4 Paws for Ability
Annual Report 2014

Taking the ‘dis’ out of disability.
2014 IN REVIEW

100 service dog placements

250+ puppies born at 4 Paws

80,000 pounds of dog food donated through Iams Bowls of Love

850+ service dogs placed since 1998

8 different types of service dogs placed

2 national competitions won, resulting in a Toyota vehicle and $25,000 donation from Pandora
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Welcome to the first, official 4 Paws for Ability Annual Report.

As I reflect on everything that happened in 2014, the most significant thing to share is that it was a groundbreaking year. Literally! After several years of planning, 4 Paws broke ground on its new state-of-the-art kennel and training facility.

During the planning process, I imagined the building as a country home, with a wraparound porch and chairs, inviting visitors to sit and visit awhile. We want anyone who comes to 4 Paws to feel at home, to be a part of our family; after all, we are a place where every parent, no matter how their child is affected by their disability, can come and know they will be understood.

It is hard for me to believe that what I started with my right hand paw, my Service Dog, Ben, in a tiny little apartment has grown into an internationally known entity. When I look out my office door at the 50 some staff working tirelessly to ready the dogs for their jobs, I shake my head and wonder if it could somehow be just a dream. But in my office, surrounded by pictures of children with their partners— beautiful, well trained 4 Paws Service Dogs —I know that, thanks to the many who have joined me over the past 16 years, it has become a reality.

At 4 Paws, we are frequently told by the parents of our children (and the handful of veterans we are able to serve each year) that our dogs are saving lives every day. The goal of the new facility is to dramatically increase the number of service dogs we can place each year in order to keep up with the staggering demand for our task-trained service dogs.

Thanks to our staff, our volunteers, our donators, and our clients for being on this journey with us and helping make dreams come true for our children and our veterans with disabilities.
Mission

4 Paws for Ability, Inc. mission is to:

• Enrich the lives of children with disabilities by the training and placement of quality, task trained service dogs to provide increased independence for the children and assistance to their families.
• Enrich the lives of veterans from recent conflicts whom have lost the use of their limbs or their hearing while in active combat.
• Educate the public to accept the use of service dogs in public places
• Assist with animal rescue when possible

Vision

It is 4 Paws vision:

• To have a large corps of volunteers to assist in all areas of the day-to-day operations of the agency as well as serving on committees to assist in specialized areas of need, such as marketing and fundraising.
• To have a sufficient number of employees to manage a growing organization though it is 4 Paws desire to have volunteers meeting most of the agency's needs, to keep the costs associated with service dog placement at a reasonable level.
• To be financially independent with funds available to those clients who need assistance with the fundraising process.
• To be the preferred provider of service dogs for children at the national level.

Advantages

4 Paws unique competitive advantages:

1. **Faster turnaround time for training and receipt of a service dog.** The process typically takes 18-24 months from start to finish. The waiting period for most service dog organizations is 3 or more years.
2. **Challenges are welcomed.** 4 Paws is willing to reach out and tackle the more difficult placements.
3. **Enviable success rate.** We have a 98% success rate in placements: we have a 90% success rate with the first dog placed in the home and an overall success rate of 98%.
4. **Flexible training.** Training that can provide unique and highly customized kinds of placements.
5. **Nationwide.** National outreach rather primarily regional.
6. **Open to more individuals.** 4 Paws has no minimal age requirement and does not discriminate based on severity of disability within the programs it provides.
7. **Pet Friendly.** 4 Paws does not require that recipients give up their pets to receive a service dog as many agencies do.
Lincoln was born at 4 Paws for Ability on October 20, 2013. A “Cities Litter” pup, Lincoln’s litter was sponsored by the family of Hawke Lincoln Falzarano. Hawke died from a seizure, but through their grief, his family vowed to help others through their support of 4 Paws. Lincoln participated in each step of the traditional 4 Paws process, beginning with the Puppy Enrichment Program, a short stay in the Mission Pawsible inmate program, and six months with a traditional foster home before returning to 4 Paws for advanced training.

Grayson was diagnosed with a rare chromosomal abnormality that challenges him with severe global delays, lack of speech, epilepsy, and autism, among other diagnoses. Grayson and Lincoln were matched together as partners in October 2014. They participated in a two-week training course to learn how to use all of the commands Lincoln had been taught in his training. During training, Lincoln began bonding with his new partner and the family connected with others in ways that made them feel at home. “Watching other families with ‘typical’ children, they bond through their children’s activities and common lifestyles. That’s what we all did [during class]! This was our typical.”

Once home, it wasn’t long before their family saw noticeable differences in their lives. “I have truly witnessed a love and a bond between our son and our dog. They are friends,” says a very grateful mom, Margaret. Lincoln almost immediately began to calm Grayson while in the car, a previously uncomfortable time for Grayson, that often led to screaming and head-banging episodes. With Lincoln by his side, that behavior has become very rare, a blessing of comfort to both Grayson and his family.

Grayson shows his affection for Lincoln by using him as a pillow or holding his paw. “They have rituals and games and moments that transcend my understanding.” These small things add up quickly and the whole family has benefitted from Lincoln’s calming presence and his assistance to Grayson.
We’ve been home for 3 months and...

...our lives have been altered in the most wonderful and unimaginable way. We knew our SD would bring some calm to our son, but we never anticipated the enormous affect Leno would have on our entire family. He's brought peace of mind to us - and that is a priceless thing.

-Laura Fiorillo
Zach & Leno

In the short month that we have been home...

...with Vonnie, I have seen the unexpected positive effects it has on each family member. I expected it for Heather but not for everyone else.

-Aleta Doty-Rudick
Heather & Vonnie

We’ve been home for 3 months and...

...Nora has not missed once in finding her boy. And with all his bolting and wandering, we couldn't go one more day without her. She has even found him on one real track. He had wandered away and she found him in less than 30 seconds.

-Jill Sargent Sapp
Andrew & Nora
Sergeant Jason Ratcliffe brings with him a very different set of life experiences than the average 4 Paws client. Jason is a veteran of the United States Army, serving four years active duty and an additional six with the National Guard. Like too many veterans, Jason returned from service changed and found very few resources to help him work through his new diagnosis, Post Traumatic Stress. He began searching for his own help, and time and time again 4 Paws for Ability turned up on his computer screen. An application and a phone call later, and Jason was part of the family.

Jason met Boston (formerly Wilder of the Authors Litter) in December of 2014. Boston was trained to help Jason with all of the manifestations of his condition. She wakes him up from nightmares. Jason also has overwhelming anxiety in crowded, public places. In public settings, Boston can not only identify his growing anxiety, but performs specific tasks to help him cope with that anxiety. She sits on his feet or pushes against him to get his attention. This indicates to Jason that he needs to pay more attention to her and the increased focus and vigilance helps him not be overcome by his anxiety.

December classmates recall Jason being worried about bonding with his new pup, just before they met. When Boston walked in the room, not a single person had a doubt. The match was perfect, and the bonding began instantly. He was fiercely protective of that bond, working hard to perfect it before heading home to his two children, who now have their own relationship with Boston and absolutely adore her.

Now, Boston goes with Jason everywhere; shopping, to the kids’ sports practices, to the bus stop. Jason and Boston have even attended a couple of professional sporting events since they were matched together. All of these things from the smallest every day public outing, to the bigger ones, were impossible before. Grocery shopping was a chore, one that sometimes seemed impossible to even attempt. When asked what the most important thing Boston does is, Jason doesn’t even hesitate. “I talk to her and she just listens. I tell her everything, all my secrets. She doesn’t even give an opinion back...just listens.” Boston might not have been trained to listen to Jason’s stories, but it’s no surprise that her commitment to Jason’s wellbeing resulted in her being a good friend, in addition to being a well-trained service dog.
What does this experience mean to you?

Thanks for giving us the power to still have dreams for our children, because new doors have been opened for them and for us.

-Ann Buzz
Kennan & Maverick

This Christmas, our lives are different because...

...we have been blessed by 4 Paws, receiving Angel. She is Hunter's best friend and has given me such a feeling of peace going to sleep at night.

-Sarah Specht
Hunter & Angel

What does this experience mean to you?

As I sit here almost 24 hours from graduation, I’m so happy to be home, but there is a void. You become comfortable for the first time, feeling understanding and love...I now have extended family in [10 states].

-Stacie Bittner Massett
Robert & Bronx
Train and place quality, task-trained service dogs

2014 Placements

100 Dogs Placed

- Autism Assistance Dog
- Multipurpose Assistance Dog
- Diabetic Alert Dog
- Multipurpose Assistance Dog with Seizure Assistance
- FASD/DE Assistance Dog
- Seizure Assistance Dog
- Mobility Assistance Dog
- Veteran's Service Dog
4 Paws’ breeding program strives to produce service dogs with good temperament, sound body, and confirmation to breed standards. 4 Paws is continually working to better its processes and breeding decision through litter tracking as well as studying scientific developments within the industry.

2014 saw a significant increase in purpose breeding of Golden Labs for 4 Paws. 4 Paws has found that by mixing the Golden Retriever and the Labrador Retriever, the result is a more well-rounded dog. They tend to be a bit tougher, without losing all sensitivity. Their hair tends to be softer than that of a pure Labrador Retriever, a desirable trait for our sensory clients, while still being somewhat sensitive. 2014 was also a developing year for our Collie population. 4 Paws is learning significantly about this breed and how to maximize the traits that make the Collie caring, yet confident.

In 2014, 4 Paws bred 3 litters of Collies, 4 Goldendoodles, 15 Golden Labs, 12 Golden Retrievers, and 3 litters of Papillons. This resulted in the birth of more than 250 purpose-bred potential service dogs. Regarding gender, it was virtually 50/50 male to female.
Owen received his first 4 Paws for Ability service dog in 2003, before Owen entered kindergarten. Back then, classes were smaller; Owen and Chase were one of only four teams attending the training class. Chase was a feisty black lab with enough energy to keep up with Owen. They bonded over the summer and went to school together right away in the fall. Chase helped Owen in many ways: pulled him down the hallways, opened doors, retrieved dropped items, but the main thing Chase did for Owen was provide an "icebreaker" for others. With Chase by his side, those uncomfortable side glances became a quick smile, a hello, and a question about his dog.

Now a tenth grader, Owen was recently matched with his second service dog, Cooper. The years between then and now have been tough on Owen, with lots of inpatient care, surgeries, and a new set of abilities. His mom told 4 Paws in advance that the kiddo they would be seeing is more sensitive than last time. She gratefully reports that these changes in need didn't change the quality of the match, “[4 Paws] could not have found a better match.” Owen was also much more autonomous over this process than the last time; he passed the public access test and can handle Cooper in public, he handles all the feeding and treating, and gives commands and affection to Cooper. Cooper helps Owen through specific tasks such as pulling or retrieving dropped items. Owen has already taught him his own tricks, like fist bump and Cooper knows what an iPod is - he grabs it and gives it to Owen as soon as Owen gives the command “iPod”.

“To the mom of a kid who has had a very tough life so far and has very limited mobility, Cooper has provided a sense of ownership and responsibility for Owen that gives immediate response to him. Further, Owen and Cooper were going down a hall at school one day and an autistic child was having difficulty. Cooper immediately went to the child and put his face on her lap. She calmed immediately. Now whenever the child begins to get agitated, her aide and her go looking for Owen and Cooper, regardless if they find them or not, the child calms. Owen and Cooper to the rescue! So instead of someone having to help Owen all the time, Owen gets to help someone out instead. Very, very cool.”
In the short month that we have been home...

...Ed and Yahoo are doing great. It makes such a difference to having Yahoo along when we go out. It was to the point where I just wouldn’t go out because it caused so much anxiety. I love what a good girl Yahoo is to her boy.

-Sarah Obach Wrona
Ed & Yahoo

This Christmas, our lives are different because......

We can rest easier at night knowing Soarin is already AMAZING at alerting us to Caleb's seizures! Yay sleep!

-Christian Suttles Morgan
Caleb & Soarin

What does this experience mean to you?

This was very emotional...I could feel the heart of each parent there as they cried and poured their hearts to each other. God doesn’t make junk...God always gives grace, mercy, and patience that we need as parents of special needs children. Jeremy [said] there’s nothing a good parent won’t endure for a child. I agree with him. Would I do it again? Absolutely.

-Shane Martin
Jordan & Flo(rence)
In November, an official partnership, Magnolia Paws for Compassion, was launched to increase awareness and education of seizure assistance service dogs. This partnership brings together Eisai, a pharmaceutical manufacturer of seizure medication, the Epilepsy Foundation, Brandon McMillan, of the TV show *Lucky Dog*, and 4 Paws for Ability for increased exposure to the important work of service dogs. Karen Shirk, CEO, and Shelby Bottger, staff trainer, attended the 68th Annual Meeting of the American Epilepsy Society as part of this collaborative kick off, where MediKidz, superheroes who educate the public on medical topics, Eisai, and 4 Paws for Ability were able to discuss the benefits of medical alert dogs with medical professionals from across the country.

The main question asked was regarding natural ability in dogs versus specifically training for medical alert. Karen and Shelby were able to share that some dogs (around 10% of all dogs) do pick up medical alert naturally, and will alert their owners in some way to an impending medical crisis. 4 Paws has an 80% success rate with training dogs to alert! They were very surprised to learn this and took the information to share with their families. Karen and Shelby met lots of medical professionals interested in the topic of medical alert dogs, and perhaps even convinced a few skeptics of how service dogs are a valuable tool to people living or dealing with any ongoing medical condition or disability. In addition to the Magnolia Paws for Compassion collaboration, 4 Paws’ seizure alert dog team, Flame and Joel, were published in a MediKidz comic book in 2014, highlighting Flame as a superhero service dog.

To learn more about Magnolia Paws for Compassion, see videos, or order your copy of *Medikidz Explain Seizure Assistance Dogs*, visit: http://bit.ly/PawsC
4 Paws for Ability Foreign Internship Program

In 2014, 4 Paws hosted Elena Palagka, from Thessaloniki, Greece, while she completed the 4 Paws for Ability Foreign Internship Program. While the country and globe are speckled with legitimate service dog organizations, there is a global shortage of skilled service dogs for kids. The foreign internship program allows 4 Paws to help alleviate this need in as many ways as it can. It is not only placing trained service dogs with applicants, but it is also providing necessary education to people from other countries to help improve the lives of children there.

Elena profusely praises Karen Shirk, CEO and Jeremy Dulebohn, Training Director for making this experience happen. In Greece, there is no Karen and Jeremy. No organization dedicated wholly to believing that all children deserve a chance. Elena wants to change that. Since returning home, Elena has worked heavily in advocating for service dogs in her country through her newly opened organization, Nina Service Dogs. Long term, she wants to expand and help other European countries that also don’t have access to a service dog organization like 4 Paws. “I will be so happy if I can change people's lives and give the hope and happiness to families, children, and adults that they need so much” says Elena.

PANDORA Hearts of Today

Jennifer Lutes was selected as a 2014 PANDORA Hearts of Today honoree, for her long-time dedication to 4 Paws for Ability, both as a volunteer and in her role as Senior Trainer. The call for nominees sought to “celebrate the selfless work women do within their communities and around the world to improve the livelihood of women and children.” Jennifer certainly fit the bill after almost 14 years with the organization.

Her nomination was selected from hundreds of applications as one of 30 finalists. Though the call did not indicate or require, Jennifer eventually was competing with mostly founders and CEOs. Of the eight women selected as 2014 honorees, Jennifer was one of only two women not acting as her organization’s CEO and founder.

The connection between 4 Paws and PANDORA, has enabled 4 Paws to increase its efforts for public education and exposure. The voting period for the award shared the 4 Paws’ mission with new audiences, and Pandora developed a wonderful follow up story, which highlights the work of 4 Paws for Ability and is a wonderful media asset for the organization. The video can be viewed at: http://bit.ly/PandoraHeartsJennifer
2014 Revenue

2014 Expenses
Statement of Financial Position

Assets
- Cash and cash equivalents $ 2,265,403
- Pledge receivable -
- Other assets 80,835
- Land, building and equipment, net 1,055,826

Total assets $ 3,402,064

Liabilities and Net Assets
Liabilities
- Accounts payable and accrued expenses $ 563,165

Total liabilities 563,165

Net Assets
- Unrestricted 2,605,531
- Temporarily restricted 233,368

Total net assets 2,838,899

Total liabilities and net assets $ 3,402,064

Statement of Activities

Revenue
- Donations $ 2,557,266 $ 165,500 $ 2,722,766
- Sales and fees 14,812 - 14,812
- Other income 5,937 - 5,937
- Net assets released from restrictions 218,745 (218,745) -

Total revenue 2,796,760 (53,245) 2,743,515

Expenses
- Dog training expenses 650,830 - 650,830
- Dog care expenses 1,164,912 - 1,164,912
- Administrative expenses 137,751 - 137,751
- Fundraising and program development expenses 184,843 - 184,843

Total expenses 2,138,336 - 2,138,336

Change in Net Assets
- Net assets, beginning of year 1,947,107 286,613 2,233,720
- Net assets, end of year 2,605,531 233,368 2,838,899

Change in net assets $ 658,424 $ (53,245) $ 605,179
4 Paws for Ability Service Dogs
Placements by State

*Data through 31 December 2014
*Data is for active placements and address of retirement
*Data includes types of dogs no longer placed by 4 Paws for Ability.

Washington D.C. - 1
Australia – 4
Canada – 13
Japan – 1
New Zealand – 7
Switzerland – 1
Germany – 1

Upcoming Placements (2015)

- Autism Assistance Dog
- Diabetic Alert Dog
- FASD/DE Assistance Dog
- Mobility Assistance Dog
- Multipurpose Assistance Dog
- Multipurpose Assistance Dog with Seizure Assistance
- Seizure Assistance Dog
- Veteran’s Service Dog
- Other
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<th>Amount Range</th>
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<tr>
<td>$50,000+</td>
<td>Estate of Frieda Pauline Hoppe - $75,098.34, The Calipari Foundation Inc - $50,000, Jay Strayer - $50,000</td>
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<td>$49,999 - $25,000</td>
<td>Estate of Joann Henninger - $34,934.04, Pandora Jewelry, LLC - $25,000, CareSource - $26,000, Monkee See - Monkee Do - $26,000, Jean Barger Rice Trust - $25,000, Eisai, Inc. - $39,000</td>
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<td>$14,999 - $10,000</td>
<td>Darlene Jordan - $14,000, Anonymous - $14,000, Jim &amp; Mary Reeves - $14,000, Oak Grove Ruritan Club - $11,082.49, James Cartwright - $12,603.20, Taylor &amp; Lindy Coleman - $14,000, Crowdtilt c/o Balanced, Inc - $10,587.54, Anonymous - $11,477.22, Ditech, Inc - $14,000, Robert Beard Charitable Foundation - $10,000, Helen W. Bell Charitable Foundation - $10,000, Anonymous - $10,000, E. Kenneth &amp; Esther Marie Hatton Foundation - $10,000</td>
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<td>$9,999 - $5,001</td>
<td>Joel Bassam - $6,950, The Bank of America Charitable Foundation - $5,325, Elsie Mommse - $6,000, Charles &amp; Lisa Taylor - $9,300, Anonymous - $10,000, Todd &amp; Amy Book - $9,105, Sylvia Gardner - $9,709.70, Eventbrite - $6,428, Friendship Athletic Boosters - $9,168.75, Sephora USA - $5,751.43, Emergency Children’s Help Org - $7,000, Carl V Bini Memorial Fund c/o ECHO - $7,000, Charles Pena - $6,700, Horicon Lodge #244 - $8,137, Matthew &amp; Suzanne Sweeney - $5,340, Island Sun Tanning, Inc - $7,068</td>
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<td>$5,000</td>
<td>Ohio Renaissance Festival, Inc. - $5,000, Don E McOsker - $5,000, Bonnie R Spaulding - $5,000, Clare Schibi Memorial Foundation - $5,000, Cory &amp; Katherine Welbaum - $5,000, Jean Price - $5,000, WHH Foundation - $5,000, Schwab Charitable Fund - $5,000, Walker Family Foundation - $5,000, Marie T Fike - $5,000, Susan Neu - $5,000, Barbara Bladecki - $5,000, Anonymous - $5,000, Diane Moutvic - $5,000</td>
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We hope you enjoyed 4 Paws for Ability’s first annual report. The tremendous effort and dedication of staff, volunteers, supporters, and all those involved with the organization has helped 4 Paws for Ability thrive in 2014. We wanted to share with you the impact our organization had on the lives of others as well as the operational and financial progress we made throughout the year.

As a volunteer, it was easy for me to quickly fall in love with an organization that works with dogs day-in and day-out. However, 4 Paws’ mission and vision go much deeper than training animals, as best illustrated by the stories contained within this report. You read about children who have found a “best friend” and parents who now have “peace of mind” in knowing their child is safer. The thing I find most striking about these stories is the sense of community many seem to share. Not just the 4 Paws’ community, or family as we like to call it, but the ability to enter into new communities that were once closed off prior to life with a service dog.

Seeing the meaningful impact our organization has had on countless lives, gives me much excitement to share that at the end of 2014 we began an extensive addition to the building that houses our primary operations. Our new building will provide additional space to house and train dogs, improved space and conditions for families receiving training onsite, and even include a veterinarian operating room. All of this additional space will allow us to build on the 100 service dogs we placed with families during the year, which represents the maximum capacity of our old building. This effort was made possible in part by the strong financial performance reported herein.

We shared significant successes within this annual report and we want to give a sincere word of thanks to all of our supporters. Whether your contribution was in the form of time, talent, or money, we greatly appreciate your backing. I’d also like to applaud the hard work and dedication of all the 4 Paws for Ability employees. Without their countless hours and tireless efforts, 4 Paws for Ability would not be the exciting, thriving organization it is today.

With these sentiments in mind, it is our hope readers of the 2014 annual report strongly consider contributing to the advancement of our organization. Please visit our website to learn about various ways you may support our mission and enrich the lives of children and veteran’s with disabilities.

Thank you again for your time and support.

Kind regards,

Greg Brelsford
Board of Trustees Chair
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Executive Director & Founder

Jeremy Dulebohn
Training Director

Kelly Camm
Development Director

Jennifer Lutes
Associate Director

Jessa Kenworthy
Senior Trainer

Kevin Corcoran
DVM

Peg Walsh Bernert
4 Paws Alaska

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As of November 1, 2015