



# paws4people™

## paws4prisons™ SLAMMERDOGZ™

### Private Placement Announcement

**Scott U., Police Officer** (retired)

With over 23 years of law enforcement experience and now living with the effects of multiple gunshot wounds, ruptured ear drums and PTSD, Scott is seeking the assistance of a Service Dog.

The volunteers of **paws4people™ foundation**, and the staff of the **paws4prisons™/SlammerDogZ™** Programs are proud to announce the selection of Officer Scott U., a 49 year-old, medically retired Florida State Trooper, with numerous physical disabilities resulting from duty-related gunshot wounds, ruptured ear drums, and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, as a Private Placement Client for a Service Dog.

Officer Scott U. was selected as a Private Placement Client [PPC] on August 1, 2009.



**Scott & RAIDER**

My name is Scott U., I am 48 years old and I am a retired Police Officer. I worked for approximately 23 years as a Traffic Homicide Investigator. I lost my hearing during a rescue dive in which a woman drove her vehicle off of a bridge into the ocean. The woman was successfully rescued as were her two children. However, I went too deep in the water without the proper dive equipment and my ear drums were ruptured. I eventually lost all of my hearing in my right ear and I have some difficulty with my equilibrium. I fall and I cannot recover myself so I walk with a cane, but the cane does little good. I still have many problems with walking; many of which are the result of gunshot wounds I received during a high-speed chase incident in which I was involved.

I have great trouble in walking any distance as my feet are now deformed and, of course, with the deformity has come arthritis in my knees and in my ankles. I am a very large person and throughout my career as a Police Officer, I have always been willing to assist the

people that were in some sort of trouble. Now I want to help but I am not able to.

I am also a diabetic and have high blood pressure. As a result of my deafness I now wear a Cochlear Implant on my right side. The Cochlear does help me to hear but my hearing still does not allow me to hear someone at the front door or the telephone ringing. I miss most of my cell phone calls because I do not hear the cell phone.

Since I lost my wife, five years ago, I have secluded myself from almost all people. In August 2008, I enrolled in West Virginia Northern Community College's Sign Language Program, and I am now beginning to get more involved in my community, my church, and my life. For a long time I felt like I had done all the things that I was supposed to do in life. Now, I am learning new things about myself every day. I have learned that being deaf does not have to seclude me from being a productive member of life.

At this time, I am working on an Associate Degree in Sign Language Interpretation, and I currently sign for my Church, and some deaf friends. Through paws4people™ I am hoping to rebuild what is left of my life. I am looking forward to becoming the best Client/Trainer that I can possibly be. I am hoping to combine my sign language ability and my love of animals into a new adventure-filled life. I have never been the type of person to sit behind a desk; I prefer to be "In the

Field.” I want to have a positive effect on people who are deaf or handicapped as well as those with various learning disabilities.

Life is great! I feel like it’s time to get started again enjoying the many things that make it special, at this point the most special thing in my life is my new companion, RAIDER, he and I have a “Glue Contract;” we work, train, and grow closer as a team every day. RAIDER is an exceptional animal, he wants to learn; albeit, sometimes in his own way, but he is smart and capable.

Scott received RAIDER on September 1, 2009. Scott is actively involved in providing RAIDER’s final customized training under the tutelage of Ms. Heidi Livengood, Chief Trainer, paws4people™ Foundation West Virginia, and paws4prisons™ USP Hazelton and FCI Morgantown.

## MY BEST FRIEND – “RAIDER”

On Thursday, September 24, 2009, I was experiencing a great deal of pain in my left foot. I was bleeding from an ulcerated lesion, the blood was literally black. The whole thing had started back in July as a blister, I treated the blister and thought that I had it healed; but being a diabetic, it did not heal and continued to get infected. I called my Podiatrist, who advised me to “get to the Office now!” I did, he tried to clean the wound out and when it would not stop bleeding, he sent me to my personal physician. As soon as my doctor saw the wound, he immediately made arrangements for me to be admitted to Wheeling Hospital. I advised my doctor that I needed to secure my dog before I could enter the Hospital.

I immediately called Terry and told him that a friend of mine had two labs, my service dog RAIDER played with them on a regular basis. However; Cathy was going to be out of town for the weekend. Terry advised me to call Heidi, who said she would drive up to Wheeling from Morgantown. I did not feel right about Heidi having to drive from Morgantown to Wheeling and I told her that I would meet her in Morgantown. I have to tell you that the drive from Wheeling to Morgantown was the longest trip I’ve made in a long time. RAIDER whined and cried all the way. I tried everything I could think of to calm him down; but, nothing worked. RAIDER rode most of the way with his head on my arm on the console. BY the time I got to Morgantown I was quite literally heartsick, coupled with being really sick, I just felt bad all over.

Let me explain a bit further, I’ve had this blessing called “RAIDER” in my life for about two months. Originally I was only supposed to have RAIDER for about eight months while my dog was being trained. I would then turn RAIDER back over to Terry after I had socialized him and got him used to being in a home environment. RAIDER in turn would get me used to having a “Service Dog” at my side. I could not give RAIDER up now for love or money.

I am deaf, I am completely deaf in my right ear, and I have somewhere between 10 and 25% hearing in my left ear. In February of 2008, I was fitted with a Cochlear Implant-specifically a B.A.H.A. I cannot wear the implant on rainy days, and it does little good in settings where there is a lot of background noise. The Cochlear amplifies sound; but it does not help me to hear. That is where RAIDER comes in.

The first couple of weeks that we were together RAIDER and I were at odds most of the time. RAIDER loves to be around people; but, at first he did not want to do things like: turn lights on and off, or we would be out for a walk and he would just stop, and refuse to heel, we would finally come to an agreement, and continue our walk.

At some point, probably about day 15 we got up one morning, I let RAIDER out of his kennel, we put his harness on and went for a walk, as we were walking, I noticed that RAIDER kept looking at me, he “heeled” better for me than he had ever heeled before. He kept watching me, glancing up at me. It almost looked like he was making some sort of decision in his mind, as we walked he continued to glance at me and watch me. I kept saying things like “What’s up big fellow?” or “What’s on your mind –Buddy”? When we got back to the house, RAIDER drank some water and I gave him his breakfast. I got ready for school, (I am a Sign Language Interpreter Student at West Virginia Northern Community College in Wheeling West Virginia). RAIDER spends most of his days in the Special Activities Room where I work, usually with College Students that are handicapped and /or disabled like me .

RAIDER changed that day; I guess that he decided that he wanted to be around me. He would sit with his head on my lap, or lay at my feet with a part of his body touching mine. I started giving him a message every night when we got home, RAIDER began wanting to be near me, all the time; and that is fine because it feels good to have him near me.

At about this time, I began feeling like we had bonded, RAIDER would pick things up for me that I dropped without being asked, he began actually helping me up the stairs, he heels for me very well, and he has become my best friend. On Saturdays we go to the Park and mess around, I get “clean up” detail; but it is a labor of love, I feel very content having this “bundle of love” next to me. After our outing to the Park we come back to the house to nap and watch football (mostly nap).

I cannot believe the deep level of dedication that this animal has for me. I have never been a person who has been desirous of admiration; I don’t know when I developed such a deep level of dependence and admiration for RAIDER. I can not hear things like doorbells or someone knocking on my door, I cannot hear people that are out walking around the neighborhood, RAIDER knows, and he lets me know, he constantly looks out for me and he is always watches when we go for a walk, and lets me know when someone is around.. RAIDER is my Hearing Assistance, sometimes he is my Medical Assistance Dog, and always he is my very best friend.

In May of 2005, my wife of 25 years died. After she died I lost all interest in everything, I really didn’t care if I lived or died, and nothing made any difference. I went into total seclusion, I left my house only to pay bills, go to church, or go to the store. I gained 187 pounds. On June 29, 2009 I was given the opportunity to go to Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C. I began walking everywhere that I had to go; I lost 22 pounds in 2 weeks. When I got Raider in July, I made a promise to myself that I would continue to walk, and I would begin watching my caloric intake. I began walking RAIDER with a cane, now I have lost 61 pounds, and I no longer use a cane when we walk. RAIDER has volunteered to be my cane, he stabilizes me and he seems to understand when I am having problems with my balance.

Raider has become more than a working dog for me, he is a great companion, and a motivator, RAIDER and I are a team, we work together every day, we are together 24/7/365. I depend on him more than I ever thought I would or

could.

I lost my hearing in a diving accident when I was a Police Officer, I am extremely angry at myself that I can no longer hear normal conversations, I get frustrated because I must ask people to repeat themselves so I can attempt to figure out what they are saying. I must use a sign language Interpreter to understand what is being taught to me at school. I feel like the "Village Idiot" most of the time. Sometimes I am in charge of the day's entertainment; because people make fun of me. RAIDER does not make fun of me, he watches me every step of the way. He does not let people walk directly up to me, especially when my back is to them, or I am sitting and I can't see the room, RAIDER lets me know when someone is around. If we are out in the car, RAIDER will let me know if someone approaches the vehicle.

I really did not know how much I could not, or did not hear until RAIDER came into my life. During my recent hospital stay, I found myself thinking about RAIDER constantly. I also realized that RAIDER is a very big part of every moment of my life. RAIDER makes my life a lot more enjoyable and easier, he is always there, and he is always concerned. **RAIDER IS MY BEST FRIEND!!!**

In His Grip,

Scott U.  
McMechen, West Virginia  
October 2, 2009