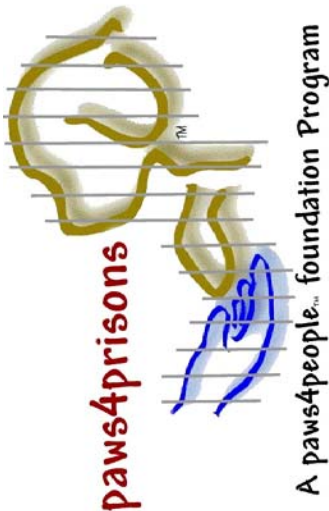


NEWS & UPDATES

US Penitentiary - Hazelton
Secure Female Facility
Edition

www.paws4people.org

www.paws4prisons.org



www.SlammerDogZ.org

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Sometimes YOU find “HOPE” in the most unexpected places

By Cynthia H., Inmate, **paws4prisons™**, Primary Trainer

This is how I discovered mine.

My name is Cynthia. I am an inmate at the US Penitentiary - Hazelton, Secure Female Facility, Bruceton, Mills, WV. I am 31 years old and the eldest of three children. My parents divorced when I was four years old. Whether real or imagined, I still believe the stress of my becoming a person with a disability, contributed significantly to their break up.

My disability was brought about by a case of pneumonia at the age of two. I was given a shot of penicillin, to which I am allergic. The physician's miscalculation placed the injection directly into a main artery. This resulted in a lack of blood circulation to my right foot, and gangrene set in. My foot was amputated along with part of my calf muscle. Unfortunately, my foot was only the beginning of the losses I experienced during my childhood.

I'm close with my siblings, but not very much so with my parents. My mother lost custody of us when I was eight due to a drug addiction that began after my parents' divorce. My father raised us from that point on, but he became very rigid and strict, to the point of fault.

Throughout my early grade school years, I attended physical therapy to learn how to walk with my prosthesis. It was embarrassing for me to be called out of class for my appointments. Especially knowing that the other kids would tease me later. Anything that makes a child "different" in grade school is usually not a good thing.

One horrific memory dating back to kindergarten is the day I was playing on the swing set and my prosthesis flew off. Not only was this a dreadful experience for me, some of the other children were also traumatized. Many of the kids who saw what happened ran to the teacher in tears. After they calmed down and my foot was back in place, they asked a lot of questions. The most frequently asked was 'Why?' I would ask myself that same question thousands of times over the coming years. Why did they tease me? Why am I treated like some freak in a side show?

As I advanced in school the teasing got worse and worse and I became fearful and shy. I didn't want anyone to notice me, but it seemed like everyone did. Everything I did caused others to scrutinize me. In gym class in second grade there was an exercise that required us to bend one leg and extend the other. When the teacher said "long leg," we were supposed to bend and touch the extended leg. Then we reached for the bent leg or "little leg," as they called it, when instructed. Since my family and physicians had also used the terms "Long Leg" and "Little Leg" when differentiating between my right and left legs, I became confused during the exercise. The teacher admonished me for doing it incorrectly and the entire class laughed at me. That was one more incident they used to taunt and torment me with.

I was afraid to raise my hand in class because it would draw attention to me and the kids would start to whisper and snicker. Even if their snickering wasn't directed towards me, I was so self-conscious that I was convinced that they hated me as much as I hated myself.

The boys were the worst. They tortured me constantly and when I would get mad and tell them to leave me alone, they would ask me, "What are you going to do? Take off your leg and beat me with it?" It hurt and frustrated me.

On Sunday nights I would get depressed and panicky because I had to return to school on Monday. I cried in the shower because I so dreaded the thought. I was alone with my sorrow. My brother and sister were three and four years younger than me. My mother was in and out of my life because of her own problems. When I was twelve we had to go visit her in the hospital after she tried to commit suicide. My father was the rugged type. On occasion I would try to express my frustration, fears, sorrow, pain, misery, etc., but he would simply tell me to ignore the comments that were tormenting me. I wished that it were that simple.



Primary Trainer **Cynthia H.**
with **GINGER**

Sometimes YOU find “HOPE” in the most unexpected places

Continued from page 1

I felt like an outcast. I was always the last one picked for team sports. I could not walk in front of the bleachers when all the kids were gathered for some game or a pep rally without hearing somebody call out “Peg Leg,” “Cripple,” or some other jeer or insult. I was never asked out on a date because I was ostracized by so many of the kids. I was never invited to parties, school dances, ball games, or proms. Once when I was in my sophomore year of high school, I decided to go to the homecoming dance. It was one of those times when my mother was in the picture. I got dressed up, had on make up, and my hair was done really nice. I felt so beautiful. I had convinced myself that things would be different. Big mistake. My mother drove me to the dance. I was on top of the world, but not for long. No one asked me to dance; I stood alone the entire evening. When it was finally over, I went home humiliated and cried myself to sleep. After that, I truly believed that I was less than human and should be ashamed.

My efforts to be normal only made things worse. I would always try to be friendly to new kids that came to our small school, but when they became more comfortable and learned from the other kids that I was an outcast, they wouldn't talk to me anymore. I always felt alienated and alone. One the rare occasion when I would find myself in a group, I knew I did not fit in. I was uncomfortable and believed they were only allowing me to hang out with them to be charitable.

Going swimming for most kids is considered to be fun. To me, it was a test of courage. I would have to endure stares from both children and adults. I felt better once in the water where my leg



Primary Trainer **Cynthia H.** with her current K-9 Trainee, **GINGER**

was not visible, and would laugh and play with the other kids. However, when it was time to come out of the water for a safety check, my nightmare began. My cheeks would burn from embarrassment. I was sure that the children I had been playing with would no longer want to play with me once they saw my leg. Sometimes they didn't. Needless to say, no matter what the temperature was outside, I never wore shorts.

Things changed a little when I turned fifteen. That is the year I started drinking and smoking pot. I also met a boy who I believed truly loved me. I had gone to stay with my mother for the summer and decided to remain there permanently. I moved in and started the school year. My boyfriend



Primary Trainer Cynthia H. w/ GINGER and other USPH K-9 trainees playing and exercising.

was a couple of years older than me. He made me feel like I never had before. For once I felt loved.

I started hanging with the drug crowd. I did what they thought was cool and what my mother had done for years. They were the first group who ever really made me feel accepted. It became a way of life for me. I was drinking and experimenting with drugs, skipping school, and rebelling against authority figures. I had a brand new start in a brand new school where the kids didn't make fun of me. I felt like I fit in for the first time in my life. I was eager to impress my new friends. I liked being cool, but I also started getting into trouble. When I was too much for my mother to handle, I began bouncing around to different homes. First back with my father, then to my boyfriend's parents', then to several friends' houses.

When tragedy struck my life through the death of a close friend, I was devastated. I experienced an overwhelming feeling of loss. All the unhealthy emotions from my childhood resurfaced. One of the few people who truly accepted me for what I was, was no longer there. I felt vulnerable and exposed. My drug use came back with a vengeance.

I had discovered a drug called methamphetamine. It gave me a false sense of well being and I found myself a regular user. My life began it's downward spiral. I became heavily involved in the drug scene, which led me to lose custody of my children. Where once my children had been the driving force that kept me from being completely reckless, they were now gone and so was my restraint. I now also had the pain and guilt of losing my own children to contend with, and ultimately surrendered to my addiction.

It wasn't long before I was indicted on federal drug conspiracy charges. The pain and loneliness caused by my childhood ridicule and unacceptance led to a severe drug problem, which led me straight to prison.

When the judge banged his gavel, announcing my twenty year term in a federal prison, I thought that my life was over. Little did I know that when I walked through the doors of the Secure Fe-

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Sometimes YOU find “HOPE” in the most unexpected places

Continued from page 2

male Facility, in a United States Penitentiary, my entire life was about to begin an amazing transformation.

I joined the **paws4prisons™** program in August of 2007. Before I started, I was only able to see the physical assistance that Service Dogs could provide for the handicapped. Now that I've had a chance to work with them, love them, and be loved by them, I see the emotional impact as well. People may see me as less of a person because of my disability, but to the dogs I am completely whole.

All my life I have been afraid to approach people out of fear that they wouldn't accept me. I've never had much self esteem or confidence. Having a unique dog by my side has changed that. They breakdown barriers that divide people. They facilitate conversation and open doors to new friendships. I now talk to people that I would never have had the courage to speak to without my trusty new buddy by my side. When I'm out walking GINGER, the Golden Retriever that I am currently training, the focus is on her – not my disability. If I could have had this opportunity when I was a child, it would have changed my life dramatically.

One of the most important things that these dogs provide is loyal companionship. They give unconditional love. GINGER believes in me completely and it's hard not to believe in yourself when someone else does. In the short time I have been involved in the **paws4prisons™** program, I have gained an enormous amount of strength, confidence and self esteem. I truly believe that having a dog with me at school would have served as an ice breaker and it would have helped other children to take a positive interest in me. I would have been the girl with the really awesome dog, not the girl with one leg.

These special dogs can make a huge impact on a child's development. Wheelchairs and other assistance devices can create such great barriers to potential friendships that are crucial to a child's self worth. Instead of people concentrating on the child's physical impairment, their dog will hold the attention. They'll gain confidence, make friends more easily, and learn to believe in themselves.

Every child deserves the chance to live up to their full potential, and if reading this touches someone's heart enough to help in any way, then all the pain I have suffered will not have been in vain.

I thought for years that I had nothing to give. Now I know differently. Training these dogs will give a child the hope for a future that I never had. I put my heart and soul into this program because I believe in it. Seeing the smiles on the faces of Gracie, Amanda, Erin and the other children these dogs help, makes it all worth it.

Working with these dogs now, at this stage in my life, has helped me heal the wounds inflicted during my childhood. I can't help but wonder if any of these wounds would even exist, if I would have had a Service Dog by my side back then.

I now know that my disability does not dictate who I am on the inside, or what I have to offer the world. I want other children to know this too.

I always thought I needed to have two legs to be whole. I never would have imagined my “HOPE” would be found in a special friend with four legs.



GINGER
HOPE ON Four-Legs

Fun Fact - What is a

Rehabilitative Assistance Dog? A Rehabilitative Assistance Dog is an Assistance Dog that is specially trained to assist therapists, patients and/or families who are affected by:

severe physical injury: These dogs assist Occupational Therapists [OT] and Physical Therapists [PT] in their treatment of patients

severe psychological trauma such as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder [PTSD]: These dogs assist mental health therapists in their treatment of patients or are actually placed with a PTSD patient as part of their treatment plan

family members who suffer from neurological, psychiatric and/or emotional disabilities: These dogs aid in, and in some cases speed up, a patient's recovery.

These dogs are trained within **paws4people™**'s Rehabilitative Assistance Dog Training Program.

GINGER has progressed so far beyond the Shelter/Rescue Training Program Command Set, that she has been recommended by the training staff to receive additional training in an attempt to qualify her as a Rehabilitative Assistance Dog. Thanks to Cynthia H.

We'll let you know how she does.

To Subscribe to this **FREE** newsletter,

Go to:

www.paws4prisons.org/register.php

DON'T MISS OUT ON THE NEXT ISSUE !!

Preston County Animal Shelter Joins paws4prisons™ to SAVE DOGS!

The Preston County Animal Shelter is pleased to announce our new partnership with the **paws4prisons™** Program, which will place some of our shelter dogs in the **paws4prisons™** Shelter/Rescue Training Program (SRTP) at the US Penitentiary Hazelton, Bruceton, Mills, WV, to be trained as community dogs.



We are proud to introduce the first dog accepted into this program, GENEVA! GENEVA will be trained as a community (adoptable) dog in the **paws4prisons™** SRTP.

GENEVA will receive basic obedience training, and after completing the program will, be returned to the PCAS for adoption to a lucky person or family.

“DEATH ROW PUP”



By Linda S.
Inmate
paws4prisons™
Program Support Specialist

The newest of our four-legged friends at USP Hazelton's Secure Female Facility (SFF) is an unusual little pup of many pedigrees. She is every color imaginable -- grey speckles and golden speckles, brown, white, tan, and black patches. Her hair is medium length with lovely waves on her back and impressive “feathers” of fur on her tail. Her name is Miss GENEVA and she is a Corgi mix. Mr. Henry, Co-Executive Director, **paws4prisons™**

lovingly refers to her as a “Heinz 87” because she certainly has more than the standard “Heinz 57” mixes in her! GENEVA has itty, bitty, short little legs. But don't underestimate those little legs because they are muscular and very strong! GENEVA has a very sweet personality and an adorable presence – She is definitely one of “**THE BEST**” **paws4prisons™** ambassadors we have on the SFF Hazelton compound. Inmates who were wary of the larger dogs have quickly taken a special liking to our short little lady!

Miss GENEVA is extra special because she was on “Puppy Death Row” and was just two days away from being euthanized at the Preston County Animal Shelter when she was selected for the **paws4prisons™** Shelter/Rescue Training

GENEVA is an Australian Cattle Dog-Corgi mix under a year old as of September 2007. She was found roaming around as a stray with her brother and sister. She has a very nice temperament and should do very well in her training.

The Preston County Animal Shelter looks forward to additional dogs being trained in this program throughout the coming years. Dogs entering the program must be spayed or neutered, up-to-date on all vaccines, wormed, free of fleas/ticks, and have routine testing for common canine diseases. Businesses or individuals may sponsor a PCAS dog's participation in this program. Please contact the shelter for details.



Program (SRTP). How lucky for us that GENEVA was released on “Puppy Parole” to our compound for rehabilitation, training, and eventual release.

On September 21, 2007, Ms. Jodeen Johnnie, Director of the Preston County Animal Shelter (PCAS), where GENEVA previously resided, and Mrs. Helen Nikirk, the Chairperson of the Advisory Committee of PCAS, turned over GENEVA'S leash to her new-found friend and trainer, SFF Inmate Gail M. There was not a dry eye in the room when GENEVA arrived. We all truly felt that we could make a big difference with GENEVA because we had the opportunity to give her a new life - literally!

We welcome “Little Miss GENEVA” to SFF and wish her well in her rehabilitation and training. She is learning very quickly and has already mastered several of her required commands and some extra ones to boot (or is that paw?). And, in the not-too-distant future, a lucky individual will have the opportunity to adopt this bright and loving canine, thus providing GENEVA with the “Pardon” she so very much deserves!

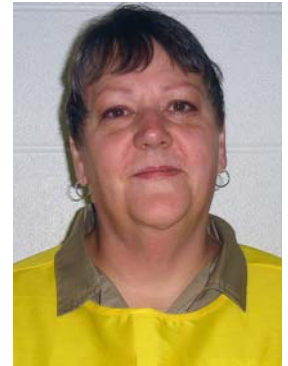


GENEVA
SRTP's first-pooch!

A Farewell TRIBUTE to Inmate Linda S.

By Geterries M., Inmate, Assistant Editor, **paws4prisons™ News & Update**

The **paws4prisons™** Program began in May 2007. The program has been a success on many levels. A great deal of the program's success is, and was, contingent on the commitment of Ms. Linda S. Her dedication as the former Newsletter Editor and Program Specialist allowed this program to soar. Ms. Linda S. has now moved on in her journey to freedom. Here are a few thoughts from some of the ladies Ms. Linda S. touched throughout her time with the **paws4prisons™** Program, as well as SFF as a whole:



Linda S.
Inmate
paws4prisons™ Program Specialist

*"Ms. Linda S. worked hard putting her warmth and generosity of spirit into every project she undertook for **paws4prisons™**. I send her my fondest best wishes."* - **Inmate Cynthia H., Primary Trainer**

"Ms. Linda S., none of us will ever forget your kindness, or how you were always willing to lend a helping hand. I would like to wish you happiness and success with every adventure life sends your way." - **Inmate Melissa S., Alternate Trainer**

*"I would really like to wish Ms. Linda S. all the happiness and joy she can stand. She's a wonderful person. I hope that she can also be a voice at her new facility for the **paws4prisons™** Program."* - **Inmate Robin R., Primary Trainer**

"Ms. Linda S. is greatly missed. As my right hand, I'm truly lost without her help and advice. She is certainly irreplaceable and I am honored to have had the opportunity to work with her so closely. She was a huge asset to our program. I give my best wishes to her and her family." - **Inmate Jennifer K., Program Specialist**

"One important quality that made Ms. Linda S. stand out as a unique individual was her encouraging spirit. She always encouraged me to keep doing what I'm doing and she emphasized her belief in me and in the program. She is someone to whom I give my full respect, love, and dedication. She will truly be missed." - **Inmate Gemma M., Primary Trainer**

"I didn't get the chance to get to know Ms. Linda S. very well, for I am new to the program. I will miss her kindness, her smile, and her overall presence." - **Inmate Sherrie B., Primary Trainer**

"It was a pleasure working with someone as energetic as Ms. Linda S. Thanks for keeping the program together and putting constant smiles on our faces. I will keep in my heart that you always said that NIKKI was your favorite lil' "wild one". Good luck on your journey toward home. We miss you, but we will never forget you." - **Inmate Tonya M., Primary Trainer**

"Ms. Linda S. was always so helpful and supportive. She was a joy to be around. She will be often thought of and truly missed." - **Inmate Christina W., Alternate Trainer**

"It was a pleasure working with a true team player. I appreciated all of her efforts in promoting the program. She loved the dogs and showed us all a better side of life within these walls." - **Inmate Gail M., Primary Trainer**

"I want to say best wishes and love to you, Ms. Linda S. You are truly missed by all the ladies and the puppies. I don't think that your dedication and commitment can ever be replaced. I hope that you are adapting well at your new location. You really deserve the advantage of being there and I will never forget you." - **Inmate Melissa H., Primary Trainer**

"I will always remember Ms. Linda S. and all the wonderful things she has helped us with in the program. She always brought smiles to everyone's faces and her presence is missed." - **Inmate Melissa A., Alternate Trainer**

"I've been in the program since August. Ms. Linda S. has been a big asset to me and the program. She has left her mark and I wish her well. I thank her for her advice and guidance." - **Inmate Pam B., Alternate Trainer**

"The night after Ms. Linda S. left SFF - Hazelton, my dog LACIE and I went for our usual walk around the compound. Toward the end of our evening we went to the library to visit Ms. Linda S., and were saddened when we arrived and she was gone. We truly miss you." - **Inmate Sandra A., Primary Trainer**

*"Ms. Linda S. had a major presence throughout the institution. Not only did she play a major role in the **paws4prisons™** Program, she was the emotional backbone for many women such as myself. I miss her wisdom, as well as the life experiences she shared. Her humble and positive attitude is most missed. I love Ms. Linda S. and I honestly wish her well in her future endeavors."* - **Inmate Geterries M., Program Specialist**

In closing, Ms. Linda S., we hope to do you proud and work as hard as you did for the common goal of training and placing these Service Dogs with families in need. You always kept the vision of the program up front, and for that, we thank you!

The USP – Hazelton DOGS



COLT, a Golden Retriever, is one of the original five dogs that started the **paws4prisons™** program at USP Hazelton in May 2007.

COLT received his “puppy” training and “basic” Service Dog training in the Hearts of Gold program conducted at West Virginia University, from January to April 2007. This training was conducted under the tutelage of Ms. Lindsay Parenti, Chief Trainer, Hearts of Gold, who is the instructor for the WVU course: “Principles, Theory, and Application of Service Dog Training.”

After the two-week USPH / **paws4prisons™** Boot Camp, which was conducted May 7-18, 2007, COLT was assigned to Ms. Heidi Livengood, Chief Trainer, **paws4prisons™**. As the Chief Trainer, Heidi is responsible for all aspects of training for all dogs at USPH. COLT lives with and works, 24/7 with Heidi. In this role, COLT will complete his 16-month, Intermediate and Advanced Service Dog training programs.

In late September 2007, Grace Meek, an eight-year-old, quadriplegic, Service Dog Private Placement Candidate, visited USP Hazelton as part of her Private Placement process. This visit was designed to introduce the USPH inmates to one of the young ladies to whom one of the dogs they were training would eventually be placed. The visit was also intended to introduce the private placement candidates’ family to the inmates who were training their daughter’s future Service Dog. Prior to this visit COLT had met Grace, and had immediately bonded with her. From this point on, everyone agreed that COLT was destined to be Grace’s Service Dog, provided he successfully completes the remainder of his Service Dog training program.

During September through December 2007, COLT continued his Intermediate Service Dog training at USPH and also accomplished additional socialization training with the assistance of WVU students as part of their “Capstone” projects within the WVU Center for Civic Engagement. COLT also visited with Grace on several occasions.

In January, 2008, COLT began his final eight-month Advanced Service Dog training program. Here he will complete his mastery of the standard 92 Service Dog Command Set, and begin the Customized Command Set specifically designed to support Grace’s unique needs and requirements. By the end of February 2008, COLT will also begin his training to become a certified Educational Assistance Dog. This training will be conducted inside the special education and regular education classrooms of the Preston and Monongalia County Public School Systems. Within this training program, COLT will learn how to perform all the tasks necessary to participate in Educational Animal-Assisted Instruction. This training will also aid COLT in performing his primary mission as a Service Dog for Grace during Grace’s school career.

We anticipate COLT’s graduation from the **paws4prison™**’s Service Dog training program, his designation as one of our first **SlammerDogZ™**, and his Private Placement , in August 2008.

COLT & others playing & exercising



Grace Meets COLT



Grace’s first “COLT KISS!”



COLT’s “Baby Face”



COLT and his favorite trainer, Heidi Livengood, Chief Trainer, **paws4prisons™**

Fun Fact - What is a

Service Dog? A Service Dog is an Assistance Dog that is specially trained to enable individuals with disabilities to lead more independent lives by performing tasks that the person otherwise could not, or would have extreme difficulty doing for him/herself. The Private Placement Candidates [PPC] for these dogs are generally confined to a wheelchair.

These dogs are trained within **paws4people™**’s Service Dog Training Program.

COLT deciding if he really wants to do this Command??



The USP – Hazelton DOGS



ELLIE, a Golden Retriever, is one of the original five dogs that started the **paws4prisons™** program at USP Hazelton in May 2007.

ELLIE received her “puppy” training and “basic” Service Dog training in the Hearts of Gold program conducted at West Virginia University, from January to April 2007. This training was conducted under the tutelage of Ms. Lindsay Parenti, Chief Trainer, Hearts of Gold, who is the instructor for the WVU course: “Principles, Theory, and Application of Service Dog Training.”

After the two-week USPH / **paws4prisons™** “Boot Camp,” which was conducted May 7 -18, 2007, ELLIE was assigned to USPH Inmate Angelic A. as her Primary Trainer. Here she began her 16-month, Intermediate and Advanced Service Dog training programs.

In late August 2007, Amanda Ivancevich, a four-year-old Service Dog Private Placement Candidate, visited USP Hazelton as part of her Private Placement process. This visit was designed to introduce the USPH inmates to one of the young ladies to whom one of the dogs they were training would eventually be placed. The visit was also intended to introduce the family of the private placement candidates’ to the inmates who were training their daughter’s future Service Dog. During this visit, all in attendance witnessed one of the most amazing events of canine-human bonding when ELLIE met Amanda for the first time, and proceeded to bond with her in a way rarely witnessed. From this point on, all who witnessed this bonding agreed that ELLIE was destined to be Amanda’s Service Dog, provided she successfully completes the remainder of her Service Dog training program.

During September through December 2007, ELLIE continued her Intermediate Service Dog training at USPH and also accomplished additional socialization training with the assistance of WVU students as part of their “Capstone” projects within the WVU Center for Civic Engagement. ELLIE also traveled on two occasions to North Carolina to conduct socialization training with Amanda and her family.

In January 2008, ELLIE began her final eight-month Advanced Service Dog training program. Here she will complete her mastery of the standard 92 Service Dog Command Set, and begin the Customized Command Set specifically designed to support Amanda’s unique needs and requirements. By the end of February 2008, ELLIE will also begin her training to become a certified Educational Assistance Dog. This training will be conducted inside the special education and regular education classrooms of the Preston and Monongalia County Public School Systems. Within this training program, ELLIE will learn how to perform all the tasks necessary to participate in Educational Animal-Assisted Instruction. This training will also aid ELLIE in performing her primary mission as a Service Dog for Amanda during Amanda’s school career.

We anticipate ELLIE’s graduation from the **paws4prison™**’s Service Dog training program, her designation as one of our first **SlammerDogZ™**, and her Private Placement, in August 2008.

ELLIE Makes a Difference

By Linda S. Inmate, Program Support Specialist

Amanda Meets ELLIE



ELLIE

Paying Attention in Class?



ELLIE & Others Playing & Exercising



ELLIE’s
Primary Trainer Inmate
Angelic A.

The dogs at SFF Hazelton touch the lives of many of the women who are located here. I want to share with you a story of one lady and what ELLIE did for her. Ms. Claudia W. was deeply affected by a very special dog in the **paws4prisons™** program.

Claudia W. said that she was not very fond of dogs. As a child her grandfather told her that the animals feared her and thus they would not hurt her. She assumed that animals stayed away from her and didn’t seem to warm up to her because, as her grandfather had told her, they were afraid to come up to her. Animals on the farm were just that, animals, not pets. She said that they owned dogs, but she never became attached or paid much attention to them.

When the dogs arrived at Hazelton, all but one of them pretty much ignored Claudia. However, ELLIE was the one exception. ELLIE would continually try to greet Ms. W. and insisted on getting her attention. Claudia told ELLIE that she should be careful... but the dog showed no fear of her at all - to the contrary. ELLIE continued to try to make friends with Ms. W. The persistent pup didn’t care that she was being ignored. The little dog seemed to know that if she kept trying, Claudia W. would become her friend. Ms. W. said that she kept thinking to herself, “Is this dog crazy? ...

Continued on Page 8

ELLIE Makes a Difference

Continued from page 7

Why does she keep coming to me?" ELLIE'S persistence finally-touched the heart of this new friend.

Ms. W. describes herself as a very proper person, but ELLIE inspires her to get down on the floor and play. Something the dignified Ms. W. would not normally have done. ELLIE helps to bring out Claudia's emotions. Claudia comes from a Japanese military background and was taught that showing emotions is a sign of weakness. Not only that, but after 17 years of imprisonment, a person tends to shut down the emotional part of themselves. In prison, emotion is also seen as a weakness ... so a person learns to keep their feelings to themselves. Feeling the love coming from ELLIE opened Claudia's heart. To feel emotion after so much time of not opening up her heart to anything or anyone, was like opening the flood gates of her emotions. When she is with ELLIE, gone is the prim, proper, unfeeling person. The Ms. W. with ELLIE is a soft and loving person. One special dog made her feel again, even cry again. Ms. W. rarely talks about ELLIE without a tear of joy in her eyes. When speaking of ELLIE and the new friendship that they have formed, Claudia said, "We are vulnerable right now and we fear caring. ELLIE surprised me with her insistence on being my friend. I thought there was something wrong with this dog because she didn't act normal and avoid contact with me. Her insistence has given me something that trusts in myself again. She gives her love fully, with no expectations. ELLIE does tricks, snuggles and accepts

hugs without expecting a treat or even praise. She gives herself to people."

Ms. W's thoughts about the program were stated as follows: "I think that those who fear or do not want to be involved in the program possibly fear the loss of this creature and the bond that they might feel towards the dog. We lose our friends and families when we come here. Attachments are not easy for us now. I think of these dogs as 'Little Heroes' and we have to let them go to do what they are being trained to do."



**Inmate
Claudia W.
with Her
First-Ever,
Best K-9
Girlfriend**

The USP – Hazelton DOGS



CLARKE

CLARKE, a Golden Retriever, entered the **paws4prisons™** program at USP Hazelton in August 2007.

CLARKE received his "puppy" training and "basic" Service Dog training in the Hearts of Gold program conducted at West Virginia University, from January to August 2007. This training was conducted under the tutelage of Ms. Lindsay Parenti, Chief Trainer, Hearts of Gold, who is the instructor for the WVU course: "Principles, Theory, and Application of Service Dog Training."

CLARKE entered the USPH / **paws4prisons™** Service Dog training program in August 2007. CLARKE was assigned to USPH Inmate Gemma M. as his Primary Trainer. Here he continued his 8-month Intermediate training and will complete his 8-month Advanced Service Dog training program. USPH Inmate Tamara M. has recently joined CLARKE's training team.



**CLARKE in His Custom-Made,
Inmate Knitted Sweater**



**CLARKE's Primary Trainer
Inmate Gemma M.
Gemma M. is also the
paws4prisons™ Inmate
K-9 Training Tutor.**



**CLARKE's Alternate
Trainer
Inmate Tamara M.**

During September through December 2007, CLARKE continued his Intermediate Service Dog training at USPH and also accomplished additional socialization training with the assistance of WVU students as part of their "Capstone" projects within the WVU Center for Civic Engagement.

In January 2008, CLARKE began his final eight-month Advanced Service Dog training program. Here he will complete his mastery of the standard 92 Service Dog Command Set. By the end of March 2008, CLARKE will also begin his training to become a certified Educational Assistance Dog. This training will be conducted inside the special education and regular education classrooms of the Preston and Monongalia County Public School Systems. Within this training program, CLARKE will learn how to perform all the tasks necessary to participate in Educational Animal-Assisted Instruction.

We anticipate CLARKE's graduation from the **paws4prison™**'s Service Dog training program and his designation as one of our first **SlammerDogZ™** in August 2008.

The USP – Hazelton DOGS



NIKKI

NIKKI, a Golden Retriever, is one of the original five dogs that started the **paws4prisons™** program at USP Hazelton in May 2007.

NIKKI received her “puppy” training and “basic” Service Dog training in the Hearts of Gold program conducted at West Virginia University, from January to April 2007. This training was conducted under the tutelage of Ms. Lindsay Parenti, Chief Trainer, Hearts of Gold, who is the instructor for the WVU course: “Principles, Theory, and Application of Service Dog Training.”

After the two-week USPH / **paws4prisons™**’s “Boot Camp,” which was conducted May 7 -18, 2007, NIKKI was assigned to USPH Inmate Tonya M. as her Primary Trainer. Here she began her 16-month, Intermediate and Advanced Service Dog training programs. USPH Inmates Yvette B. and Robin R. have recently joined NIKKI’s training team.

During September through December 2007, NIKKI continued her Intermediate Service Dog training at USPH and also accomplished additional socialization training with the assistance of WVU students as part of their “Capstone” projects within the WVU Center for Civic Engagement.

In January 2008, NIKKI began her final eight-month Advanced Service Dog training program. Here she will complete her mastery of the standard 92 Service Dog Command Set. By the end of March 2008, NIKKI will also begin her training to become a certified Educational Assistance Dog. This training will be conducted inside the special education and regular education classrooms of the Preston and Monongalia County Public School Systems. Within this training program, NIKKI will learn how to perform all the tasks necessary to participate in Educational Animal-Assisted Instruction.

We anticipate NIKKI’s graduation from the **paws4prison™**’s Service Dog training program and her designation as one of our first **SlammerDogZ™** in August 2008.



NIKKI’s Primary
Trainer
Inmate Tonya M.



NIKKI’s Alternate
Trainer
Inmate Yvette B.



NIKKI’s
Awaiting Her Next
Command.

Inmate Moment

Ms. Robin R. is one of the new members of the training team at SFF Hazelton. She is a very quiet and soft spoken person. When she was asked to collect and initiate the questions to be presented to Grace and her family during their visit at SFF Hazelton, Ms. Robin R. was worried about the task because she is very shy. She did, however, do a wonderful job of asking the questions as the representative of our team.

Ms. Robin R. is the mother of 3 children and has a loving and caring support system with her Mother and Mother-In-Law who are caring for her children while she is incarcerated.

Ms. Robin R. has had previous experience as a dog handler. She worked with the “Pound Rescue Program” at Fluvanna State Prison in Troy, Virginia. The main goal in that program was to train companion dogs using dogs that would have otherwise been euthanized. The adoption policy was to carefully screen all applicants and place the dogs in good homes after they finished their training. While in the program Ms. Robin R. helped rescue two dogs. She worked with more dogs, but her actual training assignment allowed her to fully train two dogs before she was transferred to another facility.

Ms. Robin R. says about the program: “I am looking forward to learning the methods used in training for the **paws4prisons™** organization. I feel honored and excited to be included in the new group of trainers chosen by the program administrators. I am looking forward to becoming more confident and knowledgeable.” She adds, “I feel this program will further my education and teach me a new skill that could be a career for me upon leaving prison. I hope to take my skills with me when I leave for home next year. I want to use the education I have received from the **paws4prisons™** Program to seek employment.”

“This training program makes me feel like I am able to do something for someone who really deserves the help. Instead of being selfish and feeling sorry for myself, I feel as if I will be using my incarceration time to better myself and the lives of others.”



NIKKI’s Alternate
Trainer
Inmate Robin R.

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Go to:

www.paws4prisons.org/register.php

DON’T MISS OUT ON THE NEXT ISSUE !!

The USP – Hazelton DOGS



WYATT

WYATT, a Black Labrador Retriever, is the second generation of dogs to enter the **paws4prisons™** program at USP Hazelton in January 2008.

WYATT was assigned to USPH Inmate Sharon S., as his Primary Trainer.



WYATT's
Primary Trainer

WYATT received his "puppy" training and "basic" Service Dog training in the Hearts of Gold program conducted at West Virginia University, from August to December 2007. This training was conducted under the tutelage of Ms. Lindsay Parenti, Chief Trainer, Hearts of Gold, who is the instructor for the WVU course: "Principles, Theory, and Application of Service Dog Training."

In January 2008, WYATT began his 16-month Intermediate and Advanced Service Dog training programs. Here he will complete his mastery of the standard 92 Service Dog Command Set. Toward the end of the Spring of 2008, WYATT will also begin his training to become a certified Educational Assistance Dog. This training will be conducted inside the special education and regular education classrooms of the Preston and Monongalia County Public School Systems. Within this training program, WYATT will learn how to perform all the tasks necessary to participate in Educational Animal-Assisted Instruction. This training will also allow WYATT to be potentially placed as a Service Dog with a school aged Private Placement Candidate.

We anticipate WYATT's graduation from the **paws4prison™**'s Service Dog training program, his designation as a **SlammerDogZ™**, and his Private Placement in May 2009.



Grace meets
WYATT



RAIDER

RAIDER, a 9-month-old, Black Labrador Retriever, was rescued from the Loudoun County Animal Shelter, Waterford, VA, in December 2007.

RAIDER was assigned to USPH Inmate Melissa H. as his Primary Trainer. USPH Inmate Kadisa F. has recently joined RAIDER's training team.

RAIDER qualified so high on his intake personality, disposition and trainability evaluation, that he was recommended by the training staff for immediate placement within the Assistance Dog / Service Dog Training Program. This makes RAIDER the "first" shelter/rescue dog to be trained in **paws4prisons™** as an Service Dog. In RAIDER's first six weeks of training he has already mastered as many as 16 commands and has begun to "PULL" wheelchairs and has also turned on his first light using a light switch.

Inmate Moment

Melissa H. is 39 years old, has 4 children and 2 grandchildren, and grew up in a small town. Her husband died shortly after she was incarcerated. Melissa said, "I was heartbroken, but the 'puppy' program has helped fill the void. Just knowing that I am active in this program to help others makes me feel good about myself." She continued, "I had a normal childhood but got mixed up with the wrong crowd and made some very bad decisions. I have learned a valuable lesson since being in prison. I no longer feel that I'm incarcerated, I feel rescued from a life of self-destruction. I thank God everyday for saving me from my addiction. I have done a lot of soul searching since being here, and having a dog is teaching me to be responsible again - it gives me a reason to wake up everyday."



RAIDER's
Primary Trainer
Inmate Melissa H.



RAIDER's
Alternate Trainer
Inmate Kadisa F.

www.paws4people.org
www.paws4prisons.org
www.SlammerDogZ.org



LACIE

LACIE, a mixed-breed Shepherd, was given to the **paws4prisons™** Shelter/Rescue Training Program at USP Hazelton, by a Morgantown family who had found her next to the road. They were about to take her to the

local shelter when they heard about the prison training program, so they gave LACIE to the program in September, 2008.

LACIE was assigned to USPH Inmate Sandra A. as her Primary Trainer. USPH Inmate Kayse D. has recently joined LACIE's training team.

LACIE is receiving emersion training within the **paws4prisons™** Shelter/Rescue Training Program Command Set. This Command Set is specifically designed to train shelter/rescue dogs with the basic skills necessary for a successful "adoption." The main intent of this program is to aid rescued dogs to find their "forever homes" and thereby decrease the possibility that they are returned to the shelter after they are adopted.



LACIE's
Primary Trainer
Inmate Sandra A.



LACIE's
Alternate Trainer
Inmate Kayse D.

The USP – Hazelton DOGS



GINGER



GINGER's
Primary Trainer
Inmate Cynthia H.



GINGER's
Alternate Trainer
Inmate Keisha B.

GINGER, a three-year-old, Golden Retriever, was given to the **paws4prisons™** Shelter/Rescue Training Program at USP Hazelton, by a Charlotte, NC family who could no longer care for her. They were about to take her to their local shelter when a **paws4prisons™** foundation of North Carolina volunteer interceded and told them about the prison training program so they donated GINGER to the program in August 2007.

GINGER was assigned to USPH Inmate Cynthia H. as her Primary Trainer. USPH Inmate Keisha B. has recently joined LIBERTY's training team.

GINGER is receiving emersion training within the **paws4prisons™** Shelter/Rescue Training Program Command Set. This

Command Set is specifically designed to train shelter/rescue dogs with the basic skills necessary for a successful "adoption." The main intent of this program is to aid rescued dogs to find their "forever homes" and thereby decrease the possibility that they are returned to the shelter after they are adopted.

GINGER has progressed so far beyond the Shelter/Rescue Training Program Command Set, that she has been recommended by the training staff to receive additional training in an attempt to qualify her as a Rehabilitative Assistance Dog. This additional training would allow her to assist patients in their recovery from severe injury and/or psychological trauma such as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder [PTSD] or to be privately placed with a family who has a family member who suffers from neurological, psychiatric and/or emotional disability. GINGER will continue her training for several more months before a final determination is made concerning her placement potential.

Fun Fact - What is a

Social-Therapy Dogs? A dogs that is generally obtained from pounds, shelters, or rescue groups that is then trained to perform at the Intermediate Obedience level. Once these dogs reach this level of training they are generally placed with Spouseless Seniors providing life enhancing companionship.

Dogs which are primarily privately-owned by **paws4people™** volunteers, that have successfully passed an evaluation process which looks at type of breed, personality, disposition, temperament, and training level of the dog, and the proficiency of the handler to work his/her dog. Successful candidates (handler and dog) are then provided with additional situational and environmental training which when "certifies" them to conduct General Visitation "Pet Therapy" visits to nursing homes, hospitals and/or Hospice facilities.

These dogs are trained within **paws4people™**'s Shelter/Rescue Training Program, (S RTP) and/or **paws4people™**'s General Visitation Training Program.



LIBERTY

LIBERTY, a 3-year-old, Golden Retriever, was rescued

from the Loudoun County Animal Shelter, Waterford, VA, in December, 2007.

LIBERTY was assigned to USPH Inmate Pam B., Primary Trainer and Inmate Melissa A., Alternate Trainer.

LIBERTY qualified so high on her intake personality, disposition and trainability evaluation that she was recommended by the training staff for immediate placement within the Assistance Dog / Educational Assistance Dog Training Program.

This makes LIBERTY the "first" shelter/rescue dog to be

trained in the **paws4prisons™** as an Educational Assistance Dog. By the end of March 2008, LIBERTY will begin her training to become a certified Educational Assistance Dog.

This training will be conducted inside the special education and regular education classrooms of the Preston and Monongalia County Public School Systems. Within this training program, LIBERTY will learn how to perform all the tasks necessary to participate in Educational Animal-Assisted Instruction.

A certified Physical Therapist has been identified as a potential handler for LIBERTY, and if all goes as planned, this therapist will be in classrooms with LIBERTY next Fall.

[Note: When LIBERTY arrived from the Loudoun County Animal Shelter she was named: GINGER. The Inmate and USPH Staff renamed her: LIBERTY.]



LIBERTY's
Primary Trainer
Inmate Pam B.



LIBERTY's
Alternate Trainer
Inmate Melissa A.



LIBERTY's Looking for Praise
After a Command Well-Done.

The USP – Hazelton DOGS



GENEVA

GENEVA, a mixed-breed [best guess: Australian Shepherd, Corgi and . . .], is the first dog selected for the **paws4prisons™** Shelter/Rescue Training Program at USP Hazelton in September 2008. GENEVA was selected for participation in this program two days before she would have been euthanized. GENEVA was obtained from the Preston County Animal Shelter, Kingwood, WV.

GENEVA was assigned to USPH Inmate Gale M. as her Primary Trainer.

GENEVA is receiving emersion training within the **paws4prisons™** Shelter/Rescue Training Program Command Set. This Command Set is specifically designed to train shelter/rescue dogs the basic skills necessary for a successful “adoption.” The main intent of this program is to aid rescued dogs to find their “forever homes,” and thereby decrease the possibility that they are returned to the shelter after they are adopted.

GENEVA is currently scheduled for her private adoption on February 26, 2008.



GENEVA's
Primary Trainer
Inmate Gail M.

Inmate Moment

Gail M. was born in Ohio, the youngest daughter of five girls. She has one child and is a retired Auto Worker. Her home is now in South Carolina. Gail M. said, “Upon my release I have an aspiration to open a dog kennel/obedience school. This program is allowing me to work within my desired field. Each day I am given an opportunity to share in the impact a dog will have on a special person's life. I am grateful to be a participant in this endeavor to make our world a better place.”

Fun Fact - What is a

Community Dog? A dog usually obtained from pounds, shelters, or rescue groups, or direct rescue placements, which are then trained to perform at the Intermediate Obedience level. Once these dogs reach this level of training they are generally returned to the pound, shelter, or rescue group for adoptive placement. The training provided significantly increases the dogs' chances of being successfully adopted and remaining in its adoptive home. This significantly decreases the possibility of the dog being euthanized.

These dogs are trained within **paws4people™**'s Shelter/Rescue Training Program.



Dogs that participate in training and who graduate from any training program offered by the **paws4prisons™** Program shall earn the designation of:

SLAMMER DOGZ™

A Key to SUCCESS - After Prison

paws4prisons™ is a Training Program at USP Hazelton providing Inmates the opportunity to learn and experience the K-9 / Human bond, based on unconditional love and acceptance, and, to gain valuable post-prison marketable job skills, obtain professional certifications such as dog trainer, kennel master, etc., self-discipline, a work-ethic and on-the-job experience. This is all aimed at increasing the inmates chances for succeeding upon their release from prison. Other similar programs have realized remarkable reductions in recidivism rates.

This Program produces very highly and specifically trained Service and Educational Assistance dogs to support the needs of the disabled community.

paws4people, Inc.

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