

Something to Howl About

JULY 2024

PATRIOT PUPPY PRESS



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COMMUNITY IS EVERYTHING!
We couldn't do this without you!

From the beginning of SMSD, we have been fortunate to have the support of our community - both individuals and businesses. In looking over just the past few months, we've had a great variety of support of all types. There was the Gary Lindsey Memorial Bass Tournament which has become an annual not-to-be-missed event! Then there was the 2024 Freedom Run sponsored by Fleet Feet Knoxville. Of course we can't overlook the valuable contributions of our 200+ volunteers who help in so many ways. We are grateful for everyone who has chosen to spend their time and efforts to help us help the heroes.

There are ongoing programs that seek to spread the word and raise funds to keep this train rolling down the tracks. Some of those would include the credit or debit card offered by First Tennessee Bank with a SMSD image, or the specialty license plate available to all Tennessee drivers with a registered vehicle. Don't forget the Kroger Community Rewards donations.

All efforts are greatly appreciated more than we can express.

Keep reading for more photos and information about some of our recent events.



Mike Kitchens, Ed Lindsey, Janet Lindsey, Kelly Shipe - Gary Lindsey Memorial Bass Tournament



PetSense Book Fair



Weigel's

RECIPIENT NEWS



Have you heard the news? We recently published this statement about the expansion of our recipient criteria:

When SMSD was formed in 2010, the Board decided we would serve veterans with service-connected physical disabilities. We are extremely pleased to announce that the SMSD Board of Directors recently changed our application criteria to serve veterans with either service-connected or non-service-connected physical disabilities. All veteran applicants must have an honorable discharge and meet all other application criteria. In addition, we have opened our applications to First Responders. These brave men and women who serve daily in our communities and have mobility needs that may require a mobility assistance service dog may also apply.

For more information, please visit our website, www.smokymountainsservicedogs.org

We are thrilled to see our recipients and their SMSDs after their graduation. Here are a couple photos of some recent events where we were able to catch up with some of our SMSD Family.

Brad and Jumper participated in the 2024 Freedom Run/Walk.

Diana and Valor (Valor opted to spend most of the day nearby in the A/C) at the SMSD Golf Challenge.

John, Gunner and Stephanie also participated in the Golf Challenge.

Jim and Maverick came over to our facility to share his experiences during his 28-year Navy career with sailors visiting from the USS Farragut.



Brad and SMSD Jumper
Freedom Run



Diana and SMSD Valor
SMSD Golf Challenge



Jim and SMSD Maverick
with Sailors from USS Farragut



John - SMSD Gunner - Stephanie
SMSD Golf Challenge

KENNEL NEWS FROM THE PROGRAM MANAGER

Heather Wilkerson

I hope everyone is enjoying their summer and staying cool. The heat the past couple of weeks has been brutal! As always we have had a busy couple of months.

During May many of our service dog recipient teams and our service dogs in training ages 6 months and older participated in the free Service Dog Eye Exams provided annually by ACVO. A huge thank you goes out to Dr. Ward from UTCVM for carving out time to provide this service to SMSD!

June was another busy month. SMSD hosted the Certified Canine Fitness Trainer Course last month. This course is accredited by the University of Tennessee's College of Veterinary Medicine. The purpose of the course is to teach trainers and veterinary professionals how to appropriately assess a dog for the purpose of physically conditioning it. This is a lengthy course that all SMSD trainers must take. It consists of an online study course, clinical rotation to apply and assess the student's knowledge, skills, and abilities. Each student must assess, design and execute 3 case studies for review by the instructors prior to being given access to the final written exam. The average time to complete this course is 6-9 months. This year Melissa Marti participated in the class with other service dog/professional trainers from around the country.

Also in June, Dr. Daryl Millis and several of his students provided a free orthopedic assessment for our dogs in training. Each dog received a complete physical exam and gait analysis. This service is essential in determining if there are any potential health issues with dogs in training and provides us with an extra layer of security as a mobility assistance service dog provider. Without this service we would be dependent upon radiographs only which are provided by our regular veterinarian. Dr. Millis is often able to identify musculoskeletal issues or prospective joint or soft tissue injuries even when the dog's are not visibly showing any signs of pain or discomfort. This enables us to be extremely proactive with our dogs' health. This year he did not identify any health issues, which leads me into my final topic for this edition of our newsletter which will focus on the quality of purpose bred dogs and how I obtain them.

What is a purpose bred dog? It is a dog that has been bred for a specific trait and purpose. Here at SMSD, I pride myself on establishing long term working relationships with breeders around the country who have a proven track record of producing dogs that are not predisposed to having genetic deficiencies or disqualifying traits. Our breeders invest a lot of time, effort and money to produce dogs that will work in conjunction with humans to achieve a common goal. These dogs must always meet the industry standards in health, temperament, and training to become a service dog and to perform service dog tasks. The importance of understanding the value of purpose bred dogs came from years of experience working with dogs who were not always purposely bred for service work. Dogs that do not possess all of the qualities required cost the organization a lot of wasted time, effort and money. They yield much lower graduation from training rates and often develop or have undesired traits or health issues that ultimately disqualify them from training. I work diligently to ensure that everyone benefits from my established breeder relations. Obviously, I want dogs purchased or donated to graduate from our training program. Our breeders trust that we are good stewards of their efforts. Our volunteers must trust that we follow and apply scientifically proven training methods to properly develop a dog that can graduate from the program. Our donors trust that we will be good stewards of their funds by fulfilling our mission of providing highly trained service dogs to deserving veterans. Our clients must trust that we have provided them with a dog that meets and exceeds the industry standards in all aspects. Over the years I have worked diligently to recruit dogs that will be successful for all parties involved. A very important part of my job is not only to recruit dogs to train but it is to provide our breeders with the pertinent information required to ensure that we continue to have a constant supply of qualified dogs for many years to come.

In closing, we will be busy the second half of this year conducting dog pairings for new applicants and providing our existing service dog teams with refresher training and recertifications. I hope that all of you have a wonderful rest of the summer! Stay Cool!



We're Expecting!



We will be receiving two Labrador Retrievers from Hero Labs this week! Be sure to check our Facebook page for photos and reports of their new adventures with their puppy raisers.

NEWS FROM YOUR VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR TEAM



MESSAGE FROM CARLA NAVAS, DIRECTOR, VOLUNTEERS

Our annual Volunteer appreciation picnic was held in April and we had a record number of attendees. It was great to see so many of our volunteers and their families turn out.

We hope that you all enjoyed the day and the sounds of our favorite DJ, Steve. Of course, we missed those of you that were not able to attend but we'll hope to see you next year or perhaps at the kennel for a Puppy or Foster class. We still encourage you to attend, just reach out to the trainers to check on a date and time that works for you and is available: SMSDtrainers@smokymountainservicedogs.org Please enjoy the attached pictures of the Picnic. Hope you're having a fun summer so far!

A VERY SPECIAL THANK YOU TO
STEVE BARTOLONE, DJ & GAME HOST



**Welcome 2Q 2024 New SMSD
Volunteers!**

Michelle Dixon, Puppy Raiser
Holly Momberger, Transporter
Regan Musick, UT Student Puppy Raiser
Stu Wicklund, Transporter



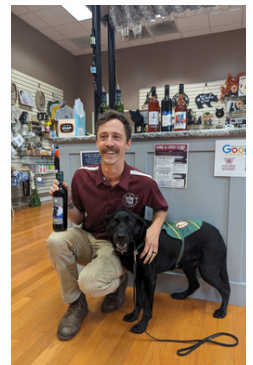
The annual Smoky Mountain Service Dogs Golf Challenge fundraiser was held on June 22 at the Toqua Golf Club in Tellico Village, and we were blessed with sunny weather, recipient veterans, and a hard-working dog (thank you, Hooligan!). One hundred and twenty golfers met a variety of challenges (like putting with a hockey stick, or taking a tee shot while sitting on a commode) and were guided by over sixty volunteers who helped explain those various challenges. Through the support of the event sponsor, Chick-fil-A of Lenoir City, and several other individuals and organizations that sponsored holes, played in the tournament or provided items for the golfers' "goodie bags," we raised \$32,000.00. We would like to extend our thanks to every volunteer who came out and spent the day in the sun, the golfing groups who gave unselfishly, and the sponsors who came through with their valued support. Thank you all!



I hope you enjoyed last quarter's newsletter article about ADI and its importance to us at Smoky Mountain Service Dogs. We will be celebrating International Assistance Dogs Week August 4-10-2024. To learn more about this important organization, please visit their website at www.assistedogsinternational.org.

Rocky Top Wine Trail

How exciting is this! Our own Ambassador Hooligan now has a wine developed especially for him by the Rocky Top Wine Trail! Winemaker Jacob created this wine to capture Hooligan's personality and the marketing staff took photos and created this gorgeous label. Hooligan attended the launch and watched the bottles flying off the shelves. Get yours while you can! Be sure to visit one of the five wineries in Pigeon Forge, TN to view this and the other wines available in their Military Wine Series.



WHAT'S IN A NAME???

CHECKERS, named for the famous UT Checkerboard, of course! He is one of our newest puppies and was named as a result of a contest by the members of UT Volunteer Puppy Partners, an organization formed to support our mission and raise awareness of service dogs. Many of the students act as socializers and puppy raisers for us. They were the winners of the Outstanding New Student Organization. Check our Facebook page for pictures of Checkers - coming soon.



Freedom Run 2024!

Many thanks to Shahin and Sharon Hadian, owners of Fleet Feet Knoxville, for sponsoring the Freedom Run each year on July 4. It's a family friendly 1- or 2-mile run/walk. There were over 600 entrants this year, including 28 SMSD Team members and five Smoky Mountain Service Dogs, including Canine Ambassadors Hooligan and Winston. Please plan to join us next year on this level course along Kingston Pike. The Farragut July 4th Parade follows behind us and we get lots of cheers from the crowd lining the sidewalks.



Are you a Kroger shopper? If you haven't already, please sign up for Community Rewards. There is no cost to you, and we receive a percentage of your purchase.

Last quarter there were just 46 households signed up and we received \$176.96.

<https://www.kroger.com/i/community/community-rewards>



Do you have your SMSD Specialty Plate yet? In just the first quarter of 2024, there were 140 new purchases and 296 renewals, resulting in income to SMSD of \$7371.00.



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

Send comments, suggestions and critiques to Laurie.B@smokymountain servicedogs.org