



Operation Freedom Paws

Four Paws, Two Feet, One Team

AUGUST 16, 2014

SUMMER ISSUE

VOLUME 2, NUMBER 3

Operation Freedom Paws

777 First Street,

PMB 515

Gilroy, CA 95020

(408)847-8518

Find us online at:

operationfreedompaws.org



"Everything, every day is a training opportunity!"
Mary Cortani

Founder's Message

"A letter from a graduate's family describing how his service dog helped him cope with his issues. This is why we do what we do here at Operation Freedom Paws. Thank you to all our clients, their families and our donors for supporting this organization and its mission. In Memory of Chris Killingsworth."

Mary Cortani
Founder and President

"July 30, 2014

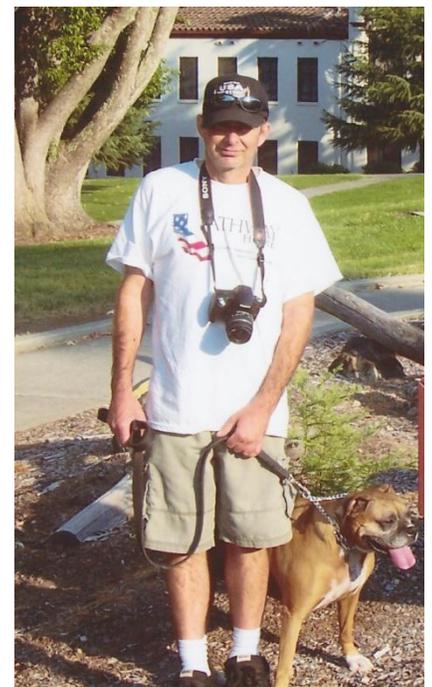
Dear Mary,

Since it is the first year anniversary of Chris's death, and now that the shock and sadness is getting a little easier to deal with, I just wanted to thank you for everything you did for Chris and Dempsey while they were with you. You are an amazing woman and you provide a wonderful service to our vets who are coming home needing help. Enclosed, please find a small donation to "Operation Freedom Paws". I wish I could afford a lot more but I also know that every dollar helps. Mary, I also want to tell you that even though Chris had lots of problems that he couldn't overcome (mainly Alcoholism), I have to tell you that he was at his "happiest time" when he was out with his service dog Dempsey. He took her everywhere he could. He used to complain (jokingly) that it would take him forty-five minutes to go to the store to get a gallon of milk because all of the people and kids in the stores would always stop him and Dempsey to pet her. (In reality, he loved it when people would stop him and Dempsey). Every time I would see Chris when he was having a rough time with life, the expression on his face and his mood would instantly "perk-up" when he was with Dempsey.

Mary what you do for the Vets is truly wonderful and I know personally that the service dogs that you train for the vets truly makes a "Hugh Difference" in their lives.

Thank You from the bottom of my heart,
John Killingsworth

PS: Enclosed is a picture of Chris and Dempsey that I took when I visited Chris at the Pathway Home."



Upcoming Events:

🔄 Hoofs & Woofs Poker Run

August 23, 2014

9 am

Harley Davidson
House of Thunder

16175 Condit Road

Morgan Hill, Ca

🔄 Paws With Patriots Wine Gala

September 13, 2014

6:00 pm

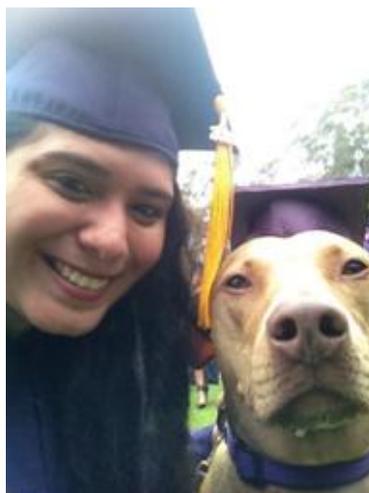
Mountain Winery

14831 Pierce Road

Saratoga, Ca

🔄 Levi's Stadium Concession Stand Fundraiser Volunteering Opportunity

Details can be found
and tickets can be
purchased online at
operationfreedompaws.org



Charlie and Daniella Graduated SFSU May 2014

Meet Daniella and Charlie

How did you learn about OFP?

It was March 2012 and I was at work, I met a couple and their dogs. I noticed that they had a vest on and that they were service dogs, I asked the couple if I could pet them. They smiled and said yes. I then asked how they got their dogs to be certified, and if they had someone else train them, or if they trained the dogs themselves. They looked at each other and smiled, then mentioned Operation Freedom paws. The gentleman handed me an OFP business card and said that I should call Mary. The rest is history.

What about this program/process attracted you?

I was attracted to the opportunity of being able to train with your service dog, instead of having someone train a dog for you and having to wait a few years. I had been looking for a place to train my own hearing service dog for 2 years before I learned about OFP.

I was born deaf, however my mother did not find out until I was three years old. The doctors kept assuring my mom that I was fine and that she was being a worrisome first-time parent. When I was three my parents realized that I still hadn't developed speech, and communicated by pointing at everything. I did not use words or word-like sounds like most toddlers. Once it was verified that I was profoundly deaf, my parents continued to work with me and mainstreamed me into "regular school."

My hearing disability keeps me from hearing certain sounds and noises, such as a doorbell ringing, or someone calling my name from behind me; I relied on my parents to let me know of these sounds and noises. I started looking for potential service dogs because I was about to venture out on my own, living in a new city, going to a new school, away from what was comfortable for me. I wanted to feel safe.

I also wanted to have the experience of going through the good times and not so good times that comes with training a dog, and that's what I love about the program; it allowed me to learn and come up with solutions that work best for both me and my dog. I truly believe that training with my own dog has made it easier to bond with him, and has created an atmosphere where sometime he instinctively knows what he needs to alert me.

Did Mary match you with Charlie?

Mary did not match Charlie with me, but I do wonder how it would be if she did match me with a dog. Mary did have to assess Charlie to see if he would be eligible to become a service dog.

What drew you to him? Was he the automatic choice for you?

Once my mom convinced me that a hearing dog would be a good thing for me, I started looking for places that provide service dogs. These organizations were usually breeding the dogs. There is nothing wrong with breeding specific dogs for a task, but in my heart I knew I wanted a shelter dog, even if it did end up being a purebred, I just wanted to save a life.

I came across several dogs that I was drawn to during my search, however things

Awards

2012 CNN Top Ten Hero

2011 Napa County Red Cross Hero

Commendation / Proclamations

2013 Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors

2013 Gilroy Chamber of Commerce Good Egg Award

2012 City of Gilroy



always fell through. They were not meant to be. It took a year of searching and educating myself in what to look for in a potential service dog before I saw Charlie. I took every opportunity I could to see dogs in pet events, local shelters, etc. then I saw Charlie on petfinder and he was adorable! Of course I think all dogs are adorable. I looked at his info and it said, "submissive, playful, good on leash, good with kids." This is typical bio for dogs that I have seen, and it didn't tell me much, so I took it one step further and emailed the organization to arrange a meeting with his foster parents and maybe spend some time with "Bugsy" (his former name). The following week my mom and I drove

to Oakland in one of the craziest and worst storms of the year. When we got there and I met Bugsy, we played, I spent some time with him and without a doubt I knew we were perfect for each other. And so began our journey together.

Now that you are certified, what are the challenges you face out in public?

Some people think Charlie resembles a pit bull, and although he is not, that doesn't stop people from being scared and walking off the sidewalk onto the street just to avoid us during our walks. It also does not stop them from discriminating against him or harshly stating their opinion about his ability to help me based on his breed. Now that we are certified our challenge is to educate people that specific breed doesn't matter; Charlie IS certified and IS just as capable of being a hearing service dog as a Golden Retriever or Lab Retriever.

How is your life different now with Charlie?

I didn't notice it right away, but I am more independent at home and outside of home. I often imagine "what if"---what if I went away to school and I didn't have Charlie? I know that answer; I would have been so afraid to walk out the door, walk home from my night classes, afraid to go to sleep peacefully thinking, "what if someone breaks in and I can't hear them." "What if someone follows me and I don't hear them?" Charlie gives me a peace of mind and I trust him, he has my back and I will always have his...tail... LOL.

What advice would you give someone thinking a service dog is right for them?

My advice would be to go for it! I say contact Mary and get assessed. It could open your world to a brand new one and you can create "a new normal," a normal that is fit just for you and your service dog. It doesn't matter that people will judge, or stare, or think they have the right to "approve, or disapprove." they are not going to be doing the training, creating memories or personal achievements with you, all that matters is YOU and your four legged, furry best friend. There will be lots of ups and downs, but I think that it makes you a stronger team and will create a stronger bond because you and your service dog are conquering the world one paw and step at a time!





If you could notify the public of anything in particular about service dogs, what would it be?

Service dogs come in all shapes, sizes, and breeds. They serve all types of people with different disabilities. When you see a service dog, remember that they are an extension of the person they are with, they are helping to service their special needs, and require your full understanding and cooperation.

Paws for a Cause 5K Fun Run



On Sunday, June 1, 2014 Operation Freedom Paws had its first annual Paws for a Cause 5K Fun Run at Vasona Park in San Jose, California. This Fun Run was planned and organized by Laura Kembla and Julie Wiley. It was a good mix of service dogs, clients, civilians, and pets. There were choices of

routes and speeds for every level of runner/walker in the event. You could run/walk a 5K or you could run/walk 1 mile, all while enjoying the beautiful landscape of Vasona Park.

Presentations/demonstrations were made by three former clients, two of which are mentor trainers. Janet Wenzholz talked about Clover's ability to alert to peanuts. Denny McLaughlin talked about Abby and how she helps him cope with PTS. And George Bravo talked about how Macey and the community of OFP saved his life. Their service dogs were of course the biggest show stealers of the day as they demonstrated key tasks that they performed for their owners.

There were first and second place winners, but the greatest winner of the day was, of course, Operation Freedom Paws. With your help we were able to raise \$8,396.73 to help more people and to save more lives. Thank you to Laura and Julie for organizing this wonderful event. And thank you to all who participated and supported Operation Freedom Paws. We could not keep doing what we do without your help.



UPCOMING EVENTS:

Hoofs & Woofs Poker Run



Don't forget to tell all your friends who ride motorcycles to come out and support us for our first annual Poker Run on Saturday, August 23, 2014. There'll be family fun for all! The day begins with a ride through Santa Clara Valley, and ends with a barbecue, games, drawing prizes and music. Pre-register for \$25 per bike

(\$35 at the door). Passengers are \$10 (\$15 at the door). We are co-sponsoring this event with DreamPower Horsemanship, one of our partners in animal-assisted therapy. Come out and support our veterans!

"Four Paws, Two Feet, One Team."

Paws With Patriots Wine Gala

Our 2nd annual Wine Gala will be at the magnificent Mountain Winery in Saratoga on Saturday, September 13, 2014. The evening begins at 6:00 P.M. and will feature dinner and music, silent auctions, drawings, and live entertainment. We will again have Jonah Denz-Hamilton from K-Bay as our MC, and the always-entertaining Mark Turner handling the live auction. Tickets are \$95 a person (\$125 at the door). Come out and support OFP! Help us rescue dogs and save lives, one service dog team at a time!



Levi's Stadium Concession Stand

Are you a fan of the 49ers and Operation Freedom Paws? Well this season you have a chance to support both at the same time. OFP will be working concessions at the new Levi's Stadium in Santa Clara, and we could use your help. We're always looking for more volunteers. If you'd like to help work the booth, please get in touch with Janet Wenholz or Nancy Corbridge. We have signed up to work these five home games:



DATE	DAY	TEAMS
28-Sep	Sunday	SF 49ers vs. Eagles
5-Oct	Sunday	SF 49ers vs. Chiefs
2-Nov	Sunday	SF 49ers vs. Rams
23-Nov	Sunday	SF 49ers vs. Redskins
28-Dec	Sunday	SF 49ers vs. Cardinals

You can help us by either volunteering to work at the booth, or purchasing your beverages and food from us at the stadium while you attend the game. 7% of the stands sales will go to OFP. We hope to see you there!

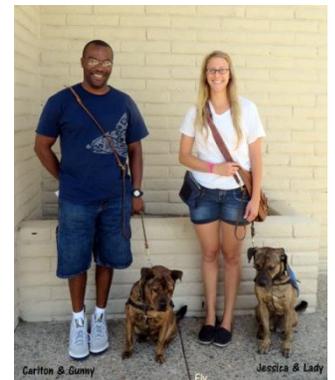
Recently Certified Service Dog Teams



their journey is really just beginning. We know they will maintain OFP's high standards and be great ambassadors for themselves, for all disabled people with service dogs, and for Operation Freedom Paws. We're so proud of you all!

Congratulations to Jeff and Selah, Jen and Milo, Noel and Bogey, Coley and Sadie, Paige and Raleigh, Jessica and Lady and Carlton and Gunny... Way to go! These teams have successfully completed their public access tests. But as we know,

"Everything, every day, is a training opportunity", so





How you can help

- Look us up! We offer civilian training too! Proceeds from our public training activities help support our work with veterans and other individuals with disabilities. All proceeds will benefit OFP's nonprofit program.
- Have time to volunteer? There are youth and adult volunteer opportunities. Contact Volunteer Coordinator Michelle Beasley at info@operationfreedompaws.org
- Make a secure credit card donation by using the "Donate" button at <http://operationfreedompaws.org> or send a check to Operation Freedom Paws at our mailing address listed above.
- Shop on Amazon? Use Amazon Smile and a percentage of your total is given to your favorite charity; which we hope is OFP.



- Click the "wish list" button to purchase an item from the Operation Freedom Paws Wish List. This purchase will go directly to a dog and human team!



- Proclaim your love for OFP by purchasing your very own "swag" from our new online store (linked to our website).
- Come support us at our next event!
- Like us on Facebook!



An AMERICAN KENNEL CLUB Program

