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BOSTON MARATHON BOMBING SURVIVORS OFFERED FREE SERVICE DOGS THROUGH NONPROFIT NEADS/DOGS FOR DEAF AND DISABLED AMERICANS

Princeton, MA, 05-08-2013 – NEADS/Dogs for Deaf and Disabled Americans announced that survivors of the Boston marathon bombing who have sustained a physical disability are being offered assistance dogs through the creation of a new fund. NEADS is a Massachusetts-based nonprofit organization that places assistance dogs nationwide.

The funds raised will be restricted to cover the costs involved with supplying assistance dogs to the survivors of the Boston marathon bombings should they decide, in the future, that an assistance dog will bring them renewed independence and connection. **"For many years now, our office has partnered with NEADS by hosting young service dogs in training,"** said Massachusetts Attorney General Martha Coakley. **"We are grateful to those donors who have agreed to fund service dogs for victims of the marathon bombings and look forward to working with NEADS to identify appropriate homes for these incredible animals."**

NEADS is working in collaboration with the Massachusetts Attorney General's Victim Assistance Program and the Massachusetts Office for Victim Assistance to distribute information and identify potential recipients of assistance dogs. Going forward, the fund will be opened to include all survivors of violent crime in Massachusetts who have sustained a physical disability and who feel that they would benefit from an assistance dog.

Gerry DeRoche, Chief Executive Officer of NEADS said, "The value and impact that our service dogs provide to those in need is immeasurable. We are happy to offer our help, and hope that by establishing this fund, marathon bombing survivors receive the independence, comfort and companionship our dogs provide."

The Boston Duck Tours (BDT) has come on board as a lead donor to this fund. BDT held a staff-wide contest to name the fund. **Pawsitively Strong** was announced as the fund's name on May 14.

For more information or to make a donation, please visit www.neads.org.

NEADS/Dogs for Deaf and Disabled Americans is a Massachusetts-based non-profit organization that provides life-changing independence, companionship and connection to people with a disability. NEADS carefully matches clients with the right dog and provides ongoing support during their entire relationship. NEADS has led the industry since 1976, matching over 1,400 expertly trained assistance dogs with people who need them.