

OPERATIONFREEDOMPAWS



5TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION



"TAILS" OF CHANGE

OPERATION FREEDOM PAWS HIGHLIGHTS THROUGH THE YEARS

As we begin celebrating our five-year anniversary, we want to share with you our "Tails of Change"---a few of the milestones your support has helped us achieve since 2011.

Since that first desperate combat Marine contacted founder Mary Cortani, over 260 clients have been accepted into OFP's service dog program. We are proud of what we have accomplished as a grass roots non-profit, and want to thank the many donors, volunteers, board and staff members who have helped make this possible.

As we embark on the next five years, we look forward to continuing this journey with you, as you help us show more teams with four paws and two feet how to create their own "Tails of Change".

BECOMING A NON-PROFIT

2011

On September 21st 2011, Operation Freedom Paws became a federally recognized 501(c)3 non-profit. This day was the culmination of a year's work to convert K9 Coach Plus into Operation Freedom Paws, driving the mission to empower veterans and others with disabilities to restore their own independence.



AWARDED TOP 10 CNN HERO

2012

In the spring of 2012, a customer nominated Operation Freedom Paws Founder Mary Cortani for the CNN Hero award. She went on to be selected as a top 10 finalist, which gave her the opportunity to share her mission with the world. She was selected for her passion, mission and innovative approach to veterans' issues---and none of that has changed. Mary is still honored that she was one of 2012's CNN Hero finalists.



HIRED FIRST VETERAN CLIENT

2012

Also in the spring of 2012, Mary was able to fulfill one of her dreams for the organization: to hire a veteran client as a "mentor-trainer" to help others train their service dogs. Since then, OFP has employed eight veterans, two of whom have gone on to pursue different careers; six are still at Operation Freedom Paws.

OFFERED EXPANDED SERVICES

2013

Beginning in 2013, Operation Freedom Paws earmarked funding for partnerships that would help us provide additional services for our clients and their families. To augment service dog training, we now offer onsite therapy during classes, anger management, spousal support, children's activities, substance abuse support, annual "family dog camp" trips to Tuolumne Trails, and referrals to specialized physical therapy programs. We are taking a holistic, individualized approach to what we offer disabled clients and their families.

LEASED CURRENT FACILITY

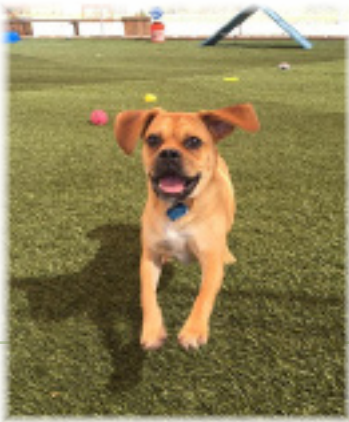
2014

In March of 2014 we were given the keys to our current site in San Martin, CA. Thousands of volunteer hours were donated that year, making the abandoned and vandalized 4.2 acre facility useable. Now home to our daycare and boarding facility, as well as the service dog training center, our staff and clients feel quite at home here. Mary has many dreams for the OFP Canine Education Center, including someday being able to purchase the property.



LAUNCHED KENNEL OPERATION

2014



In October of 2014, we opened our kennel to the public. This is part of a long-term plan to help sustain the non-profit moving forward. Historically, donations ebb and flow, and philanthropic foundations that fund non-profits close. However, OFP's kennel will allow us to continue day-to-day service dog operations by providing a consistent revenue stream that covers part of our costs. Customers are thrilled to support the work we do with veterans, and we are thrilled to offer training, daycare and boarding services to the public!

PARTNERED WITH LOCAL BRAIN INJURY CAREGIVERS

2015



In 2015, we collaborated with Learning Services, a local business that specializes in brain injury care. Their clients volunteer at our site twice a week, helping with cleaning and organization of the main building. In exchange, our trainers take OFP-trained therapy dogs to the Learning Services facility. Working with the dogs is helping their clients regain fine motor skills, and seems to help heal other damage to the brain. This mutually beneficial relationship allows us help others in our community who are not able to have their own service dogs, but who can benefit from the dogs and our training programs.



Operation Freedom Paws
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"Four Paws, Two Feet, One Team"

CERTIFIED FIRST DUAL-TRAINED GUIDE/PTS SERVICE DOG

2015

In 2014, OFP and Guide Dogs of the Desert (DD) teamed together to train the first ever Guide and PTS Service Dog for Army Veteran Rowland. Valor was one of Guide Dog's Labradors, bred, fostered and trained for guide work. While the team worked with GDD's guide trainers, Mary made several visits to their site in Southern California to teach Rowland and Valor OFP's methods for managing PTS. Following his 2014 graduation from GDD's program, Rowland continued intensive training at OFP during weeklong visits from his home in Arizona. Rowland and Valor completed their dual certification program in 2015.



TESTED RECORD NUMBER OF GRADUATING CLIENTS

2016

A record number of clients have completed OFP's service dog training and certification process this year. The program takes approximately a year to complete; in March, we tested the first graduates who started and finished their training here at the Canine Education Center. The increased success rate is a direct reflection of our having the facility and staff to provide the many quality programs and services we offer our clients.