

The Brigadoon Barker

The Newsletter of Brigadoon Service Dogs - We change lives one partnership at a time by *offering a helping paw!*

Summer 2018



4759 Mission Road, Bellingham, WA 98226
360-733-5388
info@brigadoondogs.org
www.brigadoondogs.org



Letter from Denise Costanten Founder/Executive Director

Dear Supporters,

Well prayers have been answered since the last newsletter. More and more people are helping Brigadoon. Lots of people donated in Leon's memory, which was very thoughtful and appreciated.

Lots of new puppies have arrived. We have the 4 collie pups from our Zenyatta and AJ litter. This was Zenyatta's last litter, she was spayed last week. We recently received a Lagotto Romagnolo puppy, donated by Theresa Williams. Soon two more ABC lab puppies will arrive too. See page 11 for more puppy announcements.

Our 14th Annual Auction and Dinner is coming up September 8th (see page 3). I hope everyone can make it out.

Thank you all for your support.

Sincerely,

Denise

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Newsletter edited by Celeste Macevicius

Leon Costanten

Denise and Brigadoon suffered a lost on April 27th, 2018 as Denise's husband, Leon Costanten, passed away peacefully. Brigadoon would not be in existence without Leon. Without Leon, clients would not have gotten the benefit from a service dog or even a released dog. This is not to mention the many other programs that were able to start thanks to his support. As an expression of sympathy, contributions may be made in Leon's memory to Brigadoon.



Obituary

Leon M. Costanten passed away peacefully on Friday, April 27, 2018. He is now free of pain after a two year battle with cancer. LTC Leon M. Costanten ret. from the Army- Special Forces - 3 black op missions in Viet Nam, 2 purple hearts and medal of valours. Leon's life changed in a major way when he met and married his beloved Denise (his sweet Baboo) and moved to the Pacific Northwest in 1992. Without Leon, Brigadoon Service Dogs would never existed. He gave Denise the time and money to build Brigadoon into the fabulous Service Dog School that it is today. Leon is survived by his loving wife Denise, sister Arline, and nephews Dan, Pete, Brian, and Rich. Not to forget faithful dog Sophie, big dog Journey, Angel, AJ and Zenyatta.

Save the Date!



Our 14th Annual Auction and Dinner is booked for **September 8th** at the **Four Points by Sheraton Bellingham!!!**

Celebrate our 2017/18 graduates, enjoy a delicious dinner, and bid on fabulous prizes, all while supporting Brigadoon.

This is Brigadoon's biggest fundraiser of the year. Given our current serious financial struggles, the event has taken on even greater significance and importance.

You can help Brigadoon to continue our mission. Join us September 8th

More information can be found here:
<http://www.brigadoondogs.org/auction>

Locally Trained Brigadoon Service Dogs Enrich Lives across the Northwest

By Hannah Zoe

Reprinted from Whatcom Talk



As I walked into the kennel and training room at Brigadoon Service Dogs, the puppies were yipping and jumping for joy. It was all tails wagging and mouths smiling. A large black lab laid serenely nearby, watching with interest as I entered. He was an older graduate, a paragon of composure and a model for what the younger trainees may one day become.

A professional dog trainer for over forty years, founder Denise Costanten saw a gap in the supply of quality service dogs available nationwide. "I'm just a dog trainer but I saw a need and wanted to take my skills and use them to help people in the disabled community," she says.

Denise started her non-profit in 2004 and is accredited by Assistance Dogs International. She has received multiple awards and honors for her work. She stresses that Brigadoon's dogs are handled and trained with care and consistency, so they will be of real benefit to their future owner. "There are those fly-by-night service dog outfits that will give a shelter puppy some basic training and a vest, then sell the dog and disappear," Denise says. "We're not that. I care about connecting people with dogs that can really help them and ensure the dog is equally cared for. We train our clients for weeks before and after they've made the adoption."

In her first year of operation, Denise graduated three dogs. Since then the number has steadily risen and today Brigadoon averages ten service dog graduates a year with an unending waitlist for their adoptive homes. In order to get those ten, there are 20-30 dogs in training at various stages of development. Not all will become certified. "Perfect dogs aren't common," says Denise. "If I see a character trait that would prevent a dog from doing their service and it's not improving with training, I would rather release them from the program and adopt them out so they can join their forever home sooner rather than later."

In addition to using local volunteers to help raise the puppies in their homes, Brigadoon partners with three regional correctional facilities, including Stafford Creek where the dogs are paired with incarcerated veterans. “For each prison, I’ll spend a week training inmates on how to train our puppies,” explains Denise. “I’ll bring a dog that is close to graduating to demonstrate all the handling skills, like how to hold a leash and walk through doors.” Denise also leaves the new trainers with some extra references, including five DVDs and the classic book, *Don’t Shoot The Dog!* by Karen Pryor.

Denise has heard from wardens that her program has had a profound effect on the inmates caring for the dogs. “There was an inmate who was always celled alone and didn’t really communicate with others,” she says. “When he began working with one of our dogs, he really opened up and his behavior changed because of it – he let people in again. It’s really a wonderful thing, how the responsibility of caring for a dog can be a part of someone’s rehabilitation.”

Brigadoon trainers and volunteers use only positive reinforcement techniques to modify behavior and are especially reliant on clickers. “Our training is all about keeping the commands and rewards consistent across all the different handlers that a puppy works with,” explains Denise. “It’s what’s fair for the dog and it teaches them to do the same behavior for every person that asks it of them.”

Service dogs from Brigadoon find their forever homes all along the west coast, but many end up in south Puget Sound around the army base. For veterans with diagnosed PTSD, adopting a Brigadoon service dog is free of charge. For someone who has a traumatic brain injury or PTSD, a service dog can help with their balance, give them confidence in public and can even be trained to help them to take their medications.



Volunteer, Lisa Sohni, with Buttercup demonstrating one of her basic commands.

Brigadoon trains each of their dogs with the same foundational skill set. When they have matched them with a client, they fine tune their training to suit their particular needs. For a woman with impaired depth perception, her dog will stop before reaching a step or curb. For a gentleman with limited mobility, his dog can help open doors and turn on lights. “One family we worked with had a child on the spectrum who had the tendency to run, so we trained a dog to follow her scent so her family wouldn’t lose her in crowds,” Denise recalls. “In the end, when the family brought the dog home, the little girl stopped running away because she didn’t want to leave her new friend.”

For every Brigadoon Service Dog graduate, it takes \$30,000 worth of training time, lodging and fuel over their two years of schooling. Brigadoon doesn’t receive grants for their work and relies on community financial support and volunteers to keep them operating. For volunteer and board member, Lisa Sohni, supporting Brigadoon has been incredibly rewarding. “When you’re working with a dog, you get to be in the moment, just you and them. The world kind of melts away while you help them become someone’s rock in the future.”

Bill Signed to Combat Fake Service Dogs

On March 22, 2018, Governor Jay Inslee signed a bill that would make the offence of misrepresenting an animal as service animal a Class 1 Civil Infraction.

Only animals that fit the Americans with Disabilities Act definition of “service animal” are allowed in no-pet areas. The definition is as follows: dogs [or miniature horses] that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities. Unfortunately, there has been a recent surge of people trying to bring their untrained dogs and other pets into no-pet areas by misrepresenting them as service animals.

Beginning on January 1st of next year, those who misrepresent their pet as a service animal could face a fine of up to \$500.

Need Help?

Do you have more questions about service animals and the law? There are resources available in your area!

British Columbia – Province of British Columbia - <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/justice/human-rights/guide-and-service-dog>

Oregon – Disability Rights Oregon - <https://droregon.org>

Washington – Washington State Human Rights Commission - <https://www.hum.wa.gov/>

Do Psychiatric Service Dogs Really Help Veterans with PTSD?

By Hal Herzog

Reprinted from Psychology Today

Psychology Today

I've seen the toll that war takes on the human psyche. During the Vietnam War, I was an Army medic working on a psychiatric ward in a military hospital in Georgia. In the psych-jargon of the time, our patients came with an array of impressive sounding diagnoses, the most common being "acute undifferentiated schizophrenia." In retrospect, I'm pretty sure that many of them were really suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder.

PTSD is at least as much of a problem now as it was back then. Twenty percent or more of the 2.6 million veterans deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan will suffer from PTSD, depression, or a related condition. And veterans have higher suicide rates than individuals who did not serve in the military. While some treatments for PTSD seem to be effective, high drop-out rates from treatment programs are a big problem. Some people believe that providing veterans with trained service dogs would help hundreds of thousands of veterans cope with post-traumatic stress. But are they right?

Uplifting media reports of veterans whose lives are made better by service dogs abound. Aside from anecdotes, however, there has been no solid empirical evidence to support these claims. In a 2015 review of studies of the effectiveness of animal assisted interventions for the treatment of psychological trauma, Dr. Maggie O'Haire of Purdue University found only two studies of military veterans. And even those reports were dodgy. One was a case study on a single veteran, and the other was an unpublished thesis that involved only six subjects.

Enter the Veterans Administration

The evidence that service dogs can improve the lives of veterans is so thin that the Veterans Administration will not pay for these dogs. Their reluctance is understandable as it can cost \$20,000 or \$30,000 to train a single psychiatric service dog. The VA says it needs evidence that these animals actually help veterans with PTSD, and in 2010, Congress directed them to give it a shot. In 2011, VA researchers initiated a pilot study. Unfortunately, things started going south from the outset. First, the researchers had problems recruiting subjects for the control group. Then dogs bit two children. Finally, several of the dogs developed hip dysplasia, one died from heart disease and another from cancer. In short, the pilot project was a disaster, and it was halted in 2012.

Although their first attempt at a PTSD research project failed, the Veterans Administration is now undertaking a new study which has promise. It is a randomized control trial involving both trained psychiatric service dogs and untrained emotional support dogs. The project is slated to last 18 months, and you can read about it here.

The results of the VA study will not be available for a year or two. But the findings of new study on veterans with service dogs by Maggie O'Haire and Kerri Rodriguez of Purdue University are already in. And the results look promising.

The Purdue Study of Veterans with PTSD

The research involved a collaboration between the Purdue University researchers and K9s for Warriors, a Florida-based non-profit that provides service dogs to military veterans with PTSD. The study involved 141 Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans suffering from PTSD. Seventy-five of the vets were paired with trained service dogs (the dog group) while the other 66 were on the waiting list to get a dog (the wait list group). The vets in the dog group had their dogs for a month to four years. The animals were mostly Labs, Golden Retrievers, and mixed-breed dogs rescued from animal shelters. Like guide dogs for the blind, psychiatric service dog are highly trained to perform specific jobs. These include tasks such as:

- 🐾 Averting panic attacks.
- 🐾 Waking patients from nightmares.
- 🐾 Creating personal space comfort zones in public situations by standing in front of the veteran.
- 🐾 Reminding patients to take their medications.

Just like the dogs, the veterans also had to be trained. They were required to take an intensive three week course in which they lived in dormitories while they learned how to take care of and handle their new canine partners.

Measuring Psychological Distress

The most important results were based on existing information gathered by K9s for Warriors. The organization requires that individuals getting a service dog and those on the waiting list periodically complete a psychological inventory called the PTSD Check List, a 17-item scale that assesses PTSD symptoms. The scores can range from 17 to 85, and individuals with scores above 50 are diagnosed as having PTSD. Ten-point shifts up or down are considered “clinically meaningful.” This means they have shown substantial improvements or have gotten worse.

At the end of the study, individuals in the dog group and those on the waiting list also took a series of scales designed to assess other aspects of their mental health in addition to the PTSD checklist. These included measures of depression, physical and mental quality of life, satisfaction with life, and their ability to cope with adversity (resilience). The veterans also completed several scales designed to assess their levels of social functioning and their work productivity. *Continued on page ADD*

Testimonials from Brigadoon’s Own PTSD Dog Program, Canines and Heroes for Independence

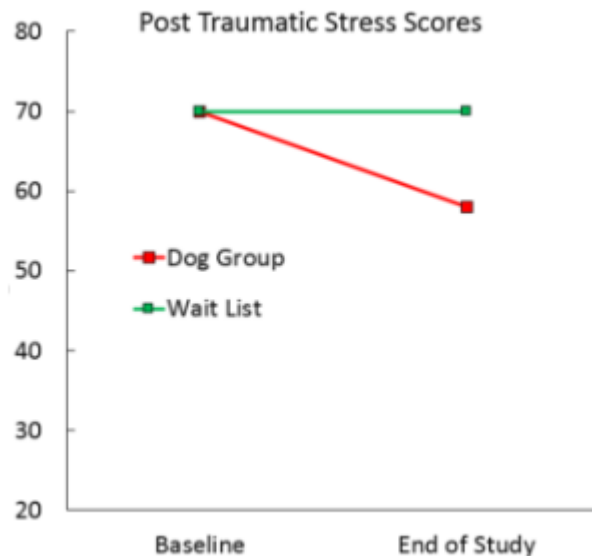
“Smoke gives me the confidence I need to know things are going to be OK” – Joshua Tanton

“He’s been my courage on four legs. When my anxiety’s kicking in, here’s there for me. I couldn’t go anywhere without him.” – Jason Haack

“I still have the problems. But to get out in public and get back out to do things like that, yeah, I mean he’s helped tremendously. He’s done an awesome job” – Brian Henry

The Good News....

The results of the study are encouraging. Take, for example, PTSD symptoms.



Graph by Hal Herzog
Source: Graph by Hal Herzog

As shown in this graph, when they initially signed up to be paired with a service dog, the veterans in both groups had virtually identical scores on the PTSD symptoms checklist. However, when they took the test at the end of the study, the scores of the dog group had dropped, on average, 12 points. In contrast, the PTSD scores of the individuals on the waiting list had not changed at all.

In addition, the veterans with dogs also were better off than the wait list group in many other ways. The dog group had:

- 🐕 Lower depression scores
- 🐕 Better mental quality of life scores
- 🐕 Greater satisfaction with life
- 🐕 Higher levels of psychological well-being
- 🐕 Better abilities to cope with adversity
- 🐕 Lower social isolation scores
- 🐕 Greater ability to get out and participate in social activities

The veterans in the dog group also missed work less and show fewer impairments on their jobs. Impressively, many of these differences had, in stat-speak, “large effect sizes.” This means that having a service dog was associated with big differences in the lives of the participants.

What Does It Mean and Where To Go Next?

This research provides the best evidence we have that psychiatric service dogs may reduce PTSD in veterans. O'Haire and Rodriguez, however, are careful not to make exaggerated claims about their results. They point out, for example, that while the PTSD Check List scores of the dog group dropped a "clinically significant" 12 points, the veterans in the dog group were not "cured." Their scores, on average, remained above 50 on the PTSD Check List.

Indeed, the researchers regard their efforts as a pilot study, and in their article, they discussed some of the limitations of their research. Among these are the lack of random assignment of veterans to conditions, the fact that the changes observed in PTSD symptoms could be due to maturation rather than the presence of the dogs, the reliance on self-reports, and the lack of a true control group. Finally, as Kerri Rodriguez pointed out to me in an e-mail, the degree their findings would apply to the average military veteran is unclear because their sample is biased towards individuals who wanted a service dog.

O'Haire and Rodriguez consider this research a preliminary study demonstrating that it is possible that service dogs can ameliorate the symptoms of PTSD. What we need, of course, is a prospective clinical trial in which some veterans suffering from PTSD are assigned to a service dog group and others to a control group. The study would need to have sufficient "statistical power" (enough subjects) and, ideally, long-term follow ups. Such a study would, of course, take time, effort, and, most importantly, money. The good news is that, based on these preliminary results, the Purdue researchers were able to convince the National Institutes of Health to provide funds for a clinical trial. Their study is currently underway with the results expected in 2019.

I've got my fingers crossed.

Access the article online here

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/ca/blog/animals-and-us/201802/do-psychiatric-service-dogs-really-help-veterans-ptsd>

Answers to Puzzle on page 14

Answer Key
Collie – Scotland
Miniature Schnauzer – Germany
Pit Bull – USA
Pug – China
Dalmatian – Croatia
Cocker Spaniel – England
Havanese – Cuba
Vizsla – Hungary
Siberian Husky - Russia

Meet our New Puppies!



Oscar, Jackson, Zulu, Campbell, and Bravo

These four puppies are Labrador Retrievers. They are Family Alliance for Veterans of America dogs. Currently these pups are in puppy homes, learning new things, experiencing the world, and getting tons of love! (Zulu pictured)



Professor (Sir)

Professor, or as we call him, Sir, is a yellow lab. He is part of the American Breeding Cooperative Already, this little pup has been on two flights – all the way from Minneapolis!

Sharing the Love

Check out these recent Facebook posts by some of our puppy raisers! Do you have a Brigadoon-related picture you want to share with us? Tag or message us on Facebook at @BrigadoonServiceDogs! Your photo could be shared to our page or put in the next issue of the Brigadoon Barker!



Cruz News: "My 1st Tea Party! I do hope we have more of these! All I have to do is sit nicely on a forbidden couch and I get served special treats! This is the life. And why yes, these are pearls around my neck!"



Growing Up Guide Pup: "Oscar met a young kitty tonight. He was so good even when the kitten bopped him on the nose!"

Prison Program Press

A Special Brigadoon Barker Feature

This special new feature will showcase news & views from our prison programs.

What Have You Gotten Out of This Program?

Cedar Creek Trainers Respond

I would first like to start off this letter by thanking Denise and Cedar Creek Correction Center for offering a program that lets me be able to give back to society. This program has helped me build the skills that Cedar Creek's funding could not. Being caring, patient, and being able to figure out different methods to obtain my goals of training. It has also showed me how to become part of a team and a leader to others.

Thank you Denise

RB

For six months now I have been in the program. It has allowed me to see and fix flaws in the way I handle situations or people. I enjoy seeing the results that come from patience and work.

It's also pretty cool being able to live with a dog

Shawn Mullen

Special Visitor!

This spring, we got a special visit from Louie, who was one of our dog trainers while he was in Stafford Creek. Louie is doing well, getting ready to start up his own business!

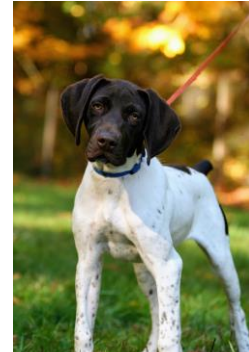


Summer Sun Safety

Summer is a very fun time to have a dog. Here are some tips to ensure you can enjoy summer to the fullest with your dog:

- 🐾 Never leave your dog in a hot car. It only takes a few minutes for the interior temperature of a car to reach upwards of 100 degrees on a hot day
- 🐾 Ensure your dog always has access to cold, fresh water
- 🐾 Exercise your dog in the mornings and evenings to avoid the hottest hours of the day
- 🐾 Ensure your dog has cool places to rest at home and out and about. For example, shady spots, basement and linoleum-floored rooms, and air-conditioned spaces. Soaking a towel in cold water makes a great bed to cool down on
- 🐾 Have fun cooling down
 - Get your dog wet – a game with the hose, kiddie pool, or trip to the lake are 3 fun options
 - Make frozen treats for your dog from low-sodium meat broth, baby food, etc. Or give an ice cube
 - Check out the latest cool-down gear at the pet store, such as cooling mats or freezable toys
- 🐾 Maintain your dog's health
 - Keep your dog at a healthy weight to reduce the risk of heat stroke
 - For non-shedding breeds like poodles, give your dog a summer haircut. (Do not shave your dog otherwise! It damages the coat)
- 🐾 Avoid hot pavement. If you cannot hold the back of your hand to the pavement for 5 seconds, the pavement is too hot for your dog's paws and will burn them.
- 🐾 Learn the early signs of dehydration and heat stroke
 - Dehydration – loss of appetite, reduced energy, panting, sunken eyes, dry nose and gums, loss of skin elasticity
 - Heat stroke - panting, dehydration, excessive drooling, low energy, increased body temperature, red gums, loss of appetite

Breed Profile: German Shorthaired Pointer



Brigadoon uses a wide array of breeds. Meet one breed we train, the German Shorthaired Pointer!

Original purpose: Hunting

Size: 45-60 lbs (female) & 55-70 lbs (male)

Coat: Smooth. Speckle markings and colored patches. Though the coat can come in many variations of black and brown, the American Kennel Club recognizes liver or liver and white.

Temperament: Intelligent bold, cooperative, trainable, energetic, affectionate

Fun Fact: As pointers, German Shorthaired Pointers have the pointing instinct to freeze and point their nose towards game. Other pointing breeds include German longhaired and wirehaired pointers, Weimaraners, Vizlas, and Setters.

Brigadoon German Shorthaired Pointers: Gunner (pictured above)

Fun Page!

Quiz:

1. What is the best way to support Brigadoon this fall while having an excellent time?
2. Where can you go to enjoy a special evening with good food, excellent auction prizes, and fun?
3. How can you learn more about Brigadoon and see firsthand how Brigadoon dogs are changing peoples' lives?

Brigadoon's 14th Annual Auction and Dinner!

4. When and where is the Annual Auction taking place?

September 8th at the Four Points by Sheraton Bellingham

5. How can I find out more information and buy my tickets?

Go to <http://www.brigadoondogs.org/auction>

Options to purchase ticket will be posted to the above webpage shortly. You can also follow us on Facebook to get all the latest updates!

Dogs of the World Puzzle

Match the dog breed with its country of origin!
Answers on page **ADD**

Collie	United States
Miniature Schnauzer	Croatia
Pit Bull	Russia
Pug	Scotland
Dalmatian	England
Cocker Spaniel	Cuba
Havanese	Germany
Vizsla	Hungary
Siberian Husky	China