

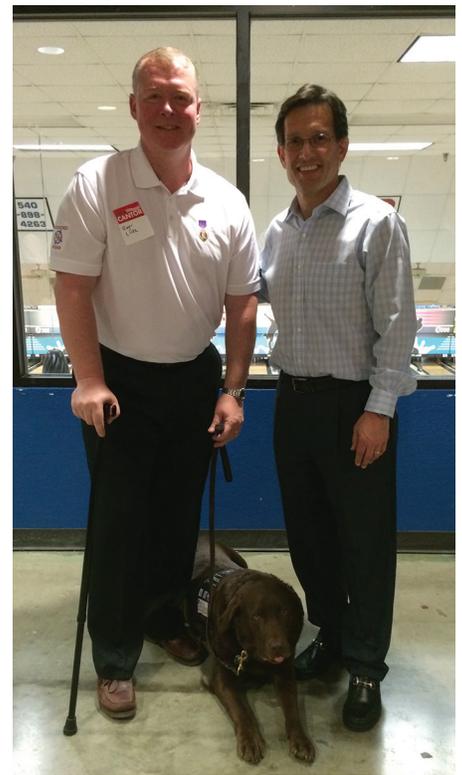


Paws of Allegiance

Newsletter of Paws for Purple Hearts

Summer 2014

PPH Welcomes New Program Development Director



Left: Col. Roger Lintz (Ret.) and service dog Niles share a stage with Virginia Governor Terry McAuliffe, center, and Senator Bryce Reeves, left, at the signing of a service dog bill in Virginia
Above: Lintz with his faithful companion, Niles
Right: Lintz and Niles with House Majority Leader Eric Cantor, prior to the June 10 Primary election

Paws for Purple Hearts is thrilled to announce that Col. Roger Lintz (Ret.) has agreed to take the position of director of program development. Col. Lintz will be instrumental in moving the PPH program forward, growing the program so that PPH can provide more Veterans with life-changing and even life-saving service dogs.

Col. Lintz is, himself, a PPH participant and beneficiary. A 31-year career of service and leadership ended when Col. Lintz endured an excruciating injury, even more painful botched surgery, and indescribable pain as a result. In addition, he was haunted by nightmares where he relived the gruesome death of a young soldier under his command, a promising young woman the age of his daughter whom he allowed to go on a mission and who, like many U.S. service

men and women, fell victim to an IED.

At home, in pain, Col. Lintz struggled with PTSD. When not kept awake by his physical pain, Col. Lintz was tormented by nightmares. He became a frightened, depressed recluse. Until he learned of PPH.

Through PPH, Col. Lintz met Niles. On their first night together, Niles snuggled against Col. Lintz. He's been there ever since, anticipating the nightmares and anxiety and heading them off; providing loyal company, support, and comfort; and providing tangible assistance with daily tasks like picking up dropped items. Niles keeps Col. Lintz on a strict schedule (a dog needs his playtime, after all) and helps him navigate society without becoming overwhelmed. Niles anchors Col. Lintz firmly in the present and enables him to

Healing Through Heeling: Menlo Park



By Dr. Bonita Bergin

“I felt empowered.” these words, spoken by one of our Veterans, also a student at Bergin University of Canine Studies, referred to training four-week old service dog pups.

Those three words touched my heart in a way few do these days, with all the pressures and stresses of running the University and Paws for Purple Hearts (PPH). And they stuck with me as I envisioned our young pups being trained by Veterans in the PPH program we operate at the VA in Menlo Park, Calif.

Why young pups? Because it is a thrill to see their little minds at work, focused on understanding a multitude of commands from “sit” to turning on a light switch. And they don’t argue — much, that is — in their zest to learn what life’s all about. As their bodies and their legs lengthen, their skills improve exponentially, making every moment spent training them so very empowering.



As the life of a regular GI is enriched by the contagiousness of the pups’ sweet eagerness to live and learn, how much more that of a Veteran traumatized by day- and nightmares, isolation, and numbness? Might they find relief in puppy breath, a darting tongue on cheek, and the bright-eyed love of a pup? Laughing at the pups’ enthusiasm for all things that move lessens the lingering physical and emotional pain that originated in those war-torn moments of hell.

Bringing this pup dream to fruition, required a body of trained volunteers who would provide the pups the touch and love needed when first away from home. Everything started to fall

into place when Kim Worrall, an amazingly capable and organized DAR, Rotarian and grandmother — though she looks as young and eager as a new college graduate — took on this responsibility. With the first training of volunteers and Veterans accomplished, we were ready to start; December 6, 2013 was the kickoff date.

The “P puppies” began the pilgrimage (all pups in a litter have first names beginning with the same letter). The P pups napped on the way down from Rohnert Park. Well-rested and curious, they flew out of their crates to visit a pup yard of artificial green grass, puppy-test new toys, and meet lots of loving puppy petters. After a considerable romp, the P’s searched for laps upon which to curl up and nap until training time with the Veterans.

The Veterans, who also train PPH adult dogs, held and petted the young P’s with the gentlest of hands. Within minutes, the pups were sitting on command, placing their small paws on tiny footstools, shaking hands, and even retrieving. And they soon progressed to tugging doors open, turning on lights, and learning 35 additional commands — a challenge for even the adult service-dogs-in-training.

In February, the “Q” litter was born. It was time to move the P’s to loving foster homes while the Q’s began their weekly trek to the Menlo Park VA. A gentler litter, the Q’s at two weeks of age reveled in being held and petted; at four weeks, they bounded into the training room with enthusiasm, and at nine weeks, their needle-sharp teeth punctured only two hands.

Each week, their growth corresponded with a decrease in activity, as their personalities began to blossom, and life held fewer surprises. Que was the most rambunctious, Quorra the least. In fact, Veteran Ian noted that the analytical Quorra took a moment to think



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Editing and layout of Paws of
Allegiance by Pamela S. Hogle

PPH Salutes Graduate Dog Teams!



Steve Roberts graduated with service dog Xander in December 2012



Jesse Knott graduated with service dog Ellie in May 2013



Raymond Sepulveda graduated with service dog Emmie in May 2013



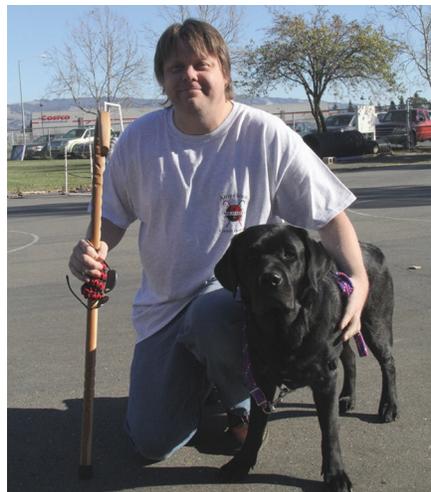
Jason Baker graduated with service dog Foster in July 2013



Steve Moore graduated with service dog Chew in July 2013



Zachary Darling graduated with service dog Ember in December 2013



Tim Harrington graduated with service dog Fagan in December 2013



Willis Hardwick graduated with service dog Hannah in May 2014



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Healing at Menlo Park From page 2



Kim Worrall

through every command (sometimes stretching this out to a full minute) before she would respond — pretty much like Ian himself. The Q litter was so gentle that retrieving and tugging skills developed later than with most service dog litters, excepting Que, of course, who

was in the forefront of almost every training activity — that is, when he knew a treat was waiting at the completion of the task.

The Q's continue their quest to learn their service dog

commands while bringing satisfaction to the lives of their Menlo Park Veteran trainers, though the conclusion of their tenure is nearing, as another breeding is due to take place in Rohnert Park soon. And 70 days later, the then week-old pups may join the grand tradition of “Pups Helping Veterans,” bringing their empowerment and joy along on visits to Menlo Park.

The VA's Menlo Park Welcome Center, including its dog training area, was donated by philanthropist John Arrillaga, without whom this pup program could not have happened. Mr Arrillaga's generosity is front-and-center as we enjoy this spacious area and opportunity to help our Veterans; our grateful pups and dogs thank him too!

Col. Roger Lintz, Program Development Director From page 1

look forward to a future that, pre-Niles, he did not believe existed. Without a trace of hyperbole, Col. Lintz credits Niles with saving his life.

Yet Col. Lintz is still haunted — by the specter of the 23 Veterans who take their own lives every single day. Many of these, he is certain, can be helped by PPH dogs. The ability to function in society, to go to hospitals without terror, to turn off the horrifying tape replaying a traumatic incident and simply sleep — these are things that many Veterans cannot do alone. PPH dogs can help.

More than 2 million service men and women have returned from Iraq and Afghanistan. Thousands more still grapple with physical and psychological wounds sustained in other wars. Hundreds of thousands of Veterans need the kinds of assistance that Niles provides for Col. Lintz. Unable to forget these brave Americans, Col. Lintz, as PPH program

development director, will figure out how to raise and train even more dogs like Niles.

As the director of program development, Col. Lintz will develop additional PPH sites and expand programs already in operation at VA Palo Alto Health Care System in California, Walter Reed National Military Medical Center and the National Intrepid Center of Excellence in Maryland, and Fort Belvoir, in Virginia. He will take responsibility for publicizing the PPH program, and he will coordinate its partnerships with the military, community groups, and the media. In addition, Col. Lintz will undertake fiscal planning and fundraising to sustain and grow the program. Under Col. Lintz's capable leadership, PPH will be able to provide service dogs — and therapeutic intervention through the training of service dogs — to more Veterans who need them.

PPH Mission

Paws for Purple Hearts canine therapy program helps heal returning service members by teaching Veterans with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder to train service dogs for Veterans with physical disabilities and combat-related injuries.

Visit us on the Web: www.PawsforPurpleHearts.org