



# WINTER IMPACT NEWSLETTER

2019/2020

## SECOND-GENERATION FOSTER HOME TRAINERS



PO Box 634  
Hopkins, MN 55343

Furthering people's independence and quality of life  
through the use of Assistance Dogs.

952.988.9359  
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# SECOND-GENERATION FOSTER HOME TRAINERS

ALL IN THE  
FAMILY



## THE McCUSKEY FAMILY

Responsibility, Trust, Compassion, Unconditional Love, Bereavement, and Patience are all ideals, values, and life lessons we hope to pass onto our children. Understanding these skills allow us to be positive, active individuals who thrive and contribute in our communities. In our 2020 Winter Impact Newsletter, Helping Paws will highlight an exciting new trend happening: Second-Generation Foster Home Trainers. We will explore what raising and training a service dog teaches a family, why a child would want to follow in their parents' footsteps by training a service dog, and ultimately ask ourselves who's teaching whom?

Let's meet the McCuskey Family! Corinne and Steve raised son Alec and daughter Colleen with strong family values. Working at an elementary school allowed Corinne to witness first-hand the impact a service dog could have on a student. Her interest was then sparked! After hours of research, Corinne decided Helping Paws was a perfect fit for her family. She appreciated the follow-through Helping Paws provided its graduates - from birth of the dog to end of service. It wasn't until Alec left for college, that the McCuskeys began training their first Helping Paws service dog, Brinkley. Seven years later, Corinne, Steve and Colleen have welcomed three different Helping Paws dogs into their hearts and homes including their most recent addition, a now five-month old Golden Retriever named Beacon.

*"When your service dog in training is placed, it's bittersweet. You know the dog is going to a great home and will have an impact, but it's still two and half years of love and bonding. Being able to pass on all of that love to someone else showed my family the importance of paying it forward. Volunteerism is essential in learning empathy."*

*-Corinne McCuskey*

After graduating college and living in his own apartment, Alec had a conundrum. He wanted a dog but also a fulfilling volunteer opportunity. It then became clear it could be both! Alec had previously seen the impact Juneau, the second Helping Paws service dog his parents trained, had on his new partner, Tom. This impetus made it an easy decision. Now, Alec has a roommate, a Labrador Retriever named Avi! The McCuskey's joke that their two new service dogs in training are in constant competition to prove who can learn a cue faster. The McCuskey family is now training two different service dogs in two different households. They're paying it forward, together.







## THE KIPP FAMILY

The Kipp Family emote a profound sense of peace when talking about their Helping Paws history. Ten years ago, Sarah and Mark with daughters Mary and JoJo began to raise and train Ripken, a Helping Paws Labrador Retriever. After 2<sup>1/2</sup> years of training and even participating in the start of Graduate Pre-Matching, Ripken had a career change due to medical issues. This decision was heartbreaking but allowed the Kipps to adopt Ripken. It took poise to confront the vulnerable truth of loss and/or disappointment, but in their pursuit of acceptance, the Kipps made lemonade. After his career change, Ripken with Mark became ambassadors for our then still-developing program training service dogs for Veterans with PTSD. Their demonstrations laid the groundwork for our exposure in the veteran community.

When Helping Paws needed more Foster Home Trainers in 2014, Sarah volunteered her passion and unconditional love to raise and train Fraser. Sarah included and encouraged her mother to assist in Fraser's training as a way to deal with and process the sudden death of her husband, Sarah's father. They used these intense moments of grief and mourning as opportunities to find new understanding and growth. In their bereavement, they found peace with Fraser's training and eventual placement.

Currently, Mary is co-training and raising Aurora with her father, Mark. The Kipps continue to find acceptance and purpose in training Helping Paws service dogs. While life will never be the same after a loss and disappointment, the three generations of Kipps press forward with hope.



## THE OWENS FAMILY

"Before I can finish asking why Sam would want to follow in her mother's footsteps?", her Mother, Rosie proclaims, "Because she's awesome and I've always wanted to be like my mom!" The group erupts in laughter. But that's pretty darn close to the truth. The Owens Family loves dogs. Sam has the same level of enthusiasm for working with animals as her mom does. Fifteen years ago, Rosie began involving her children in the training process of Helping Paws service dogs. Since then, Sam has always dreamed of raising and training a service dog on her own. We're happy to report Sam joined the Helping Paws community in 2014 as a Foster Home Trainer. Currently, Sam is raising and training Mulligan, a two-year-old Golden Retriever. One of the reasons she came back to raise and train another service dog is the support and community Foster Home Trainers receive. Whether it's other Foster Home Trainers, Helping Paws staff, Graduates or even Mom, you're never alone at Helping Paws.

*"Training a dog for Helping Paws, especially after seeing my mom do it, drove home the point that it truly takes a village. It also creates perspective. It's a gut check against my own personality that I can't do it all alone, and this entire process isn't meant to be done solo. You have your other Foster Home Trainers in class each week for a reason, and you develop a network of support and community."*

*-Sam Owens*

# THE MARTINY FAMILY



To say the Martiny household can be hectic is an understatement. Since 2006, the Martiny Family has raised and trained five service dogs with another still in training. Two of the dogs became breeding dogs for Helping Paws who gave birth to forty-five puppies over six litters. As Helping Paws Caretakers, Susan (Mom) and Mike (Dad) with help from Kaitlin and Ellie, cared for the puppies for the first eight weeks. Kaitlin explained this exposure and insight into breeding and caretaking paved the way for her to become a Foster Home Trainer. But it was destiny which led her to become one. When Lanie, a Helping Paws Breeding dogs cared for by the Martinys, had ten puppies in 2017, a future Foster Home Trainer had to recuse themselves due to allergies. Kaitlin seized this opportunity and began training and raising Nessie. It's a family affair! Katilin is Susan's daughter and Nessie is Lanie's daughter. What a wonderful connection!

Even eleven-year-old Ellie has a job when the Martiny household is full of puppies or training a service dog. Last year, Susan and Eillie began co-training and raising Willow. "We teach each other. I'm learning just as much as Willow!"

*It taught me patience. Our family has cared for newborn puppies and trained service dogs; each has their own unique way of testing you. But in the end, patience connects you to happiness, the joys of hard work and humility."*

*- Kaitlin Martiny*



## ABOUT US

Helping Paws is a Minnesota non-profit 501(c)(3) organization with 31 years of experience training and placing service dogs with individuals with physical disabilities or veterans/first responders with PTSD and facility dogs with hospitals, mental health professionals, and courthouses. 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 service dogs are trained to provide assistance with many daily living activities (about 100 commands in all) and offer much-needed companionship. They are a source of newfound freedom for individuals with physical disabilities—at home and in public. Helping Paws service dogs empower people with physical disabilities and encourage self-sufficiency. When paired with our service dogs, veterans/first responders are more comfortable in public, can foster relationships, and see a reduction in isolation, depression, anxiety and medication.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- **Evereve Eden Prairie Style Social Fundraiser** - Saturday, March 21, 2020 from 9am-12pm. Join us for fashion, fun, coffee, treats, shopping, and service dogs in training. Evereve will be donating 15% of the profits to Helping Paws.
- **2020 Tail Waggin' Dinner** - Saturday, September 12, 2020. Save the date for our annual fundraising gala!



**Helping Paws is looking  
for Foster Home Trainers  
New litters this Summer!**

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