

**DOGS** for  
better  
**LIVES**

ANNUAL REPORT  
2018-2019

# “Finding the right dog for me was well worth the wait.”

Mary Gamble of Dothan, Alabama, Hearing Assistance Dog client

## Our Mission

Dogs for Better Lives is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that professionally trains dogs to help people and enhance lives while maintaining a lifelong commitment to all dogs we rescue or breed and the people we serve.

## Why We Do It

At Dogs for Better Lives, we believe it's an honor to be a part of something bigger than ourselves and we're impassioned with what we do. Operating as a team, we put the mission above the individual, trusting in one another to break through challenges and obstacles to maintain our mission of bettering lives by matching people with the amazing dogs we train.

## Our Values

**Care for the dogs** by keeping their well-being (physical, emotional and mental) at the root of all decisions.

**Care for clients** by providing our services with kindness, compassion and patience.

**Care for donors** by being responsible stewards of our “donor dollars” through mindful and conscientious use of company time and money.

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## Welcome from the CEO



Taking over a new leadership position can be challenging. There are a lot of things that need to be considered when developing new strategies, changing policies, implementing new ideas, and shifting culture. Managing change is hard and takes time. Now that I have been at Dogs for Better Lives for a little over a year, I am seeing change happen and it's very exciting. And one year from now, I know we'll see even more progress in our efforts to scale and grow.

In this annual report, you'll see our 'Why' and values. These are so important to us that we want to share them with you. They drive our decision making and how we interact with one another. They determine who we choose to join our team. But they don't quite provide you with insight on the culture we want to build at our organization.

One of my favorite Ted Talks is by Drew Dudley who is an expert on leadership. The principle he teaches is called Lollipop Leadership. Drew starts his talk by asking how many people are comfortable calling themselves a leader. Most people are not. His theory behind why people answer that way is because we put leadership up on a pedestal and make it into something bigger than ourselves.

On Drew's last day of college, a girl came up to him and said, "I remember the first time we met, and it changed my life." The day before she was starting college, the girl burst into tears and told her parents she couldn't do it. She wasn't ready. She would fail. She just couldn't go to college. Her parents told her, "let's just go tomorrow to check it out and if you still don't feel comfortable, we'll go home." She agreed.

The girl was standing in line the next day to register for classes and a feeling of anxiety overwhelmed her. She had to quit and go home. At that very moment Drew came out of the student union building wearing a crazy hat and holding a bucket of lollipops. He started handing out lollipops to people in line. Suddenly, Drew saw her and stopped. He looked at the girl standing beside her, and told him, "You need to give a lollipop to the beautiful woman standing next to you." The young man, very embarrassed, reluctantly took the lollipop and handed it to her and as soon as she took the lollipop from him, Drew said, "Look at that. First day away from home and she's already taking candy from a stranger!" Everyone around them laughed. And in that moment when everyone was laughing, the girl knew that she shouldn't quit. She could do it. That's where she belonged. Four years later as she was getting ready to graduate college, she told Drew that story and told him that he was an incredibly important person in her life.

But Drew doesn't remember that moment at all. No recollection of it. An incredibly important moment for one person wasn't even impactful enough for another to be stored away into memory. That is Lollipop Leadership. It is every day moments where you make an impact on someone's life and you may not even realize it. Leadership is not about changing the world. It is about making a positive impact every day. And that will change the world.

That's what we strive for at Dogs for Better Lives, making a difference every single day. Throughout this annual report, you'll see stories about people who do just that. Stories that show the impact a dog makes on the life of a client. The impact a volunteer makes by giving his or her time, allowing us to be more cost-effective. The impact a donor makes on the life of a client through giving. The impact that a puppy raiser makes by training and housing a dog until ready for professional training. You and all the people whose stories we share join us to make a difference. We thank you from the bottom of our hearts for whatever role you play in bettering lives through the amazing dogs we train and place with clients all over the country. You are living embodiments of Lollipop Leadership and, even if you don't realize it, there is someone out there who would say, you changed my life.

Thank you for bettering lives,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bryan Williams".

Bryan Williams  
President & CEO

## Major Gifts

# Adding to the ability to change lives

Beth Brenner of San Diego, California loves dogs. She even served as a foster puppy raiser once for a guide dog service in California. When she and her husband, Rich, were in southern Oregon's Rogue Valley to attend the renowned Oregon Shakespeare Festival, they decided to visit Dogs for Better Lives' (DBL) facilities out of curiosity.

"I was very impressed with the work they do, especially that they rescue dogs from shelters," she said. "We kept going back every couple of years to visit."

**"I think Dogs for Better Lives is extremely progressive and willing to change based on what they discover from their own experience."** Beth Brenner

Following the organization through the years, Beth was enthusiastic about the expansion of the mission to include other types of service dogs.

"I think Dogs for Better Lives is extremely progressive and willing to change based on what they discover from their own experiences," she said. "As a former middle school teacher, I'm aware of the issues for students on the autism spectrum and I thought that was a wonderful addition."

Beth decided that when her individual retirement account came due, she would donate it to Dogs for Better Lives to support the area of greatest need.

"I wanted to give it to Dogs for Better Lives to use for whatever they needed it for that year," she said. "I like to help the organization with their endeavors."



Rich and Beth Brenner

## Hearing Assistance Dogs

# Keeping active with Carli

Mary Gamble of Dothan, Alabama has worn hearing aids for 30 years, and as she approaches her 90th birthday, age is stealing what little hearing she has left. Since her husband died, she discovered she was missing phone calls and drop-in visits from friends because of her poor hearing. She was hoping for help to maintain her active business and social life. She applied to Dogs for Better Lives and waited.

“When I received the picture of Carli and that she would be placed with me, I was so very happy!” Mary said. “Finding the right dog for me was well worth the wait. Though I’ve had many dogs over the years, Carli is my first Hearing Dog.



Mary Gamble and CHD Carli

At home, she alerts me to my cellphone, the doorbell or someone knocking. She also alerts me to my cellphone at work.”

**“Finding the right dog for me was well worth the wait.”** Mary Gamble

Mary owns a storage business and often is about town visiting the courthouse, post office, grocery store and banks as well as attending church. She is enjoying having a companion with her in public.

“Carli obeys beautifully,” Mary said. “She wasn’t really trained to alert me for kitchen sounds, but she does. She also has an amazing way to let me know she is trying to tell me something. I am learning to speak ‘dogease’ slowly! She will come to me and twitch her tail with a little dance to let me know she needs attention.”

## Guardian Society

# Leaving a legacy

When their mother died in the late 1970s, siblings Dorothy and Don Seiwel of Lancaster, California wanted to do something in her honor and to remember their late father. Both educators, their co-workers kindly took up a collection to contribute to the memorial. Both Seiwells were members of a Good Sam Club, and they had heard about a new organization that trained Hearing Assistance Dogs. They decided to take a trip to Oregon to check it out.

“Our dad had tinnitus the last decade of his life, and that was a hardship for him,” Dorothy said. “After seeing the dogs training, we decided to sponsor our first dog. We got a letter from the people who received that dog, telling us the ways the dog had changed their lives. It assured us that the donation was worthwhile and improving the quality of life for people with hearing difficulties.”

**“We wanted our donation to be growing and sustaining, even if it’s not a tremendous amount.”** Don Seiwel

The pair have sponsored several additional dogs over the decades, as well as donating food and toys for the dogs.

“We know the change it makes in a person’s life to get one of these dogs, so we decided several years ago that when we are no longer around, a percentage of our money will go to the designated endowment fund at Dogs for Better Lives,” Donald said. “We’re not rich, but we’re doing what we can. We wanted our donation to be growing and sustaining, even if it’s not a tremendous amount. But that way, every year the organization will have money coming in, and that can make a big difference.”

Dorothy agreed, saying, “Dogs for Better Lives has grown and become so well-known nationally among the people in Good Sam Clubs. We just want to add what we can to keep it going.”



Dorothy and Don Seiwel

*In the last fiscal year, Dogs for Better Lives received \$539,885 from individuals who chose to support our life-changing mission by making a future gift through their will or trust. For more information on how you can become a member of our Guardian Society, contact us at (541) 826-9220.*

## Autism Assistance Dogs

# Julián is not alone anymore

Rosa Ochoa will never forget the day the doctor gave Julián, her 1 ½-year old son, a diagnosis for autism. She was only just learning English, as she had recently moved to Medford, Oregon from Mexico City.

“We thought Julián just needed a shot or something and it will go away,” she said. “We hear the word ‘autism’ and we don’t know what it means. Everything they give us is printed in English. We felt very alone.”



Julián, AAD Vanilla and Family

Despite the initial language barrier, Rosa became a determined advocate for Julián, who is now 9 years old. She learned about Autism Assistance Dogs at Dogs for Better Lives’ Facebook page.

“We never had a dog before, but when I see this in the news about autism dogs, my brain is like, ‘Julián can benefit from that’,” she said. “Julián doesn’t know how to find friends and we want him to be more independent. Since we brought Vanilla to our home, we are seeing a huge difference, and Julián is so happy.”

Vanilla’s presence helps the family in many ways, Rosa said. By having to care for her, she teaches Julián responsibility, and her need for daily exercise is boosting Julián’s activity level. Vanilla is a comforting presence when they go out of the house, and she can calm Julián when he has a meltdown.

“If Julián doesn’t feel good at a place, he will run away,” Rosa explained. “With Vanilla, he has to hold the leash. If Julián wants to run away, Vanilla just holds him. Vanilla knows we have to walk with mom. If he is upset or angry, Vanilla can ‘smush’ him by pressing a paw on him, and he feels better.”

As a Latina, Rosa hopes their family’s example will inform other parents for whom English is a second language that they can access services that will help their children.



AAD Vanilla

### Expansion plans for Autism Assistance Dog Program

DBL’s donors are initiating what will eventually be a national program to dramatically enhance the lives and futures of more children like Julian. In fall 2019, DBL extended the Autism Assistance Dog Program beyond the borders of Oregon and Washington, to now include California.

## Monthly Giving

# Animal companions are good medicine

A semi-retired family physician, Dr. Stephen Leighton of Mocksville, North Carolina is aware of the incredible benefits service dogs bring to their people.

"The partnership between humans and animals is awesome," he said. "Beyond our medical system, I think there is much more that could make people's lives dramatically better. Fortunately, the usefulness of service animals is one of those areas that has gained solid recognition."

When vacationing with friends in Oregon 15 or so years ago, Leighton and his group decided to take a tour of DBL. After the visit, Leighton decided to add DBL to the short list of charitable organizations he supports.

**"I'm confident the money I share with them goes for a good purpose that makes a positive difference in the world."** Dr. Stephen Leighton

"The Dogs for Better Lives staff scour the animal shelters in the Northwest for dogs that have been abandoned who might make appropriate service dogs," he noted. "Making an animal's life purposeful appeals to me as it expands the life of the dog, and those of us who have pets know it expands their human companions' lives as well. I like that approach. It just resonated with the way I see humanity's need to interact with the animal kingdom."

Naturally, Leighton also checked out DBL's reputation and fiscal responsibility.

"There are a lot of organizations that do good work around the world, but it can be a struggle sometimes to find ones that use their money well," he said. "A lot of good work in this world is tainted by the financial side of it. When I look at this organization, I don't see that interfering. I'm confident the money I share with them goes for a good purpose that makes a positive difference in the world."



Dr. Stephen and Deborah Leighton



## Foundation Giving

# Providing for needs regardless of income



Based in North Caldwell, New Jersey, Frog Crossing is a small foundation with a mission of supporting animals and women/girls. Board member Elle Levenson said it can be challenging to find grantees that live up to the mission of making a difference, and to also do so in an efficient manner.

“Dogs for Better Lives is very specific about funding uses,” she said. “Their services for people who might not otherwise have other resources to acquire Assistance Dogs is incredibly valuable work. We are proud to recognize and support their important work for the community of people who benefit from the training and expertise of their pups.”

**“We want our money to make a difference, and we like what Dogs for Better Lives accomplishes with it.”** Elle Levenson

The benefit to the individual receiving one of DBL’s highly trained Assistance Dogs is clear to the board members of the Frog Crossing Foundation.

“These dogs make their lives easier, safer and more enjoyable,” Elle said. “We want our money to make a difference, and we like what Dogs for Better Lives accomplishes with it.”



## Facility Dogs

# Rambler's calming presence eases anxiety

One gentleman reluctantly returning for additional cognitive testing for Alzheimer's disease at Spokane Psychology and Neuropsychology said, "The only reason I'm here is because I want to see the dog."

Rambler is just the reassurance many of the patients need when they come to see neuropsychologist Winifred Daisley. From toddlers to seniors, Winifred works with people who have brain function effects from diseases such as dementia, tumors and Parkinson's disease as well as injuries from concussion or stroke and learning and behavior issues like autism and ADHD.

"Working with the population I do, I thought it would be comforting and reassuring if we had a well-trained, reliable service dog," Winifred said. "It has turned out far better than we had even hoped."

Rambler is the successor of Jackson, Winifred's first dog from DBL. A rescue who was starved as a puppy, Jackson was too distracted by food to be a Hearing Assistance Dog, so he made a career change as one of DBL's first Facility Dogs.

"I had a patient with post-traumatic stress disorder that couldn't talk about those experiences unless he sat on the floor with Jackson," Winifred said. "He would pet Jackson's head and then begin to talk."

After Jackson died, Rambler took his place.

"Rambler has an incredibly calm disposition," Winifred said. "When people first come to a psychologist's office, they often have anxiety. A sweet dog to greet them is comforting."

Winifred has lots of stories about how the two dogs have influenced patients and staff. She's seen people with dementia brighten up and come to life when they see a dog. She's seen children on the autism spectrum who have difficulty relating to people happily interact with a dog, showing more of their true potential. She believes more psychology offices could benefit from service dogs.

"I think a lot of my professional colleagues don't even know about this resource," she said. "We aren't given a class in how to work with an animal as part of training. But both my dad and my grandpa were veterinarians, so I know how amazing animals can be."



Winifred and FD Rambler

**"When people first come to a psychologist's office, they often have anxiety. A sweet dog to greet them is comforting."** Winifred Daisley

# Corporate Giving Dedicated to Giving Back

Since 2017, local and national businesses have given nearly \$60,000 in support of DBL's mission to rescue and breed dogs and train them to work with individuals who seek greater independence and safety in their daily lives. Their support has helped to create a Canine Exam Room in the new training facility and placed an Autism Assistance Dog in the home of a child who experiences Autism.

Soon, our corporate sponsors will have helped to complete needed upgrades to the original kennel facility built back in the 1980s. When the original kennel was built, the technology and infrastructure supported the needs of 20 small rescue dogs. But now, the kennel doors and lighting are outdated and may create safety hazards for the staff and volunteers. Upgrades will be cost-effective, as the updated LED lighting will save energy and new doors will allow for streamlined cleaning and sanitizing of the kennels each day. The upgrades will also eliminate the possibility of accidental locking that was a concern with the previous latching mechanisms.

## Partnerships for Better Lives

Applaud them. Support them. Join them.

### Executive Level

Brown & Brown Northwest Insurance  
Coming Attractions Theatres  
Ecluse Wines - Lock Vineyard  
Harry & David  
Jerry and Donnis Lausmann Foundation  
Kogap Enterprises  
Little Caesars Pizza  
Mercedes Benz of Medford  
Paul Smith, Nelson Maler and Norman Fincher  
at Morgan Stanley

### Senior Level

Ascentron  
Banner Bank  
Centria Healthcare LLC  
Dixie Hackstedde,  
Principal Broker, John L. Scott  
Rogue Benefits Planning  
RKD Alpha Dog Marketing, Inc.  
Master Stitch Inc.  
Pacific Office Automation

### Partner

Advocate Insurance Services  
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DANCIN Winery  
Elemental Graphic Design  
Northwest Retirement Plans, Inc.  
Pet Essentials  
SkyOak Financial  
Star Body Works  
The Brand Build

To join this unique group of leaders or for more information, contact Wanda Cockey at (541) 423-8326 or [wanda@dogsforbetterlives.org](mailto:wanda@dogsforbetterlives.org)



Celebrating our corporate partners who changed the life of a boy on the autism spectrum.

## Community Club Giving

# Lions take pride in supporting hearing efforts

In four short months last year, Wes King of Brookings, Oregon rallied fellow members of Lions Clubs throughout the state to raise \$42,000. This became seed money to qualify for a grant from Lions Club International Foundation to support the new Training Facility at Dogs for Better Lives. Wes said he may have burned through a set of tires traveling to meetings to give talks and raise funds, but it was worth it to present a check for \$85,000 from Lions Clubs International, for a total contribution of more than \$120,000.

“The need was there, and when the need is strong enough, you put forth more effort,” he said. “Everyone knew the passion I had for it and that probably helped as well. People walk right up to me even now and hand me a check for Dogs for Better Lives, saying, ‘I believe in what you believe in.’ That’s a pretty good feeling.”

**“I thought their mission dovetailed with what we can do. We can help with audiologists and hearing aids, but sometimes that doesn’t satisfy all the need.”** Wes King

Wes has been a member of the Brookings Harbor Lions Club for 17 years.

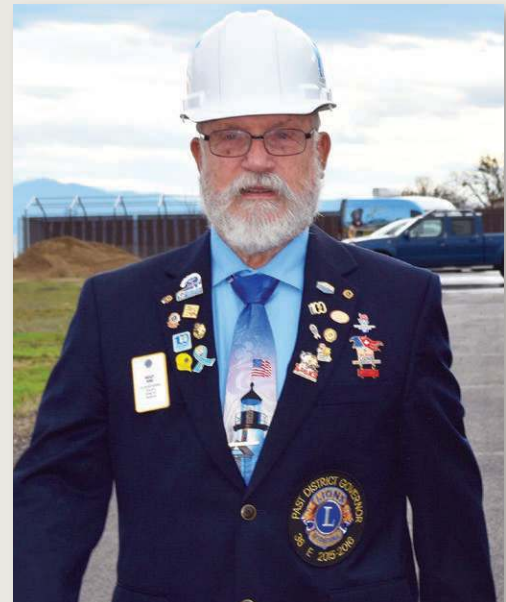
“The primary mission with Lions Clubs is sight and hearing,” he said. “For example, we screened approximately 200,000 children in Oregon this year for sight and hearing difficulties. With Dogs for Better Lives, I thought their mission dovetailed with what we can do. We can help with audiologists and hearing aids, but sometimes that doesn’t satisfy all the need. Dogs can alert to sounds while also being a companion.”

Wes already had a relationship with DBL, having visited the facility and met the staff.

“I know the quality of the individuals and their passion for their work,” he said.

“I was also very interested in their efforts for children on the autism spectrum, because we are very much attuned with that need because of all the work we do with children.”

To help the organization educate the public about services and raise funds, Wes and fellow Lions Club leaders invite Dogs for Better Lives to attend local meetings and district conventions to make presentations.



Wes King, Past District Governor, Lions Club 36-E

## Ambassadors

# Following Floyd to spread the word

Before Floyd joined the family, Brent Mershon of London, Kentucky could run into a shop and pick up a few things and be on his way quickly. Now, accompanying Floyd in his bright orange vest, Brent expects errands to last longer.

"It's very rare that I won't be stopped by someone with a question," Brent said.

Realizing they were informal ambassadors anyway, Brent and his wife, Peggy, decided they could give back to the organization that had supplied a Hearing Assistance Dog and educate the public by officially joining the DBL Ambassador program.



Brent Mershon and HD Floyd

Follow Floyd and the Mershons on Instagram @floydismyears.

"At the time Brent was accepted for a Hearing Assistance Dog, he was the first recipient in Kentucky," Peggy said. "Most people don't even know there is such a thing as a Hearing Assistance Dog. As ambassadors, we have done two in-home interviews for other hearing dog applicants. One of the families saw an article about Brent and Floyd in our local newspaper, and that's how they learned about Dogs for Better Lives."

As representatives of DBL, Peggy and Brent understand what it's like to be on the receiving end of a home visit.

**"If the result is someone else gets some help, it's worth making the effort."** Brent Mershon

"You know what they are going through," Peggy said. "We remember how nervous we were and how much we wanted everything to go well. We try to put them at ease."

Brent and Floyd have actively hit the talk show circuit whenever they can find someone willing to listen, attending a couple of health fairs and a retired teachers association meeting recently. They love camping and travel, so as Good Sam members, they've talked around campfires and at a statewide rally.

"I got Floyd at next to zero cost; if I'd had to pay \$10,000 for a dog, it wouldn't have happened," Brent said. "Being an ambassador is a way to give back to Dogs for Better Lives. If the result is someone else gets some help, it's worth making the effort."

## Puppy Raiser

# Preparing Birch for an important job

As volunteer jobs tend to do, one small effort becomes a pathway to a bigger role.

"A holiday was approaching and our neighbor, who is a board member at Dogs for Better Lives, told us about a foster placement that didn't work out and that the 5-month-old puppy was back and would be spending the holiday alone," said Paul Loozen of Rogue River, Oregon. "We agreed to bring Belle home for the holiday, which turned into becoming her foster family. When it was time to give Belle back, she went on to become a Hearing Assistance Dog for a young woman."

Paul and his wife, Virginia Madigan, are now raising Birch until she is 14 months old.

"What you're doing as a puppy foster parent is giving a dog an incredible beginning," Paul said. "You have to realize puppy raising needs constant attention and care, and also be aware of behaviors to stop or reinforce. You provide a loving, highly stimulating home, but have the mindset from the outset that if you're successful in your job, the dog will go on to enhance the life of someone else."

**"What you're doing as a puppy foster parent is giving a dog an incredible beginning."** Paul Loozen

Foster parents agree to bring the puppies to DBL for weekly training.

"As puppy raisers, we are mostly providing obedience training and preparing our puppy for graduate school when she goes to Dogs for Better Lives and trainers take over full time," Paul said. "Depending on how well Birch learns the skills, she will be placed into one of the programs for autism, hearing or facility dogs."

When that day comes, Paul and Virginia will be sad but fulfilled.

"I'm sure I'll cry, but in the end, the stories you hear back from when they are placed and what they do for their people is very gratifying," Paul said. "Here's Birch: She could be part of a family with a child on the autism spectrum and totally change that child's life. What an immense opportunity that is!"



Virginia Madigan and Paul Loozen with Birch

# 2018-19 Financials

Audited as of September 2019

## Statement of Activities

### Support and Revenue

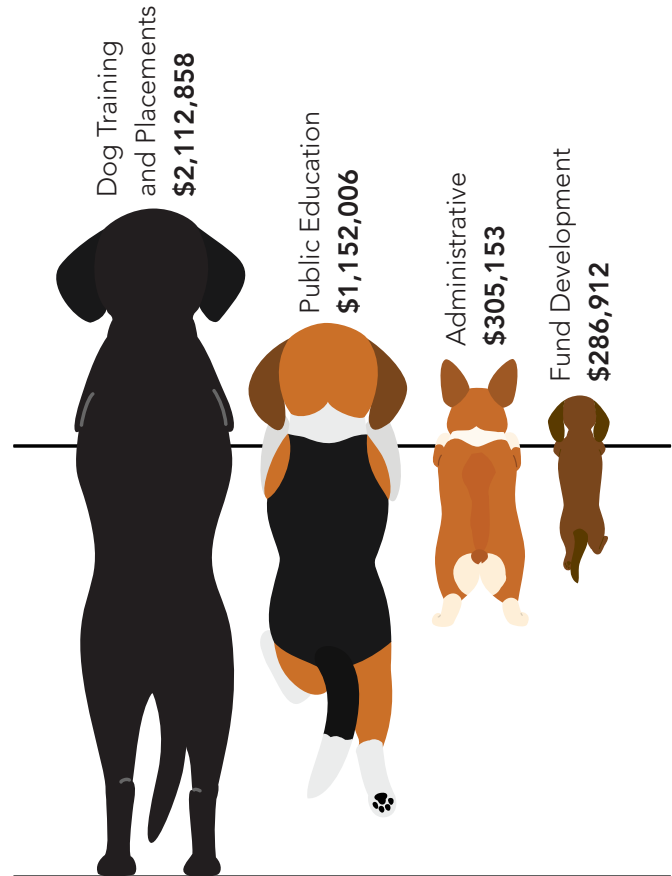
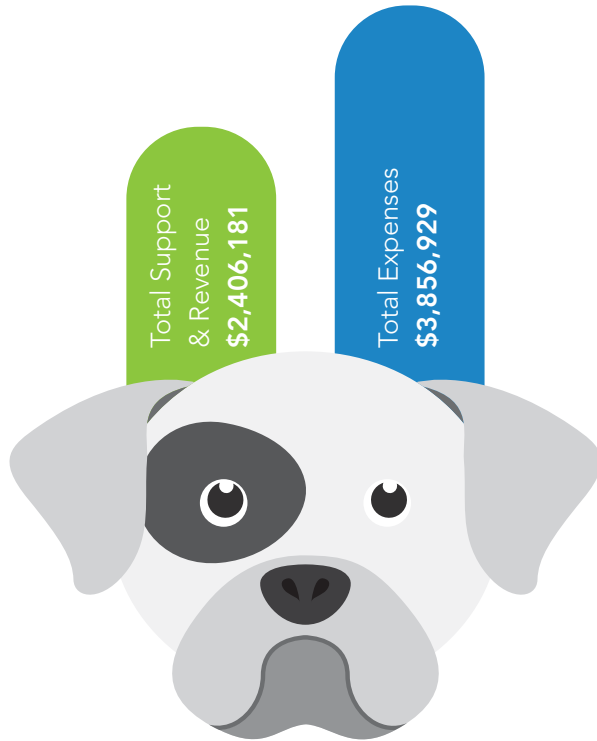
Individuals, Businesses and Clubs - \$993,382  
Foundations - \$473,733  
Bequests - \$539,885  
Investment Income and Other Revenue - \$399,181

**TOTAL SUPPORT & REVENUE – \$2,406,181**

### Expenses

Dog Training and Placements - \$2,112,858  
Public Education - \$1,152,006  
Administrative - \$305,153  
Fund Development - \$286,912

**TOTAL EXPENSES – \$3,856,929**



86 cents of every dollar you give goes towards programmatic services critical to the mission of making lives better.

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## Guardian Society

*The Guardian Society honors the community of dedicated people who support Dogs for Better Lives through their estate plans. Contact Wanda Cockey to learn how you make an impact through Planned Giving at (541) 423-8326.*

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Patti and Jeffrey Tautenhan  
Ms. Patricia Taylor  
Mr. and Mrs. Paul Toole  
Mr. and Mrs. Robert D. Topp  
Mr. and Mrs. John VanDyke  
Mr. Joseph Viola  
Stephanie Walsh  
Ms. Barbara Whitworth  
Mrs. Marilyn Wilson  
Mr. and Mrs. James B. Worley  
Mr. and Mrs. Marcia and Steve Zink

## Bequests (7/1/18 - 6/30/19)

*Thank you to the individuals and families who provided philanthropic support for Dogs for Better Lives through their wills and trusts this year.*

Dorothea Allin  
Mamie E. Beard  
Bell Charitable Perpetual Trust  
Donna Beatrice Cramer  
The Trust of Leonard J. Desmelik  
Muriel L. Dusek  
Lucille H. Edgerton Trust  
Helen Griffin Charitable Remainder Trust  
Phyllis A. Gunsalus  
Roger J. Harmon  
Dr. Jacqueline Harris  
Anne Cantrell Hutchinson  
Trude Ingram Trust  
Jerik Trust  
The Robert E. and Hattie Miller  
Charitable Remainder Unitrust  
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Mohr  
Franklin and Elaine Nettles  
Josephine H. Overdick  
The Estate of Roy R. Rath  
Mrs. Sharon Stephenson  
Estate of Ronald J. Thompson  
Ms. Frances A. Urban  
Ms. Shirley Vanelli



## Dogs for Better Lives National Pawprint

Total number of clients



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