

OPERATION FREEDOM PAWS



OPERATION FREEDOM PAWS IN 2018



THE SMALLEST ACT OF KINDNESS IS WORTH MORE THAN THE GRANDEST INTENTION-OSCAR WILDE

Every day we come across potential clients who are in desperate need of help and need someone to step up and remind them that there is good in the world. I was reminded of this over the weekend. I was out of town with a group of friends having a fantastic dinner, when I stepped outside and noticed a young man with his dog. Both looked very skinny and lost. Myself, being a veteran and working with veterans on the daily, I recognized certain mannerisms and body language that characterized this man as a veteran. I approached him, his name was Adam. Adam is a veteran. He had gotten out 18 months ago, lost everything, was fighting for his benefits and had given up hope. His car had broken down and he was sleeping in it during the night in the parking lot of the restaurant. He didn't know how he was going to get anywhere. So after speaking for a while we told him who to call and connected him with local services. It was a reminder that you never know what someone else has gone through, the story behind their circumstances, or what they may need. That day we were able to feed him and his dog. This was a simple act, but it helped this young man in the moment.

A recurring donation of \$5, \$10 or \$20 a month to an organization like Operation Freedom Paws can make all the difference in the world to our veterans who are, like Adam, lost and in need of local services to help them restore their freedom to live life. Through the help of donors like you, when we come across those veterans in need, we can reach out and give them a hand; making their life a little bit better so that they can enjoy life and know that their sacrifices weren't in vain.

-Mary Cortani
Founder and Executive Director

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SUMMER FUN WITH OFP

COME JOIN US FOR OUR UPCOMING FUNDRAISERS!

OFP Sip and Shop at Kendra Scott on Sunday June 24th from 1pm – 4pm.

Come by Kendra Scott in Santana Row, San Jose and enjoy some beverages, food and jewels! Sunday June 24th from 1pm – 4pm buy yourself or your special someone everything from a geode candle to some fantastic jewelry and 20% of all sales will come directly to OFP supporting our programs. Bring friends to this fun event and support OFP!



OFP Paws with Patriots Wine Gala on Saturday, August 11th from 5pm – 10pm.

Join us for a night of wine, dinner, and live music at the OFP Canine Education Center, 13920 Llagas Ave, San Martin, CA 95046 from 5pm to 10pm, Saturday August 11th. We will have music from classic rock band Iconics, along with special guest, Kbay's Jona Denz-Hamilton! This is a sellout event so be sure to get your tickets now!

OFP ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

EAGLE RIDGE GOLF COURSE

Our Annual golf tournament was a huge success, hosting a sell-out crowd at Eagle Ridge Golf Course. All of the funds raised the day of were able to go directly to the program thanks to our fantastic sponsors! A few of the following were major contributors:



Missed the event this year? Don't worry, mark your calendars for next year; May 17th, 2019.

OFP FOUNDER RECIEVES HONOR

SVBJ 100 WOMEN OF INFLUENCE

This May, Mary Cortani was presented with Silicon Valley Business Journal's Women of Influence award for her work with Operation Freedom Paws. This award honors those women in Silicon Valley who have made a significant impact on their community. We are thrilled Mary was chosen for her work with our clients and their service dogs, empowering veterans and individuals with disabilities to restore their freedom to live life!

GLOBAL GIVING FUND

HELPING OFP CONTINUE THEIR MISSION

We need help from our readers to share and donate to our Global Giving Project: <https://www.globalgiving.org/projects/train servicedogs4vets/>. The Global Giving Foundation offers a platform for non-profits to raise funds from individuals globally and if the minimum funds raised by the minimum unique donors (\$5,000 from 40 individuals per Global Giving) then they are included on the Global Giving Foundation's Charities List for their corporate donors to select as beneficiaries. This is a great way for OFP to become visible to larger corporations and receive more money to help our mission allowing every dollar you donate to stretch further as well. The deadline for this round is June 29th. Please donate and share with your friends and family!

MEET SEAN AND MANNY

ARMY VETERAN AND HIS SERVICE DOG (ACTIVE CLIENT; 4 MONTHS WITH OFP)

The two and a half years before I came to Operation Freedom Paws (OFP) I probably left my house five or six times total. Then I came to OFP for my interview and they introduced me to Manny so my routine of not leaving the house changed very quickly. Coming to training twice a week and visiting Manny on “non-class” days changed a lot of stuff for me and it was hard at first...it was really hard, because I was so set in that routine of not leaving the house, not interacting with people.

After about a month of training, coming to classes twice a week and coming on “non-class” days once or twice a week, Mary asked if I wanted to take Manny home with me and I said, ‘Yes!’ right away.

From that point on everything changed drastically. I had to take Manny out, making sure we were doing our homework on “non-class” days. He made it possible for me to go out and do things that I haven’t done in years; go grocery shopping, go to restaurants, go visit family, etc. It is now to the point where I can go grocery shopping and I don’t feel completely emotionally drained from going to the store.



This last weekend I went to Great America with Dave (head mentor trainer) and his family. This was huge because it wasn’t something I ever thought about as a possibility [since being home] to go out and do. It was hard, really, really hard, and stressful. And I may have pushed myself a bit too hard, I was there with them for almost four hours, but I wouldn’t have made it thirty seconds before having Manny and the support from OFP.

Manny has improved my life in ways that I thought were never going to come back. For a long time, all I wore was basketball shorts because I didn’t want to go clothes shopping. I had accepted at that point that if I couldn’t get it online then I didn’t need it and that would be my life. OFP and everybody here showed me it doesn’t have to be that way. I don’t have to be afraid all the time and I am not alone. I know that I had my family and people who loved/supported me but it is just a different dynamic than I was used to in the military. With Manny he is just there—it is not conditional, and that is not to say my family had any conditions, that isn’t it at all, but with Manny he is just there.

I have had a bad history with nightmares and that was a thing that was really hard for me as well. Since Manny has been home it is not that I don’t have nightmares, because I have them, but I don’t

remember them. Manny wakes me up in time and I can tell the difference between him getting me up so he can go to the bathroom versus him waking me up for a nightmare. With a nightmare he will stand there in my face licking me to wake up and if I acknowledge him and the job he is doing then he curls up and lays down on the bed next to me and goes back to sleep, if he needs to go out then when I wake up he immediately jumps off the bed. He has made it so that the nightmares don’t have time to stick. [cont. pg.4]





Operation Freedom Paws
777 First St. PMB 515 | Gilroy, CA 95020
"Four Paws, Two Feet, One Team"

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My doctors ask me all the time how it's been having a service dog and I tell them that 'Manny is the most effective medication that I have ever had.' He has helped me with my depression, anxiety and PTSD and things like that, in ways that a medication never has. And it shows because I am able to go do things now. Without OFP and Manny I would still be that guy in basketball shorts, never leaving my house with the same mind set of, 'if I can't get it delivered to the house then I don't need it'. Whereas now, I recently went clothes shopping; all the clothes I bought could have been delivered to the house, but instead I got dressed and went clothes shopping. I tried stuff on to see what fit and what I liked and have actually been back out shopping twice since, just looking at stuff that interests me.

With everything that had gone on and everything that was going on, this was never going to be my life. This was never going to be for me. It is different now and I have all these people now that I know, care and rely on me and want to see me succeed. It has been amazing!

Learn More about Operation Freedom Paws and how you can help online!

Our website is www.OperationFreedomPaws.org

or follow us on Twitter: @opfreedompaws & Facebook: /OperationFreedomPaws