

# PATRIOT PUPPY PRESS



SMSD BELLA

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Benny & Blaze  
Air Force

Benny and  
Blaze  
8-27-21



Wendell  
and  
Duncan  
8-3-32

See page 6 for the stories and links to learn more about our latest teams.

## Volunteer Spotlight Gale Frana



We are pleased to shine the spotlight on Gale Frana in this edition. Gale has been a volunteer with SMSD since June of 2015 and has filled a variety of roles since that time. She started

out as a weekend respite for SMSD Freedom, then progressed to Freedom's advanced foster. In addition to weekend respite and advanced foster, she has taken on the responsibility to administer PATs (Public Access Tests) to veterans as they finish training camp and also the recertification PATs. She is a member of the Community Events Team and was also on the Application Team. She has taken dogs on plane trips when needed and attended a PTSD conference out of state. Gale has contributed a lot of time and energy to the SMSD organization and we are grateful for all she has done and continues to do.

(Continued on page 7)



## A Great Day of Golf!



Smoky Mountain Service Dog 5th Annual Golf Challenge was held on Saturday September 18 at the Toqua Golf Club in Tellico Village. We'd like to say thanks to those that made the event a great success:

Event Sponsor: Mortgage Investors Group.

Lunch Sponsor: Chick-fil-A.

Hole Sponsors: Regions Bank, Patriot Investments, Emerson Automotive, Bill & Pam Cooley, Brian & Sharon Wethington, Cook Bros Homes, Harbortowne Marine, Jackman Family Foundation, Edward Jones (Gary Stuart),

Prosperity Partners, Smoky Mountain Traders & Smoky Mountain Realty.

Supporters:

Simmons Bank, Vonore; Pinnacle Partners, Maryville; United Community Bank, Tellico Village; Volunteer Federal Savings Bank, Vonore.

Silent Auction Items:

Total Wine, RT Lodge, Twin Oaks Farm House, Citizens Insurance Solutions.

Snack food items:

Walmart, Lenoir City; Ingles, Lenoir City; Food Lion Tellico Village; Dunkin Donuts, Lenoir City. And to all the other companies and organizations that donated promo items and gift cards for the goody bags and prizes.

Then, of course, to the players, volunteer organizers and the staff of the Tellico Village Golf Club.

Thank you everyone, you made a difference.



## **UPCOMING EVENTS - MARK YOUR CALENDARS**

**Pull for our Veterans  
Sporting Clays  
October 16 and 17**

**Fishing for Soldiers -  
Bass Division  
October 30**

**Knights of Columbus  
Turkey Shoot  
November 13**

**Our 2021 Night for Patriots  
was canceled due to Covid-19  
We are looking forward to 2022!**



Stay Tuned - We had just one new puppy join us this quarter but more are expected before the end of the year.

Meet our newest family member - SMSDiT Rocky. Thanks to Jim and Nancy Goyert for making the trek to pick him up from Kellner Labradors in Missouri and deliver him to the kennel. Rocky is off to a great start with his puppy raisers.



## Puppy Press News



It's been a busy quarter at the kennel. Our trainers are working hard at advancing skills for all the dogs in the kennel, as well as keeping up with the puppies and their puppy raisers and the advanced dogs with their fosters.



Canine Program Manager Heather Wilkerson has written an excellent article (see next page) describing the training steps and milestones we track for all our dogs.



# FROM THE OFFICE OF OUR CANINE PROGRAM MANAGER

Did you know that SMSD administers the following behavioral and performance assessments to dogs between the ages of 1-2 years old? Through the use of standardized assessments, our team can identify specific strengths and weaknesses for an individual dog. Each dog in training is placed on an individual training plan.

These assessments enable us to provide critical information to the breeders who provide dogs to the organization. It also justifies whether a career change for a dog is needed before additional resources and funding are allocated. Each assessment is progressive in nature for behavioral criteria and performance expectations.

Level 1/Week 4- Conducted on Site/The dog is handled by the assigned trainer.

Dogs are introduced to various textures and basic retrieval tasks, learn or advance basic position skills, learn targeting behavior and are introduced to distance, distractions and duration.

Level 1/Week 8- Conducted in Public & on Site/The dog is handled by the assigned trainer. New position and manipulation skills are introduced, all previously taught skills are applied in public settings.

Level 1/Week 16 - Conducted in Public & on Site/The Dog is handled by someone other than its assigned trainer. New manipulation skills are introduced. All new and previously taught behaviors are applied in public settings.

Level 2- Conducted in Public & on Site/The Dog is handled by someone other than its assigned trainer. Advanced mobility tasks are introduced: searching for a phone, cane retrieval, alerting that help is needed. All previous skills are applied in public settings, Final C-BARQ (Canine Behavioral Assessment & Research Questionnaire) assessment is administered.

Once a dog passes a Level 2 assessment, it is considered ready to be paired with a veteran. Dogs that are not yet paired to a veteran may be moved to a volunteer advanced foster home or live part time with a staff trainer. During this time, we expect to apply all skills learned in the home and public settings until the dog is paired to a veteran applicant.

Heather Wilkerson  
SMSD Canine Program Manager  
423-421-4880



## Please share our joy in graduating two new teams in this quarter!

Our 47th placement! - US Air Force Veteran Crew Chief F-15 and Crash Recovery, Benny receives his SMSD Blaze. Watch the training camp video [here](#).

Click this link for the Passing of the Leash video:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nuZNHDOTrrU&t=285s>

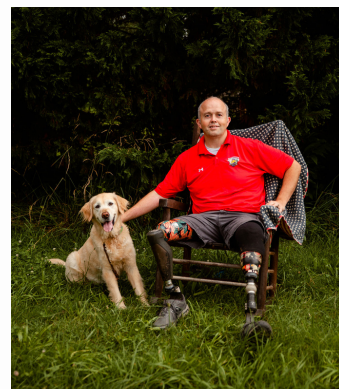


#46 - US Navy Petty Officer (ret.) Wendell receives SMSD Duncan. Wendell served his nation during the Gulf war stationed on the aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt. Training Camp video [here](#)

Passing of the Leash video here:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G9WqWXIXyeU&t=18s>

## Catching up with a few of our SMSDs and their recipients

Today he is 6, it's hard to believe we have cared for each other 3.5 years already. I Love Buster to the moon, and will Love him always and forever.



Only four years ago..

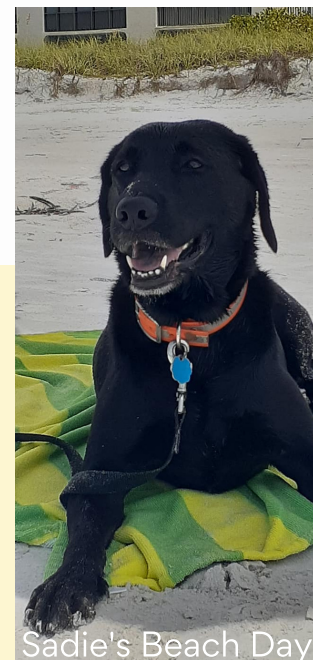
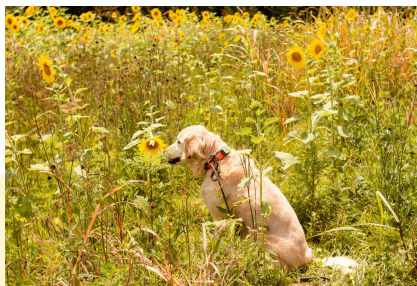
Looking back, it seems like a dream . . . SMSD Chance became the first Mobility Assistance Service Dog employed in the history of Veterans Affairs Tennessee Valley Healthcare System. In only eighteen months of employment, from the beginning of the onset of the global pandemic, Chance has assisted me in personally providing medical services to over 4,000 disabled Veterans and their family members. . .

To date, we've moved on from TVHS VA. Chance is an admired sentinel both in our community and at home. He remains 99.9% proficient in skills/tasks, despite challenges imposed upon us. (In fact, he only gets better!) As a matter of National record, FOIAs have documented our expertise 😊

Chance has been there all along. Even now, as I pause from typing, at my side I meet his gaze. . . Wags.

Thank you to SMSD, Volunteers, and sponsors for your continued support.

God bless!



(Volunteer Spotlight - continued from page 1)

When asked what brought her to SMSD, she says it was the mission and the people (our trainers and other volunteers).

Gale says what keeps her involved is, again, the people – veterans, other volunteer handlers, excellent trainers – all dedicated to the mission. She also appreciates the fiscal responsibility shown by SMSD.

Her background as the child of a military family has given her an appreciation and respect for our veterans. Her business management degree and raising of seven children helped her develop communication and organizational skills to prepare her for the SMSD volunteer roles. Gale brings a lot of dog experience, both as a breeder and trainer of Chesapeake Retrievers beginning in 1975, and showing her own dogs in conformation, obedience, rally, and other dog sports.

When Gale was asked the difficult question: Do you have a favorite dog? She was quick to respond, “The dog at the end of my leash is my favorite, but every dog has a piece of my heart.” Good answer, Gale! Each dog, (Freedom, Buster, Tucker, current advanced foster Tango, and current puppy Seymour) have a very special place in her heart. Her enthusiasm has prompted two of her daughters to join as well as another friend to become a puppy raiser. Her contacts in the dog world have led to volunteers to conduct dog visits and out-of-state PATs.

She reports that when she shares the mission of SMSD, to help our wounded veterans, people seem to straighten up a bit and show more respect towards the dog and herself. Gale is proud of her work, and the work of all volunteers, which results in our veterans and their families living a fuller life and having the freedom to participate in community activities.

Thank you, Gale! We are proud and pleased you are on our team.

Keep up with all the latest news - follow us on all the social media platforms. Click on any of the icons below to go directly to our page.

Send newsletter comments to  
laurie.b@smokymountain servicedogs.org

## **Welcome New 3rd Q 2021 Volunteers:**

**Kim Flad - Weekend Respite**  
**Kimberly Lee - Puppy Respite**  
**Diana and Tom Bradley - Fundraising**  
**Mary Ellen Young - Fundraising**  
**John Anton - Socializer**  
**Mari Kukral - Weekend Respite**  
**Whitney Young - Puppy Raiser**  
**Sheryl Morales - Puppy Raiser**  
**Kelly Wolf - Puppy Raiser**  
**Marina Ghani - Puppy Raiser**  
**Kathy & Richard Korinek - Weekend Respite**

***FIVE years of  
volunteer service!***

**Barbara Spate - VC, CE, R, S  
Congratulations, Barb!**

CE-Community Events, S-Socializer, A-Applications,  
VC-Volunteer Coordinator, G-Green Team,  
R-Respite, B-Board of Directors, T-Transport Team



**Our volunteers are at the core of our business model for SMSD. We couldn't do what we do without all of your help and dedication to our mission. Our heartfelt thanks and appreciation go out to each and every one of you. Thank you. We appreciate you and are honored by your service.**

### **WE DID IT!!!!**

Thank you to all of the 1,000+ supporters who helped get us to the goal of 1,000 pre-orders. The State of Tennessee is currently making them and you will be notified by your county clerk when it is time for you to pick up your new plate



[HTTP://SMOKYMOUNTAIN SERVICEDOGS.ORG/](http://smokymountain servicedogs.org/)