

OccuPaws Guide Dog Association

WWW.OCCUPAWS.ORG



RAISE A PUPPY

Ready to change a life. Apply to be a raiser today!



VOLUNTEER

Can't Raise a Puppy? Help support our mission by volunteering!

Help Us Name the Newsletter

Put on your thinking cap and help us create the best title for our new quarterly newsletter! Get creative, be funny, show your sensitive side, the options are really endless. Send your suggestions to John at johndfetters@gmail.com. Then we will compile a selection of the best submission and post to our facebook for voting!

What's in the Newsletter

1

PROFILE OF A TEAM

Meet Kathy & Aurora and hear about their Journey

2

CAREER CHANGES

Brit finds a new way to make a difference

3

MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Interview with two of our long-term volunteers



DONATE

Make a difference with a donation at www.occupaws.org

Meet Kathy & Aurora

We asked Kathy questions about her experience with OccuPaws and Aurora

How has having your guide dog changed your life?

Aurora loves to learn new routes, is smart, loves to play (which helps to keep us laughing), and helps to connect me with others who may otherwise shy away from me & a white cane. We can do away with morning alarms – because the dog’s tummy will always wake up at about the same time every day! Love those little puppy whimpers that say, hey guys, time to get up now – right? I travel some for work and Aurora keeps me safe in unfamiliar environments. She is quick to pick up on finding our hotel room, the office building, our desk at the office, co-worker’s desks or offices, etc.

What has your experience with OccuPaws been like?

From day 1, Barb & Mark pulled me into this family. The customized training in our home environment is superior. Upon graduation, we are a safe and knowledgeable team. We know where we are going. No need to return home from a campus across the country left alone to figure out how to find Internal Medicine or Complimentary Medicine in our clinic because we learned all of that with our Guide Dog Mobility Instructor at our side. We have excellent support when post-graduation questions come up. Help is a phone call away.



“This organization is a family, helping everyone through this journey we call life.” Kathy Ducat

Any advice or comments for our volunteer raisers and sitters?

Thank you for getting to know our working teams. It is an extension of graduation which may be the last time a raiser interacted with the pup they raised. It is also a way for handlers to help show our appreciation and the celebrations of this amazing relationship.

Thanks to Kathy & Aurora for giving us a little peek into their life as a working team!

PUPTOBERFEST - OUR BIGGEST FUNDRAISER OF THE YEAR

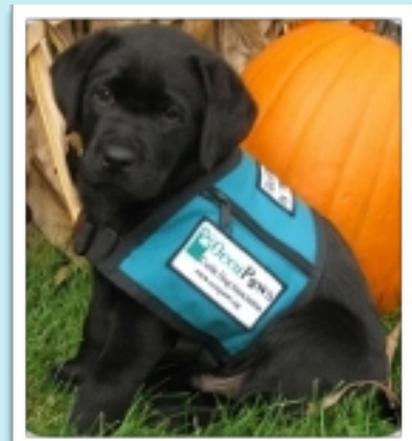
Puptoberfest is Sunday, September 8th at Wisconsin Brewing Company. This FREE to the public event will run from Noon -5pm and have live music from the Red Hot Dogs, Raffle Items, Food, Drinks, Family Fun, and of course gives you the opportunity to help support OccuPaws in our mission to create new guide dog teams!

How You Can Help: Volunteer at the event - Donate items for the raffle - Become an Event Sponsor -or just come join the fun on Sept. 8th!

[Puptoberfest Flyer](#)

[Donation Link](#)

[Volunteer Link](#)



CHANGING CAREERS - A Success Story

From Guide Dog to K9 Officer Sir Britford

Meet Brit, a high spirited, year and half old yellow lab. He started his life at Captains Labs and came to OccuPaws for guide dog training. He spent his early days training and growing to be a guide dog for OccuPaws. Bob and Joanne worked with him, taught him his name and spent time getting him ready for guide dog training. He then went to Oxford prison where the inmates reinforced what he already knew and continued his training to be a guide dog. Brit never really enjoyed that work. He would bark in his crate and was a very powerful dog. He did like going places and meeting the people and had fun when he went to Southwest Wisconsin Technical College with Kris. It was

decided that a guide dog career was not for him and he was released from the program and career changed.

He came to live with Jim and Kris Schoville which he enjoyed. Fast forward to May 2019 when a phone call came to OccuPaws from the Enfield Connecticut Police Department. They were looking to add a fourth K9 officer who could be trained for narcotics and search and rescue. Brit immediately came to mind and it was determined that he could be just what they were looking for and Brit needed a purpose in his life. Brit was flown to Connecticut where he began his training at the Connecticut Police Academy in Meriden, Connecticut. Officer Bartolucci of the Enfield Connecticut Police Department was chosen to be Brit's handler. Over the next 12 weeks, they worked together to be a team and on July 26, 2019 – Officers Brit and Bartolucci graduated from the Connecticut Police Academy as a new narcotics team. Kris and Jim Schoville went to Connecticut and represented OccuPaws at Brit's graduation and enjoyed spending some time with Brit and his family.

“K9 Officer Britford and Officer Bartolucci have already had several arrests involving narcotics - all due to Brit's narcotic sniffing ability. From Guide dog in training to K9 Officer. Raising a Puppy and Changing a life - One dog at a time.”

-Kris Schoville



Volunteer Profile

Kurt and Kristy have raised 24 puppies since starting in 2009 and have been instrumental in developing 6 current working teams!

How did you learn about OccuPaws and why did you decide to get involved?

Our next-door neighbor was involved in raising puppies with OccuPaws. At that time, we also adopted our own dog and attended dog obedience classes with other OccuPaws raisers. We got involved because raising puppies is a very rewarding volunteer choice. It combines the fun of spending lots of time with puppies, educating the public, and constantly learning about different training theories, techniques and strategies.

What do you enjoy most?

We enjoy the experience of having public access with the puppies as we take them into the community and to our jobs at school where students also get to be a part of the process of raising a puppy. We enjoy educating the public about service dogs, what to do and what not to do and why. We enjoy being a part of the OccuPaws community and sharing experiences with other raisers. We also enjoy regularly being challenged by the different personalities and training needs of each different puppy, constantly learning from others as we go. Of course, one of the greatest joys is hearing that your pup is moving on to work with a Guide Dog Mobility Instructor, and then finally handing the leash over to the new recipient

knowing that a successful team has been brought together.

Any advice or comments for our newer volunteer raisers and sitters?

People often say they could never do this kind of work because “don’t you get too attached?” or “I could never give them up.” Knowing the work you do from the beginning is on someone else’s behalf and that the puppy is never yours to keep helps put things in perspective. While that is easy to say, I cry each time I say good-bye. And even as I type this, through tears, I realize it is because of how much I love each pup while he or she is in our care, and thinking ahead to all the good they will do for their partner. It is deeply rewarding. Don’t worry about getting attached, you can’t help but get attached to a dog you put so much time and effort into. Letting go won’t be easy, but it will be worth it.

On another note, having no carpeting and only hard floors, plenty of strategically placed baby gates, a floor littered with appropriate dog toys, and a loaded treat pouch on your hip also makes for a much easier training experience. Finally, be willing to ask for advice and training ideas, and most of all, have fun!

