



Puppies
Behind
Bars

Puppies Behind Bars
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Puppies Behind Bars trains prison inmates to raise service dogs for wounded veterans and explosive detection canines for law enforcement. The puppies live in prison with their puppy-raisers from the age of eight weeks to twenty months. As the puppies mature into well-loved, well-behaved dogs, their raisers learn what it means to contribute to society rather than take from it.

CFC #11902



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DOG TAGS: Service Dogs for Those Who've Served Us



DOG TAGS®, a Puppies Behind Bars® initiative, honors and assists wounded OIF/OEF veterans. By pairing you with a specially trained Labrador or golden retriever service dog, we can help you cope with the challenges of everyday life.

Our dogs, raised in prison, are trained to perform 90 service dog commands. Since we specialize in dogs for veterans with PTSD and TBI, we also teach our dogs special commands for wounded warriors with these injuries.

All our dogs can open and close doors, turn lights on and off, dial 911 on a phone, carry shopping bags, do laundry, and bring items to you. In addition, we teach them how to enter a room before you, assuring you it's safe; how to awaken you from nightmares; how to "watch your back"; and how to stop people approaching, if their approach is making you nervous.

Because our dogs are not raised in a kennel, but instead are around people 24 hours a day/seven days a week, they develop an exceptional bond with humans. Since they are raised by prison inmates, they are able to connect with people who may be socially withdrawn.

Dog Tags® can only pair fifteen of these magnificent dogs per year, but as a result of being a small organization, we offer some of the best service dogs available. We are unique in that we do not send our dogs out to be raised by families, who then return them for formal training; we raise and train them from earliest puppyhood. We've known each dog since he or she was eight weeks old.

Puppies Behind Bars® pays for all the costs associated with getting one of these special dogs. We will fly a wounded warrior to one of our training facilities and provide a hotel room, transportation, and most meals for the two weeks that we train you to become a team with your new dog.

It is the least we can do for you after all you have done for us.

HOW TO APPLY

1. To qualify for a Dog Tags® service dog, you, an OIF/OEF veteran, must be capable of incorporating a dog into your life. You must be able to provide a stable, safe environment for our dog, as well as love, exercise and food. Most important, you must be willing to become more independent and to work with a highly trained four-legged companion.
2. Access the Dog Tags® application online at www.puppiesbehindbars.com (click on "Apply for a Service Dog," then on the "Download the Dog Tags Application" button). Send the completed application and all requested references to our office.
3. After reviewing your application, we will begin the process of interviewing you, speaking with your health care providers, and checking your references.
4. If you are accepted, you will come to us for two weeks of training with the dog we have chosen for you. Six weeks after this training is completed, we will do a home visit, and we will see you annually thereafter, to recertify you and your dog as a working service dog team.

For additional information, please contact nora@puppiesbehindbars.com or visit our website at www.puppiesbehindbars.com



*Dave Long and Harry,
New York, March 2010
Photo by Keith Barraclough*