



Backgrounder

Patriot PAWS, a not-for-profit organization, trains and provides service dogs for the benefit of disabled American Veterans in order to help restore their physical and emotional independence and to provide a service for other Americans with mobile disabilities. Partnerships with community and state organizations help support this undertaking and allow Patriot PAWS to reach its overall goal.

Each dog is customized to the individual needs of the owner with tasks as varied as finding assistance in emergencies and helping with laundry. In addition to helping with daily tasks, one of the most beneficial contributions a service dog provides to a disabled partner is its life long devotion and unconditional love.

This idea became reality thanks to founder Lori Stevens. Stevens is a certified dog trainer with more than 20 years of experience working and volunteering for several dog-training organizations. In 2006, Stevens combined her passion for training dogs with her compassion for disabled American veterans, thus creating Patriot PAWS. In 2008, Patriot PAWS partnered with the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ). This collaboration allows prisoners the opportunity to be a part of something bigger than their confinement and provides Patriot PAWS a much-needed volunteer base to train quality service dogs.





General Fact Sheet

- Patriot PAWS was established as a not-for-profit organization in 2006.
- The mission of Patriot PAWS is to train and provide service dogs for the benefit of disabled American veterans and others with mobile disabilities in order to help restore their physical and emotional independence.
- In 2008, Patriot PAWS partnered with community and state organizations, such as the TDCJ.
- Founder and Executive Director Lori Stevens is a certified dog trainer with more than 20 years of experience and is a graduate of the Karen Pryor Academy. She has also worked and volunteered for several dog-training organizations, including Lone Star Assistance Dog Service and Texas Hearing and Service Dogs (THHSD).
- Each dog trained at Patriot PAWS is customized to the individual needs of the owner. Tasks, both physical and mental, can be as varied as finding assistance in emergencies, helping with chores and aiding emotions for those with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and brain injury.





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FAQ Sheet

Q: Who trains the service dogs?

A: The primary trainers of the service dogs are the TDCJ inmates. In this unique partnership, Stevens and her professional staff train and supervise the inmates. Final customization of the service dogs is done at the Patriot PAWS training facility in Rockwall, Texas. In addition, Patriot PAWS staff trains foster parents who commit to initial care and works with the dogs in their homes.

Q: How much does it cost to train a dog?

A: Patriot PAWS does not place a dog younger than 18 months. Training costs approximately \$20,000-\$30,000, which makes donations and volunteers even more crucial.

Q: Who should apply for a service dog?

A: Any physically disabled American veteran can apply for a Patriot PAWS Service Dog. This service is also available to other Americans with mobile disabilities. Once an application is accepted, an interview will be conducted and every attempt will be made to find a compatible match.

Q: How does Patriot PAWS get funding?

A: All of the money needed to care for the dogs-in-training is donated.

Q: How do I apply for a service dog?

A: Download the application form on this Web site, follow the instructions to fill it out and begin the process of regaining your independence!

Q: May we donate our family pet to be a service dog?

A: Most service dogs are selected from local animal shelters, rescue groups and service dog/puppy raisers. They are carefully evaluated prior to selection and only the best become candidates, graduate and are certified. Patriot PAWS' selection process is extensive. Although generous, donations of your family pets are not ideal for Patriot PAWS.





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Prison Program Fact Sheet

In 2008, Patriot PAWS and the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) entered into partnership to have prisoners train service dogs for disabled American veterans.

Patriot PAWS researched correctional facilities in Texas, as well as other states, to ensure compatibility for both parties could be achieved. After a series of interviews with the TDCJ, the two parties agreed and signed a Memorandum of Understanding in February of 2008, officially establishing this strong partnership. This collaboration allows prisoners the opportunity to be a part of something bigger than their confinement and provides Patriot PAWS a much-needed volunteer base to train quality service dogs. Two TDCJ facilities are participating in the program: the Dr. Lane Murray Unit and Christina Melton Crain Unit in Gatesville, Texas. The partnership is intended to not only provide help for disabled veterans, but also opportunities for prisoners to have a job while serving their sentence, learn a career trade and give back to the community.

The service dog training program was initiated in February of 2008. From the initial pool of 88 applicants, a total of 12 trainers were selected, and eight Labrador puppies were placed with the inmates. The women live with their dogs in a dormitory-like space in each unit, which include outdoor areas for the dogs. A shared training facility is also on the grounds.

After demonstrating the program's success, TDCJ approved adding more female inmates to each unit and has asked Patriot PAWS to expand the program at the current facilities. A number of women have been paroled since the program began and most are training dogs in some capacity since their release.





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Board of Directors

Dr. William Perkins – Chairman of the Board

Dr. William Perkins serves as the chairman of the board for Patriot PAWS. With expertise in areas such as directing oncology/immunology clinical trials, protocol design, team development and FDA interface. Dr. Perkins has a proven record of success. After graduating with a Ph.D. from the University of Washington – Seattle, he traveled to Harvard Medical School where he performed his postdoctoral fellowship in pathology. Dr. Perkins has worked as a director of the classroom, clinical trials, research and others within prestigious corporations throughout the country. Now residing in Texas, Dr. Perkins has received numerous awards and has appeared in more than 30 publications.

Lori Stevens – Founder and Executive Director of Patriot PAWS

Ms. Stevens has more than 20 years of dog-training experience, an entrepreneurial spirit and a passion for helping others; Lori Stevens became the founder and Executive Director of Patriot PAWS. Since 2006 when the organization was founded, Stevens has provided numerous disabled veterans with dogs trained to fit and assist their needs. She has also partnered with the TDCJ to train prison inmates to train these service dogs. Before Patriot PAWS, Stevens was the owner of Country K9 Academy. She is a graduate of the Karen Pryor Academy and has also had experience working at THSD, PETCO, and Lone Star Assistance Dogs. Along with being a certified pet dog trainer, her attendance and participation in numerous workshops truly shows how dedicated Stevens is to these animals and the people receiving help from them.

Terri Stringer – Secretary

Terri Stringer, who began as a part-time sales associate, is now the regional training manager for PETCO Animal Supplies. Along with being responsible for instructing management courses, supervising numerous store trainers and coordinating executive personnel, Stringer also performs double-duty as PETCO's regional marketing coordinator. Stringer graduated from Amber University in Garland, Texas, and in 2001, was selected to serve on PETCO's National Dog Obedience Committee.





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William Cecil – Board Member

William “Bill” Cecil was elected mayor of Rockwall in 2005 after serving more than five years on the Rockwall city council. He currently serves as the council liaison and an ex-officio director of the Rockwall Economic Development Corporation. As the vice chair of the Rockwall County Emergency Services Corporation, Cecil dedicates a great deal of time supporting the arts and historic preservation in his community. He retired from the U.S. Air Force Reserves in 2002 as a lieutenant colonel after 42 years of service. He is a graduate of Langston University and majored in business and administrative management. Cecil then earned postgraduate credit from the Defense Systems Management College in defense systems management. He and his wife, Becky, are proud parents of Renée, Jack and daughter-in-law Angela. They also have two grandchildren, Garrett and Rylie.

Clay Rankin – Board Member

Clay Rankin joined the U.S. Army in 1979 as a military police officer. During his distinguished career, Officer Rankin was awarded the Bronze Star for Valor and presented with the Medal of Valor by the city of Northglenn, Colo. In 2008, Officer Rankin became an Army Wounded Warrior (AW2)) Program Advocate. As a severely wounded soldier, Officer Rankin is able to personally relate and provide support to injured soldiers and their families. He uses his Patriot PAWS service dog to show others that having a disability doesn’t hinder his life.

Dr. Rhonda Phillips – Board Member

As the owner of Country Friends Veterinary Clinic and a doctor of veterinary medicine from Oklahoma State University, Dr. Rhonda Phillips was a perfect fit for this board. Previously, Dr. Phillips worked for two other veterinarian clinics in Texas and as a relief veterinarian for numerous clinics in the Dallas metroplex. Along with Patriot PAWS, she serves on the Royse City Independent School District board of trustees and the Rockwall County Juvenile Services board of directors. Dr. Phillips is also a member of the American Animal Hospital Association, the American Veterinary Medical Association and the Texas Veterinary Medical Association.

Christina Melton Crain

Immediate Former Chairman, Texas Board of Criminal Justice; Chairman, Dallas One-Stop Optimized Reentry System (DOORS); Director, State Bar of Texas; Immediate Past President, Dallas Bar Association; Attorney and Counselor.





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Awards Page

Woman of the Year 2009 – The American Legion Auxiliary, the world’s largest women’s patriotic service organization with 900,000 members, honored Stevens with the 2009 Woman of the Year award. She was recognized at its 89th Annual National Convention in Louisville, Ky., for her outstanding dedication to serving veterans, their families and their communities. Past recipients of this award are former First Lady Laura Bush, former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, country artist Chely Wright and politician Elizabeth Dole.

Dog of the Year 2009 — Archie, an 8-year-old Labrador retriever trained by Patriot PAWS, was named the 2009 Dog of the Year by the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. Archie assisted his owner, U.S. Army Sgt. Clay Rankin, in nearly every aspect of his life, ranging from picking up mail to helping him get out of bed.

“Making a Difference” 2009 – Stevens was featured on “NBC Nightly News” with Brian Williams as one of five leading women making a difference in the United States.

