, Intermittent Explosive Disorder (IED), Traumatic Brain Injury, Anxiety Disorder, COPD and seizures.

Apollo, a rescued Standard Poodle, and John found each other in 2013 and have been more than best friends and battle buddies. No words can describe the bond between the two of them. Apollo understands when John starts to display signs of a seizure or panic attack and will get him away from the situation. Apollo also helps John remember to take his medication at a prescribed time every day and wakes him from nightmares and for lack of breathing. Apollo has made it possible for John to get out in public and have a social life outside of work. He has made John self-sufficient again.

Apollo is now 15 years old and still wants to do his job, but John has retired him to enjoy the life of rest and leisure while being spoiled by John. He says Apollo has made his life enjoyable again and he would not be around today without Apollo. John has reservations about bonding with another service dog currently, so Apollo continues to perform his duties while the two of them are home.