

Something to Howl About

OCTOBER 2023

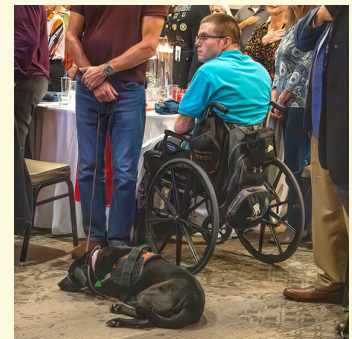
PATRIOT PUPPY PRESS

What's Inside

*Night for Patriots
Veteran News
Kennel News
Volunteer News
What's in a Name*



Another wonderful evening at our annual fundraiser, A Night for Patriots. Keynote Speaker US Marine Lt. Gen. Larry Nicholson (Ret.), Recipient Speaker US Army CMSgt. Chuck Stewart (Ret.), music by Vocal Point - and much much more.



(More on Page 6)

VETERAN NEWS



We were so pleased to celebrate Cheryl and SMSD Aster on September 20. Aster is stepping in to relieve SMSD Chance as he enters retirement. Chance will remain with Cheryl and her family and has been very happy to welcome Aster to the home.



Matt with SMSD Monti



Training Camp Video
Double Click or C&P
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5hH7oay8Ccs>



Bob, Stephanie, Sidney, SMSD Jazz
Pull for our Veterans 9/23/23

As a reminder of our organization's mission, SMSD will continue to focus primarily on wounded veterans. When canine inventory allows, we will serve First responders with service-connected physical disabilities and place facility dogs when we have a dog that is better suited for working with veterans in facility settings. Recently we placed three facility dogs- one in a Children's Advocacy Center and two in a VA facility. However, moving forward, the SMSD Board's position on facility dog placement is veteran associated facilities only.

We hope you enjoy the upcoming news about our fabulous facility dogs and the healing work they are doing.

For more information please feel free to contact Suzy Kitchens at Suzy.k@smokymountain servicedogs.org

We have received excellent reports from our recent facility dog placements. Sam and Stinger are settled in to their new jobs and staff, clients and patients are all benefitting from their presence.

We have similar good news from Peyton and his role with the CAC. We are thrilled these wonderful dogs are making such a tremendous contribution.



It is with great sadness we report the recent passing of SMSD Willie. Willie crossed over the rainbow bridge on August 10, 2023. Willie was and always will be his veteran's best friend and served him for over 10 years. May peace and comfort surround Willie's family. Rest easy, Willie. Our condolences, Cody.

KENNEL NEWS

Our congratulations to SMSD Program Manager Heather Wilkerson

She was honored by the Military Order of the Purple Heart Chapter 356 for her selfless dedication to veterans over her career. We could not agree more. Thank you for all you do, Heather.



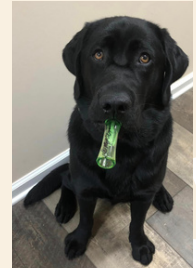
SMSDiT Silas meets Uncle Si!

Silas was named by a generous donor and partner after Uncle Si of Duck Dynasty fame. The two were able to meet recently at a premier of the movie "The Blind". Our Silas was able to show off his duck calling skills.



Lead Trainer Susan Shemwell with a class of advanced foster dogs

JoJo practicing diving with trainers



Our dogs have been rocking their evaluations over the past month! We can barely keep up with all of their accomplishments.

We are proud to present our dogs and their latest achievements.

Honor and Triscuit passed their week 16 eval and will now start working in the Balance Assistance Harness.

Silas and Wylie passed their week 8 eval and will now start working on more complex manipulation skills and tasks.

Wrigley and JoJo II passed their STAR puppy eval and will now start working on their Canine Good Citizen tasks.

Way to go dogs and puppy raisers!

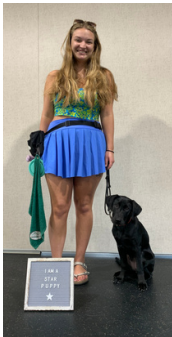


Closing out the week on a high note! We are so proud to announce that Wylie (back left), Silas (back right) and River (front) have passed their week four performance assessment!

This performance assessment is usually challenged after the dogs move into the kennel full time, it consists of skills such as left, stand, place, kennel, picking up textures, proper retrieves and so much more!

These dogs and fosters have shown exceptional ability to guide them through the required skills and have them pass the eval!

This is our youngest group of dogs to ever pass this performance assessment! We are so proud of them and especially the volunteers who have worked so hard with them over the past several months.



NEWS FROM YOUR VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR TEAM

Spotlight on Barbara Schmitt

It is impossible to fully describe the contributions of Barbara Schmitt over the past twelve years with SMSD – volunteer coordinator, socializer, respite home, community events etc. In the early years of SMSD, Barbara was one of the only volunteers who both socialized dogs and took them home for respite care. Recently, Barbara in her humble way significantly impacted donations. In July 2023 Barbara was the accompanist for Tellico Village Singers & Tellico Voices and the audience donated generously to their Veteran charity of Choice SMSD and raised \$15,000. Barbara says she gets back more than she gives when she sees a veteran's "battle buddy" by his/her side, changing their lives as they gain independence and confidence with their canine partner. She is rewarded by onboarding new volunteers while nurturing relationships, and seeing new volunteers take on additional roles as week-end respite, puppy raiser or advanced foster.

Suzy Kitchen's comments about Barbara

When we started SMSD, Barbara always said yes with a smile- handling dogs, playing the piano at POL and Night for Patriots events etc., fundraising, serving as a volunteer coordinator and more. Barbara rises to the needs of SMSD and gives her all with great love and devotion to our dogs and our mission.

Carla Navas, Volunteer Director comments about Barbara

Barbara is a dedicated and knowledgeable Volunteer Coordinator. She has onboarded many volunteers and helped them start their "career" at SMSD. Barbara can always be relied upon when the need arises and does so with a cheerful smile. She is a valued member of our SMSD team!



**Barbara Schmitt & Winston,
Ambassador in Training**

Heather Wilderson's comments about Barbara

Barbara selflessly dedicates her time to being a respite provider, occasional dog sitter for clients needing temporary care of their canine partner, a socializer to our dogs in training and serves as a Volunteer Coordinator. I thank Barbara for her commitment and volunteer spirit.

Spotlight on John Wylie Forcum

John Wylie Forcum has been a SMSD volunteer since 2020. Over the past three years he has transported many dogs including being a dedicated weekly transporter for Cisco and Wylie, both raised or co raised by Andee Raker (pictured below). Providing an incredibly valuable service as a canine transporter, John has put over 7000 miles on his car in one year. You will be happy to know that John and his wife are conscientious of the environment and both drive electric cars. John and his family have a special connection to Wylie. John's brother donated to the acquisition of Wylie and requested the name. Wylie is a family name passed down to more than five descendants since the Civil War. As a result, John has a special interest in that era. He has written and e-published a book *The Company of Girls 1862-1865*, a historical book which illuminates the circumstances of women living on farms along the TN River during the Civil War. In addition to his role as a canine transporter, John has also been a socializer for the last two years providing opportunities for our kennel dogs to accelerate their development. Prior to his retirement John was a Superior Court Judge for 24 years.

Andee Raker, Puppy Raiser comments

I am SO thankful for John's consistent commitment on the transport team! We have benefited from his "Puppy Uber" service for 2 years while he transported Cisco & Wylie. We live 45 minutes from the kennel and it would not be possible to travel twice in a day for puppy training day! Thank you John!

Heather's comments about John

John is a reliable canine transporter and socializer ensuring our service dogs in training receive age appropriate socialization. He assists our volunteer fosters with getting puppies or advanced dogs to and from our facility. Without volunteers like John, we would struggle to advance our dogs in training to a graduate level. John, your commitment and dedication to serve shines through brightly!



**Andee Raker & John W.
Forcum with SMSDiT Wylie**

NEWS FROM YOUR VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR TEAM



Spotlight on Groundskeeping Team

Team #1

Larry Denney

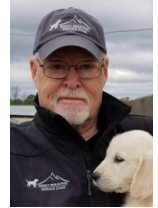
SMSD Volunteer for 10 years serving in various capacities. He is a marine aviator veteran and was a pilot for American Airlines. Larry loves working with a great group of guys on the mowing team. Larry says "The Green Team—git's er done".

Jim Goyert

SMSD Volunteer for 10 years in various roles as a Board member, socializer and facility projects. He is an Army veteran and volunteers on the Tellico Village Fire Dept. Board of Directors. Prior to retiring he spent 40 years in the automotive business.



Larry Denney



Jim Goyert

Team #2

Justin Hendrix

SMSD Volunteer for 1 year. For the past 16 years he worked as a career firefighter in Lenoir City. Hobbies include RVing, camping, boating and motorcycle enthusiast.



Justin Hendrix

Team #3

Jim Sprague

SMSD Volunteer for 8 years. Rode off-road motorcycles back in the day, mowing the property with its obstacles and rough ground has been a great substitute for that. When I return home my wife always says I smell like fresh air.

Gary Peltzer

SMSD Volunteer for 7 years. Retired Tool & Die maker from Minnesota and volunteer for Tellico Village Fire Department for seven years.



Jim Sprague



Gary Peltzer

Team #4

Larry Fox

SMSD Volunteer for 3 years. Born and raised in Ohio, still follows the Buckeyes, Browns, and Cavs. Larry is a member of the Golf Advisory Committee in Tellico Village and HOA VP in Florida.

Tom Maher

SMSD Volunteer for 4 years. Tom was in law enforcement for 25 years prior to retiring. He moved here with his wife to retire and enjoy the Tennessee lifestyle and four seasons.



Larry Fox



Tom Mahoer

Welcome 3Q New SMSD Volunteers!



Kristi & Mike Cook, Communiity Events
Beth Engel, Canine Transport
Jessica & David Hartman, Puppy Raiser
Neil Hersh, Canine Transport
Ron Kukral, Canine Transport

2023 NIGHT FOR PATRIOTS



Many thanks to all who made this night a success. We hope you can plan to join us next year!



Simon Adams was honored by the Mary Blount Chapter DAR, Maryville, TN for his commitment and service to SMSD. He was the puppy raiser for SMSD Slate. The Adams family came out to celebrate with Simon and SMSD Ambassador Hooligan went along to lend his support also.. Younger sister Annalise is following in his footsteps and is currently raising her second puppy for us! We are so thankful for the support of the entire Adams family!



Nashville, TN - Blue Star Mothers of America, Inc convention. SMSD was presented with a donation of \$8050. The BIG check says \$7,000 but they received an additional \$1,050 in last minute donations. Thank you! And thank you to Volunteer Chairman Mike Kitchens for representing us well.



You can still order this heartwarming children's book written by our volunteer Haylee about SMSD Cowboy. Available at Barnes and Noble or Amazon dot com



SMSD Buster wants you to get your SMSD Specialty License Plate today! Available to registered vehicles in Tennessee.



WHAT'S IN A NAME???

We thought you'd like to hear about how our dogs get their names. This will be a regular feature so feel free to ask about some of your favorites so we can include them in a future issue.

Bearden

Bearden High JROTC students sponsored and supported SMSD Bearden all the way to his graduation. This wonderful dog served his veteran well and then spent his retirement in the home of Mike and Suzy Kitchens. Sadly, he crossed the Rainbow Bridge July 11, 2022.



Blair



SMSD Blair with
Veteran Dax



Derek Blair with SMSD Bella



SMSD Blair was named after a much loved and admired trainer, Derek Blair. We know Derek would be very proud of the wonderful work SMSD Blair is doing serving his Veteran.

Henley

Named by Recipient Brad Walker. John Robert Henley was a Navy Corpsman. Corpsman are affectionately referred to as "Doc" by the Marines they are attached to. Doc Henley is credited with saving Brad's life after his Humvee was blown up by an IED and was with Brad all the way to Germany.



Cover photo



In case you missed it, check out this great article about SMSD in *Everything Knoxville*. Double click photo to view the article



Smoky Mountain Service Dogs
By Karen Cappock Have you ever seen a service dog and wondered how it goes from being a wiggly puppy to a focused assistant? A visit to Smoky Mountains...



[HTTP://SMOKYMOUNTAIN SERVICEDOGS.ORG/](http://smokymountain servicedogs.org/)

Send comments, suggestions and critiques to Laurie.B@smokymountain servicedogs.org