



NEADS HERE AND NOW

NEADS World Class Service Dogs Change Lives

SPRING 2023

From the CEO

I often describe NEADS as many gears working in concert for the common goal of changing lives with our World Class Service Dogs. From breeding to training to matching the right dog with the right client, the number of people involved and the amount of coordination required is staggering.



This newsletter highlights some of the unique gears, or parts of our program, that you might not be aware of. For example, Breeding Center staff members, besides running our breeding program, also arrange to transport puppies and dogs to and from NEADS as part of our breeding co-op agreements. Meanwhile, the Trainers and Puppy Raiser Instructors follow a thoughtful, choreographed training process, always with the success of the dog in mind. And our Client Services and Training teams stay in regular contact with our clients for the entire working life of their dogs.

Donor support is critical to keeping these gears moving and comes in many different forms – individual donations, grants, partnerships, and support for our events. This April, we're thrilled to bring back the Pulling 4 Paws Truck Pull after a 3-year hiatus. We are grateful for the enthusiastic response we've received from teams joining in and sponsors alike. It's not too late to be part of this event – bring a team, sign up as a business supporter, or join us for an activity-packed family event on the 23rd. Find out more about the event on p. 3.

Gerry DeRoche, Chief Executive Officer

Taking Flight

*by Kate Albertini and Megan Kropf,
NEADS Breeding & Puppy Development*

In the fall of 2022, NEADS bred one of our broods, Cameron, to a stud dog named Felix from Southeastern Guide Dogs (SEGD). As part of our agreement, Southeastern Guide Dogs, located in Palmetto, FL, was to receive a female puppy from Cameron's litter when the puppy was eight weeks old. (The litter, born on November 24, was aptly named the Thanksgiving Dinner litter.) Gravy* was selected as the SEG D puppy.

Not many dogs have their first airplane ride when they're eight weeks old, but thanks to Puppies in Flight (PIF), a program offered by American Airlines (AA) through Assistance Dogs International (ADI), puppies like Gravy can be safely transported where they need to go. NEADS takes part in approximately 20 PIF transports each year.

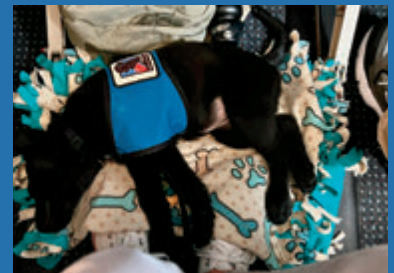
Puppies in Flight was started in 2014 to help move puppies and dogs between ADI-accredited Service Dog and Guide Dog organizations. Each year approximately 180 dogs are transported through this program by about 150 American Airlines employees. The employees volunteer their time and use their flight benefits to fly puppies in the cabin as Service Dogs in Training to various airports in the United States and Canada. The dogs must be at least 8 weeks old, have proper vaccinations, and travel with a current valid health certificate.

AA volunteers go through an orientation and hands-on training with dogs and puppies. In March, NEADS hosted three AA volunteers for the hands-on portion of their training. Breeding and Puppy Development Coordinator Megan Kropf taught the volunteers how to work with both an adult dog and a puppy. They learned how to use different equipment, what to be prepared for in an airport while walking with a Service Dog, and the commands the dogs or puppies typically know.

(continued on p.3)



AA volunteer Brandon safely transports Gravy from Boston to Tampa

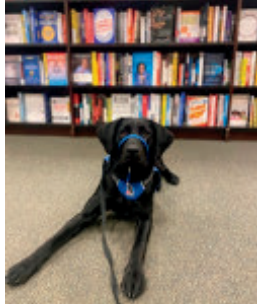


Gravy sleeps comfortably on her flight

Out & About with NEADS Service Dogs in Training

by Meghan O'Brien, NEADS Trainer &
Bailey Sullivan, Assistant Manager of Raiser Operations

It may look like fun and games when NEADS volunteer Puppy Raisers take our dogs on training field trips, but there's a purpose behind each visit. The trips are intended to ease the puppy into public settings, with the levels of distraction gradually increasing as the dog advances in its training. Slow and steady exposure to new sights, sounds, smells, people, and environments helps build a dog's confidence – critical to its work as a future Service Dog.



STORYTIME FOR MINNIE

Field Trip Level: Beginner

Exposure Goal: introduction to public environments



The library is one of the first places our dogs visit. Short visits to these quiet spaces set the dog up for success and become building blocks for the training that follows.

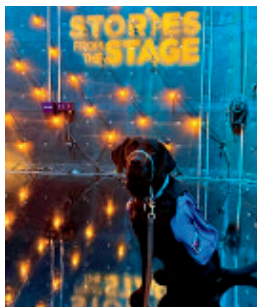
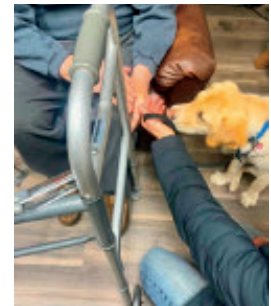


ALBERT VISITS A NURSING HOME

Field Trip Level: Beginner

Exposure Goal: different people, medical equipment

A nursing home offers plenty of opportunities for introducing new things to a young dog in a calm setting – people of different ages, medical equipment like the walker pictured here, and a variety of other sights and sounds. These are all important for developing that calm, confident behavior a Service Dog displays around all people in many different settings.



RIGBY TAKES THE STAGE

Field Trip Level: Intermediate

Exposure Goal: crowds, loud noises, tight spaces



This higher-level field trip to the theater is good for exposing Rigby to crowds and loud noises. He can practice being in tight spaces in the theater seating as well as a longer-duration "down, stay." A solid "down, stay" is important, as future clients may need the dog to stay put during a meeting, doctor's appointment, while out to dinner, and on many other occasions.

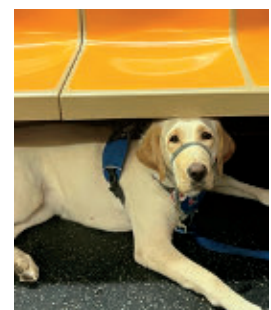


BETTY MASTERS THE SUBWAY

Field Trip Level: Advanced

Exposure Goal: small spaces, public transportation

A train or subway is a good environment for the dog in training to get used to small spaces and to also get comfortable taking public transportation. Here, Betty is positioned "Under" the subway bench, a place where she is less likely to be stepped on.



Raise a Puppy, Change Your Life

If you live in New England, love puppies, love to help, and would love to make a change in the community, please join us! NEADS World Class Service Dogs change lives every day, and you can be part of this life-changing story when you volunteer as a Puppy Raiser. Visit neds.org/ftr for details.

JOIN US ON APRIL 23RD

More than a dozen teams will put their strength to the test at the NEADS Pulling 4 Paws Truck Pull on April 23. Spectators are welcome to cheer on their favorite team and the whole family can enjoy a fun day at Polar Park.

Take a backstage tour of Polar Park and try your skill in the WooSox batting tunnels—how do you measure up to the big leagues? Challenge your friends to Giant Jenga and other family friends games and meet Smiley the WooSox mascot, all while DJ Mike Majikas spins tunes. Great ballpark food, beer, and wine will be available for purchase.

Tickets are \$10 for adults and \$5 for children under 13. Scan the QR code for tickets.



Sunday, April 23
11am-4pm
Polar Park, Worcester, MA
neads.org/p4p

Money raised by participating teams and our generous sponsors support our mission of providing independence to more clients through our World Class Service Dogs. Thank you to all our teams and sponsors, including:

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Batting Tunnels Sponsor
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MEET BOSTON



Official Timing Sponsor
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Business Sponsors: **Blue Buffalo Company, Curry Printing, Leominster Credit Union, O'Connell Plumbing, Inc., Reliant Medical Group, and The Black Dog.**

IN THEIR WORDS...

Samantha Dias and Assistance Dog for the Courthouse Chief



"For several months, Chief had been working with a 9-year-old boy who was prepping to testify in trial," says Samantha Dias, a Forensic Interviewer for the Bristol County (MA) District Attorney's Office. "This child was exposed to years of extremely cruel punishment and is very distrustful of people."

"The boy was invited to a special event at the courthouse, and when he was told he could bring a guest with him, he chose Chief. The smile that came across the child's face when Chief arrived at the event was priceless. The adoption worker who accompanied the boy had never seen him light up the way he did when he saw Chief." Says Sam, "Chief makes my job so much easier."

(Puppies in Flight, continued from p. 1)

A lot of coordination is involved in the transports.

To get Gravy to SEG, NEADS started by posting a travel request for her to fly from Boston to Tampa. AA employee Brandon volunteered for the job. Once he let us know which flight he was taking, NEADS arranged for Ellen Ferri, one of our transport volunteers, to deliver Gravy to Brandon at Logan Airport. At the other end, Southeastern Guide Dogs arranged for one of their volunteers to pick up Gravy when she arrived in Tampa with Brandon.

Gravy, now named Birdie, is with a Southeastern Guide Dogs Puppy Raiser and is learning all the basics in her Guide Dog training.

**NEADS puppies receive temporary names in the Breeding Center; they receive their official names once they enter a training program.*



NEADS World Class Service Dogs
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Princeton, MA 01541

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NEADS World Class Service Dogs change lives



SAVE THE DATE

JUNE

10

Polar Park,
Worcester, MA

NEADS Day at Polar Park

Watch the Worcester Red Sox face off against the Rochester Red Wings, enjoy an all-you-can-eat buffet on the Shaws Terrace, and wrap up the evening with a sunset catch on the field. \$5 of each ticket purchased is donated to NEADS.

neads.org/neads-day



SEPTEMBER

29

The Exchange,
Boston, MA

Get Dressed. Give Back

Join us for our annual fundraiser on the Boston waterfront. Enjoy a cocktail reception, music, a seasonal tasting menu, signature drinks, shopping opportunities, and a silent auction. Tickets & Sponsorships available soon.

