Online Auction - Sept. 6th - 13th

Our week long online auction will feature more than 40 different baskets and items for both people and dogs of course! 100% of the proceeds will go to support our mission of placing guide dogs with the visually impaired free of charge! Register today for all the bidding fun!

What's in the Newsletter

1. PROFILE OF A TEAM
   Meet Patty & Reagan

2. MAKE A DIFFERENCE
   Interview with Sheilagh and Mike on their raising experiences

3. YOUR SUPPORT
   Is more important than ever right now

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!

DONATE
Make a difference with a donation at www.occupaws.org
Patty & Reagan

Reagan is the first OccuPaws dog for Patty. They live in Arcadia, WI a small town of about 3,000 people and unfortunately, no available census data for the number of canine residents

Tell us about yourself?

I am currently busy exploring new activities and partaking in familiar activities after 32 years of teaching the blind and visually impaired with River Falls, Hudson, Durand, and Eleva-Strum school districts. Throughout my career, I also worked for several school districts in Minnesota. My hobbies are gardening, knitting, cooking, traveling, reading books in Braille, listening to podcasts, walking, and shopping. I also teach Sunday school, lector, and sing with our choir. Reagan, my guide dog, and I also volunteer at the local food pantry. I serve on committees and affiliates of the American Council of the Blind. My house is currently being remodeled. I am always learning new technology to help with accessibility. I have always loved animals and now question why I waited until retirement to get my first guide dog.

Tell us about your Guide Dog?

Reagan is a quiet female yellow lab. She loves her job. Her relaxation includes playing with stuffed toys which she does not destroy. Most people comment on how cute her smile is and that she has the most expressive eyes. When I lecture at church, people comment that she crosses her paws as if she is praying. Words cannot express how much of a blessing she is in my life.

“Reagan & I traveling to Alaska without knowing anyone else on the tour. We managed customs, TSA, a cruise, dog sledding, multiple hotels, and the cold weather.” Patty Slaby

How has your guide dog changed your life?

Working with Reagan has increased my independence. I also work with apps such as Be My Eyes and AIRA to assist with reading street signs or to describe my surrounding environment when I am traveling in unfamiliar areas. We love to travel. We have recently traveled to Canada and a bus tour to Alaska.

Any advice for others seeking a Guide Dog?

Develop excellent orientation and mobility skills. Be patient with your dog.

Thank you both for sharing your story!
Volunteer Profile

Sheilagh & Mike Lien have been involved with OccuPaws for about a year. Prior to getting involved with OccuPaws, they rescued 5 Golden Retrievers.

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

We adopted an English Cream Lab from OccuPaws who was a “Career Change Dog” His name is Wrigley and we enjoy him so much we decided to volunteer for OccuPaws as a Dog Sitter. We could never be raisers as we would never be able to give them back after having them in our home so long. We have had Noble on and off for about 4 months. We just took him to be evaluated for harness training. He of course passed with flying colors and is now on the list to leave for college when Covid slows down a bit. Of course, I (Sheilagh) have been crying a river thinking we may never see this precious boy again. We know he is off to do something special for someone else. Whoever gets this boy is going to be a very lucky individual. He loves to work and is very smart. We will miss him greatly but on the other hand are also so very proud of his accomplishments!

What do you enjoy most?

Working with the dogs on their command list, watching them grow in their training, meeting other volunteers and dogs in the training classes and watching Wrigley get to interact with all the new doggie friends from OccuPaws when we sit for a dog.

Any advice or comments for our new raisers or sitters?

Please make sure to attend all the training sessions that you can as it not only will help you, but it will help the dog you are responsible for greatly. Please work with the dog on a regular basis to help them through the process. They are going to be off doing something very special with their life for a visually impaired person. Don’t forget to pull the puppy/raiser report for the dog you are getting so you know what the dog needs help with. Be honest when filling out those reports as it helps the next person who will have the dog. If you have questions, please ask it will help you & the dog.

Have fun training. We think that is what a person will enjoy the most is training the dog and watching how they become a special dog for someone in need.

Any favorite stories?

Johnny B and Lava loved to be groomed. All I had to do was get the swivel comb and brush out and they both knew what was coming. They would lay down for me while I shaved the fur on their pads and brushed them. Java loved to go for walks and try to sneak slippers in his mouth. Korbel and Noble were our longest guests. Korbel was an awesome boy who would to anything to please. Korbel was very vocal in the morning when he got up loved to get everyone else up as well. Noble we had the longest and even took him for his evaluation so he has grown on us and it will be hard to say good-bye. We know he will make his person very happy as he LOVES to work and is VERY smart. They ALL LOVE homemade frosty paws. After their schoolwork if they have done well of course they get a treat and that would be a Frosty Paw. When asked if they would like one they all know where the freezer is and run right to it to get their homemade Frosty Paw!
MORE THAN EVER - WE NEED YOUR HELP

It costs $40,000 to raise, train, and place one OccuPaws guide dog. OccuPaws does not charge any fees for these dogs that change so many lives for the better. With a goal of placing 6 to 8 guide dogs each year, that equates to more than a quarter million dollars annually.

OccuPaws receives no federal, state, or local government funding. Financial support comes from corporate and foundation grants, fundraising events, and generous donations from people like you.

This year has been particularly challenging. Decreased business profits, high unemployment, increased demand for services, and the impact of social distancing on events have created a difficult environment. We have faced increased competition for grants and cancelation of our major fundraising events.

The 2020 CARES Act recognizes the challenges created for non-profits by providing expanded tax benefits to donors:

• Don’t itemize deductions?
  You can now claim a charitable donation deduction of up to $300 in addition to your standard deduction.

• Itemize deductions?
  You can now deduct charitable gifts up to 100% of your adjusted gross income. This opportunity may well provide a benefit to individuals that are taking distributions from tax deferred accounts that are not needed for living expenses and are under the age of 70½.

• 72 and over?
  You can make a direct transfer from your tax deferred account to qualified charitable organizations up to $100,000. The donation distribution is not counted as income and is therefore excluded from taxation and calculations of Medicare premiums and Social Security payments subject to taxation.

Your donation will be put to good and immediate use to help place specially trained guide dogs free of charge to people who are legally blind. You can donate at OccuPaws.org via PayPal whether you have a PayPal account or not, or download a donation form and send your gift to:

The OccuPaws Guide Dog Association
P.O. Box 45857
Madison, WI 53744

Thank you for your Support