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St. John's College seniors Audrey Morf (left) and Zoe Sherman snuggle up to Library Facility Dog Seymour.
 Photo by Melissa Latham-Stevens

A Bright Future

Four new siblings have joined the ADW ranks. Born to our beloved Honey Pie on February 26 at our Sunrise Springs Puppy Enrichment Center, this purpose-bred litter is growing fast and eager to learn. Follow their progress via our daily live feed on our Facebook page and you can learn more, plus support their training, at ADWpuppies.org.



Puppy "Mom" Barb Klein at Sunrise Springs. EnV Photography



Special Thanks For Our Major Event Sponsors

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Spring 2017 Newsletter



ADW moved to our new training headquarters this winter. More space, lots of outdoor areas for our dogs and a very happy staff. EnV Photography

Built on Love and a Dream

Not only did we welcome a new litter of puppies in February, but also we finally moved into a much-needed new headquarters for Assistance Dogs of the West. Our indoor and outdoor training spaces have grown exponentially, allowing us more room and greater flexibility for our daily canine work, Client Placement Classes, and Puppy Raiser sessions.

For Jill Felice, ADW Founder and Program Director, this expansion is a game changer and the beautiful culmination of a dream that's been 22-years in the making. "We

now have the room to handle all of our daily activities with ease, as well as plenty of room for the 25+ dogs we have in training at any given time. And we are excited to start exploring more ways to involve our supporters, our volunteers and the community into our work and mission through more events, offerings and educational opportunities. By simply having a new building with greater space inside and out, ADW can really come into its own." We hope to see you soon at our new home and we'll keep you updated on upcoming events and ways to become involved.



Jill Felice, Frances Green and Linda Milanese. EnV Photography

Director's Note

Director's Note: There are occasions in life when one becomes completely aware of how blessed and fortunate one can be. I've worked with Jill since 2006 and as her Executive Director since 2011. We are what is known as Sympatico---holding a shared vision, working together with mindfulness, choosing a life filled with amazing people and lovable, talented dogs, and building an agency with an ethos that is service based. Our new spaces reflect your commitment to excellence and each and every one of us appreciates this beautiful creation. From me to you---Thank you Jill. How lucky can one person (me) get?

Light in the Darkness

Four years ago, a little eight-year-old boy walked into our offices wearing a buttoned-down shirt and a tie, all ready for his first interviews with our dogs. Due to some mental and emotional challenges that developed from drug and alcohol exposure in utero, Chance was not quite ready to be paired at that time but he stuck with us. And with the persistence of this sweet, now, 12-year-old young man and his adoptive parents, Anne and Richard, our yellow Labrador Billie walked (and licked her way) into his life a year ago. You can still hear the excitement in Chance's voice when he tells you about the moment ADW Lead Trainer Jodie said, "We've found your dog."

On the first night of their trial week together in Chance's home, he curled up on the floor next to Billie by his bed and slept the whole night nose to nose with his new best friend. One of the truly life-changing moments for the whole family came at 4:00 a.m. when Billie awoke and

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Chance and his beloved Billie make a contented pair. EnV Photography



2017 Graduates: Skippy (left) is serving at the Los Angeles District Attorney's office, while Pink is making important friends in the San Francisco District Attorney's office. EnV Photography

Justice with Compassion

In the midst of the fast paced events of today's world, there are thousands of vulnerable victims of horrendous crimes--especially children and elders--who need our love, our compassion, our strength and resolve. The carriers of these qualities, who renew and restore hope and healing, are the incredibly brave and resilient women and men in District Attorney's Offices, Children's Advocacy Centers, CASAs, Children's Protective Services and other areas of our Judicial System.

We are proud that in their work they have chosen Assistance Dogs of the West Courthouse Facility Dogs to partner with them and to bring the unconditional love and calm presence that rights the ship in the midst of the storm.

This year, we graduated ADW dogs Pink and Red in the San Francisco District Attorney's Office. Dr. Gena Castro Rodriguez, Chief of Victim Services and Parallel Justice Programs there, says, "We developed our Victim Services Dog program to enhance our services for victims of crime, but Pink and Red have provided so much more to our team. Our staff, partners and collaborators all look forward to seeing the dynamic duo at meetings and events where they are often the center of attention.



Hamlet works with child victims of sexual abuse calming them during the criminal investigation at the Roswell Child Advocacy Center. Photograph courtesy of Roswell CAC

tor shared this with us, "The Los Angeles County District Attorney's Victim Services K-9 Unit (VS K-9) Facility Dogs and their handlers assist victims by providing comfort and support to child victims, elder victims, victims with disabilities, homicide families, and survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence. Providing a facility dog assists in decreasing anxiety and fear for victims during interviews, exams, and legal proceedings."

And here in Roswell, New Mexico, three of ADW's beloved canines, joined CEO Carrie-Leigh Cloutier's dedicated staff: "We are honored, humbled and excited to announce that three Courthouse Dogs are joining our CASA Programs and Child Advocacy Center this year. Ben, the loveable chocolate, works with high-risk youth, teaching them non-violence and acceptance. Wise Hamlet, a handsome black lab, works with child victims of sexual abuse, calming them during the criminal investigation. Beautiful yellow Henry Sage will help hurting children of all ages by easing their trauma as they go through the court system."

Another ADW graduate, Mickler, is working in Austin with Miriam Jansky, Trauma Services Director, Center for Child Protection and her staff; and Fortune with Jennifer Lightfoot, Victim Witness Program Director, Tulare County District Attorney's Office. Both Mickler and Fortune were named for fallen veterans by our Warrior Canine Connection trainers. These handsome brothers help bolster and restore the soul and spirit of both the youngsters and staff.

Congratulations to our Courthouse Facility Dog graduates and their dedicated handlers who are making new maps of empathy and kindness on the Judicial Landscape.



Healing Wounds

Each week, when we work with local military veterans as part of our Warrior Canine Connection™ program, they are asked to provide feedback at the end of the session. Here is a peek into how our ADW canines are assisting their healing and the impact that is created outside of our classroom:

"Just stepping out and being in public is hard. It's a lot better with the dogs." As the class progressed Norm also noted, "We realized that through the dogs, we can communicate with each other. We started supporting each other." - Norm L.

"Felt a lot better this week; engaging in the program is helping my attitude at home and my outlook on life and my sobriety." - Gregory M.

"Thank you for allowing me to do this. Best day of my week. It has been instru-

mental in my sobriety and level of happiness in my life." - Chris J.

"I look forward to working with the dogs. It's my one time during the week I don't isolate. I always feel good after class, more extroverted." - Patrick P.

"As I learn more, I feel much more confident and have less anxiety" - Michael R.

Our quantitative evaluations to date show that half of the veteran student trainers reported an increased ability to manage fatigue symptoms, along with decreased pain and emotional distress during class. Two-thirds reported an increased ability to manage the desire to "isolate themselves" during class. Veterans also showed increased confidence in managing their symptoms over the week following their WCC class. At ADW, we are inspired daily by our dedicated canines and staff, who enable many diverse people from various walks of life to take a quantum leap and build a better tomorrow.



Yahtzee, here and above with her veteran Norm, graduated last year and continue to help ADW's Warrior Canine Connection. EnV Photography

College Station Postcard

ADW formed a new partnership this year with students from Texas A & M University who train guide and service dogs as part of their activities. Our black Lab Lennox jetted away and has this to report:

Howdy! This has been my first month with my new mom Victoria and boy has it been busy! It's been so much fun meeting all of my new friends in Aggie Guide and Service Dogs! We've hung out on campus a couple times every other week to work and learn together and also meet up at new places like Harley Davidson and Petsmart!

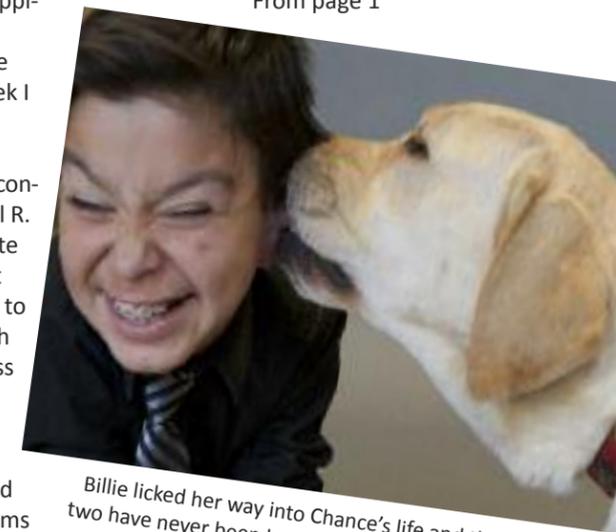
College Station is so big and there are so many places we haven't visited yet! So far I've gotten to go grocery shopping and

to church with her along with Spring Break when we went to her hometown of Athens and met the rest of the family. The very next day we went to the Houston Rodeo and I got to see someone named Willie Nelson in concert.

I also got to go spend the day with the vet and it must have been some kind of party because I woke up kinda groggy and I had a giant ring around my head. There's also a bandage in a weird place and she keeps saying I got neutered, whatever that means. Mom seems really happy with how I'm doing and I absolutely love getting to put my vest on and go work! That's all until next month! Thanks and Gig 'Em!

Lennox von Bonetaire

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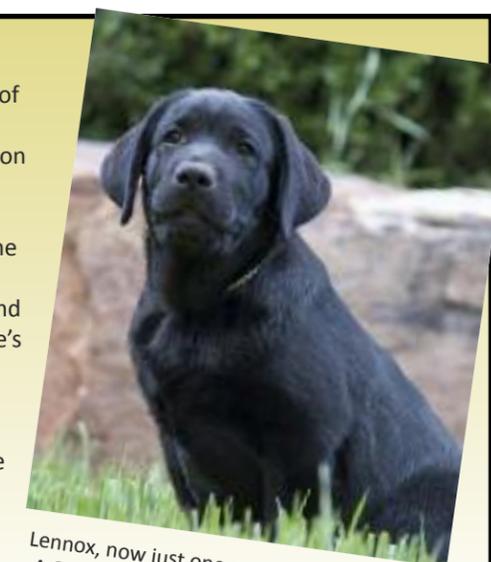


Billie licked her way into Chance's life and the two have never been happier. EnV Photography

needed a potty break. One of the challenges Chance faces is an anxiety disorder similar to PTSD, one component being that he cannot walk anywhere alone in the house at night when it's dark.

Anne and Richard heard the pair rustle in the darkness and their son ask, "Gotta go?" They held their breath waiting for him to reach out to them, but the cry never came. Chance led her out back into a pitch-black night, waited patiently for her, and they returned back to bed without a peep.

Anne will tell you how amazed she is by watching this pair grow together, "Billie has given him confidence he hasn't had, his self-esteem has grown and I can't wait to see how she continues to help him succeed." What Chance can't wait for is to introduce Billie to his football coach and his teammates.



Lennox, now just one-year old, lives at Texas A & M with his student service dog trainer. EnV Photography