

# Pawsitive News

[OccuPaws.org](http://OccuPaws.org)



## Amazon Smile

An easy way to give back while holiday shopping!

Amazon Smile will donate 0.5% of your purchase when you select OccuPaws at check out! There's no additional cost to you and toy shop as you normally would. Shop at [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com) or check out our [wishlist](#)

## What's in the newsletter

**VOLUNTEER PROFILE**



Profile of raisers, Bob & Joanne N.

**PROFILE OF A TEAM**



Maggie & Denver

**BREEDING PROGRAM**



Welcome to our new puppies!



### RAISE A PUPPY

Ready to change a life? [Apply](#) to be a puppy raiser today!



### VOLUNTEER

Can't raise a puppy? No worries - help support our mission by volunteering!



### DONATE

Make a difference by donating, at [occupaws.org](http://occupaws.org)

## Bob & Joanne N: Raising Puppies Since 2013

**Your name and where you live:** Bob & Joanne Neuheisel from Plain, WI.

**Tell us about yourself:** We are retired. Bob volunteers for Fire and EMS and Joanne takes care of the home and helps with the puppies

**How long have you been involved with OccuPaws?** We started Jan of 2013

**Are you a raiser, sitter or both?** Raiser. We start out with 8 week old pups

**How many dogs have you had?** 24 Plus - The pups that we do are 8 to 10 weeks old when we receive them.

**How many of those dogs have graduated and become working guide dogs?** Amy -Max- Blessing - Thor made harness training Duke was in guide training but to health had to be taken out of training. Some pups went on to become therapy pups - one went on to be a K-9 drug dog We do stay in contact with Dan and Blessing except this year because of the virus were we are not able to.

**Any favorite stories?** We have had a number of people come up to us and ask us about OccuPaws and they tell us to keep up the good work. We were at a restaurant and we were outside talking to our family and a young lady came out to thank us for volunteering for OccuPaws and the pup that was given to her dad saved his life. This got him out of the house and he now travels the states. Volunteering for OccuPaws gave us a new light of what dogs can do for humans to help them through life and how much the dogs can give back to

humans. We know that because it has changed our lives. One time we were in church and one of the pups was sound asleep and started to snore loudly and people started to look around to see who was snoring.

**How did you learn about OccuPaws and why did you decide to get involved?** Christmas shopping at the Boston store and they had a table set up showing off the pups that they had in progress of training. I thought it would be interesting to do it for a year or two but guess what it's been going on for 8 years and we both are enjoying training of the pups.

**What do you enjoy most?** Seeing a pup make the Graduation party and they are presented to a person that is vision impaired that changes their whole lifestyle for the good.

**Any advice or comments for our newer volunteer raisers and sitters?** Have patience and respect the pups and keep consistent with the commands.



## A Guiding Team: Maggie Ollmann & Denver Attending College Together

**Where do you live and describe your neighborhood:** I live on the Edgewood College campus in Madison, WI. It is within walking distance to a park, the lake, a few stores, and some coffee shops and restaurants.

**Tell us about yourself:** I am a college student studying elementary education with a minor in special education. My goal is to teach somewhere between kindergarten and third grade once I complete school. My family is a big part of my life. They are very supportive of me and my goals. I like to paint, shop, and go for coffee.

**Tell us about your Guide Dog:** Denver is my first guide dog and is a very sweet boy. When he is not working, he loves to play fetch or tug. At night he is a snuggle bug as we watch tv. When he is working, he does a great job of helping me out. When we go to class, he likes to snore away through them.

**How has your OccuPaws guide dog changed your life?** Denver has help me feel more safe and confident as I walk around and do everyday things in my life. Denver and OccuPaws has been amazing and really has helped me and changed my life for the better.

**How did you learn about OccuPaws and what has your experience with OccuPaws been like?** I learned about OccuPaws first from my O&M instructor from high school and again in college from the disability office, where I then got the help to make the connection with OccuPaws.

My experience with OccuPaws has been great. Everyone is so nice and caring. They do great things. I am so happy I found OccuPaws and Denver was able to come into my life and help me.

**Any advice or comments for our volunteer raisers and sitters?** Keep doing what you are doing! You are going great work and helping so many people.

**Do you have any advice for people seeking a guide dog?** Be patient with the process OccuPaws does a great job creating and finding the right dog to join your team. The wait to getting your guide dog is absolutely worth it.



## Breeding Program Has Produced 47 Puppies

What has 7 tails and 28 legs? If you guessed our latest litter of puppies, you'd be correct. Did you know that OccuPaws started its own breeding program in 2018 and since that time a total of 47 Labrador puppies have been born with more due soon? Prior to that, we would either purchase a puppy or get lucky and have a puppy donated to us from one of several reputable breeders we've worked with. One of those breeders of Labs

informed us that he was moving and getting out of the dog breeding business and offered us the option to purchase some of his breeding females at a discounted price. An offer too good to refuse.

There are several benefits to OccuPaws when we breed our own dogs. Rather than selecting only 1 or 2 puppies that we think have potential to become working guide dogs from a

litter, we are able to keep the entire litter and observe their behavior as they grow increasing the odds that at least one will graduate. We are also able to control the puppy's socialization from the time they are born and can ensure they are exposed to as many sights, sounds and smells possible during their formative first several weeks. From a business standpoint, we're saving money by not buying puppies and keep the money

when a career changed dog is sold.

So, how does the process work? All these dogs are AKC registered and have all OFA clearances and full genetic testing to ensure they are capable of

producing healthy offspring. Currently, there are 4 breeding females (Nala, Nelly, Zaga, and Bling) along with one stud male named Sox.

Ivy, Paige and Opal were retired from breeding after their last litters.



Breeding dogs live with a volunteer except during the last couple weeks of pregnancy through weaning of the puppies (usually about 6-8 weeks total). OccuPaws pays all expenses (food, equipment, vet care, Heartworm and Flea/Tick meds). After she has 2-3 litters, the volunteer can keep the dog no cost. Because these girls do not have public access, they do not need to attend weekly training classes.

When a breeding female begins her heat cycle a determination is made whether to breed her. This is based on several factors such as the age of the dog, the date and size of her last litter, her potential due date and any overlapping litters. There is no guarantee she will become pregnant after insemination. Approximately 4 weeks afterwards a test is done to determine whether she's pregnant.

Total gestation period is 8 weeks and an x-ray conducted during week 7 helps estimate the number of puppies she's carrying.

About 2 weeks before her due date, the mama dog is moved into Barb and Mark's house where she'll remain until her puppies have been fully weaned from her at around 6 weeks old. There are volunteer midwives who assist with the delivery of the

puppies. Other volunteers help take shifts to watch the puppies 24/7 during their first 2 weeks to ensure they stay safe and healthy. Once its safe for the puppies to be around other people, volunteers are invited to Barb's house for play time as part of the socialization process.

To maintain a steady stream of newborn puppies, it's important that we also have enough breeding females. That's why we're looking at 3 other potential breeding females among our current dogs in training.

In the future we hope to expand the breeding program to include Goldens and have already identified Willow as a possible mama.

This breeding program would not be possible without the help and support of numerous volunteers including Breeding Homes(Barb & Mark Schulze, Mindy & Dan Allen, Jason & Kathryn Wood, Walt & Karen Bublitz, Karen & Dalton Luckey, Kris & Jim Schoville), and midwives, puppy area cleaners and night watch volunteers (Katie Noyce, Lois Thuemmler, Michelle Mercier, Annie Pankowsky, Olivia Napadensky), just to name a few!

Keep up to date on our breeding program by following us on [Facebook!](#)