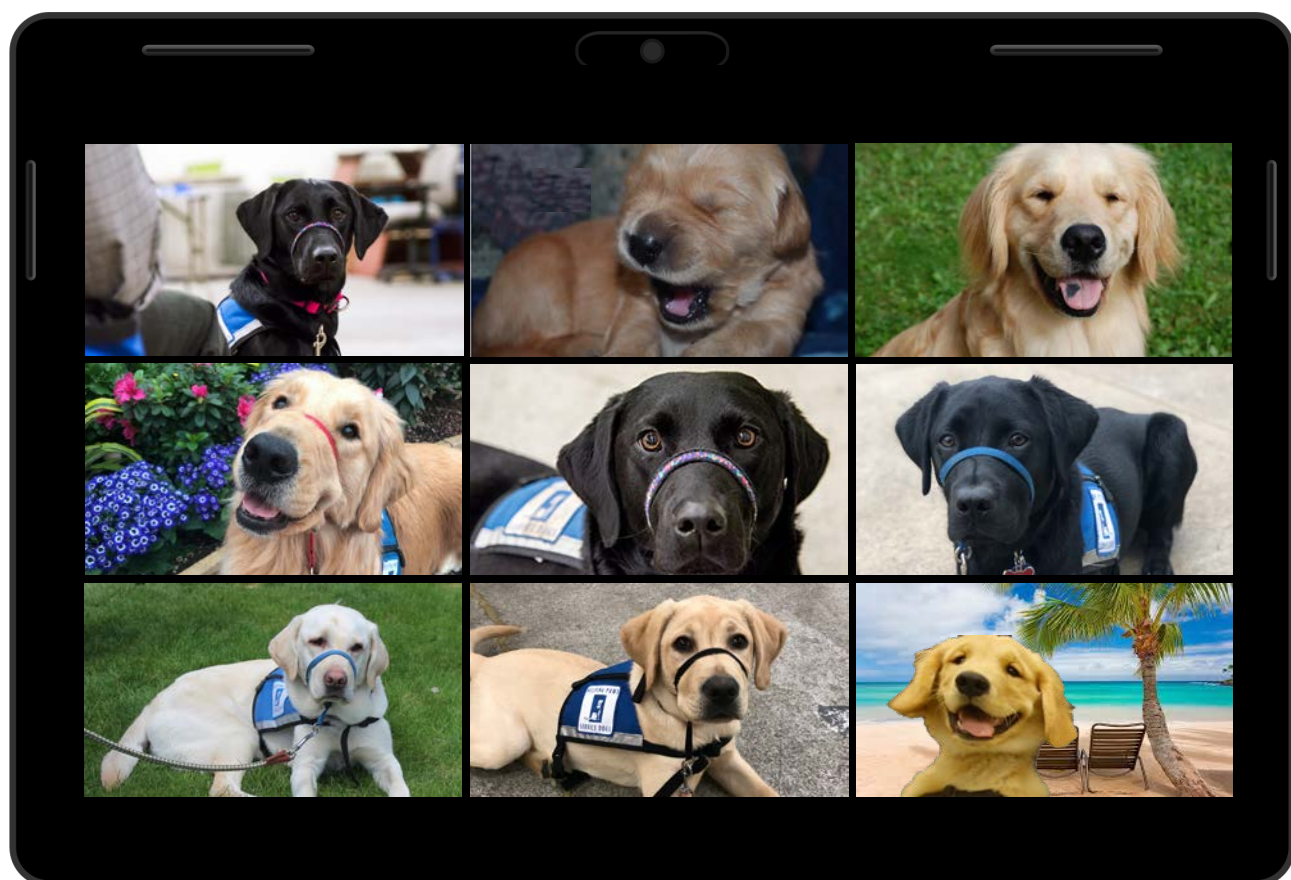




SUMMER IMPACT NEWSLETTER

2020

CONTINUING THE HELPING PAWS MISSION DURING COVID-19



COVID-19 PREPAREDNESS PLAN FOR HELPING PAWS

Helping Paws is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace for all our employees, volunteers and clients. To ensure we have a safe and healthy workplace, we have developed the following COVID-19 Preparedness Plan in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Our goal is to mitigate the potential for transmission of COVID-19 in our workplaces and communities, and that requires full cooperation among our employees, volunteers and clients. We are serious about their safety and health.

Our COVID-19 Preparedness Plan follows Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) guidelines, federal OSHA standards related to COVID-19 and Executive Order 20-48. We also have involved our community in this process by soliciting their concerns and input. Some of these policies include:

- Volunteers, clients and employees will be required to wash or sanitize their hands immediately upon entering the facility. Hand-sanitizer dispensers are at entrances and throughout the workplace.
- Social distancing of six feet will be implemented and maintained between employees, volunteers and clients in the training center. Foster Home Training class sizes will be limited to 10.
- Face coverings will be required of everyone entering the building. Face masks will be provided to anyone without a face covering.
- Routine cleaning and disinfecting of work surfaces, equipment, training equipment, and areas in the work environment, including restrooms, kitchen, offices and training area.



INTRODUCING THE DREAM LITTER



On April 22, 2020, Helping Paws welcomed the Dream Litter, nine Labrador Retriever puppies. It was the wholesome and inspiring news we all needed. Dreams became reality when the future Foster Home Trainers learned that all six boy puppies and three girl puppies were healthy and inquisitive by nature.

Typically, Helping Paws hosts an in-person “Puppy Orientation” for upcoming Foster Home Trainers. However, during the pandemic, Helping Paws has transitioned to a virtual orientation via Zoom which allows us to provide Foster Home Trainers with critical information while protecting the health and safety of these volunteers and our staff. When it came time for the Dream Litter to go home with their new families, staff created a “drive-by” puppy send-off which invited Foster Home Trainers to drive up to our facility, retrieve their puppies from a safe distance, and quickly exit. We look forward to reopening our facility for service dog training classes in July. The Dream Litter is excited to begin their official journey. Their Foster Home Trainers will be there every step of the way... just six feet apart with masks.

The Puppy Send Off was not only safe, but well planned with great communication from arrival to departure. As a result, the send off felt deeply personal despite the distancing required. I especially liked how the staff spotlighted both puppy and foster homes as each met the other for the first time. The staff responding with humor (and quick action) when the one puppy went off script and rolled the transfer pen in its' exuberance to meet their new parents, was a perfect example of what makes Helping Paws such an incredible organization; joy in their mission, deep love for the dogs and clients they serve, and a profound faith in the many and varied talents of their volunteers.

- Lu Ann Finnegan
Foster Home Trainer to Davanni

DIGITAL TRAINING WITH A HUMAN TOUCH

For the rest of our 60+ service dogs who are already in training, Helping Paws has switched their training classes to an online platform. Every Monday, you could find Pepper, a service dog in-training, and her other Big Dog classmates practicing their cues together over the internet.

At the start of the pandemic, there was a feeling of uncertainty in the air. Luckily, the Helping Paws community of Foster Home Trainers, Caretaker homes and volunteers were flexible and persistent. This allowed us to not miss a beat and continue fulfilling our mission to breed, train and place assistance dogs.

When Helping Paws shifted their training classes to Zoom, we (Foster Home Trainers) adjusted to the new norm. It was a fun challenge to find variety within the confines of my home, yard, and neighborhood. We would exchange best trade secrets during our classes. You do miss the in-person classes and the camaraderie. I'm definitely excited to start again.

-Karen Hupp
Foster Home Trainer to Pepper



Pepper



Puppy Orientation

ABOUT US

Helping Paws is a Minnesota volunteer-based non-profit 501(c)(3) organization with 32 years of experience training and placing service dogs with individuals with physical disabilities or veterans and first responders with PTSD as well as facility dogs. Our mission is to further people's independence and quality of life through the use of Assistance Dogs. Since 1988, we have placed over 250 people with a service dog, giving individuals the gifts of dignity, independence, peace of mind and companionship.

Helping Paws is an accredited member of Assistance Dogs International. We train and place Golden Retrievers and Labrador Retrievers as hard-working partners and companions. Foster Home Trainers take a puppy into their home for approximately 2½ years, during which time they oversee the dog's training and development. Foster Home Trainers and dogs attend weekly service dog training classes led by our professional staff and develop the dogs' repertoire of more than 80 cues.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **Helping Paws Tail Waggin' Gala - Virtual** - Saturday, September 12, 2020 from 7pm-8pm. Join us for our largest fundraiser of the year...now online as we celebrate **People, Paws & Partnerships**. More details closer to the event.
- **Davanni's Day** - Tuesday, August 4, 2020 – 10% of dine-in and take-out sales (curbside pickup) is donated to Helping Paws at every Davanni's locations.



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Photo Credit: Chelsey Bosak, Laura Gentry, Karen Hupp, Jonathan Kramer, Judy Michurski, and Mary Tiegen