



SUMMIT ASSISTANCE DOGS

2015 Annual Report



A home of our own – chapter two!

Last year we told you about our major milestone, when after 14 years, we were able to purchase 17 acres on North Whidbey Island for our future permanent home. During 2015, we worked through many of the preliminary permitting and initial design processes necessary to take the next step toward the dream – building a training and kenneling facility, with future plans for a dormitory to house our clients when they come to us for assessments and training.

The concept sketch here shows our initial vision for the project, which will be refined and enhanced over time. Facilities Project Manager Mark Bunje has been coordinating with permitting officials on Whidbey Island, consultants and with Boxwood architects working on the design for the facility.

“Island County staff have been very supportive and helpful, in spite of being stretched thin on resources,” Bunje said. “They have given us helpful suggestions and guidance as we navigate the permitting and review processes.”

Summit hopes to be ready for a public hearing late fall 2016 so final approvals can happen by the end of the year. Please follow us at www.summitdogs.org/watch-us-grow for updates throughout the coming year.



Meet one of our many applicants

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Meet two Summit grads now on staff

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SUMMIT ASSISTANCE DOGS

Empowering people living with disabilities to greater heights

Message from the Founder/Executive Director



2015 was a year of changes for Summit. We've been training and placing a variety of different assistance dogs, including mobility, hearing and therapy dogs, for 15 years. We've taken pride in every placement, and our dogs have all been life-changing partners for the people who have received them.

As we enter our 16th year, we have decided to limit our focus to training and placing mobility service dogs. While we believe that all assistance dogs are amazing and provide incredible therapeutic benefits for their partners, this renewed focus will let us make the best use of training resources to meet the demand of our growing list of applicants, which includes earlier graduates whose dogs have retired or passed away. Many organizations provide hearing and therapy dogs, so we can refer those applicants to other resources.

The vision we hold for our future is to provide our applicants with a service dog within six months, and we can't achieve this goal without narrowing our focus. We are striving to become the very best

we can be at training and placing assistance dogs for people living with a disability that significantly impacts their mobility.

To support this vision, we are developing a breeding program to help supply us with the quality dogs we need. We will continue to bring suitable rescued dogs into our training program, however, we need a more reliable supply of purposefully bred dogs to meet our ever-increasing demand. Expect to see a lot of new puppies coming soon!

And of course, we need a place to house all these pups and expand our operations, so we are very focused on designing our new facility and obtaining the required permits to begin construction. The conceptual plan for our development is hung on the wall in my office, a constant reminder of a big dream that is now within reach.

Big dreams require believers who join together to turn them into reality. Thank you so much to all of you who have supported Summit for the past 15 years. I feel confident that with your continued support, we will reach this next milestone and be able to provide even greater service to our community!

Sue Meinzinger

Join us for a prison graduation ceremony

At the end of each nine-week training session, we honor the inmate trainers at the Monroe Correctional Facility who have worked with our pups with a special graduation ceremony. It's a very moving event as some of the trainers talk about how working with our dogs has impacted their lives, often trying to hold back tears. Each is then awarded a diploma before they mingle with outsiders attending. Please consider joining us for a ceremony. The next scheduled ones are Sept. 7 and Dec. 7. All people attending must get special clearance, so we need to know if you're interested at least three weeks in advance of each ceremony.



Please contact Alex Stone at alex@summitdogs.org if you are interested.

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Summit applicant hopes for a dog with a “sassy personality”



Jessie Owen’s life came crashing down – literally – just before Christmas 2012 when a snow-laden tree crashed down on her family’s car, killing her parents and severely injuring Jessie and the others in the car. Jessie sustained a spinal-cord injury. Through perseverance and hard work, she has learned to walk with the aid of her hot-pink crutches, but she still needs help walking and picking things up, and hopes for a service dog to help in her daily life.

“I hope for a service dog who is not only physically helpful to me but the absolute rock star of my life,” Jessie said. “I’m hoping that my service dog will be able to help me open doors, take off jackets, and give me confidence to go into places that I maybe would not go alone. And I hope my service dog has just a little bit of a sassy personality.”

Sassy would be perfect for Jessie, who has an amazingly upbeat spirit and outlook on life despite all that has happened to her since that fateful day more than three years ago. Jessie was a sixth-grade teacher who has been off work since her accident, but she’s easing back into it by volunteering almost full time and hopes her dog will enjoy being at her side and with her students. She describes the 12-year-olds she works with as “wild and crazy and always

naughty,” but she loves being with them.

Jessie hasn’t let her injuries hold her down, even without a service dog. With the help of friends and family, she travels a lot. She backpacked all over Europe last summer, using her power wheelchair to navigate through France, the Netherlands, the Czech Republic, Germany, Italy and Spain, but she knows her life would be much easier with the assistance of a trained service dog.

Jessie said she spent her first couple of years after the accident working on her body, and now she is working with a life coach to help her figure out where she goes next.

“I would hope that I can be back in the classroom a couple of times a week,” she said. “I am also very interested in dogs, and would love the opportunity to open an indoor dog park for all of those rainy days in Seattle.”

Successful training partnership changing lives all around

Summit’s training partnership with the Monroe Correctional Facility finished its fifth year in 2015, changing lives both inside the prison and for potential Summit service dog recipients.

Leon

“I am grateful to be part of the program, because it gives me the chance to express affection I otherwise miss with my family being in Texas. The teamwork gives me a positive outlook, and I get to pay it back by giving 100 percent of my affection, devotion and respect to the dogs I work with.”

Wesley

“I have been involved in the program since June 2011. There is no better feeling than knowing I played a small part in making it possible for someone with unique life challenges to go out in to the world in a way they couldn’t before.”

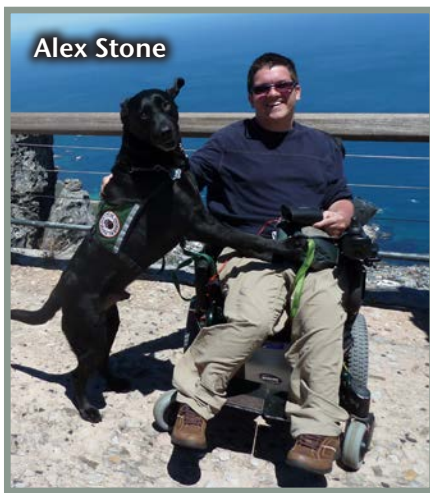


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Two Summit graduates support the mission as staff

Their hearts are definitely in their work, because they know what Summit can do. Alex Stone and Melissa Mitchell both have cerebral palsy and have benefited from the support of Summit service dogs.



Alex Stone

Alex has been Summit's development associate for the past two years.

Since graduating with his first service dog, Fraser, in 2006, Alex has gone to college, earned a degree in public affairs and nonprofit leadership and

is currently finishing a graduate degree through the School for International Training in Brattleboro, Vermont. For his thesis, he is designing a program for disabled college students to study abroad in South Africa, as he did several years ago.

Fraser has mostly retired after many years of dedicated service and international travel, and Alex is waiting for his successor dog from Summit.

"I'm working to bring in new supporters and strengthening connections with existing donors to support Summit's important mission," Alex said. "My favorite part of my job is the people I get to meet and watching their excitement grow as they see the impact of Summit's work."

"From planning events to speaking with groups and individuals, I love my job so much. I can't imagine another role that would give me the opportunity to give back to an organization that has given me so much!"

Melissa Mitchell joined the Summit staff in late 2015 as a trainer. She received her first

Summit dog, Shiloh, in 2007 and was paired with successor dog Tanner in 2015, allowing Shiloh her well-deserved retirement.

Prior to joining Summit, Melissa ran a community inclusion and employment program for adults with developmental disabilities in Oregon.

Melissa said her work has taken her far from her education, which includes degrees in French and print journalism, although she taught English in France after graduation. She then spent two years in this country doing AmeriCorps projects, but her "family legacy" called to her, following in her parents' footsteps working in disability advocacy.

Melissa trained her first service dog herself, something she strongly advises people not to do if they are not professional

trainers. It takes certain skills to prepare a dog for public access as a certified service dog. At the time, she didn't know other options were available. But she found Summit and was blessed with the match with Shiloh.



Melissa Mitchell

Her experience training her own service dog, plus the many years she has dedicated to learning about training, make her a great fit for Summit.

"Training my first dog cost me about \$10,000 out of pocket. Summit has never asked me for anything," she said. "That's why I do this. It lets me give back for so much Summit has given me."

And her new partner Tanner serves as an "adjunct" staff member, helping Melissa train other dogs.

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Generous Summit donor plans to give beyond her lifetime

Mona Zimerman of Snohomish gives time and money to Summit Assistance Dogs, and she will continue giving when she's gone. Mona has made a planned gift through her estate planning, designating Summit as a beneficiary in her will and her 401Ks.

"I don't really have any family to leave money to, so I want what's left after I die to go to a good cause," she said. "I have always loved dogs, working dogs in particular, and especially those who help people. That was the motivation for me."

Her involvement began almost six years ago when she found Summit while "surfing, looking for someplace to volunteer."

Mona fosters Summit dogs, volunteers for outreach events, transports dogs as needed, and adopted Ginger,

(aka Sprite) a "repurposed Summit dog."

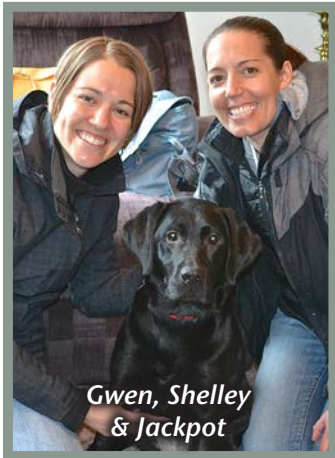
"Ginger has loads of personality, enthusiasm for walks and gets along with all creatures, except squirrels," Mona said.

"We are so grateful for people who make bequests and planned gifts that help us prepare for a future in which we can provide more life-changing partnerships," said Sue Meininger, Summit's founder and executive director. "If you want to consider a lasting gift to Summit, talk with your attorney or financial adviser. Then be sure to notify us so we can thank you!"



Mona & Ginger

Special-needs released dogs get special homes



Gwen, Shelley & Jackpot

We're always sad when we have to release a dog for whatever reason, but we're happy when we find the right homes for them, especially when they have special needs. That was the case with puppies Lizzie and Jackpot, who both turned out to have vision-limiting cataracts. We knew they would likely need expensive treatments, and we were honest with the two couples who stepped up to

give them loving homes.

Jackpot went home to Portland with Gwen Nesselbeck and Shelley Zavitz. They are totally enamored with 2-year-old Jackpot, whom they adopted in January 2015.

"Jackpot is great. We just adore her. She's our little love," Gwen said. "She has a teenage attitude but basically good temperament. We credit her early Summit training that she is leaps and bounds ahead of a dog her same age."

Gwen said they are fortunate to have the means to afford the care Jackpot needs.

"Such a happy girl. She doesn't know how impaired she

is," Gwen said. "She was on limited activity for a month after the surgeries. Try telling a one-year-old Black Lab that she can't swim or play with her friends! But, now she has found a whole new world."

Jackpot's littermate Lizzie is living happily in Maple Valley, Washington, with equally doting dog moms Colby Collier and Melanie Jennings. They also have spent lots of money on Lizzie.

"Lizzie loves to be with other dogs. She doesn't know she has special needs."

Colby said. "She catches movement if it's big enough, follows with hearing, and then follows up with her nose, sniffing things out," she said. "She's totally energetic, a very happy girl."

"I couldn't be happier with the homes these girls ended up in. They are living the good life," said Rita Cooper, who handles released-dog placements for Summit.



Melanie, Colby & Lizzie

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Summit puppies become great senior class projects

Two Mount Vernon High School seniors are raising Summit puppies for their senior projects, a new and welcome twist on our traditional foster homes. It gives the students great learning opportunities while giving Summit much needed foster homes and great community outreach.

Claire Dimock started at the beginning of her senior year, raising Black Lab Maui. She enjoyed it so much that she's wrapping up the year with her second pup, Yellow Lab Mabel.

Hector Calzada joined the puppy-raising ranks in early 2016 after attending some Summit puppy classes to get some experience. He passed training classes with flying colors and is now raising Chocolate Lab Olive.

"I decided to be a puppy raiser because our project is supposed to be something connected with what we want to do when we're older," Hector said. "I want to be a veterinarian and maybe open my own animal shelter."

Claire had the idea to train a puppy after an older friend told her about her experience working with Summit Assistance Dogs, but she had a little more trouble convincing the school that puppy raising was

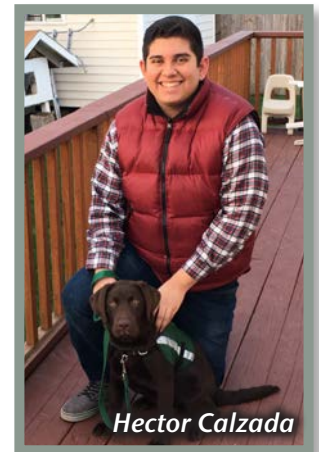
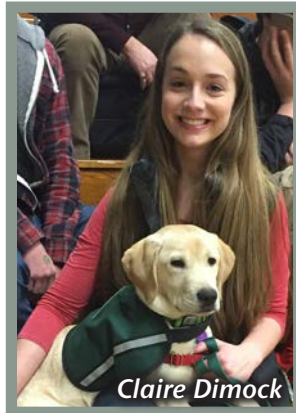
connected with her career goal of becoming a neonatal nurse. She made her case that raising Maui was like taking care of babies between when they're born and after they leave the hospital.

"It's a great learning experience with responsibility," Claire said. "It warms my heart to know how much this dog will enrich someone else's life."

After graduation in June, Hector plans to go to Washington State University or Western Washington University to study biology and then go on to study veterinary medicine. Claire plans to go to nursing school.

Foster home coordinator Brenda Crispin is pleased that younger people are becoming interested in puppy raising, a role traditionally filled by older people, including retirees. "We love our snowbirds," she said, "but it's nice to have some people who don't go away in the winter. And this is such a fun project for a family to do together."

To learn more about becoming a Summit foster home, visit our web site and click on "Volunteer".



2015 Foster Homes

Ann Watkins
Andrea Crispin
Anne Marie Fleming
Anni Campbell
Brenda Crispin
Brenda Walker
Cheng Hsun Shih
Dave Thompson
Deborah Darsie

Dawnelle Bomer
Diana Smith
Donna Vaquer
Hector Calzada
Jane Dielman
Joy Thompson
Claire Dimock
Kelly Kosiewicz
Laurie Quirk

Linda Chapman
Lori Sprague
Mary Beth Foglia
Mary Lou Vibrans
Mikayla Rolf
Mike Powers
Mona Zimmerman
Nancy Johnson
Nancy Nielsen

Nina Mann
Peg Bodin
Penny Potter
Scottie Kuper
Shivani Caplan
Sophie Chen
Tina Starks

SUMMIT ASSISTANCE DOGS

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2015 Accomplishments

- Provided an educational program for prison inmates who help train our dogs at Monroe Correctional Complex
- Provided two new service dogs for people living with disabilities
- Provided ongoing support and recertification for 40 service-dog partnerships
- Completed conceptual design work for new training facility
- Provided numerous educational presentations for various schools and community organizations

2015 Financial Results (FY 1/1/15 - 12/31/15)

Income

Corporate	\$106,000
Employee Campaigns	\$105,000
Events	\$133,000
Grants	\$9,000
Individuals	\$111,000
In Kind	\$13,000
Investments	\$27,000
Miscellaneous	\$2,000
Organizations	\$6,000
Program Service	\$13,000
Total Income	\$525,000

Expense

Communication	\$5,000
Events	\$29,000
Insurance	\$3,000
Miscellaneous	\$12,000
Occupancy	\$10,000
Printing & Postage	\$18,000
Professional Services	\$55,000
Salaries	\$254,000
Supplies	\$40,000
Travel	\$14,000
Total Expenses	\$440,000

Board of Directors

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Seattle, WA

Matt Hobbs
Seattle, WA

Brandon Stone, *Vice President*
Bothell, WA

Stephanie Drenchen
Bellevue, WA

Kimberly Lancaster, *Secretary*
Redmond, WA

Mike Hughes
Mill Creek, WA

Rick Greaves, *Treasurer*
Seattle, WA

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Special Thanks to 2010 graduate Steve Ellison (with Crocker) for donating design time for this publication.

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SUMMIT ASSISTANCE D❤️GS

**2015 Graduate
Teams**



Melissa & Tanner
Oak Harbor, WA
Service Dog



Amy & Shane
Seattle, WA
Therapy Dog