

Creating Lasting Bonds



2021
Annual Report

CONTENTS

- 4 News and Events
- 6 Training
- 7 Our Clients
- 11 Client Services
- 12 Canine Development & Operations
- 15 Breeding and Puppy Development
- 16 Breeding Center Capital Campaign
- 17 Development
- 20 Behind the Scenes
- 21 NEADS by the Numbers
- 22 2021 Financials



RED VEST ACCESSIBLE

Congratulations to the following organizations who received the Red Vest Accessible designation in 2020/2021:

Morgan's Wonderland (Austin, TX)
Polar Park and Worcester Red Sox (Worcester, MA)
Best Western Plus Waterbury-Stowe (Waterbury, VT)
9 Round Worcester (Worcester, MA)

Thank you for helping all legitimate Service Dog teams navigate the world without worry.

Businesses are nominated by someone who has had first-hand experience with the location. Recipients are selected based on a list of criteria relating to Service Dog accessibility and the staff's general knowledge of disability access. Through the Red Vest Accessible program, which was started in 2020, Service Dog owners will be able to recognize a Red Vest Accessible establishment as a safe place, and proprietors will understand their own rights – what questions they can and cannot ask when someone enters with a Service Dog.

Businesses can be nominated at redvest.neads.org

Front cover: Steve and Service Dog for Hearing Charlotte, a brindle Lab (p. 7)

Changed... for the Better

NEADS saw much growth and change over the past year, in part as a response to and because of forces outside of our control – primarily Covid-19. This Annual Report is dedicated to the entire NEADS staff for its commitment to breeding, raising, training, and placing World Class Service Dogs no matter what comes their way.



MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

We began the fiscal year on September 1, 2020, amid great uncertainty and with many questions regarding Covid-19. But we also began the year with great anticipation, as we hoped everything would quickly return to normal. Fast forward to August 31, 2021. The pandemic is still very much a part of our personal and professional lives, and we are now adapting to a “new” normal.

I am very proud to say that NEADS never ceased operations during the pandemic. Although we closed the campus to volunteers and visitors, we continued to breed, raise, and train World Class Service Dogs. We also continued to match and place dogs with our clients as soon it became safe to do so.



To accomplish this, we made fundamental changes to our operations to ensure the safety of our staff. And Zoom became a way of life for our teams. This year's annual report features many of our staff who rose to the occasion.

While we continued with our regular operations, we also undertook two large initiatives. First, we completed our re-accreditation with Assistance Dogs International, a process that is required every five years. Second, we began and made great progress on the construction of our new Breeding Center on a beautiful piece of property just up the street from our main campus.

We continued to demonstrate the capacity and capability to evolve with fluid conditions and adjust along the way, whether it was re-opening the campus in a limited way in June or rebuilding our Prison PUP Program. I can confidently say that we have adjusted to our new normal and, in many ways, have emerged stronger.

A NEADS annual report would not be complete without hearing from our clients. Their stories provide a window into their world and the incredible impact our dogs have on their lives.

On behalf of everyone at NEADS, thank you to our wonderful supporters for helping us to provide our clients World Class Service Dogs. I hope that you stay safe and well during these very unusual times.

Sincerely,

Gerry DeRoche
Chief Executive Officer

NEADS Events

While some of our favorite events were cancelled due to Covid-19 restrictions, we still found plenty of ways to connect with the NEADS community.

SEPTEMBER 2020: MARTIN AND KELLY LIVE FROM THE NEADS LOBBY



NEADS hosted friends Martin and Kelly for a virtual concert, performed in our lobby and shared through Facebook Live. Not a bad way to spend a Friday night in!

OCT-DEC 2020: NEADS MARKET

The first-ever virtual NEADS Market featured a curated mix of creative and unique products from more than 25 local makers, artists, and designers. Participating vendors donated 15% of all purchases to NEADS.



OCTOBER 2020: ARE WE DUNKIN' THE BOSS?

In October, NEADS CEO, Gerry DeRoche, stepped up for a Dunk Tank challenge. Donors were able to select Team Dunk (the boss goes in the tank) or Team No Dunk (the boss stays dry), with the goal of raising \$5,000. The team with the most donations decided whether we would be dunkin' Gerry or not. To keep things interesting, NEADS Board Chair Paul Jornet also agreed to be dunked.

We crossed the \$5,000 line early on, and by the morning of October 7, it was clear that we were dunkin' the boss, with 75% of donors selecting Team Dunk. NEADS staffers lined up for a chance to throw the ball to dunk Paul and then the boss. It took a number of tries, but Paul finally went in. Gerry was dunked next, tuxedo and all. Thanks to event sponsor, Dunkin'.



JUNE 2021: << NEADS DAY AT POLAR PARK

NEADS was honored to be part of the pre-game ceremonies at the brand-new, fully accessible Polar Park in Worcester, MA. Thanks to all of the clients and Puppy Raisers who came out to represent NEADS Nation.

JULY 2021: GIRLS INC. OF WORCESTER

NEADS partnered with Girls Inc. of Worcester for a summer literacy initiative for 2nd and 3rd grade girls. Each Thursday morning in July and August, NEADS Assistance Dog clients and staff visited Girls Inc. of Worcester, where the girls read

NEADS RE-ACCREDITED BY ADI

NEADS has once again achieved re-accreditation by Assistance Dogs International (ADI). ADI, the leading authority in the Service Dog industry, establishes and promotes standards of excellence in all areas of Service Dog acquisition, training, and partnership. NEADS is a charter member of ADI, which was incorporated in 1988.

Once accredited initially, a program like NEADS becomes a member of ADI. Member programs must complete a re-accreditation every 5 years to comply with ADI's Standards of Practice.

ADI accreditation is a peer-review process conducted by a trained ADI assessor. Currently, there are 133 ADI accredited Service Dog programs in the world. While no national Service Dog certification exists, ADI is the only organization that comes close.



NEADS is proud to be an active member of ADI,” says **Gerry DeRoche, NEADS CEO**. “ADI standards have become the benchmarks to measure excellence in the Service Dog industry, and prospective clients can feel confident that an ADI-accredited organization like NEADS is trustworthy and can truly change their lives. Every aspect of our program, from the training of NEADS dogs to the education and support our clients receive, meets the extraordinary criteria established by ADI.



out loud to NEADS Assistance Dogs. These one-on-one sessions helped them strengthen their reading skills, boost their confidence, and inspire them to become life-long readers. The program was supported by Bay State Savings Bank.

AUGUST 2021: FALMOUTH ROAD RACE RUNNERS RUN FOR NEADS

8,000 runners participated in the 7.2 mile race, and 7 of them ran for NEADS. Thank you to Amy Dorsey, Deb Lally, Vanessa Winters, Katie Kozikowski, Molly Ball (pictured),



Melissa Cruz, and Jeffrey Lynch. We are so grateful for your support.

SUMMER 2021: RED SOX SERVICE DOG OF THE GAME SERIES

NEADS was well represented at Fenway Park this summer as the Boston Red Sox resumed its Service Dog of the Game series. Throughout the summer

before Tuesday evening home games, the Red Sox honored working dogs in a ceremony at home plate.

Congratulations to these NEADS Service Dog and Assistance Dog teams: Beth and Assistance Dog for the Classroom J.D.; Betsy and Service Dog Simba; Erin and Assistance Dog Prince (below); Ken and Assistance Dog Bentley; Ryan and Service Dog Oliver.



TRAINING



TRAINING STAFF MILESTONES

NEADS Trainers must successfully complete a two-year apprenticeship program. During this time, they learn all that goes into the making of a World Class Service Dog Team. Congratulations to **TYLER GRIBI** (above), who completed his apprenticeship in January 2021, and **MICHELLE KATI** (below), who completed her apprenticeship in August 2021.



TRAINING helps ensure a successful NEADS partnership through training program dogs directly and working with inmate handlers as they train the dogs in the facilities; working with Client Services to make the client matches; instructing client classes; and supporting clients post-training and beyond.

While the Trainers are happy to now work together as one group compared to being split into two teams during the height of the pandemic, there were several changes put in place that we are benefiting from today. For example, when we worked in teams, we needed to develop a schedule for Trainers to spend time in the Canine Center, particularly when using the play yard. This more structured approach offers a predictability that is useful for both the Trainers and the Canine Center staff.

Together with Client Services, we launched and continue to use a 'Let's Meet' Zoom meeting with clients prior to their in-person training. This started out as a way to introduce ourselves to clients without masks, but it became an opportunity to calm pre-training jitters and give clients a chance to ask questions.

A 'string training' program, in which our Trainers are responsible for training two to three dogs in addition to their work with the inmate handlers, was already in the works pre-pandemic. It was accelerated due to the number of dogs we had on campus when the Prison PUP Program was put on hold. String training also gives the Apprentice Trainers and Trainers plenty of opportunity to develop their skills. – Erin Wylie, Manager of Training



Right: NEADS Training Staff: Anna Tepe, Erin Wylie, Michelle Kati, Tyler Gribi, and Meghan O'Brien



NEADS SERVICE DOG FOR HEARING PROGRAM

Steve & Service Dog for Hearing Charlotte

ARMY VETERAN AND RETIRED CHICAGO POLICE OFFICER Stephen Hood's hearing was profoundly deteriorating; even his hearing aids and cochlear implant were not enough to alleviate the mounting challenges of his daily tasks. He was no longer able to recognize alert sounds or when someone spoke his name. Not only was this frustrating, but his safety became an ever-greater concern, so Stephen's wife and daughters encouraged him to seek the help of a Service Dog.

Having never encountered a Service Dog for Hearing, I wasn't sure exactly how our relationship would work. I had thought, she's trained to provide a service for me, and she's a working dog. What I didn't expect was the strong emotional connection we've developed. But she's definitely my dog. She always looks for me and wants to know where I am.

Pre-Covid, my wife would travel to visit our daughter in Texas for a week at a time, and I would be alone. Being alone changes everything. Today, if I don't hear my alarm, Charlotte jumps up on the bed and wakes me up.

Then there are the little things that you don't think about. Prior to Charlotte, I would drop things from my pocket and not even realize it. Now, if that happens, she stops immediately and grabs whatever I've dropped and turns to give it to me. When I'm out walking with her, if she hears something behind her, she'll stop and turn. When she stops and turns, it means I'm supposed to look back also.

All this takes practice, and I try to be very conscientious about her training.

I paid attention during my time on the NEADS campus. It was apparent that the training wasn't for Charlotte, it was for us, the clients; what we have to learn, and what we need to do to reinforce the training. You receive a highly trained dog, but you can't just sit back and assume that that's it. You have to commit to keep her skills sharp.

Charlotte and I go through a whole routine at least three or four times a week. She loves to work. We practice with the fire alarm so she knows to come looking for me. She bumps me and runs to the front of the house, because she knows we have to go out. We practice alerting to door knocks and to my wife calling my name. We practice with dropped items. At first it was just keys, but then I started dropping other things, like a pen. The first time she just kind of looked at me but she quickly figured it out.

All the neighbors on our block know Charlotte now. She's friends with everybody. People ask me, "Why is she so calm?" I answer, "It's the training. She's a Service Dog, and when she's out and dressed, she's working." And she knows it. I let people say hello, but then she turns around and comes right back to me. I'm her main person.

I've had dogs my whole life, but this is a totally different experience. It's been phenomenal.

Photo: Courtney Laper of Courtney Michelle Photography



NEADS SERVICE DOG PROGRAM

Sarah and Service Dog Edison

SEPTEMBER 2016 WAS A LIFE-CHANGING MONTH for me. I had just completed my two-week training with Edison at the NEADS campus, and we were home, ready for our new life together.

I quickly jumped back into my routine, now with Edison by my side. Just three days after returning home, we traveled from my home in the suburbs to New York City for my weekly physical therapy session. Our first adventure, and we were ready! Get into an Uber to the train. Smooth. Get from the Uber into the train station and onto the train. Smooth. Get off the train and into Grand Central Terminal. Smooth.

Then, my pen dropped. As had happened so often in the past, I started to panic, and many thoughts went through my head: Were people watching me? Was I being judged? Did people want to help me but weren't sure if they could approach me because I was in a wheelchair and looked... different? Suddenly, I remembered. Edison was by my side, and all those thoughts stopped in an instant. I was not used to the idea that I didn't have to panic just because I dropped a pen. I looked Edison in the eye and told him, "fetch," and he picked it up. I said, "give," and within 30 seconds I had my pen back, and we were on our way to the appointment.

I will never forget that moment. Having Edison by my side has changed my way of thinking from panic to safety. Knowing that he is with me everywhere I go is such a comforting feeling. I no longer have to feel as though my life is going to end if my pen drops. Edison is right there, ready and willing to help me.

Flash forward five years... Coming out of the Covid-19 pandemic, I find myself taking things slower. Edison and I don't travel as much as we did, as a majority of my meetings and therapy are online and virtual. Still, I continue to find ways to keep Edison's training sharp. We spend more time outside, take more walks, and are starting to get around more. Edison continues to help me in so many ways, and it is my responsibility to find ways to keep him healthy and happy.

NEADS ASSISTANCE DOG PROGRAM

Kim and Assistance Dog Nellie

KIM IS A CLINICAL SOCIAL WORKER, CURRENTLY working in private practice with adolescents, families, and adolescent groups. She was matched with Assistance Dog Rowdy in 2007 and Assistance Dog Nellie in 2017.

I can trace my relationship with NEADS back to the late 1990s, when a good friend from grad school, Mary, received her second Service Dog for Hearing, and her first dog from NEADS. Attending Mary's graduation in 1998 was my first exposure to NEADS. Mary, NEADS, and I have been connected ever since, as Mary received her second NEADS dog in 2008 and her third in 2021.

I first applied for an Assistance Dog in 2007. I was matched with Rowdy, who became integral to my work first in a children's psychiatric hospital and then in private practice. Unfortunately, in 2015, he became unexpectedly ill, and we lost him very quickly.

I've lost pets over my lifetime, but it was different with Rowdy. This was a shared loss with my patients. I typically have strict boundaries between my personal and professional life, but in this case, I had no choice. Rowdy impacted so many people, so the impact of the loss and how we managed emotions in subsequent sessions was very hard.

FROM CLIENT TO VOLUNTEER TO CLIENT. It was almost two years before I was ready to apply for another dog. It wasn't a decision I took lightly, because having an Assistance Dog is nothing like having a family pet. If you want the dog to continue to work and to work well, you have to commit to maintaining its training for the working life of the dog.

Even though I wasn't ready for my own dog after losing Rowdy, I stayed connected to NEADS during that time, volunteering as a Puppy Raiser and helping to raise two puppies. I was curious about what went into the training of these dogs, and I thought well, now is my chance. It is astounding just how much work it is and how it is so enriching.

In 2017, I was matched with Nellie. The NEADS client training experience was quite similar the second time around in terms of how to partner with my dog. What was different was my on-campus experience. I commuted during training with Rowdy, so it was amazing to stay in the new Client House and to be able to immerse in bonding with the dog. While I knew intellectually that there could be another dog as great as Rowdy, my heart was telling me something else. Of course,



Inset: Kim with Assistance Dog Rowdy.

Large Photo: Kim with Assistance Dog Nellie (photo by Tina Tryforos).

when I was handed Nellie's leash that very first afternoon, I knew everything was going to be just fine. Love at first sight.

SAME TRAINING, DIFFERENT CAPABILITIES. Even though both dogs had the same excellent training, there's a big difference between the way I work with Nellie compared with how I worked with Rowdy. Each patient interaction is unique, so I had to understand Nellie's capabilities and personality to make the best use of her in whatever therapeutic setting I find myself.

Why do I think these dogs are so successful? In addition to specific task work I use to help clients develop better cognitive and emotional skills, I think the dogs make people feel like they matter in a way that I as a clinician can't do by myself. We talk about a dog's unconditional regard, and I can't emphasize enough how much of a difference it makes to people to be able to feel that "this dog cares about me, no matter what." Even when she's on her bed on the other side of the room I know Nellie's presence makes an impact. You can almost see her saying, "I'm here. Just use me, I'm here."

**NEADS SERVICE DOGS FOR
CHILDREN WITH AUTISM OR
OTHER DEVELOPMENTAL
DISABILITIES PROGRAM**

Sawyer and Service Dog Emmitt

OUR SON SAWYER HAS ALWAYS LOVED and had a strong connection with dogs. We noticed that when he was around certain dogs, he said he felt calmer and happier. We had read about the impact Service Dogs can have on an individual's life and thought Sawyer could benefit. We hoped a Service Dog would help Sawyer with his anxiety, communication, sleep, and his motor coordination challenges.

From the first moment they met, the connection between Emmitt and Sawyer has been strong. They just seem to get each other. Sawyer thinks about what Emmitt needs and plans his day around him, and Sawyer is Emmitt's whole world. Emmitt loves people and is so sweet to everyone in our family, but his waggle and the bond is stronger with Sawyer than with anyone else.

Sawyer has shown tremendous growth with his language and communication since Emmitt arrived. We see him being more confident when we are out in the community. He has matured and grown so much since having Emmitt in his life.

Nearly every night for the first 14 years of Sawyer's life he has needed me to lie down on the floor of his bedroom until he falls asleep. He had tried many times to go to sleep on his own and was very motivated to be more independent, but it hadn't happened yet.

From the first night Emmitt arrived at our home, sleeping for everyone in our house got better. I kiss Emmitt and Sawyer good night, and the two of them settle in.

One morning when I went to make Sawyer's bed, I found a few books, a flashlight, and some dog toys under the blankets. Sawyer had stayed up late



to read and hang out with his dog. It was a developmental stage we had not experienced until that moment, and it felt great to see it happening. For whatever reason, he didn't fall asleep right away that night, but with Emmitt there, he figured out a way to entertain himself and fall asleep without a parent's support.

Because of the pandemic, everyone in my family was attending school and working from home when Emmitt came home. Emmitt kept Sawyer focused on his Zoom calls with school and online therapy. Everyone in our house could see the bond develop.

Their interactions are usually the best part of my day. The way Emmitt will put his head on Sawyer's arm or his lap to remind him he is there for him warms my heart.

Sawyer's older brother Caleb says he can't believe how much Emmitt has improved our family's life: we all sleep better and feel more joy doing things as a family because of Sawyer being supported by Emmitt. The love everyone in our life has for Emmitt is a joyful surprise.

One day, Sawyer and Emmitt came running down the stairs, and Sawyer yelled, "Oh my goodness!" I said, "Is everything OK, Sawyer?"

Sawyer replied, "I just still can't believe I have a dog like Emmitt!"

Submitted by Sawyer's mother, Melinda



CLIENT SERVICES is often the first point of contact prospective applicants have with NEADS. They respond to inquiries about our programs, review applications, and interview viable candidates. They participate in the matching process and help clients prepare for on-campus training, ensure their comfort while here, and help with any concerns raised after they are home.



Client Services staff: Sue Berry, Katy Harrison Ostroff, Katie Hanna

While much of our activity was conducted virtually at the start of the pandemic, in-person training and on-campus interviews started up again after four months. We were able to match 33 new teams and did so while helping clients navigate the ever-changing travel restrictions and quarantine and testing requirements. We want to particularly salute several out-of-state clients who quarantined for 14 days in an area hotel prior to coming to on-campus training.

This past fiscal year had its share of joys as well as challenges. There is nothing better than making the call to a client about their match with their Service Dog. The impact of this life-changing partnership is clear. As one mother wrote when she and her family arrived home after a 17-day stay in MA needed for quarantining and training: "We are so happy to be home with (our Service Dog). Our son went to sleep with his lights off last night for the first time in 11 years!" – *Katy Harrison Ostroff, Manager of Client Services*



Kevin Lambert with NEADS Service Dog Ambassador Sally

The Brightest of Days

Kevin Lambert was a member of the first NEADS TAD class and was matched with Service Dog Ronnie. He later became a member of the NEADS Board of Directors. After a lengthy career in state services for veterans, he joined the Client Services team in 2018. He worked primarily with NEADS veteran clients until he left in July 2020 to return to school.

HAVING BEEN INVOLVED WITH NEADS AS A CLIENT, member of the Board of Directors, and employee, I can truly say that from all aspects this is a unique and incredible organization.

Service Dog Ronnie was a true life changer for me. She was that Battle Buddy I lost when I left the Army. She was a living creature that I could count on to be by my side, no matter what happened around us. Some of this was just Ronnie's nature, but much of this was what Ronnie learned and how she was trained. NEADS dogs are a symbol of independence, of life, of unwavering dedication and loyalty, and, overall, of a companion you can count on in the brightest of days and the darkest of times.

I thought through my time as a client and on the Board of Directors I knew so much about NEADS that coming to work here would be easy. I was so wrong. I learned new things every day about what it takes to create a World Class Service Dog. Words cannot express the respect and gratitude I have for all that goes into making this possible. Without NEADS, I would not have Ronnie. Without Ronnie, I am not sure I would be who I am today or if I would have made it through some challenging times the way I was able to with her love and support. Working at NEADS has been one of the great privileges and honors of my life.



The HAWKINS CANINE CENTER staff cares for the dogs on campus with one-on-one time, outdoor play, and enrichment activities.

Providing excellent care for the dogs in the Canine Center is always our top priority, pandemic or not. Not knowing how long the dogs we brought back from the MA Department of Correction prisons early in the pandemic would be with us, the Canine Center staff developed an extensive enrichment program to be sure the dogs had sufficient mental stimulation and were happy while in our care. We are still using this for dogs in the HCC today.

Team scheduling, in which Canine Center and Training staff members worked in small groups, helped us maintain a safe working environment during the pandemic. But it also meant the usual interactions and exchange of information with co-workers was very limited. To be sure the entire HCC staff understood our dog care protocols and all things NEADS, we started weekly classes. These continue to this day.

– Kathy Foreman, Director of Canine Development



Hawkins Canine Center staff: Sarah Heinrich, Leah Bell, Kathy Foreman, and Maddie Dolan



The NEADS MEDICAL TEAM oversees the medical care of all NEADS dogs in training, coordinating with Puppy Raisers, prison staff, and veterinarians.

We made a number of changes during the pandemic that we continue with today. With so many dogs in our Full-Time Raiser program, we started weekly clinics with our volunteer Medical Director, Dr. Christine Pelletier, which allowed the Raisers to get the dogs to us for vaccines and non-emergent medical problems.

More Full-Time Raisers meant we needed to connect with more veterinarians across New England, including a much more extensive and widespread relationship with VCA Animal Hospitals. In fact, we now are partnered with VCA Hospitals in all New England regions.

We also have a new partnership with Antech Laboratories, which offers discounts on bloodwork run through VCA Hospitals. – Dom Cornacchioli, Canine Operations Manager



The FULL-TIME and WEEKEND PUPPY RAISER INSTRUCTOR TEAM works with both Full-Time and Weekend Puppy Raisers and the NEADS pups in training, leading training sessions, organizing socialization field trips, and helping Raisers one-on-one.

Both in-person training and field trips, which are the heart of our Raiser program, came to an abrupt halt at the start of the pandemic. Thanks to video conferencing, we were able to stay connected with the Puppy Raisers, holding group and one-on-one sessions. Today, while we are back to in-person sessions and field trips, virtual meetings are one more way to stay in touch with the Raisers.

Because the Prison PUP Program was on hold at the start of the pandemic, we had many Weekend Puppy Raisers without dogs to care for. These experienced Raisers helped us launch our Sitter program, in which volunteers step in if a Full-Time Puppy Raiser is away or is unable to take care of the dog for a short time. And while many pups are back in prison and with their Weekend Raisers, we still have a number of Raisers who fill in as Sitters.

– Dom Cornacchioli,
Canine Operations Manager



*Top photo: Puppy Raiser Instructors Bailey Sullivan and Rea Samuels
Clockwise from left: NEADS Medical Team members Taylor Rhoads and Karen LaPierre; Canine Center Assistant Supervisor Sarah Heinrich; HCC staff Maddie Dolan and Leah Bell*



Long-time volunteer Pam Murray with Acadia (l) and Morrison (r).

SPIRIT AWARD 2021

Pam Murray

EACH SPRING, NEADS PRESENTS ITS SPIRIT AWARD to a volunteer or group of volunteers who passionately exudes the energy, values, and commitment to our mission over an extended period of time.

The 2021 Spirit Award was presented to recently retired NEADS employee and long-time volunteer Pam Murray.

This is the first time a Spirit Award has been presented to a retired employee, but it was given in recognition not of her work at NEADS but of her volunteer efforts. While Pam was an exceptional and dedicated employee, she was an even more exceptional and dedicated volunteer.

Pam joined NEADS as a volunteer in 2004, was hired in 2007, and continued volunteering until 2009. In 2018, Pam became our first Breeder Caretaker, for Acadia, mother of our first NEADS-bred, born, and raised litter of purpose-bred dogs. Since then, she has cared for Acadia in between litters and also helped with transporting her to other Service Dog organizations and taking Acadia to her breeding appointments. She also often stepped up for early morning (4am) Nursery shifts with the broods and puppies.

"I am humbled and honored to receive this Spirit Award. From the moment I saw my first graduation in the late 1990s," says Pam, "I wanted to be a part of this amazing organization. From the kennel, to the office, to early morning babysitting sessions with our broods and their litters, I have enjoyed every minute of the time I've spent at NEADS. The volunteers, employees, and the canines we care for are the heartbeat of NEADS, and I am so proud to be part of that."



10 YEARS OF DEDICATED SERVICE

Anne-Marie Chernosky

IN NOVEMBER 2020, NEADS RECOGNIZED Anne-Marie Chernosky for 10 years of service as a Puppy Raiser and dedicated volunteer.

"Anne-Marie is dedicated, caring, and loyal to the NEADS mission. She has been a Puppy Raiser for over 10 years and has also volunteered in our Nursery with the young pups and moms." – Bailey Sullivan, NEADS Puppy Raiser Instructor

"As a member of the NEADS Weekend Puppy Raiser Council, Anne-Marie always goes above and beyond to help new and old Raisers with anything that they need. We are honored to have Anne-Marie be a part of our team and could not be more thankful for all the hard work she has done for this organization." – Rea Samuels, NEADS Puppy Raiser Instructor

"Anne-Marie is an invaluable asset to the NEADS Weekend Puppy Raiser program. She is always available to offer support and help in any way she can. Not even a broken leg and surgery can slow her down! Getting the weekend program up and running again after Covid shutdowns wasn't easy, and we couldn't have done it without her knowledge and support." – Sam King, NEADS Puppy Raiser Instructor

"When I think of the volunteers for NEADS, Anne-Marie is always the first person I think of. She is always willing to help out, whether it's training a new Raiser or doing something to help the NEADS staff. She's a wealth of knowledge on how to handle pups or where to go for specific field trips. As a Council member, she's great to work with. She is thoughtful and brings creative ideas."

– Annette McBride, Volunteer Puppy Raiser

BREEDING & PUPPY DEVELOPMENT



BREEDING & PUPPY DEVELOPMENT manages the breeding program and cares for the broods and puppies in the Nursery and Laura J. Niles Early Learning Center

Covid-19 had a drastic impact on our puppy acquisition, requiring us to ramp up our breeding program production much more quickly than we originally planned. Prior to Covid-19, we typically acquired 50 to 60 puppies from outside sources each year. This past fiscal year, we acquired three. This put pressure on increasing the size of our breeding colony in order to put enough puppies into the program to support our mission.

Breeding and Puppy Development went from raising six litters a year before Covid-19 to raising 15 litters this fiscal year. The large increase in litters meant at times we were raising three to four litters at a time, compared to one to two the previous year. Through these efforts, we put a total of 58 puppies into the program, 55 from our breeding program and three from outside sources.

Video conferencing has been a game changer. For the first time, we were able to hold volunteer orientations regardless of where people were located. We have also used this as a tool to stay connected to other volunteers, such as our Breeder Caretakers, and anticipate that we will continue to use it to some extent in campus volunteer programs going forward. We've found that whether we have good or less positive news to share, having conversations with volunteers over video gives us a way to connect in a way just not possible by phone.

– Kate Albertini, Manager of Breeding & Puppy Development



Breeding and Puppy Development staff (counterclockwise from top):
Kate Albertini, Corrine Donohue, Megan Kropf, Emilie Gagne, and Julia Prime



Breeding Center Capital Campaign

Thanks to the many donors who supported our Breeding Center Capital Campaign, including those who made a gift of \$5,000 or more.

Anonymous

214 Philanthropic Foundation

Abaris Financial Group

Copeland Family Foundation, Inc.

Deborah A. Hawkins Foundation

Elovitz Family Building #19

Foundation

Estate of Elizabeth W. Blumenthal

Hoche-Scofield Foundation

Laura J. Niles Foundation

Leominster Credit Union

McKeen Charitable Remainder

Trust

Merck Animal Health

Pardy Charitable Trust

RAWZ, Scott Family Wellness

Foundation

S & L Marx Foundation

Saint-Gobain Corporation

Foundation

Stoddard Charitable Trust

The Barker Foundation, Inc.

The Fletcher Foundation

The Health Foundation of

Central Massachusetts

The Montsweag Foundation

The Windbrook Fund

Tiffany & Co.®

Wester Matteo Charitable

Foundation

Assistance Dog Bentley and Friends

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Mr. Matthew Bruns &

Ms. Kelly Magnuson

Mr. & Mrs. Robert Burke

Mr. Graham Chevy

Mr. & Mrs. Larry Costa

Mr. & Mrs. Gerry DeRoche

Ms. Susan Feit & Mr. Drew Feit

Mr. John Fracasso &

Ms. Adelita Orefice

Ms. Kathleen Gleason

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Mr. & Mrs. James W. Henderson

Mr. Timothy Hilton &

Ms. Sara Jane Miller

The Kensky Downes Family

Mr. & Mrs. John Kornegay

Ms. Diane Lebel

Mr. & Mrs. Robert J. Lepofsky

Ms. Maureen Manning

Mr. & Mrs. Robert Melzer

Mr. & Mrs. Christopher Neylan

Mr. Tom Nolan &

Ms. Laura McTaggart

Mr. Scott Notargiacomo

Mr. Thomas O'Connor &

Ms. Martha Coakley

J.D. Power Family

Dr. A. Kim Saal

Ms. Pamela Siegel

Mr. Saul Skoler

Mr. Richard R. Storck &

Ms. Aletha A. Langham

Mr. Geoffrey Worrell

NEW NEADS BREEDING CENTER



DEVELOPMENT

DEVELOPMENT is responsible for all fundraising efforts, from Name a Puppy to annual appeals to Capital Campaigns. Grants and foundations, the NEADS Retail Shop, Community Fundraising, and Client Fundraising Support are all managed by the Development team.



One of the things the pandemic really drove home was just how important personal outreach is for the Development team. With limits on in-person events, we needed to find creative ways to stay engaged with our constituents. We “dunked the boss,” hosted an online Holiday Market, secured a \$20,000 match for Giving Tuesday, and sent a creative and comforting Holiday card for our annual appeal. This spring, we contributed over a dozen cutouts of NEADS dogs to help fill the stands of Polar Park, the brand-new Worcester ball park, when the stadium could only be at 25% capacity. Likewise, we worked with the Boston Red Sox to be sure that they had Service Dog teams for their Service Dog of the Game initiative. It is my belief that successful non-profit organizations should go outside their mission to engage the community and become a relevant and visible part of it. *Cathy Zemaitis, Director of Development*



NEADS Development team: Cathy Zemaitis, Lori Barrett, Melissa Baern, Amanda Charbonneau, Tracy Kelly, Hannah Kump

Puppy Love

Puppies brought Doreen Sheridan to NEADS. Puppies may just keep her here forever.

DOREEN RECENTLY TRANSITIONED from Supervisor of Foundation Relations to a part-time position managing the Name a Puppy, Doggie Dorm, and Sponsor a Litter programs. In her fundraising role, she was highly instrumental in the success of NEADS' Foundations for the Future Capital Campaign as well as growing NEADS' portfolio of institutional funders. Her work has had a big impact here—but it's not, she says, where her heart lies. That's with the puppies.

Through sharing puppy updates and photos, [Doreen] learns what special significance the name holds. "That sits in my heart."

Doreen joined NEADS in 2006 after a long career in criminal investigation, ready for something completely different. She found it in what was then the Laura J. Niles Puppy House (now the Early Learning Center), managing volunteer visits with the pups, and learning about their training and development. She went on to serve as assistant to three executive directors before joining NEADS' development team.

In every role, she has enjoyed working with donors who name puppies, often in honor of loved ones. Through sharing puppy updates and photos, she learns what special significance the name holds. "That sits in my heart," she says, and while ready



to step back from her full-time role, she wasn't ready to give up the puppies and their friends.

"Doreen completely revamped and re-vitalized the Foundation Relations department at NEADS, bringing not only professionalism, intelligence, and a quick sense of humor to her position, but also increasing foundation gifts to

levels previously unseen," says Director of Development, Cathy Zemaitis. "She remains the heart, soul, and moral compass of our organization, and we are all thrilled that she is staying on."

We all hope her love of puppies, and the generous donors who name them, keep her at NEADS for a long time to come.

A LEGACY OF LOVE

Diane Lebel & Alan Harris

IN KEEPING WITH THE RESIDENTIAL look and feel of the neighborhood, the new NEADS Breeding Center will feature a garden and a front porch commemorating Alan Harris, thanks to a generous gift made by his wife, Diane Lebel.



Alan, a lifelong lover of dogs, had embraced NEADS' mission. After his sudden death in 2020, Diane sought a distinctive way to honor his memory.

"I believe he found NEADS by cycling past it," Diane says with a laugh. "He knew every back road in Worcester County." The retired allergist divided his time between the couple's homes in West Boylston, Mass., and Tucson, Arizona. An avid cyclist, passionate outdoorsman, and craft beer aficionado, Alan always had a dog by his side.

We are both honored and grateful to steward Alan's legacy. Thank you, Diane, for establishing a permanent testimony to Alan's spirit here at NEADS.

Foundations

We would like to thank the following organizations for their generosity*:

214 Philanthropic Foundation
Barker Foundation, Inc.
Barney Family Foundation
Bennett Charitable Foundation
Emma and Georgina Bloomberg Foundation
Building 19 Foundation
CarMichael Foundation
Copeland Family Foundation, Inc.
Curtis O'Hara Foundation
Disabled American Veterans Charitable Service Trust
Don & Angie Seta Foundation
Doug Flutie, Jr. Foundation for Autism, Inc.
Evon D. and Jack H. Keck Foundation
Fletcher Foundation
Frantzman Scott Charitable Foundation
Gardiner Howland Shaw Foundation
George & Alice Rich Charitable Foundation
Greater Worcester Community Foundation – Rosemary Davis Memorial Fund, Katharine Higgins Riley Fund
Grimshaw-Gudewicz Charitable Foundation
Health Foundation of Central Massachusetts
Hebeler Foundation
Henderson Foundation
Herman Foundation
Hoche-Scofield Foundation, Bank of America, N.A., Trustee
Jack Satter Foundation
Jolyn Foundation Inc.
Kathryn Davis Grado Foundation
Kay Family Foundation, Inc.
Kenrose Kitchen Table Foundation
Kopf Family Foundation, Inc.
Lakeside Foundation
Laura J. Niles Foundation
Leclerc Charity Fund
Litowitz Foundation, Inc.
Marjorie M. Peloquin Foundation
Michael T. Sherman Foundation
Mildred H. McEvoy Foundation
Montsweag Foundation
Nadia Sophie Seiler Memorial Fund
Powell Foundation
Price Chopper's Golub Foundation

Robert Lloyd Corkin Charitable Foundation
Rockwell Foundation
S & L Marx Foundation, Inc.
Saint-Gobain Corporation Foundation
Stoddard Charitable Trust
Susan A. and Donald P. Babson Charitable Foundation
The Human Fund
Tower of Hope
Town Fair Tire Foundation, Inc.
Van Sloun Foundation
Wester Matteo Foundation
Winning Home, Inc.

**Funding received from foundations in FY 2021 (Sept 1, 2020 through Aug 31, 2021)*

Partner and Supporter Organizations

Partners

Blue Buffalo
Idexx Laboratories
Merck Animal Health
Payden & Rygel Investment Management
RAWZ Natural Pet Food
VCA Charities
Worcester 6K Memorial

Sponsors

Abaris Financial Group
The Black Dog
Blue Pearl specialty + emergency pet hospital
Boston Duck Tours
Oliver Inc.
Burke Distributing Corporation
D'Ambrosio Eye Care
PEAK Event Services
Red Sox Foundation
The Tower of Hope

SPOTLIGHT:

Planned Giving

When you name NEADS Inc. in your will, trust, life insurance policy, or retirement plan, you keep your assets available today and know you are helping World Class Service Dogs change lives in the future. Gifts to our planned giving program enable us to continue our goal of helping others help themselves through the use of our unparalleled canine assistants.

For more information, visit neads.org/plannedgiving.



19 CONSECUTIVE 4-STAR CHARITY NAVIGATOR RATINGS

Strong financial health and commitment to accountability and transparency have earned NEADS its 19th consecutive 4-star rating from Charity Navigator, America's largest independent charity evaluator. NEADS is one of the longest-standing nonprofits to hold this rating.



BLUE BUFFALO

NEADS is proud of its partnership with Blue Buffalo, a leading natural pet food company. Through this partnership, Blue Buffalo is the exclusive food provider for the dogs in the NEADS program, donating thousands of pounds of food each year to fuel our World Class Service Dogs.

Support Behind the Scenes

CAMPUS
OPERATIONS &
ADMINISTRATIVE

CAMPUS OPERATIONS

is a 3-person team that takes care of all the maintenance, inspections, and major and minor repairs required to keep the grounds, vehicles, five buildings, and technology infrastructure running. Often working behind the scenes, they make sure NEADS staff can do their jobs without interruption.

COMMUNICATIONS

COMMUNICATIONS

keeps the NEADS community – donors, volunteers, staff, and others – connected with the NEADS mission.

FINANCIAL
OPERATIONS

FINANCIAL OPERATIONS

manages the finances to make sure NEADS operates smoothly and is well positioned for future growth.

Rather than pull back during those uncertain, early days of the pandemic, we increased our communications through vehicles like email, social media, and our website in order to stay connected with our supporters, volunteers, and staff. This was especially critical during a time when our main connecting point was a screen. The increased level of communications was positively received by the community at large and will continue, even as our in-person activity resumes.

We also moved ahead with our plans to work with a PR firm, a commitment that began just prior to the pandemic. This professional resource has proven invaluable for volunteer recruiting, fundraising, advocacy, client acquisition, and much more. In October 2020, a campaign to recruit Full-Time Puppy Raisers allowed us to reach an audience we could not have reached on our own and yielded instant results. In April 2021, with the help of the PR firm, we hosted a media day to raise awareness about our Breeding Center capital campaign. The result? Front-page coverage in the *Boston Herald*.

–Audrey Trieschman, Manager of Communications



2021 NEADS: *By the Numbers*



42 VALUABLE STAFF MEMBERS*



KATE ALBERTINI
JANET ANDERSON
MELISSA BAERN
LORI BARRETT
LEAH BELL
SUSAN BERRY
MAGEN BLAKE
LISA BRALEY
KAELIN BRAMSON

DAVID BUTEAU
SEAN CARROLL
AMANDA CHARBONNEAU
GERRY DEROCHÉ
MADISON DOLAN
CORINNE DONOHUE
KATHY FOREMAN
EMILIE GAGNE
TYLER GRIBI

KATIE HANNA
SARAH HEINRICH
MICHELLE KATI
TRACY KELLY
SAMANTHA KING
MEGAN KROPF
HANNAH KUMP
KAREN LAPIERRE
MEGHAN O'BRIEN

KATY OSTROFF
JULIA PRIME
TAYLOR RHOADS
REA SAMUELS
CAITLIN SHAW
DOREEN SHERIDAN
ANDREW SHUSTA
BAILEY SULLIVAN
ANNA TEPE

AUDREY TRIESCHMAN
JULIE VAUTOUR
AMELIA WENDELL
ERIN WYLIE
CATHY ZEMAITIS

*EMPLOYED BY NEADS AS OF 8/31/21

2021 Financial Highlights

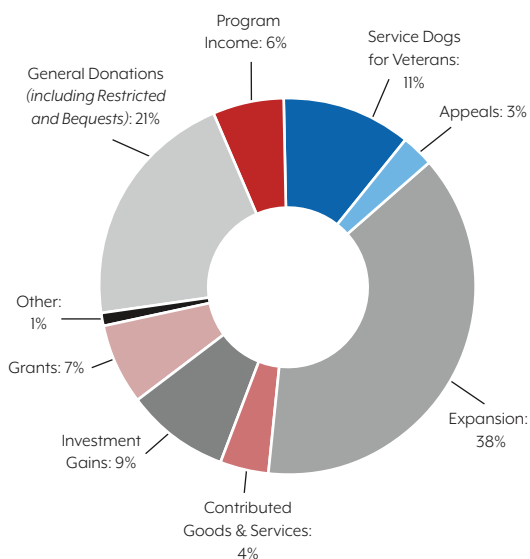
Operating Revenue

	2021	2020
General fees and contributions	\$4,509,800	\$2,357,961
Contributed goods, services and property	265,611	324,268
Grants and foundations	1,436,611	1,183,628
Interest income	4,291	2,531
Investment gains (losses)	587,869	268,894
Other income	1,962	1,501
<i>(Net assets released from restrictions)</i>		
Total support and revenue	\$6,806,144	\$4,138,783

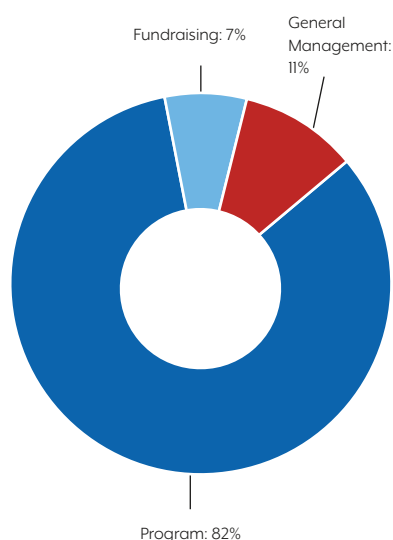
Operating Expenses

	2021	2020
Training program	2,774,205	\$2,765,782
Management and general	373,505	315,890
Fundraising	233,993	232,207
Total expenses	3,381,703	\$3,313,879
Change in net assets	3,424,441	\$824,904
Net assets, beginning of year	9,563,514	\$8,738,610
Net assets, end of year	\$12,987,955	\$9,563,514

SUPPORT AND REVENUE BY CATEGORY



EXPENSES BY CATEGORY



NEADS* Board of Directors*

Chair: Paul Jorner

Vice Chair: A. Kim Saal, MD

Clerk: Scott Notargiacomo

Treasurer: Graham Chevry

Vanessa Brown

Mary Casey

Sue Feit

James Hick

Carol Krauss

Kelly Magnuson

Kristen Massaro

Christine Pelletier

Tina Rice

Geoff Worrell

*Member of Board of Directors as of 8/31/21

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Kate Albertini, Megan Kropf, Tracy Kelly, Nate Photography (back cover), Cathy Zemaitis

Support and Stay Involved with NEADS

NEADS thrives on the hard work and generosity of a vast network of dedicated donors and volunteers. We are lucky to have supporters who are as passionate about our mission as we are...and we couldn't survive without them. Here are a few ways you can stay involved.



— Connect —



Facebook.com/
NEADSdogs



Instagram.com/
neadsdogs



Twitter.com/
NEADSdogs



Youtube.com/
NEADSdogs



Linkedin.com/
company/neadsdogs

Congratulations

TO OUR CLIENTS WHO COMPLETED THEIR TRAINING IN FY 2020/2021

Wytske Kingma & Fenway
Andrew Riddle & Champ
Janice Queijo & Martha
Sawyer Marston & Emmitt
Edison Boots & Lilly
Gabrielle McInnis & Riker
Charles Whittier & Arnie
James O'Malley & Sally
Jennifer Johns & Gavin
Betsy Hamill & Simba
Sheila Harrington & Reilly
Gabriel Bachour & Kacey
Michael Broughton & Ilsa
Carly Smrz & Franklin
Erin Doak & Prince
Kristin Moffat & Sophie
Tracey Stoll & Gleason

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Kevin Fenlon & MK
Danielle Lambert & Morrissey
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Talia Ze'evi & Ruby
Patrick Cogan & Knight
Grayson Bruttomesso-Clarke & Dessie
Nissa Thornton & Tucker
Kacper Rodzik & Ruckus
Nicholas & Luna
Heather Davis & Chelsie
Fred Ayers & Lincoln
Nicholas Miranda & Bruce Wayne
Nathan Lynch & Zeppelin



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World Class Service Dogs
fueled by World Class Food