

PARAGON

SERVICE DOGS



Paragon Press May 2025



May has been a busy month, full of exciting developments and celebrations!

We're thrilled to share each triumph and special moment with you. So, grab your party hats and balloons as we recap this amazing month!

Client Applications Opening June 1st, 2025!

We are excited to announce that Paragon Service Dogs will begin accepting applications June 1, 2025, through July 31, 2025. Starting June 1st, candidates may apply on our website under the apply tab. Applications are reviewed and accepted on a rolling basis during this window, so we encourage early submissions. If you are interested in applying, please review our eligibility criteria and program description.

[Click Here to Apply](#)

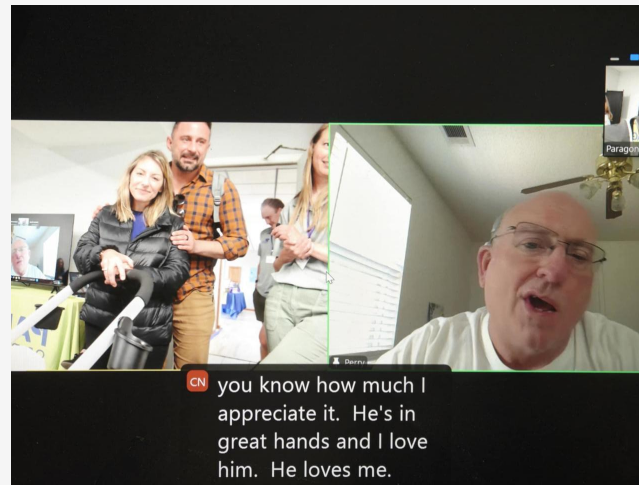
[Click Here for Eligibility Criteria](#)

A Graduation Event!

Our favorite events each year are when we get to celebrate our new teams at graduation. This graduation, we were joined by our newest service dog teams — Kari and Doc, and Perry and Shandy — to celebrate their hard work and officially welcome them as part of the Paragon Team. There is always a special magic at these events, and this one was no different. Surrounded by forty of our supporters, volunteers, staff, and friends, we gathered for great food and company.

This year, for the first time, we welcomed a client virtually: Perry and Shandy. As

you know, they graduated last month, but they were unable to travel to Paragon to celebrate with the staff and Shandy's puppy raisers.



Joining us via Zoom, Perry shared this special moment by giving a heartfelt speech and bonding with Shandy's puppy raisers, Jamie and Roger. It was delightful to hear them connect to each other.



In addition to Perry and Shandy, we celebrated Kari and Doc, who just completed team training. Like Perry, Kari and Doc's puppy raisers, John and Charlene, shared meaningful moments, reflecting on Doc's successes and lovable quirks.

Graduation is always magical, and as always, there wasn't a dry eye in the room. Thank you to everyone who made it possible. Congratulations to Perry and Shandy, and to Kari and Doc!

Kari and Doc: A Terrific Twosome

This month, we congratulate our newest team: Kari and Doc! We are thrilled to share that they have passed their certification test and are now officially a Paragon Service Dog hearing team!

Kari reached out to Paragon after her daughters began moving out. With no one else at home, she was unable to hear important sounds like the fire alarm or



the tornado siren — which often goes off in Illinois. Concerned about missing vital sounds, Kari began her journey with Paragon to receive a hearing dog.



Because Kari works as a Behavior Analyst for Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) students through the Illinois State Board of Education, the Paragon staff knew she needed a confident dog who was comfortable in crowds and around children. Since Kari travels across Illinois, she also needed a companion who was ready to take on the world right alongside her.

While Kari waited for her ideal match, our puppy raisers, John and Charlene, were hard at work with a promising new puppy named Doc. Throughout his training, Doc went on countless adventures and gave many presentations, including visits to several schools. Doc's calm nature, exceptional sound alerts, love for children, and stellar behavior helped make him the perfect match! Two weeks ago, Kari and Doc came together for team training, learning about each other and forming a strong bond.



Kari and Doc have now returned to Illinois, where they are doing wonderfully. Kari shared how amazing Doc is.

“Paragon listened to my needs — what I wanted and didn’t want in a dog — and they trained Doc for me, who is perfect!”.

Volunteer Spotlight: Jamie and Roger





There are some people in this world who are guided by kindness, and Jamie and Roger are two of these folks. They have truly inspired us with their continued generosity and dedication. Jamie began working with Paragon in 2023 as a trainer and volunteer coordinator, tirelessly supporting and educating each volunteer on how to successfully raise a puppy. She quickly became an invaluable part of our program. Soon, she and Roger went above and beyond by becoming puppy raisers themselves and welcoming Shandy into their home.

After long days at work, Jamie and Roger devoted their evenings to training and caring for Shandy. Their time, dedication, and impressive training skills truly set Shandy up for success. Then came a joyful life change: the arrival of their beautiful daughter, Nora. Jamie began to transition away from Paragon to embrace her new motherhood adventure.

Yet, even with the demands of welcoming a newborn, Jamie and Roger never wavered in their commitment to Shandy. Between feeding and naps even Shandy embraced Nora's new schedule. Through everything, they continued to lovingly include



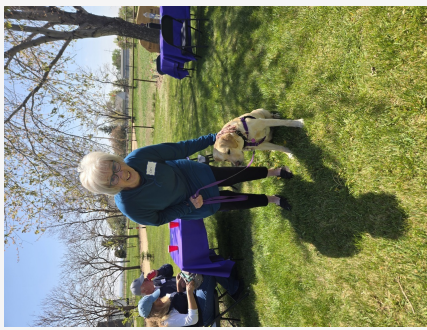
Shandy as a part of their growing family. Their unwavering kindness and devotion ensured that Shandy was prepared to fulfill his role as a lifeline and best friend to our client, Perry.

Thank you, Jamie and Roger, for everything you've done. Together, with little Nora, you've changed lives in the most remarkable way.

Volunteer Appreciation Picnic



The foundation of our Paragon program is our volunteers. They provide love and care to every one of our priceless pups. We had the opportunity to give a special thanks to our volunteers during Volunteer Appreciation Month through our first-ever Volunteer Appreciation Picnic! Full of games, laughter, and of course, food, we welcomed 25 of our



volunteers to the Paragon facility to celebrate their outstanding 7,875 volunteer hours this year.

Naturally, no celebration would be complete without activities centered around our pups!



There was a rally course, a variety of signs with cues for dogs to perform, a leather dog tag maker, and a large yard for puppy playtime. It was magical to see each of our volunteers bonding, sharing experiences, and showing their true love for our dogs.

Thank you, volunteers, for the outstanding work you do. You truly make our program possible, and we couldn't be more thankful!

Circle Graphics at it again!

This month, we were honored to receive another volunteer project from Circle Graphics. The first time, they transformed our front yard by placing tons of

gravel under our ramp, completely revitalizing the space. Well, they've gone and done it again! They removed leaves, clipped tree branches, spread tons of mulch, and once again gave our front area a complete makeover.

This small team of ten made a big impact on our yard, and we're so excited to welcome new guests. The photos speak for themselves!

Circle Graphics, thank you for creating a beautiful space for our pups to train.



Dog Diaries: Flip and Flapjack



Hi there!

We are Flip and Flapjack! We just arrived at Paragon after a long car ride from Kansas. We're Cobberdog puppies, and we're super excited to start our training journey!

We've already met our inmate handlers, and that's where we'll begin our learning of the important skills to become service dogs. Everyone has been so welcoming, and we can't wait to get started!

Paws up for new adventures!

Thanks for Reading!

Thank you for joining us in celebrating such an exciting and busy month! Our volunteers truly make matches like Perry and Shandy, or Kari and Doc, possible. For that, we are incredibly grateful.

We can't wait to share all the exciting developments coming in June, so keep an eye out for our next newsletter!

With gratitude,
The Paragon Team ☐♥



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