



Rescuing One to Heal Another

BLUE STAR SERVICE DOGS

Quarterly Newsletter

Fall 2019

Renovations Continue at the Training Center

Improvements to Blue Star's training center and grounds began in the spring and have continued throughout the summer due to the generous efforts of many volunteer groups and individuals.

Using materials from a Home Depot Foundation Grant, skilled tradesmen from UAW Ford's Community Outreach Program de-moed and rebuilt an unsafe deck, built a large shed for storage, removed the empty raised gardening beds, and fenced the entire yard for safety and privacy for our veteran dog teams. Additional companies added donations and discounts such as Momus Inc., Monroe's Rubbish, Screeners Landscape & Supply, and Collins Electric to make it all come together. In September, the Home Depot volunteer team from Howell came out to spruce up the back of the building and new shed with some fresh paint.



The Howell Home Depot volunteer team.

The inside of the training center was brightened up by Mark Visel and his wife Lorri. They painted the interior walls of the training and office areas and laid shiplap on the upper walls of the office. Adding an element of indoor protection for the veteran dog teams, local Eagle Scout, Nick Bell, designed and constructed several 3 to 4-foot-high safety gates for the building's entrances. As a



The newly constructed perimeter fencing.

bonus, Nick's fellow troop members (Boy Scout Troop #9914) and their families cleaned up around the property. A second Eagle Scout, Jacob Cook, built agility equipment for veteran dog teams to train on. With the help of fellow troop members and their families, the equipment was stationed outdoors within the newly fenced-in yard.



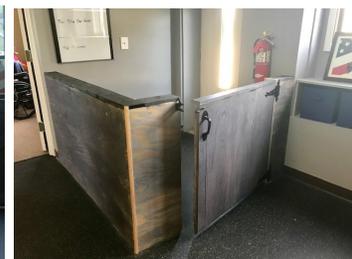
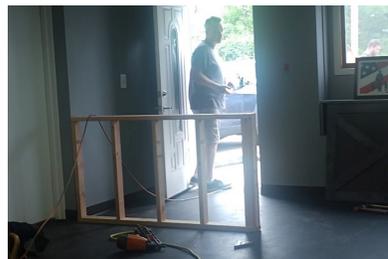
Sarge inspects the newly painted training area.



Newly constructed agility equipment compliments of Eagle Scout, Jacob Cook.



The new shed under construction.



Before and after photos of one of the interior gates, designed and constructed by Eagle Scout, Nick Bell.

New Trainers at Blue Star

Blue Star Service Dogs is pleased to announce the hiring of two new trainers, Kevin Flynn and Jacqueline Drake.

As a veteran and graduate of Blue Star’s Training Program, Kevin Flynn is deeply invested in his role as Trainer Apprentice and is passionately committed to improving the lives of his fellow veterans. Having served in the military allows Kevin to bring an astounding level of personal, compassionate, and professional insight to the team. His service to his country and the impact the experience has had on him are the driving forces for his apprentice training. With a desire to help veterans in need, Kevin embodies the mission of Blue Star and works tirelessly to train dogs that will be paired with former military servicemen and women. In addition to his volunteer work and position as Dog Trainer, Kevin also enjoys spending time with his own canine-friend.



Kevin Flynn

Jacqueline has been a professional dog trainer for the last six years and has worked in the field of animal welfare since 2011. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Biology from Eastern Michigan University, carries multiple certifications (CPDT-KA, Pet CPR, Canine Emotion & Cognition, Fear Free Shelters) and is an evaluator for American Kennel Club (AKC) Canine Good Citizen (CGC) and AKC Temperament Test (ATT) certifications. Jacqueline has worked with numerous rescue/non-profit organizations and continues to do so. She has been fortunate enough to work in the medical field of animal welfare as well.



Jacqueline Drake

Jacqueline knows how important the Blue Star program is for those that have served our country and have given their all. For her, the most rewarding aspect of her position with Blue Star is to watch veterans begin to flourish during training...often coming in with smiles or reporting they are able to get out into the world more with ease.

The Impact of Blue Star’s Training Program—In the Words of a Veteran

I am a Marine veteran that served during the first Persian Gulf War. While on deployment I was stationed in the Philippines as my unit was a backup unit for our sister battalion that went directly to the Gulf. We relieved 2nd battalion 3rd Marines that were deployed in the Pacific who were scheduled to deploy to the Gulf as well. During my time in the Philippines Mt. Pinatubo had its main eruption accompanied by a category 5 typhoon. This was followed by a category 4 typhoon in Okinawa. I was later diagnosed with severe PTSD. I was on a multiple cocktail of medications prior to being prescribed a service dog. I joined Blue Star Service Dogs (formerly Stiggy’s Dogs) in June 2018 with my own dog that I had purchased from a breeder in Florida. Once I got further into the program, my doctor started to remove me from prescription medications that I had been taking to help me cope with my PTSD. The first to go was a stimulant, followed a few months later with narcotic pain medication. During the time prior to getting off the afore mentioned prescriptions, I was drinking alcohol at an excessive rate and with the amount and type of medication, it was seriously jeopardizing my health and placing a strain on my marriage. After getting off the pain medications I stopped drinking completely and have been sober for six months as of July 2019. I was also able to get off anti-anxiety medication. My service dog has helped me immensely to deal with my rage attacks, night terrors, flashbacks of my experiences during the volcanic eruption, and the events that followed with guarding the base from the New People’s Army (NPA) that was attempting to infiltrate the base. The staff at Blue Star Service Dogs has been a blessing and very supportive through the time I have been in the program. I knew that I would be in the program a while as my dog was merely a young puppy when I started.

Sincerely,
A Marine



Emotional Support, Therapy, and Service Dogs. What Are the Differences?

The terms “service”, “emotional support”, “therapy”, and “companion” dogs get tossed around a lot and misconceptions surrounding where each are publicly permitted abound.

Companion dogs are family pets and are welcome on sidewalks, pet stores, dog parks, and are being more welcomed in places such as hotels and non-food retail stores. Emotional support dogs are prescribed to an individual pet owner by a physician for a mental health issue such as anxiety or depression. They require no specialized training and are not guaranteed public access; their access to public spaces is left to the discretion of the business or public institution. Therapy dogs are used for comforting people in times of crisis or stressful situations and their certification requires extensive training. Therapy and emotional support dogs are not considered to be service dogs and are not defined as such under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).



Blue Star service dog, Bravo.

Under the ADA, a service dog, also prescribed by a physician, is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities.

The tasks performed by a service animal must be directly related to the individual’s disability. They must complete hundreds of hours of training and must be able to adapt to their handler’s needs as they may change over time.



Jax, a Blue Star therapy dog who works at the Woodland Correctional Facility.

Guiding people who are blind, alerting people who are deaf, assisting someone in a wheelchair, alerting and/or protecting a person who is having a seizure or other medical condition are examples of work or tasks service dogs are trained to perform.

By law, a service dog is allowed public access and is not legally defined as a pet; it is a working animal. A person with a disability cannot be asked to remove his/her service animal from the premises unless the dog is out of control and the handler does not take effective action to control it, or the dog is not housebroken. Many times there is an extra fee for dogs when staying at hotels or with airline travel. This fee must be waived for service dogs under the ADA.

The ADA prohibits asking a person about their disability or asking that the service animal demonstrate its ability to perform the work or task, as well as other prohibitions. If it is not obvious that the animal is service animal, only two questions may be asked of the person: 1) Is

the animal required because of a disability? 2) What work or task has the animal been trained to perform?

The law also states that a service dog handler does not require any type of medical or dog training documentation or special identification (e.g. card, vest, or tag). Additionally, the handler cannot be asked to have the service animal demonstrate its ability to perform the work or task.

With the prevalence of “fake” service dogs, it is important to know that an emotional support or therapy dog is not a service dog and their handler does not possess the same rights as a service dog handler under the ADA. Also important, when encountering a service dog please do not pet or ask to pet the dog as it distracts it from working.

For more information on service animal law see <https://www.michigan.gov/mdcr/0,4613,7-138-74964---,00.html>



A Blue Star veteran shops with his service dog.

Blue Star Service Dogs' Past Events

Blue Star Bash, Hell, September 21

It was hotter than hell in Hell Saturday, September 21 as temperatures soared into the upper 80s with humidity so thick it could be cut with a knife. Yet Blue Star supporters still ventured out to attend the 2nd annual Blue Star Bash, sponsored by the Tina Peterson Real Estate Team of Brighton. Attendees were treated to a free will offering bar-be-que complete with shredded pork, sides of baked beans, cornbread, coleslaw, chips, and cookies. The pork, baked beans, and cornbread were generously donated by Smokehouse 52 BBQ of Chelsea, MI. Events included an agility course for 4-legged visitors (with free coaching from Blue Star dog trainers), a 50/50 raffle, silent auction, live music, and putt-putt golf. A hot, steamy, and sweaty fun time was had by all.



Silent auction items ready for bidders.



The Blue Star Team. From left to right, Tammy Dible, Volunteer Coordinator; Mat Sica, Lead Trainer; Cathy Collins, Research Specialist; Christine Myran, Executive Director; Kevin Flynn and Jacqueline Drake, Trainers



Blue Star sponsors.



Furry visitors.



Visitor being coached on the agility course.



Visitor



Debbie Clark with her Paws With a Cause service dog, Loci.



Photo left: Hand-crafted hidden gun storage box and wall hanging were two of the many silent auction items.



Photo, right: Christine and Tammy pose with the BH Police Dept.

Bloomfield Hills Department of Public Safety Open House, September 15

Blue Star had a fantastic day at the Bloomfield Hills Department of Public Safety Open House, having been selected to receive event donations and provide awareness to their mission.

Past Events, con't

Knights of Columbus Car Show, Brighton, August 19

The Knights of Columbus welcomed Blue Star to their annual classic car show, held at St. Mary's Magdalen Church. The wonderful summer evening brought out classic car enthusiasts from far and wide.



Photos above and below: A lineup of classic cars at the K of C car show.



Trainer Kevin Flynn mans the Blue Star table at the K of C car event.



Vet Fest, Howell, August 10

Blue Star was invited to Vet Fest, a free resource fair organized by combat veterans Joe Riker and Josh Parrish for Michigan service members, veterans, and their families. Free food, door prizes with values up to \$1,500, kid's activities, live music, and displays of military vehicles were made available. The 2nd annual Vet Fest connected veterans and their families together for the purpose of providing information on resources available to assist them. Over 2,800 people, nearly doubling last year's attendance, and over 70 resource providers participated.

Bark-E-Que, Mt. Clemens, August 9

The Bark-E-Que Blue Star Fundraiser was a huge hit! The fundraiser included yappy hour, dinner, kid friendly face activities, 50/50 raffles, and a silent auction. Blue Star is so grateful for all the hard work that went into this event to support their mission! Many thanks to Karen & Nick Straffon, Charlie, The Lilly family, Julie Art Studios, American Legion Post #326, and more.

Right: At the Bark-E-Que Blue Star table, Christine, Tammy, and Blue Star veteran Tom and his service dog, Athena.



More Scenes from Blue Star



Blue Star mascot Sarge wonders if "Open Sesame" is the password that will open the new gate.



Blue Star graduates Adam and Mickey.



Athena takes a break during a training session.

