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**From:**  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 18, 2009 4:52 PM  
**To:**  
**Cc:**  
**Subject:** Fwd: Young Canadian Raises Thousands of Dollars to Provide Service Dog for American Girl



**MEDIA ADVISORY**

August 19, 2009

**Young Canadian Raises Thousands of Dollars to Provide Service Dog for American Girl**

Five year old Erin Buckles of Stafford, VA suffered a stroke during her separation surgery from her twin sister and lost all function from the mid-chest down. Fourteen year old Canadian Keira Watters, an advocate for conjoined twins raised over \$3,000.00 in her small town of Bolton, Ontario to help Erin obtain a paws4people service dog ([www.paws4people.org](http://www.paws4people.org)) that will help her with countless tasks in her everyday routine and to overcome challenging social situations. The Embassy of Canada will host the check presentation at 501 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W. on Friday, August 21, 2009 promptly at 11:00am. Erin, Keira and Solomon (a black Labrador from the paws4prisons program) will be in attendance.

See attached backgrounder for more details.

For more information, please contact:

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# BACKGROUND

## THE AMERICAN GIRL

5-year-old Erin Buckles had a stroke in 2004 during the Separation Surgery from her twin sister. Erin lost all function from mid-chest down. Since 2004, she has undergone intense physical and occupational therapy and has been fitted with different devices and braces to help her stand and use a wheelchair. While she has had to deal with so much in her short life, her spirit is indomitable and she aspires to be independent. Erin lives in Stafford, Virginia with her mother, father and siblings. Her father, Master Sergeant Kevin D. Buckles, is the Drum Major of “The Commandant’s Own,” The United States Marine Drum and Bugle Corps.



## THE CANADIAN GIRL

14-year-old Keira Watters from Bolton, Ontario, an advocate for Conjoined Twins, came across the story of paraplegic Erin Buckles on the Internet. Keira has raised \$3,750 Canadian Dollars to help Erin get the love, companionship and service of a Service Dog.

## THE DOG “SOLOMON”

“SOLOMON”, a black Labrador, was donated by a breeder to paws4people™, Inc. which placed him in its paws4prisons™ Program at USP-Hazelton, WV, for training by prison inmates for placement within the paws4vets™ Program which provides Service and Assistance dogs to wounded soldiers with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Traumatic Brain Injury and to dependents of active military such as Erin.

The paws4prisons™ inmates have trained “SOLOMON” to help Erin open doors, turn on/off lights, pick things up and assist in countless other tasks that Erin can’t perform on her own, bridging the gap in social situations that are uncomfortable to others because of Erin’s disability. “SOLOMON” will accompany Erin to school in the future to facilitate Erin’s acceptance, inclusion and integration into the challenging new world of school. Erin’s mother, Melissa Buckles, told the paws4people™ volunteers that “after everything our family has been through, we have FAITH that Erin will once again beat the odds; she will walk one day! However, no matter how far we have come with technological advances in our society, the thing that will help her the most is man’s (or in this case a little girl’s) best friend – a Service Dog.”

For more information about paws4people™, Inc. and its K-9 Programs for children, seniors, prison inmates, and Veterans go to:

[www.paws4people.org](http://www.paws4people.org)  
[www.paws4prisons.org](http://www.paws4prisons.org)  
[www.paws4vets.org](http://www.paws4vets.org)

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