

Tails_Tales

Winter Edition 2021

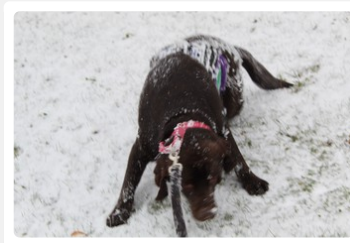
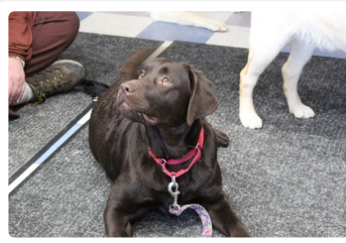
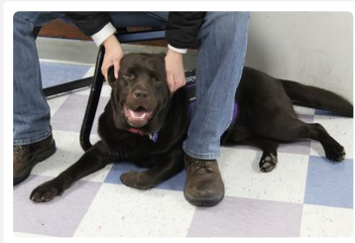
UDSFD Kirby visits old friends at SCI Houtzdale!

From Mary Tatum with CAC:

Kirby, the Facility Dog for the Child Advocacy Center of Clearfield County, visited SCI Houtzdale! When Kirby was a puppy, he lived at SCI Houtzdale as one of their RUFF (Relying Upon Furry Friends) Program pups. He was known for his zoomies and his one-of-a-kind personality. When Kirby first arrived at SCI Houtzdale for his visit, it was evident he remembered his friends. He was full of tail wags and kisses for his friends and handlers. He spent the day at the prison, visited staff, and saw his old handlers and the other handlers for the SCI Houtzdale RUFF (Relying Upon Furry Friends) Program. It was an excellent experience for everyone Kirby saw that day! Thank you, SCI Houtzdale, for letting Kirby come for a day's visit!

From Alicia Swanson, Liaison with RUFF program:

It was a wonderful experience to have one of our former pups visit Houtzdale. The moment he saw his former handlers his excitement was evident. As the handlers were unaware of his scheduled visit they were completely surprised but in a great way; I swear I saw them holding back tears. Kirby certainly remembered his old stomping grounds and all of his friends. It was almost like he never left! He had a great day visiting everyone and playing with all of our current dogs in the RUFF program. It was an amazing experience for our handlers to see what great work they are doing for the children that the CAC helps on a daily basis. We are looking forward to Kirby visiting again in the future.



Meet our new Volunteer Coordinator

Christie White, long-time volunteer with the UDS Service Dogs Program recently added Volunteer Coordinator to her list of "things to do" for our program. Christie will oversee new volunteer applications and help people get started on their own journey with becoming part of our family. Here is

her story in connecting with the UDS Service Dogs Program.

I began my journey with United Disabilities Services in 2014 as a Supports Coordinator for the Adult Autism Waiver Program. As UDS employees, we were given the opportunity to meet the new puppies coming into the Service Dogs Program; as well as see the older dogs progress in their training. I knew this program was one I was interested in getting involved with when the timing was right.



In 2019 my husband retired from the Pennsylvania State Police, which afforded me the opportunity to become a full time volunteer in the community. At this time we also lost our beloved Italian Mastiff after twelve years and I knew the time was right to begin my journey volunteering with the service dogs program. After completing my training and becoming familiar with the techniques and expectations of the program, I took on my first puppy, Kolben. Kolben spent his first eight weeks of training in our home. It was exciting to see him develop the skills to become more confident and independent. Kolben was dubbed the mascot of my son's ice hockey team and loved getting on the ice and chasing pucks after the games. Kolben warmed our hearts, and kept our hearts pumping with his endless energy. I was grateful for the help and support the UDS team provided as I took on my first puppy; however, they did not warn me that I would cry more the day I dropped him off to continue on his quest than I did when I dropped my boys off to college.

As the world changed in 2020, we had the blessing of being able to bring several dogs into our home. It is always fun to watch each one settle in and to be able to see the different personalities of each come out. Ian spent his first several months of training with us and several other dogs have come and gone within this time; all bringing light into a somewhat dark time. I like to refer to Ian as the calm after the storm. He was a blessing to our family as we gathered in our home for the quarantine and provided endless entertainment and love in an uncertain time.

Since this time, I have had the pleasure of working with several dogs and look forward to helping in my new role as the Volunteer Coordinator. I feel truly blessed to be a part of this program, and I am forever grateful for the help and support the staff provides. I look forward to the future and the next adventure it brings.

Mechanicsburg Area School District Pup Pack



Gideon



Carson



Dugan



Andre

From the desk of Jaime Bott, Supervisor of Special Education

The Mechanicsburg Area School District has been fortunate enough to bring facility dogs into four schools within our district over the past four years. Carson, Gideon, Andre and Dugan are regular facility members within the buildings and are working hard each day to support staff and student emotional needs. The idea of adding facility dogs came from a neighboring school district that saw great success in using the dogs to teach emotional and behavioral regulation. The pups at Mechanicsburg are no different. Each dog is assigned handlers within the building and spend their days supporting students across the school setting.

Facility dogs can be used in a variety of different ways. At Mechanicsburg, you can find our dogs at recess playing with children. Ms. Alexander, principal and primary handler for Gideon, shares that no one ever plays alone at recess now that Gideon is in the building. Carson, at Mechanicsburg Middle School, loves to snuggle with students after working hard and is a motivator during Physical Education class. Dugan, our newest pup at Northside, is a happy greeter as students enter the building and serves as a highly motivating reward when students are caught doing the right thing.

One of the most exciting and unplanned benefits of adding facility dogs to our buildings is seeing the staff interact with the pups. Most of the dogs spend their mornings at the mailboxes catching a ball or allowing a quick belly rub. Teachers leave the office with a smile on their face that is passed on to students as they enter the building.

Our community is very grateful for the support and dedication of these organizations. Having facility dogs in the Mechanicsburg Area School District would no be possible without our donor organizations, Kick in For Kids and Operation Wildcat. Additionally, Winding Hills Veterinary Clinic partners with the District for affordable healthcare for each dog. Most importantly, this program would not be possible without United Disabilities Services and their commitment to training and supporting the placements of facility dogs. Without them, the Mechanicsburg Pup Pack would not be possible!



Employee Highlight - Janna Barley

Janna Barley is a trainer with the UDS Service Dogs program and works mainly with dogs entering our kennel for Secondary Training. Read about how Janna became involved with our program.

1) How did you get involved with the UDS Service Dogs Program and how long have you been an employee? *I started volunteering for UDS Service Dogs in the summer of 2013 as I wanted to get involved with training service dogs. I had heard of UDS Service Dogs in high school and attended one training in 2010, but then headed off to college in NY. As a volunteer, I began with working dogs in classes, but eventually started puppy sitting and then had secondary dogs live with me. When UDS moved to their Erin Court location in March 2018, I was hired as the kennel assistant. A few months later I was promoted to Trainer, and my main focus has remained on the dogs in the kennel - evaluation and getting them ready for placement.*

2) What do you most enjoy about your job as Trainer? *The thing I enjoy most about my job as Trainer is teaching and solidifying a task that the dog will use to assist their match, and then seeing those tasks transform the lives of the individuals the dogs work with.*

3) What is one thing you wish for in regards to the program? *One wish for the program is that it can continue to keep growing so we can continue to impact more people.*

4) How do you keep from forming attachments with the dogs you train? *I don't. As part of the training and evaluation process when the dogs enter the kennel, the trainer that is assigned to the dog spends time bonding with that dog. It is important for us to be able to see how that dog bonds and that they can bond. That being said, I definitely find that I form a stronger bond with some dogs than others. Knowing that their future goal is to improve the life of an individual, or many individuals in the case of a facility dog, helps me be able to break that bond once it is time for placement.*

5) Is there a particular highlight from your time working with UDS Service Dogs that stands out for you? *Hearing stories from consumers about how the dog has helped them are always a highlight for me. In particular, hearing that the dog has learned a helpful task that we had not originally planned for, such as alerting to blood sugar drops, are my favorite highlights. Daily highlights would be seeing a task "click" in the dog's brain - if they have been struggling with a certain task and then finally get it.*

6) Is this a role you see yourself involved in for many years? *Yes, I hope to continue being able to train dogs to increase independence for individuals for many more years.*



Meet Karen Bradley and her Service Dog Scout!

Hypermobility joint syndrome, a connective tissue disorder, has affected my life significantly. This condition causes my joints to be extremely loose and flexible which makes them susceptible to injury. There is no cure for this condition, the main treatment is improving muscle strength so the joints are better protected and by avoiding movements that will cause stress and strain to the joints. While I was diagnosed with this condition about five years ago I had unexplained and misunderstood issues for well over 25 years prior to that time. My work as a social worker was affected due to injuries that had no known cause. Any type of repetitive motion was believed to cause damage that may necessitate surgical repair, something that I experienced over 20 times due to this condition. Frequently, by the time it was apparent that I was having difficulty with my shoulder, elbow, neck or back I was at the point where surgery was necessary. Many of these procedures required significant rehab afterwards and I was out of work for weeks at a time. By the time I started recovering from a procedure another part of my body started to become an issue. This disorder affects not only my joints but also major organs and systems. I have significant GI issues requiring medications and procedures. My jaws are affected and I need to wear an appliance at night. My skin is very stretchy and fragile. Despite several fusions I frequently experience severe muscle spasms in my neck due to instability and suffer debilitating migraines. I have "footdrop" due to chronic nerve impingement in my lower back and wear an AFO brace. This condition rendered me unable to drive so I had my car modified with hand controls. I wear hand braces to support my wrists and thumbs and have very poor coordination due to this issue. I developed anxiety and depression, conditions which are very common with hypermobility joint syndrome, and I feel almost inevitable given the chronic pain and worry over "what will happen next", a situation that was very real as something as simple as getting in and out of the car was suspected to have caused a tear in my hip. Due to compounding issues a walker and cane are necessary to help me ambulate for any distance.

Over the years my condition deteriorated to the point where I was no longer able to work fulltime. This was very difficult for me as I loved my job as a prenatal social worker.

Fortunately my employer of many years, LGHEALTH, was very supportive and my managers were willing to modify my role so I could continue to work on a part time basis. Throughout the years I continuously participated in physical and occupational therapy on a regular basis and about 3 years ago my OT urged me to consider a service dog with the thought that this could greatly reduce stress and strain on my joints. This was one of the wisest decisions I have made. I was paired with the perfect partner, "Scout", a 2 1/2 yr old Australian labradoodle. In a very short time Scout has proved to be a huge help to me in all areas of my life. He can pick up, carry and retrieve almost any item; and can open and close doors for me. Scout is able to unload my dryer and drag my laundry basket to the bedroom. He can assist in bringing bags into the house from the garage and pick up anything from a pen to my phone or remote control that I drop frequently due to difficulties with my hands. At my work place Scout can assist me in many ways which will enable me to continue to work in Healthy Beginning Plus. Without him I fear that my ability to stay employed even part-time would have been very tenuous.

because of the stress that day to day activities have on my body. It is extremely important to me to remain independent and a contributing member of society and Scout is definitely going to be the means for me to meet with goal. While there are activities I can no longer participate in due to my physical limitation such as painting and hiking, it is important for me to be able to stay active socially. Scout is enabling me to continue to take short shopping trips, go to restaurants and music events with friends. I am also more able to attend church and visit a close friend in a skilled nursing home because of his assistance. I am looking forward to our summer beach trips and the ability to more fully participate in activities there because of Scout's help. Obviously none of these things that have helped improve my life would be possible without the help of UDS. The staff at UDS service dog program is fantastic; very patient, caring and understanding. I can't say enough about their program nor can I sufficiently express my gratitude to Scout's sponsor, Keller Brother's for allowing me to join up with Scout. He truly has changed my life, not only in terms of the physical assistance he provides me but also in how he can help me emotionally. On days where I am having a particularly pain filled day or am feeling discouraged he is always able to lift my spirits with his sweet personality and snuggles. I am so appreciative to UDS team for their support in helping make me and Scout a great team!! My family, friends and co-workers share in my excitement!

Congratulations to our 2021 Graduating Class!

On Monday, November 8th, UDS Service Dogs Program staff and approximately 45 guests gathered at UDS to celebrate the achievements of 10 teams graduating this year.

Our evening was full of joy, happiness and even some tears as clients shared stories about the impact their Service, Facility and Companion dogs are having in their lives.



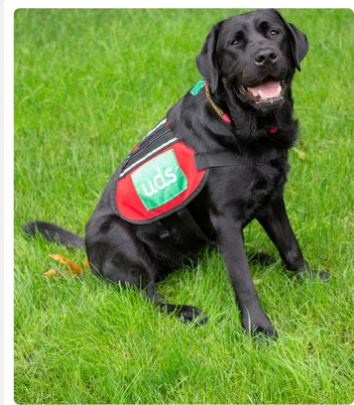
UDSSD Griffyn

Jennifer Beattie



UDSSD Obadiah

Sue Bingaman



UDSSD Gibson

Betty Severson



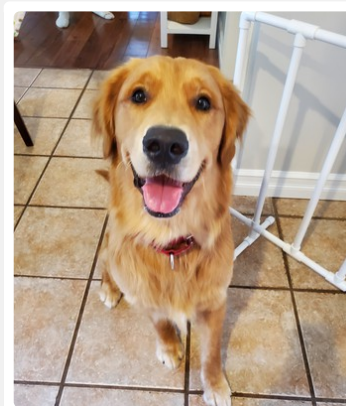
UDSSD Harper

Gary Myers



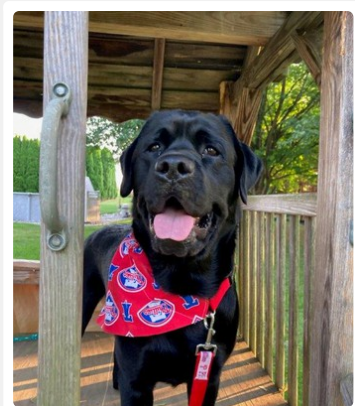
UDSFD Kirby

Child Advocacy Center,
Clearfield County



UDSFD Lincoln

Big Springs Middle School



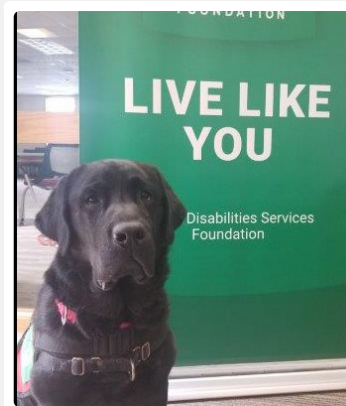
UDSFD Andre

Andre will work at
Mechanicsburg High School.



UDSFD Cooper

Cooper will work at York
Suburban Middle School.



UDSFD Murphy

Murphy will work at
Elizabethtown Area High
School.



UDS Companion Cody

William Hougendobler

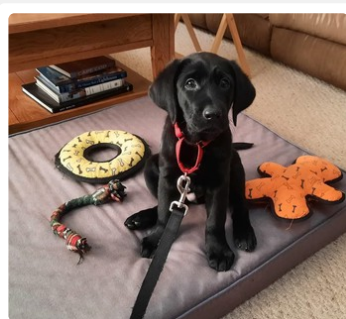
A BIG welcome to our newest trainees!

We are excited to welcome our newest trainees to our program! Check out these sweet faces. We can't wait to embark on their 2 year journey with them as they work hard for the next 2 years to become Service, Facility or Companion Dogs. No matter what their future holds, one thing is for sure, they will change the lives of everyone they meet.



Owen

Owen is being sponsored by Dan & Suzy Keller and Keller Bros., Ford Family of Dealerships and is named after one of their grandchildren!



Tyler

Tyler is another pup being sponsored by the Keller family and named for one of their grandsons.



Kinsley

Kinsley is also sponsored by the Keller family and named after their granddaughter.



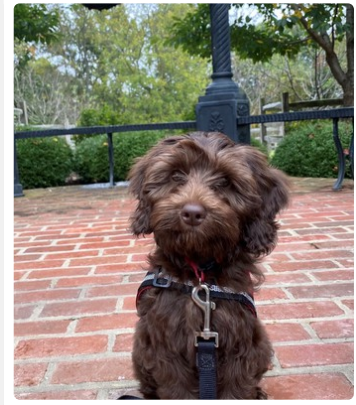
Rubee

Rubee joins our Owner Trained program with Lisa Geer and she will work at Sara Lindemuth-Anne Carter Primary School in the Susquehanna School District.



Hurley

Hurley will be sponsored by The Porsche Club of America.



Calvin

Calvin is a Chocolate Labradoodle pup who will be leaving for SCI Houtzdale to receive training in our RUFF, Pups in Prison program. Calvin received a sponsor for 1 year of dog food plus his training vest from Medical Cosmetics!



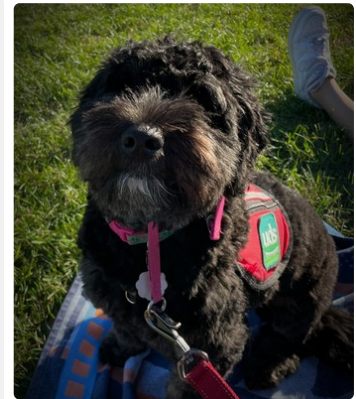
Oakley

Oakley is part of our Owner Trained Program with Tammy Wiggins.



Lucy

Lucy is part of our Owner Trained Program with Colleen Pavlovec and she will work at Leola Elementary School.



Elsie

Elsie is part of our Owner Trained Program with Christine Calantoni and will work at Brownstown Elementary School.



Cocoa

Cocoa is part of our Owner Trained Program with Rachael Metzinger and he will work in Conestoga Valley High School.

Keeping our dogs safe this holiday!

It takes a Village - THANK YOU!

*We all know how important volunteers are in our world. The very definition holds great meaning; **a person who freely gives, of their time, love, compassion, commitment, dedication and so much more.***

Without our volunteers the UDS Service Dogs Program would be unable to continue to experience growth as we strive to develop into one of the leading Service Dog organizations in the state of Pennsylvania.

A SHOUT-OUT to all of the amazing volunteers both long time volunteers and our new volunteers for signing up for kennel care and walking our dogs each day, for providing a loving home on weekends, over holidays and during challenging times we experienced in 2020!

You truly are our volunteer angels!

Your support means the world to our pups!

Dear friends,

Every dollar donated to the UDS Service Dogs Program truly makes a difference in the lives of one of our pups in training!

This holiday season your generosity could purchase a bag of treats or a new leash and collar or fund a month of food for Harris our kennel cat.

Thank you for your continued friendship and support!

[Partnering for Paws Online Donation Store](#)

[Amazon Wish List](#)

Wishing our friends a joyous and blessed holiday season!

Dear friends,

The staff with UDS Service Dogs Program is truly blessed with having your friendship and support! You have given generously this year of your time, love and financial support. Thank you for supporting our Pups in Prison Program; our 2nd Annual Golf Tournament; our Great Pup-kin V5K as well as making purchases from our online store for treats, toys and dog food.

As our program continues to grow and thrive we are all looking forward to 2022 with hope and continued blessings as we work hard to help those people in need!

Warm regards,

Lori, Janna, Kristy, Lorrie, Susan, Jennifer and Hope