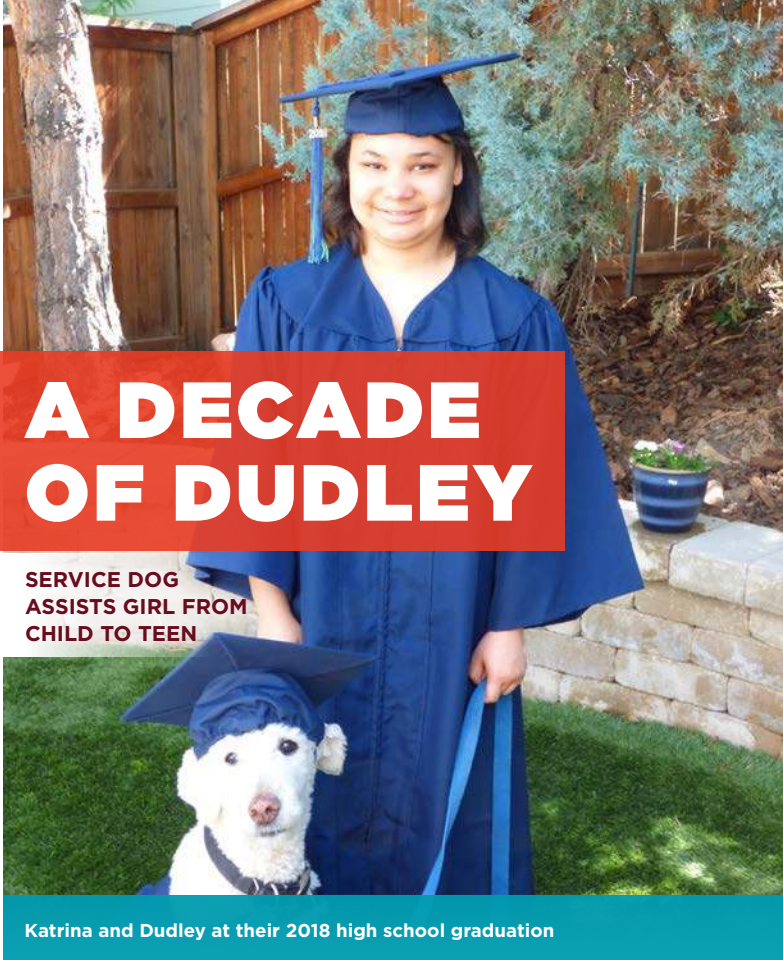


THE FREEDOM PRESS

News, Events & Heartwarming Stories



A DECADE OF DUDLEY

**SERVICE DOG
ASSISTS GIRL FROM
CHILD TO TEEN**

Katrina and Dudley at their 2018 high school graduation

Katrina's life changed forever in 2008, on the day she first laid eyes on a standard poodle named Dudley. Diagnosed with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder and developmental disabilities, Katrina had been waiting for a Freedom Service Dog that was hypoallergenic. When she and her parents came to FSD to meet Dudley, 8-year-old Katrina fell asleep with the big, gentle dog inside his kennel—a moment she recalls as “the first time I ever left my mom’s side and felt safe.”

Since then, Dudley has accompanied Katrina to the library, stores, doctor’s offices, voice lessons, restaurants, friends’ houses, and her job at Timbuk Toys. Katrina’s transformation is especially amazing considering that prior to receiving Dudley, she rarely left home. “I had a hard time going anywhere because my brain acts in a different way than other people’s

brains,” she says. “I got very nervous and didn’t have much fun. I used to never want to go to school because people were not nice to me. But I did go back in high school after my mom homeschooled me, and people were nice to me because I had Dudley with me.”

Katrina’s mother, Sharon, says that Katrina used to have a hard time sleeping and would wake every few hours and wander around the house. From the first night Dudley came to live with them, he has slept with Katrina in her bed. Says Sharon, “Dudley provides that warm contact and body weight that allows Katrina’s brain to slow down and quiet so she can sleep. He has also made it possible for us to stop giving her medication to sleep, so she awakes rested and not ‘hung over’ from medication.”

Katrina often shares her thoughts, feelings, and frustrations through Dudley, saying for example, “Dudley needs to get out of this noisy room or he is going to get really mad.” Explains Sharon, “When we hear these things from Dudley, we react immediately and thus avoid a behavioral episode with Katrina.” She also says Dudley was trained to assist Katrina with neurological regulation due to her cerebral dysrhythmia. “He senses when Katrina becomes dysregulated and provides her input either by bracing, laying over her feet, putting his head in her lap, or jumping onto her lap to help engage her until she can self-regulate enough to ask for help or pay attention to the task at hand.”

Today, Dudley is nearing retirement, and Katrina is on the waiting list for an FSD successor dog. As she looks back on the last 10 years with her best four-legged friend, Katrina says, “Dudley helps me go places I have never gone before. He helps my brain calm down when it gets zigzaggy. He leans on me and I feel better. He just knows when I need him. Dudley is my buddy, and when I have my buddy with me, I can do all kinds of things that I can’t do without him.”

**APRIL IS AUTISM
AWARENESS MONTH**

Did you know that FSD’s Disco’s Dogs program pairs custom-trained dogs with individuals age 5 and older who are on the autism spectrum or have developmental disabilities? To learn more, visit freedom servicedogs.org/our-dogs/#discos_dogs.

About FSD

Freedom Service Dogs of America is a Denver-based nonprofit organization that unleashes the potential of dogs by transforming them into custom-trained, life-changing assistance dogs for people in need. Clients include children, veterans and active-duty military, and other adults. Their disabilities include autism, traumatic brain injury, cerebral palsy, spinal cord injuries, muscular dystrophy, multiple sclerosis, and post-traumatic stress (PTS). Since being founded in 1987, Freedom Service Dogs has paired hundreds of client-dog teams—using dogs primarily sourced from shelters and rescues—at no cost to the client. For more information, visit freedom servicedogs.org.

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Freedom Service Dogs is a 4-star Charity Navigator-rated nonprofit organization. This highest rating means that FSD is considered accountable, transparent, and financially healthy.



Tom Scanlan with his Australian shepherd, Kodi

Starting off strong in 2019

A MESSAGE FROM BOARD CHAIR TOM SCANLAN, RETIRED, BRIGADIER GENERAL U.S. AIR FORCE

By the time you read this, we'll be three months into the new year, and I'm really excited about the many things that are happening at FSD in 2019. As always, we are committed to sourcing the majority of our dogs from shelters and rescues, but due to a lack of qualified dogs, we're seeking out new dog-acquisition partners across the country. In addition, we're also trying a new pilot program: a community-based Puppy-Raising Club. We've combined the expertise of our operations, veterinary, training, and volunteer staff with the puppy-raising experience of FSD volunteer Cathy Kennedy (who you'll meet on Page 6) to create this program, which we hope will be instrumental in helping us graduate more successful service dogs for the 100-plus clients on our waiting list. Our first two training classes for puppy raisers have been filled, and this spring, 15 puppies will be placed with these dedicated volunteers to learn basic obedience, house manners, and socialization. At around 13 to 15 months old and with this strong foundation laid, the pups will return to FSD to be custom trained for our clients in need.

For all the dogs that come to FSD, we're continuing to make improvements to our facility to ensure they are as healthy and happy as possible. We've added new sliding doors inside our kennels so two dogs can be housed together, allowing them to enjoy "roomies" during their stay and more importantly, allowing us to strategically match unsure dogs with more confident dogs so they can learn and grow. We've also installed more kennel doors with windows to help dogs stay calmer and added a sun shade over one play yard to help dogs keep cool while spending time outdoors.

We're also standardizing our training processes across FSD's trainers, volunteer handlers, fosters, and staff to enhance the effectiveness of the program for our dogs. A big shout-out to our volunteer handlers who were the first to go through this program and to the trainers who helped them, giving us tremendous insight into making it work across the board.

I hope you'll take a moment to look at some of our December 2018 graduates on Page 4. Those proud, happy faces represent the diversity of programs we offer and people we serve, from clients with mobility issues, to veterans with post-traumatic stress, to children on the autism spectrum. But most importantly, those photos represent every FSD client-dog team that is experiencing more independence, greater self-esteem, and the ability to do things they once believed impossible—all because they received the life-changing gift of a Freedom Service Dog.

Thank you for playing a vital role in helping us bring more people and dogs together, and enhancing the lives of each. We look forward to sharing more happy faces and heartwarming stories in 2019.



FSD CEO Michele Ostrander with President George W. Bush and former First Lady Laura W. Bush, and Tony, a veteran who received his FSD dog Promise in 2015

Judy Braun named Volunteer of the Year



FSD 2018 Volunteer of the Year Judy Braun

Multitasker extraordinaire Judy Braun received FSD's 2018 Werner Kaplan Volunteer of the Year Award at our annual Volunteer Appreciation Night on Nov. 14. Judy has been lending her time, talents, and boundless enthusiasm to FSD for more than eight years as a volunteer dog handler, photoshoot helper, and member of our Speaker's Bureau. She also assists at FSD events, inspires other volunteers, and is a tireless advocate for the organization.

Says Judy, "I have been very blessed in my life by being able to do the things that I have a passion for. Working at FSD with the staff, the volunteers and, of course, the dogs is a joy. Many times I have said, 'Where else can you go and come out with a smile on your face every time?' Receiving the Werner Kaplan Award fills my heart with gratitude and humility."

Congratulations, and thank you for your dedication and hard work, Judy!

Thanks to you, we met our match... and more!

What a way to ring in the New Year! Inspired by an extraordinary \$100,000 Matching Gift Challenge from the Salah Foundation, our incredibly generous supporters not only helped us meet our \$100,000 matching goal, but exceed it! A huge thanks to the Salah Foundation and to everyone who donated in December—and throughout the year—to make our life-changing work possible.

FSD receives \$100,000 from NAPE Expo Charities Fund

On Feb. 14, Freedom Service Dogs received a \$100,000 donation from the NAPE Expo Charities Fund, which was created to honor and empower wounded veterans in their adjustment back to civilian life. Accepting the donation on behalf of FSD at the NAPE Charities Luncheon in Houston were President and CEO Michele Ostrander, Board Chair Tom Scanlan, Events and Community Partnerships Manager Nadine Pace, and U.S. Army veteran and FSD client Tony with his service dog, Promise. President George W. Bush and former First Lady Laura W. Bush, longtime supporters of both veterans and rescue dogs, were the keynote speakers.

FSD was one of four veteran-serving nonprofits honored at the luncheon, which is part of the NAPE Summit that draws more than 15,000 attendees to the world's largest global upstream oil and gas exploration and production expo.

Since 2009, the NAPE Charities Fund has distributed more than \$3.25 million to help charities support U.S. veterans through its annual luncheon. We would like to thank the NAPE Expo Charities Fund for this generous grant, which will be used to ensure that FSD can continue to offer unique programming and lifetime support to veterans free of charge, and to increase the number of shelter and rescue dogs in our training program.

DECEMBER 2018 GRADUATION



CEREMONY HONORS 14 FANTASTIC TEAMS

If you can't imagine why FSD staff members hand out free packages of tissues to guests at our twice-yearly graduation ceremonies, well, it's obvious you've never attended one. Our most recent graduation, held on Dec. 6 at Parker Arts, Culture & Events Center, gave nearly 500 audience members ample reason to shed tears of joy, as 14 client-dog teams shared the struggles and triumphs that had brought them to Freedom Service Dogs—and to the stage that night.

The women and men of our December graduating class showcased the variety of programs FSD has in place to serve a broad spectrum of client needs. Of our six graduating U.S. military veterans, four were members of Operation Full Circle, an innovative program in which veterans with post-traumatic stress (PTS) and traumatic brain injury work alongside our trainers for four months to train the dogs provided to them by FSD.

Two children graduated from our Disco's Dogs program, which provides service dogs for children challenged by autism spectrum disorder and developmental disabilities. A third young man, Ian, graduated with his second FSD service dog, Race, through our successor-dog program that is just one aspect of the lifetime support we provide to all FSD clients.

Representing FSD's traditional clients, two strong and fiercely independent women with mobility limitations were honored, along with the service dogs that are enhancing their lives. A clinical social worker and a recreational therapist who graduated with professional therapy dogs rounded out the night's honorees.

To experience the joy and inspiration of a Freedom Service Dogs graduation for yourself, mark your calendar for our Summer 2019 Graduation on June 15 from 1-3 p.m. at Parker Arts, Culture & Events Center in Parker, Colorado. The event is free and open to the public. For more information, visit freedom servicedogs.org/winter-2018-graduation.



View the entire graduate gallery at freedom servicedogs.org/graduation. Special thanks to Terri Watson Photography.



TOM & NORWIN

Tom, a U.S. Army veteran with post-traumatic stress, relies on service dog Norwin to help him feel more comfortable in public and nudge him awake from recurring nightmares. "This dog has literally changed my life. I can't wait to see what our future holds as I get better."



AMANDA & AVA

Partially paralyzed in a car accident 25 years ago, Amanda is enjoying greater independence with the help of service dog Ava. "I am gaining confidence with Ava and starting to see possibilities for a life of more opportunity, hope, and less struggle."



IAN & RACE

Ian is a kind, affectionate young man with autism, ADHD, and cerebral dysrhythmia, a seizure disorder. Race helps Ian deal with situations that overwhelm him by providing sensory pressure, interrupting repetitive behaviors, and creating space around him in public.

2018 EVENTS

For more information about all our events, visit [freedom.servicedogs.org/events](http://freedom servicedogs.org/events).



Faces of Freedom: Midland

MORE THAN \$423,000 RAISED FOR FSD

On Sept. 21, 332 enthusiastic supporters participated in our third annual Faces of Freedom: Midland Sporting Clays Tournament, presented by Core Lab and ConocoPhillips. The popular event took place at Windwalker Farms Sporting Clays near Midland, Texas, and raised more than \$423,000, making it our most successful Faces of Freedom event ever. Team Gresham, led by Core Lab Senior VP Jim Gresham, was the number-one fundraising team, contributing more than \$125,000 to the cause.

Since 2013, Faces of Freedom tournaments in Midland and Denver have grossed nearly \$2 million to benefit Operation Freedom, an FSD program that helps veterans and military personnel with disabilities regain their independence. Many thanks to all our generous sponsors for their continued support.

11th Annual Doggie Plunge

A DOGGONE GREAT POOL DAY

More than 600 happy dogs made a humungous splash at our 11th annual Doggie Plunge on Sept. 8, raising over \$24,000 for Freedom Service Dogs. Held at Pirates Cove Water Park and presented by Baird, the event gave fun-loving pups (and their generous people) a wonderful way to end the summer while supporting our work providing custom-trained service dogs to veterans, children, and other adults with disabilities. Thanks to all our attendees and sponsors for a truly sensational event!



SPONSORED BY:



Diamonds in the Ruff

BRILLIANT EVENT SETS NEW RECORD

On Oct. 20, over 570 sparkling guests gathered at Wings Over the Rockies Centennial: Exploration of Flight for our seventh annual Diamonds in the Ruff, presented by Visa. The sold-out event raised a record amount of more than \$320,000 to support the life-changing work of Freedom Service Dogs. Guests enjoyed a training demo, shopped silent and live auctions, and purchased champagne flutes for the chance to win a custom one-carat diamond pendant, donated by Larry Blauweiss of Fifth Avenue Designs.

FOR INFORMATION ABOUT EVENT SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES:

CONTACT NADINE PACE
EVENTS AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS MANAGER
NPACE@FREEDOMSERVICEDOGS.ORG | 303-922-6231 X216

Save these 2019 dates!

JUNE 15
SUMMER GRADUATION

JUNE 28
FACES OF FREEDOM: DENVER
Presented by PowerShift

SEPT 7
DOGGIE PLUNGE
Presented by Baird

SEPT 20
FACES OF FREEDOM: MIDLAND
Presented by Core Lab and EOG Resources

OCT 12
DIAMONDS IN THE RUFF
Presented by Decorative Materials and the Kaplan Family, In Loving Memory of Werner Kaplan



FSD volunteer Cathy Kennedy with puppy in training Tater
Credit: Amanda Engel Photography

Puppy-Raising Club up and running



When FSD launched its new Puppy-Raising Club earlier this year, we did so with the confidence that a dedicated volunteer named Cathy Kennedy would be lending her 20-plus years of puppy-raising experience to our pilot program. The community-based program provides special training and ongoing support to volunteers who will raise puppies in their homes, giving the pups foundational training in obedience, socialization, and house manners before returning them to FSD at between 13 and 15 months old for specialized training.

Cathy has raised four puppies for Guide Dogs for the Blind and two for Guiding Eyes for the Blind, in addition to recruiting puppy raisers, conducting puppy testing, and leading puppy socialization and obedience classes for those organizations. During her five years as an FSD volunteer, Cathy has helped out at numerous special events, but she is currently putting her skills to use raising a Labrador retriever puppy named Tater. He is one of four puppies born to Mochi, a rescue dog who was pregnant when she arrived at FSD last year. Tater attended the Prison Trained K-9 Companion Program in Trinidad, Colorado, for four months before heading out to his foster home with Cathy in October 2018.

Says Cathy, "When I first got Tater, he was 6 months old. He knew a lot of obedience, but he needed socialization and to learn to use his obedience with all the distractions of life." Along with taking Tater to work, doctor's offices, restaurants, and stores as part of his training, Cathy will attend Puppy-Raising Club orientations to answer questions from new volunteer puppy raisers and assist FSD trainers during classes and outings. "Raising puppies is a lot of work," says Cathy, "but at FSD, you will never be alone. You will have FSD staff and trainers, a manual to guide you through each step, and other puppy raisers to train and support you throughout the process."

Cathy admits that the hardest thing about raising puppies is giving them back, but she says the sacrifice is more than made up for by seeing them graduate and knowing you played a small part in their achievement. "Raising a service puppy changes so many lives, from the person who receives the service dog, to their friends and family who don't have to worry as much about them, to all the people who will come up to you and ask about FSD and the puppy program. And it will change your life forever, too!"



VOLUNTEER

We are actively seeking volunteers in the Metro Denver area to join our Puppy-Raising Club. Learn more about this and all FSD volunteer opportunities at freedom servicedogs.org/volunteer.

FEATURED DONOR: KITTY COTTINGHAM

MONTHLY GIVING SUITS DELIGHTFUL DONOR

Ask Kitty Cottingham to describe her love for the life-changing work of Freedom Service Dogs, and she'll do so in a voice still sweetly dripping with the gracious southern accent she acquired while growing up in Mississippi. Today, Kitty lives at a retirement home in Highlands Ranch, where in 2016 she attended a presentation by FSD volunteers. She was so impressed by our organization's work that she joined FSD's Kibbles Club on the spot.

Kibbles Club members like Kitty donate to FSD on a monthly basis, providing consistent, ongoing support that can be counted on to fund our most urgent needs, such as emergency veterinary care for a dog in training or special support for one of our clients. As a Kibbles Club member, you can make automated monthly payments of any amount by credit card or by sending in monthly cash or check donations, and you can increase or

decrease your donations, skip a month, or make other changes at any time.

Says Kitty, "I give to FSD monthly because they do such a wonderful job, and I know my money will go to what it's supposed to be used for, not a lot of administrative costs. It's so simple to set up and to check my credit card statement every month that truthfully, I don't know why everybody doesn't do it!"

Joining the Kibbles Club is easy!



REPORT

Visit freedom servicedogs.org/donate/kibbles or contact Kate Goble at 303-922-6231 x215 or kgoble@freedom servicedogs.org.



Ru lives up to her name, bouncing happily when she gets excited, or when there's a T.R.E.A.T. involved.

Ru: from dumpster throwaway to penthouse diva

CAREER-CHANGE DOG LIVING THE HIGH LIFE

Ru had a rough start in life, to say the least. Found as a puppy inside a dumpster in a city on the Texas/Mexico border, Ru was brought to a Texas shelter, where she lived for two years. Little Ru—a mixed breed with Doberman-like markings—never enjoyed the life a puppy should have. When FSD's intake manager traveled to Texas in search of shelter dogs with service dog potential, she was charmed by Ru's people-pleasing personality and brought her back to Colorado.

When Ru first arrived at FSD, she was afraid, anxious, and unsure of everything. But thanks to the patience and persistence of her trainer, Lisa, within a month Ru started to build confidence and overcome every challenge in her path. After nine weeks of training, she was relaxed, happy, and comfortable—a completely different dog.

Despite her significant progress, however, Ru's upbringing and past experiences didn't allow her to achieve sufficient confidence to be happy as a service dog or professional therapy dog. Like many shelter dogs that come to FSD, Ru was better suited to a career change as a family pet, where she could enjoy all the love and attention she missed out on as a puppy.

While Ru didn't become an assistance dog, trainer Lisa believes that FSD saved her life. "Chances are that she would have been adopted and returned to the shelter over and over again, because people aren't equipped to deal with a dog like Ru. Ultimately, she would have become unadoptable," says Lisa. "I can confidently say we gave that sweet girl a chance and accomplished that without causing any further damage or stress for her. We improved her quality of life and helped her find the loving family she deserves."

That family consists of Marci and Jon, a compassionate couple who fell in love with Ru while fostering her for FSD and subsequently adopted her. Ru now lives with them in the 10th-floor penthouse of a downtown Denver high-rise, where she plays at the rooftop dog park, watches the people and traffic below from their balcony, and has become fast friends with their current FSD foster, London.



INTERESTED IN ADOPTING A NEW FURRY FAMILY MEMBER FROM FSD?

BROWSE ADOPTABLE DOGS:

 freedom servicedogs.org
 303-922-6231 for more info

 If you have adopted a dog from FSD, we would love to hear updates and see photos. Please send them to econley@freedom servicedogs.org, or post and tag on Facebook @FreedomServiceDogs or on Instagram with **#adoptfsd**.



Watching the world go by from 10 stories high requires multiple pillows and frequent naps for Ru.

"Ru is the sweetest pup I have ever met! Lisa, her trainer, taught us so much and did such amazing work with her to come out of her shell. We are so happy you all rescued this sweet and gentle soul, and we look forward to giving Miss Ru a long, happy, and loving life!"





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WHAT'S ON OUR WISH LIST?

You can make a difference for our service dogs in training!

Donating items on our Wish List is a great way to support FSD and make a big impact on the health, happiness, and progress of the dogs we train and care for every day. Find all our most-wished-for items, along with our Amazon Wish List, at freedom servicedogs.org/donate. Our dogs in training say "Thank you!"

Service Dog Candidate Houston's Top 5 Wish List Items:

1. LARGE ROPE TOYS
2. BULLY STICKS (MADE IN THE USA, PLEASE)
3. GREENIES PILL POCKETS
4. PETSAFE 3-IN-1 HARNESSSES (SIZES M AND L)
5. COMFY CONES (SIZES XL AND XXL)

