

2019 Helping Paws Team Training Graduation

**Welcome and Thank you to Our
Team Training Volunteers**

Pete Markham

**Introduction of New Teams
and Comments From Graduates**

Closing

Eileen Bohn



HELPING PAWS

Spring Team Training Graduate Teams

Molly DePrekel & Facility Dog Finnegan

Finnegan works as a facility dog with Molly DePrekel, Clinical Director of Cairns Psychological Services located at the Midwest Center for Trauma and Emotional Healing in Minnetonka.

Finnegan is involved with individual therapy sessions and works to comfort people with various mental health issues. He sometimes sits by clients and asks to be petted and other times he may go for a walk or do some fetching with clients who may need to move and play for their own self-regulation.

Finnegan also says “hi” to clients in the waiting room or hallway who just need a meet and greet on their way into or out of a therapy session. He seems to sense who needs a Finnegan hug or paw shake and will stop by that person and wait for a greeting. He offers to clients some good Golden Retriever love and smiles.

The clinic often works with clients who are recovering from post traumatic stress disorder and trauma and working with Finnegan as a therapy partner is fantastic. We look forward to his continued work and he may be involved with group therapy in the future as he gains experience in this setting.

Foster Home Trainers: Lyn and Tom Davis

Litter: The Freedom Litter; Buzz x Terra



Gerald Piotter & Service Dog Jewel



Jewel is the gem in my life. Since I met Jewel my days have been easy to get through. Since I was paralyzed I knew I needed a service dog, but I got one better, a best friend. Jewel is very active and energetic which matches my lifestyle perfectly.

Jewel helps me from the moment I wake up til the end of the day when we snuggle up in my bed. She retrieves everything from my shoes to a piece of paper. She has even helped me get through this first year of college. She can sense when I'm struggling and helps comfort me. Jewel is the most loving best friend I could have possibly received. Thank you to Helping Paws for helping me find my best friend.

Foster Home Trainers: Barb and Peter Hutchinson

Litter: The Joy Litter; Gangsta x Elska



Tom Hallada & Service Dog Juneau

In the beginning of May, I had the pleasure of being teamed up with service dog Juneau. He is a Golden Retriever full of life and very happy to please. I cannot imagine being without him after being together for only five months.

There are three areas in which having a service dog has greatly impacted my life. First, the mobility aspect has been very helpful as I can have items picked up, lights turned on, and assistance entering and exiting.

Secondly, the companionship aspect has had a bigger impact than the mobility piece. Juneau has made me smile and laugh so many times. There is also something about having a dog with you that has a calming effect. Shifting the focus from yourself to the dog and making sure he has his needs met has been very fulfilling for me.

Finally, having a service dog with you causes people to treat you differently. Before Juneau most people would simply notice my wheelchair. Now people smile at Juneau and I come up and talk.



Foster Home Trainers: Corinne and Steve McCuskey
Litter: The Joy Litter; Gangsta x Elsa

Corbett Laubignat & Service Dog Jerry

Jerry is such a priceless gift. He is always eager to pick up items that I may have dropped or need to access and he loves assisting me with taking off my jacket every morning at work. He also does something that I know Helping Paws does not train their dogs to do however they do it so well. He bridges the social divide between people who experience disability and people who have yet to experience disability. Allowing for authentic interactions and meaningful relationship building opportunities. It's amazing when I shift from being the person in the chair to the person with the dog. Priceless!

Foster Home Trainers: Brenda and Lloyd Hagemo
Litter: The Joy Litter; Gangsta x Elsa



Norie - Courthouse Dog



Bill Kubes and Courthouse Dog Norie

Recently, the Ramsey County Attorney's Office embarked on a new adventure - that of bringing on a facility/assistance working dog. At the end of May, our division welcomed Norie, a Golden Retriever facility dog from Helping Paws.

In our work environment at Ramsey County, Norie assists our division by working in the court system helping victims and witnesses. Her impact on individual victims has been positive and profound. She is a gentle dog that has an amazing calming effect on victims. It's an incredible feeling to watch people's reactions to Norie, as they always have a happy expression on their face as they meet her.

Each day, our bond grows stronger and stronger and the trust between us strengthens as well. She is a very special dog. She is an intelligent dog and I know long-term, she will be a very valuable asset to our County and the people we serve.

Norie has helped many young and older victims. Recently, she sat in a meeting and the victim would reach down and pet her while she was talking. After the meeting was done the victim asked if Norie could be at future meetings, "She helped me so much today." She had a big smile and gave Norie a hug before she left. This is such a valuable opportunity and experience for me, for our office and for those we are assisting in our work. I am so lucky to be able to have this position and to be Norie's handler at Ramsey County.

Foster Home Trainers: Maryanne Mahowald

Litter: The Nice Litter; Briggs x Lanie

Veterans & First Responders

Team Training Graduate Teams



Robbie Holscher & Service Dog Jemma

Several years ago I saw a news segment on the television about a veteran with a service dog. I was amazed at how his service dog helped him with his PTSD. It was so obvious that the service dog had a calming effect on the veteran and I thought, "I need that." I didn't realize how much until Jemma became my service dog.

Having Jemma has had a huge impact on my life. I now feel more at ease socially and not only is she my service dog, she also provides comfort to many other veterans that I see at the VA. It is so comforting to know that at my lowest moments she is there to pull me through. Thank you to Jemma's foster homes, Dana, Ken and John for this incredible gift!

Foster Home Trainer: Dana and Ken Engstrom, and John Litch
Litter: The Joy Litter; Gangsta x Elska



Peter Johnson & Service Dog Kevin



When I was a kid getting ready to finish high school, I had no ambition, no direction for my life, and no reason to care. After 9-11 I found myself questioning my entire existence and a year later I decided I had two options....keep complaining about it or do something about; so I went to enlist into the military, and signed on with the Army as a Combat Engineer. I would get to be on the front lines, taking the fight to the enemy just like the Infantry does, but Combat Engineers get to use explosives. Sign me up!!!

My first deployment was exactly that. Night operations, dismounted patrols, kicking in doors, movement to contact with the enemy, and PLENTY of explosives. It really was my dream job, and I was good at it. For the first time in my life, I felt like I was part of something bigger, something worthwhile. I always had a very loving family, but now my family had grown and there was NOTHING I wouldn't do for my new brothers and sisters. I loved what I was doing and never wanted to do anything else for the rest of my life. But during that first deployment, things stopped working

according to the plan. The roll of Combat Engineers changed from fighting the human threat to fighting the IED threat. While everyone around us was trying to avoid IEDs, we were trying to find them and often times the IEDs would find us first. And the sense of personal responsibility for the safety of my small unit turned into a feeling of responsibility for the Military as a whole. I felt like it was my job, and mine alone, to ensure every American made it home. It was an unrealistic expectation, but one I took deadly serious. I became angry with myself and had more and more unrealistic expectations of myself, of my soldiers, and worse yet, of my wife and children. I was a healthy, motivated, and extremely driven individual...but I was slowly dying inside. I eventually left the military when all the death around me became more than I could handle. And suddenly, my purpose for living no longer existed and my family suffered for this new kind of loss.

The Army trains you to put the uniform on, but not how to take it off. I sunk myself into a hole that got deeper with every new perceived failure and my family continued to suffer. I closed them out of my life. I closed everyone out of my life, especially other Veterans who I felt had abandoned me. And for years things continued to get worse until I abandoned my family, moved to another state, and then tried to commit suicide. After my release from the hospital, I moved back to Minnesota, checked myself into treatment and started trying to rebuild the relationships I had destroyed. My wife told me about an old high school friend who received a dog from Helping Paws and told me I should apply. After an intense application process, I was invited to an open house. I almost walked out because all the years of seclusion had taken a toll on my ability to interact with other people. The staff at Helping Paws and that same high school friend, who was also at the open house as a graduate speaker, helped me navigate the stress and convinced me to stay. I couldn't get out of my own head during the entire introduction portion of the day. When I met Kevin, I caught the first real glimpse of light in a darkness that had once seemed impenetrable. Soon after, Eileen and Judy decided to pair us and my life has been so much better ever since. Kevin has helped me begin to reconnect with the outside world, but most importantly, he has helped me to start mending the fences I had destroyed with my wife and children. I still struggle so much, but Kevin has given me so much hope for the future because he does not care about my past. He only cares about our future. I owe my life to my wife, to Kevin, Kevin's foster home trainer the Schultz family and to Helping Paws for the gift of a second chance that they have given me.

Foster Home Trainers: Jane and John Schultz Family

Litter: The Kind Litter; Gangsta x Maple

Dan Vincent & Service Dog Delta



I always wanted to be an ARMY RANGER, and at the age of 19, I was...

I met Darrell at the VA hospital, we were roommates, and hit it off immediately. We were both Airborne, both very Irish, and both served with the 1st Ranger Battalion, only 14 years apart, Darrell was older than me, and was a highly decorated Vietnam Vet. We also had other things in common, secrets, the kind you do not bring up, but we did with each other.

The physical injuries are right there, you cannot deny them, you see and feel them immediately, its called pain. I spent nearly two years in a military hospital, and then I was done, no longer what I wanted to be. I pushed on, was strong enough to live with the pain that I live with to this day, but I ignored what was going on in my head. But after decades, it destroyed three marriages, jobs, relationships with children, and nearly me.

After two years of therapy, I had had enough, and in March of 2018, I made a real, but failed suicide attempt. I spent the next 58 days in the hospital.

I remember how happy and excited Darrell was when he told me he was bringing his service dog home. Her name was Delta, and she was the new, "love of his life". He couldn't wait for me to meet her, and we made plans to get together right after the Christmas holidays. Darrell died suddenly, a few days before Christmas and I was devastated.

I finally met Delta at Darrell's memorial service, and it was there I also met the wonderful people of Helping Paws. Before I knew it, these kind, caring folks had me on a path to being blessed with my own service dog. I was so excited to go through the matching process, and I was hopeful that one of their beautiful dogs would want me. Judy asked if I would like to see if Delta was a match, I was thrilled and afraid at the same time.

Delta changed Darrell's life. She gave him a sense of confidence, a reason to get up in the morning, and a reason to be alive. But most of all, she gave him unconditional love. As it turned out, she had enough love for the both of us... Delta is, The New Love Of My Life...

Foster Home Trainers: Karen and Erika Schmidt

Litter: The Do Litter; Chester x Callahan



Delta with Darrell in
Veteran Summer Class 2018

Michael Drury & Service Dog Luca

My lifelong dream was to join the U.S Army so after high school it was only natural that I start my military career, 1998-2001. Once I was steeled in at my first permanent duty station Mannheim Germany, I realized that the army was a good fit for my skill set. No matter what demand was made I gladly met the challenge. I found that my Military Occupational Specialty offered a good balance both mentally and physically, and I loved how I was able to thrive under pressure, the more stress from my environment the more I achieved. I was on the fast track. Then it was over...

After the Army, I was able to hide in plain sight by selecting a profession that allowed me to interact with others on my terms, stay on the move and always push myself to do more, and be better. I had successfully removed myself from society. This removal was my way of hiding my mental health and PTSD from all those who cared for me. Eventually I realized I had no one left in my life, and I had created a scenario where I had no ability or reason to reconnect.

When I first started to work with Luca, I had no idea that I was going to be the student, every day Luca reintroduces me to a life skill that I had successfully abandoned. Being engaged with Luca has offered me an opportunity to reenter society in a fashion that does not set off social phobia or anxiety. Without Luca this was not possible. I have been able to go to places that I would not normally go to. Having Luca with me has fostered much interaction from many people. The casual compliments on how well he is trained, or his good behavior has replaced the awkward looks that I always felt prior to having Luca in my life. Luca has allowed me to remove the social barriers I had previously fortified.



Foster Home Trainers: Diane and Tim Daun

Litter: The Loyal Litter; Chester x Karma



Kurtis Hollar & Service Dog Malkin

I joined the Marine Corps during my senior year of high school in 1999. As soon as I graduated I was off to recruit training. When 9/11 happened I was stationed at Parris Island, SC working in a warehouse. I was not sure how to take everything that I had just witnessed, I guess I was in shock watching it unfold. Things changed overnight and for the next few years the Marine Corps operated differently. In 2003 when I was nearing my time to get out of the service there was a stop loss and stop move. I decided to reenlist and change my job in the Marines to an 1833 Assault Amphibious Vehicle Crewman. I was sent to Camp Pendleton, CA for school and then was stationed there for the next few years. In 2003 the 3rd Assault Amphibian Battalion I was assigned to was deployed to Iraq for the initial invasion. When they returned home I had been assigned to Alpha Company and was doing some training in 29 Palms. We had found out while doing training that our Company was going back to Iraq to be a part of Operation Iraqi Freedom II (March 2004-October 2004).



Fallujah changed my life forever. April 2004 I found myself in the middle of Fallujah operating an AAV street to street. My role inside the vehicle was a Crew Chief so I was overall in command of the vehicle and most importantly operating the turret. On April 13th 2004 my friend Kevin Kolm was killed inside of his AAV and the brutality of that happening and dealing with the aftermath has lived with me to this day. I continued on my deployment and was involved in another incident September 13th where our company was hit by a Vehicle IED. We lost 3 Marines that day and again this is a day that I will never forget.

When I came back home I drank and I drank some more. I was haunted by nightmares, had a lot of angry outbursts and my Marine Corps career was spiraling out of control. I started getting help and was diagnosed with PTSD in late 2004 early 2005. I stayed in the Marines until 2011 when I was honorably discharged. I knew for the longest time there was something seriously wrong with me and I continued to hide behind it all and was basically surviving each and every day. I tried so many different treatments, medications, you name it I tried. I was tired of surviving and on January, 7th 2019 checked myself in to St. Cloud VA for inpatient treatment. I spent 60 days in treatment and it was during this time I reached out to Helping Paws.

Helping Paws has been a lifesaver for me. I am truly grateful for what they have done for me and I am truly grateful to Alice and her family for spending so much time training Malkin. Alice had no idea when she started fostering Malkin that he would get matched with me who just so happens to be a Pittsburgh Penguins fan. You could say this was a perfect match. I am now living my life and do not feel like I am surviving anymore. I am truly scared to go back to the way I was before, Helping Paws has saved my life. Do not get me wrong I still have my days and September 13th and April 13th are tough days, but Malkin and my family support make them better. I do not think I would be here today if not for my wife Danielle. She has stood by my side and her love and support has really helped me a lot. My kids Madison, Matthew, and Maxwell do the same for me. I have a huge support system who wants me to be a better version of me. Thank you to Helping Paws for doing what you do for veterans, first responders, and persons with physical disabilities.

Foster Home Trainers: Alice Chapman

Litter: The Music Litter; Teller x Augustina



Adam Judd and Service Dog Java

I had the honor and privilege of serving my country for over a decade in the Army. I spent most of the years overseas, to include two tours of duty in Iraq. I left the Army while I still could, feeling as if I was falling apart. Upon return, I did not recognize the country that I came home to. I was overwhelmed and unable to reconcile what I had done and witnessed in war and felt completely alienated from friends, family, and society in general.

I attempted for years to return to “normal” and just be a good husband, dad, student, and employee. I tried everything I could to forget about the past, thinking it would fade as new memories and experiences piled on top. It did not work and I eventually sought help with the VA.

The VA has provided me as excellent treatment and care as they could have. I certainly could have been a better patient. After many years of trying new medicines, therapies, and treatment plans, my life had improved but not to the point of long-term stability. Every day was a struggle. I met a few veterans who had service dogs for PTSD. After consultation with my doctors, I went ahead and started the process of getting a service dog for myself. I connected with Helping Paws and went through the application process. I was matched with Java, with whom I struck an immediate bond.

Java has transformed my life. His presence has forced me to become disciplined in maintaining good life habits and routines. He allows me to go where I feel most vulnerable, which is anywhere outside of the house. He loves me unconditionally and is a light in my life and everywhere I take him. My wife and kids absolutely adore him as well. Java is there for me when things go bad, often halting the worsening of symptoms and bringing me back. He is my battle buddy. I am forever grateful to Java and Helping Paws for such a blessing in my life.



Foster Home Trainers: Nancy and Barry Westgard

Litter: The Joy Litter; Gangsta x Elska



Fall Team Training Graduate Teams

Rita Elliott & Service Dog Napa

You wouldn't know by looking at me, that my bones fracture easily and bending over to pick up items causes extreme pain. With Napa as my partner, I can rely on her to assist me with retrieving items and I can enjoy time with my grandchildren as I can now sit on the floor with them knowing that Napa will help me get back up by doing the "brace" cue.

Due to life circumstances, I've been waiting for a service dog for several years. Thank you to Catherine Reid, Napa's foster home trainer for doing a wonderful job in training her to be my service partner. I will treasure Napa always.

Foster Home Trainers: Catherine Reid

Litter: The Nice Litter; Briggs x Lanie



Faith Morfitt & Service Dog Nash



Laughing too hard to give a cue to the innocent, imploring puppy eyes staring back at me, I couldn't help but wonder if this sweet boy, Nash, would be mine. Then, scooting closer and gently snuggling his fluffy head on my lap, he sealed the deal.

My life is mostly spent in bed, so finding a dog who would spend hours cuddling with me was a must from the beginning. Let me tell ya, Nash is as cuddly as they come. When it's time for appointments or the occasional adventure, Nash is eager to bring me one shoe, then retrieve the "like." Returning home, he'll also readily pull them off for me! Dropping something no longer means dislocating a shoulder and nearly passing out to pick it up, my gentleman of a Golden will grab it for me. When a seizure renders me helpless or anaphylaxis sneaks up on me, I'm in good paws. Nash will bring my EpiPen or find someone to help me.

While he may simply look like a stuffed animal with the purest honey coat, this pup has a powerful purpose. Nash is my angel in fur. And Helping Paws gave him his wings.

Foster Home Trainers: Kim and Ray Torell

Litter: The Nice Litter; Briggs x Lanie



John Enestvedt & Service Dog Milton

My name is John Enestvedt and Milton is my first service dog.

First, I have to say the foster home trainer, Cecilia, did an incredible job of training Milton. She described him as “a perfect dog,” and I believe this is due to the care and skill she dedicated to raising and training him.

I have Secondary Progressive Multiple Sclerosis. I was diagnosed about 19 years ago and my health, particularly my walking, balance and hand control, have been getting worse over the past few years. Very fortunately for us, a co-worker of my wife is a Helping Paws foster home trainer, and about a year ago she suggested that we apply for a service dog.

Milton has only been with me for a week, but I find it amazing the way he’s become a part of my life. Not only does Milton help me up after I fall, he picks up endless numbers of dropped items, and, maybe most importantly, he makes leaving the house much more possible. We’re unbelievably fortunate for the help we’re receiving from Helping Paws and the dedicated instructors and foster home trainers.



Foster Home Trainers: Cecilia and Tom Grass-Neary

Litter: The Music Litter; Teller x Augustina



You Make It Possible

Without puppies and sponsors to support their training, graduation of these 10 teams would not have been a possibility. Our heartfelt thank you to the Caretaker Homes, Sire Owners and Blue Coat Benefactors of these dogs.

Do Litter (Chester x Callahan)

Delta

Sire Owner: Denise and Rob Babcock - The Captain's Labradors

Caretaker Home: Judy and Steve Michurski

Blue Coat Benefactors:

Anonymous
Lori and Art Bartels
Jennifer and Jon Bishop
Tracy and James Carlson
Karen and Jim Clark
Naomi and Larry Crepeau
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Janeen and Joe Steffel
Barbara and Jeff Sweet
Cheryl and Jim Thomas
Kim and Ray Torell
Viking Client Services, Inc.
Cindy and Tony Zappa

Freedom Litter (Buzz x Terra)

Finnegan

Sire Owner: Dallas and Denise Babcock - Dal-Rhe Golden Retrievers

Caretaker Home: Jane Moelter and Jane EckesEtzel

Blue Coat Benefactors:

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Mark Hortman
Kartra and Glenn Kohl
Marie Lavigne

Sue and Bill Linder
Sally and Mark Ludlow
Sue Gageby and Russ McCandless
Jan and Mitchell McMillen
Debby and Richard McNeil
Bonnie Oian
Susan and Timothy Palmer
Kimberly and Philip Proffitt
Support the Troops
Debra Volkman



Joy Litter (Gangsta x Elska)

Java, Jemma, Jerry, Jewel, Juneau

Sire Owner: Jane Docter - Docmar

Caretaker Home: Mary Tiegen

Blue Coat Benefactors:

Anonymous
Akkerman
Allyson and Todd Aldrich
Lisa Bailey and Scott Anderson
Sheila Ashenbrenner
Kim Bakken-Parr
Lori and Art Bartels
Michael Baxter
Linda Beck
Lindsay and Matt Berg
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Lisa and Jerry Ward
Margaret Jane Weissenborn
Cindy and Richard White
Lynne and Robert Wicklund
Mary Jane and Basil Wissner
Doreen Bell and Paul Yamashita
Cindy and Tony Zappa
Ginger Zieman

Kind Litter (Gangsta x Maple)

Kevin

Sire Owner: Jane Docter- Docmar

Caretaker Home: Diane and Jamie Crannell

Blue Coat Benefactors:

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Kathryn and Ron Colby
Susan Davis-Ali
Erin Rauk and Ryan Haugen
Dianne and Jay Heath

Vanessa and Gary Hendrickson
Beth and Philip Hudspeth
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Jeffrey Jones
Stephanie and Stephen Jones
Sue and Bill Linder

Bonna Maypark
Thomas Turner
Karen Veninga
Debra Volkman
Judy and John Windorski

Loyal Litter (Chester x Karma)

Luca

Sire Owner: The Captain's Labradors

Caretaker Home: Jill Rovner

Blue Coat Benefactors:

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Carolyn Bollhoefer
Lawrence Doig
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Nancy and Michael Gosz

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Sue Gageby and Russ McCandless
Gwen and David Mersky
Patricia Olson
Susan and Timothy Palmer
Mary Phelps
Connie Walerius

Music Litter (Teller x Augustina)

Malkin, Milton

Sire Owner: Jane Docter and Jessie Douglas - Docmar

Caretaker Home: Gloria and Dave Sather

Blue Coat Benefactors:

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Naomi and Larry Crepeau
Janice Culnane

Dianne and Jay Heath
Ann Markus
Sue Gageby and Russ McCandless

Lukas Wallerich, DVM
Reverend Robert White

Nice Litter (Briggs x Lanie)

Napa, Nash, Norie

Sire Owner: Judy Campbell - Elm Creek

Caretaker Home: Susan and Mike Martiny Family

Blue Coat Benefactors:

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Phyllis and James Bjork
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Barbara Ann Brown
Courtney Costigan
Julie Hoffer

Karen and Alan Hupp
Janet Jones
Sue and Bill Linder
Norie and Bob Mahowald
Susan and Mike Martiny
Jan and Mitchell McMillen
Marilyn and William Ryerse

Becki Sanford
Terry and Pat Schulte
Vincent Valcroft
Laurie Carlson and William Voedisch
JoAnne and Dave Walvatne

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American Legion Post 260
Lori & Art Bartels
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Carol & Casey Carlson
Andrea & Jeff Eggert
Jeri Lea Elsner
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Nancy Eserkain
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Janeen & Joe Steffel
Jenny & Tony Taschner
Cheryl & Jim Thomas



Special Thanks To:



**Davanni's for their sponsorship of
the 2019 Helping Paws Graduation**

The Volunteers that Provide Special Support for Team Training

Emery Erickson, Anne Fleagle, Richard Greelis, Mike Hogan,
Pat Hook, Gary Kish, Steve Lindseth, Steve McCuskey
Gary Nelson, Nanci Shapiro, Glen Thill, Kim and Ray Torell, Jane Ward

Helping Paws Volunteer Assistant Instructors

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Carol Lamoreaux, Katy Shannon, Annie Schoenecker,
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