



# QUEST

**Home of the Assistance Dog Institute**  
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THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF BERGIN COLLEGE OF CANINE STUDIES

## IN QUEST OF: BETTERING LIVES

### THREE PREGNANT RESCUE DOGS. TWO DEDICATED BERGIN STAFF. ONE MISSION TO SAVE LIVES.

Faculty members Devan Amundsen and Registered Veterinary Technician Jen Longman are the ring leaders behind our successful Shelter Dog Program. This duo has established quite the connection with shelters all around Northern California, most notably with Dogma Animal Rescue and Humane Society for Inland Mendocino County.

Jen is Bergin College of Canine Studies' Puppy Breeding and Enrichment Manager and has known of Duane, who runs Dogma Animal Rescue, for a while now. She has known numerous people that have worked with him, so she knew it was a reputable rescue. "It's a well-known rescue in the community so we went with that resource when looking for pregnant dogs to help," she elaborates. We received three pregnant mothers from the local Sonoma County rescue: Margie, Betsy, and Lolly. With the help of our dedicated students, we cared for and whelped two litters of mixed-breed puppies. Margie brought our *New Girl* litter into the world, comprising of one girl and two boys: Jess, Winston, and Schmidt. Betsy birthed the *Gilmore Girl* litter of seven pups, including five girls and two boys: Lorelai, Rory, Lane, Miss Patty, Sookie, Logan, and Luke. It turns out that Lolly wasn't pregnant after all, so she provided wonderful moral support for her fellow Dogma "sisters" and was a wonderful "auntie" to all the puppies.



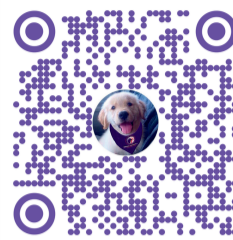
Lolly, Betsy, and Margie

Cappy & Brooklyn 99 Litter

The premise of this endeavor is to replicate the enrichment we provide to our service dogs for these shelter dogs to make them more adoptable. Our goal is to "find them a forever home from the beginning because they've had good socialization, enrichment, and an introduction to training," Jen explains. "We aim to provide them with more skills and socialization so they will have a better chance of not getting returned back to a shelter. We don't want them to live a life of jumping from house-to-house, getting rehomed."

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Devan established a relationship with Becca at Humane Society for Inland Mendocino County (HSIMC) years ago and since then, he mentions that "They have always welcomed the college with open arms and open minds, whether it's pulling dogs into our program or students visiting to get hands-on experience working with dogs in the shelter." We received another pregnant mother, Cappy, from HSIMC and she birthed the *Brooklyn Nine-Nine* litter. This mixed-breed litter consists of seven puppies, including four girls and three boys: Gina, Rosa, Amy, Tiny Terry, Jake, Hitchcock, and Scully.



Brooklyn 99 Litter

Various Litters

"It's just been a very different journey because we don't know what we're getting. All the puppies are surprises, even as they continue to grow. It's been fun for everybody to see a different breed than we're used to," Jen answered when asked how this experience differs from whelping and caring for our usual service dogs-in-training. She is far from inexperienced when it comes to raising shelter pups so the only real surprises for her in Bergin's Shelter Program were the mothers' due dates and the number of puppies they would whelp. It's also been interesting to witness our rescue dogs' different temperaments in comparison to our service dogs, who are bred for their specific career.

Our students have really taken initiative and worked alongside both Jen and Devan to achieve our Shelter Program goals. Devan proudly shares, "I have been constantly surprised at their willingness to explore difficult and controversial topics in animal sheltering with empathy and thoughtfulness. They have been so enthusiastic about visiting shelters and working with dogs, especially the dogs often labeled 'challenging' by shelters.

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They have stepped up to foster moms and puppies, (a nightmare within a shelter), and have been so great about being up for anything in the interest of helping homeless dogs." Nearly each week, our Bachelor of Science students joined Devan for hands-on field trips across Northern California at various shelters in Alameda, Mendocino, and Sonoma Counties.

Jen keeps order in our busy puppy room on campus and has appreciated all the help from our students. Some of them are employed by Bergin College of Canine Studies to take shifts in the puppy room while others have taken pups into their own home for fostering and further enrichment.

This current Spring semester of our Shelter Dog program has amassed us a total of 17 puppies and 4 moms! These adorable mixed-breed rescue pups have surely made their mark on our organization.

Beatriz Padilla, Bergin College of Canine Studies' Lead Puppy Kennel Technician and 2022 Graduate of our Bachelor of Science in Cynology degree program, was the first to set her heart on adopting one of these cuddly little rescues. After taking Sookie home to meet her family, it was decided: she would become the newest addition to the Padilla household immediately! Sookie is settling in very nicely to her new home with Beatriz and family; we couldn't be happier to know that our *Gilmore Girl* is being loved unconditionally, every day.

Sookie wasn't the only puppy to steal the heart of one of our very own: Ana Alvarez, 2023 Bachelor of Science in Cynology graduate, has adopted Hitchcock from the *Brooklyn Nine-Nine* litter! Now answering to the name "Archie", this pup is in confident hands, learning the ropes and gaining more experience each day.

Don't be fooled: working in the shelter industry is no walk in the park, yet finding these loving pets their forever home makes it all worth it. Devan has had extensive first-hand involvement in the shelter industry for some years now and explains "It is emotionally, mentally, and physically exhausting work. There isn't an end in sight... As people struggle with finances, housing, illness, and mental health, their dogs will unfortunately struggle alongside them. While it is difficult work, it is always incredibly rewarding to be part of changing the lives of people and their dogs."

Anyone in the shelter industry will tell you that it is a taxing field because it tugs at your heartstrings, but that's why they do it. We need these brave, educated, and professional leaders like Devan and Jen in this industry to continue being the driving force to ethically and humanely empty animal shelters. Every dog is innately good and it is their lived experiences that can alter that disposition.

## INTRODUCING OUR 2023 GRADUATES!



Left to Right: Patricia Hunt, Hope Minton, Mary Kate Cipollone, Kalina Wilson, Yayoi Jiko, Nicole Roberts, and Izora Hoagland

Canines that have been neglected by humans naturally develop an aversion to them and ultimately distrust. As a result, shelters must pour quality care and empathy into these animals in order to make them equipped to enter into a forever family home.

Our hats go off to Jen, Devan, our wonderful and dedicated students, donors, and our community of supporters for making Bergin College of Canine Studies' Shelter Dog Program a success. Many thanks to Dogma Animal Rescue, Humane Society for Inland Mendocino County, Oakland Animal Services, and Rohnert Park Animal Services for the opportunities they have provided to our students and for the ability to change these rescue dogs' lives for the better. For more information on how you may get involved in our Shelter Dog Program, you may visit [www.berginu.edu/donate](http://www.berginu.edu/donate). If you are interested in adopting any of our rescue dogs, or have any questions about our program, please email [jenniferl@berginu.edu](mailto:jenniferl@berginu.edu).

## UC DAVIS CAME TO VISIT



On Saturday, March 4, 2023 University of California Davis' First-Year Seminar (FYS) Program students came to our campus! We were happy to give over 20 UC Davis students and staff members a campus tour, complete with a visit to our Puppy Room. Our day ended in the Training Room with Sherri Rieck and her demonstration dog, Barlow, showing just a glimpse of the 100+ impressive commands our assistance dogs learn. We are proud to say that each visitor left having learned something new and thoroughly enjoyed their visit to our campus. UC Davis' FYS Instructors wrote us a kind message thanking us for the opportunity, "Thank you for welcoming us for so many quarters to tour your wonderful campus and introducing your one-of-a-kind programs. This trip has been foundational in introducing the profound role of animals in our lives and society. So many students identified their visit as the best part of their term, and I know they will carry Dr. Bergin's words with them as they strive to figure out their contribution to the world."



Left to Right: Ana Alvarez, Teagan Kennel, Jaymie Cardin, and Haley Jones





Gilmore

# Dog is my Coworker



Pepper

## Who would've thought!

Canines have been working alongside humans for centuries traditionally in agriculture, herding, and hunting. Now you can find them in schools, hospitals, and therapy offices across the nation as facility dogs! With the right training and temperament, dogs have the ability to assist healthcare and educational professionals in their workplace. Teachers' students are more engaged, able to regulate their emotions, and achieve higher reading scores with a facility dog in the classroom. Megan Byrum, a first grade teacher in Santa Rosa, California, got paired with Bergin Facility Dog graduate Dora in December 2021. "Dora loves when our class members read to her and cozy up next to her in our reading corner," she shares. "The companionship with a facility dog helps create a safe haven for our students. The students look forward to seeing Dora every day in our classroom - truly their home away from home!"



Megan Byrum & Dora

Other educational professionals utilize facility dogs as well. Heidi Adler is the director of a school for students with Autism and has always wanted to use dogs in her work. She was previously a school psychologist and had Therapy Dogs for a long time. It wasn't until she became school director that she found out about Facility Dogs and "knew it was exactly what our school needed." When asked about her Bergin Facility Dog, Larry, whom she got paired with in 2016, she says, "Larry loves work more than anything else and does an adorable happy dance as soon as he gets to the office every day." Our dogs genuinely find joy in helping people!



Heidi Adler & Larry

A trait we look for when determining whether our dogs can successfully become assistance animals is an aim to please. That characteristic is the biggest factor that decides whether our canine will switch careers (get released from our program to be a household pet) or graduate to become a certified Service Dog or Facility Dog. Healthcare professionals witness a sense of ease, vulnerability, and calmness radiating from their clients when their Facility Dog is present. "My clients can receive so much healing from the physical comfort of Patmon," says Eating Disorders Nutrition Therapist Diane Summers. "It is amazing to watch!" Summers got paired with Bergin Facility Dog graduate Patmon in 2017 and graduated from our very own Master of Science in Human-Canine Life Sciences degree program in 2021. She explains, "By the time I decided to apply for a Facility Dog in my private practice, I had seen so much evidence of how dogs helped as a bridge to engagement, building trust, calming the nervous system, fostering emotional safety and connection." We have seen, time and time again, the power and levity a dog's presence holds.

Oftentimes, for both adults and children alike, the simple act of petting a dog allows the human to access more vulnerable depths within their psyche. The stakes lower and fear dissipates when man's best friend is near.

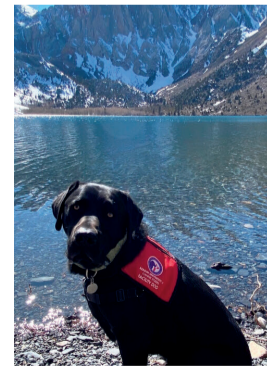
Licensed psychotherapist Sharilyn Marshall provides individual psychotherapy for adults who have mood and anxiety disorders. She shares, "I have experienced first-hand the calming and comfort bonding with a dog brings about, especially when under some kind of physical/emotional distress." It's no wonder she wanted to "hire" Bergin Facility Dog graduate Gilmore to be a part of her team in 2022! "Kisses' is probably his favorite of all activities".



Diane Summers & Patmon

Our active facility dog teams were asked how they found out about our program and offerings – Julia Borges, fifth grade teacher who got paired with Bergin Facility Dog Pepper, learned about us through some family friends that were involved in our organization. Also, her college roommates were previous puppy petters! Pepper and Julia got matched with each other in 2021 and she says the most surprising thing about their relationship is "how much we have learned to understand each other's moods." At Bergin College of Canine Studies, we utilize a specific method of data collection that classifies personalities into four main categories: Amiable, Analytical, Driver, and Expressive. The humans AND canines get surveys completed on their behalf by those who know them best! This method proves to be very effective in matching the right dog with the right person, and vice versa.

Social workers benefit from having a Facility Dog by their side, too. Ellen Fisher graduated from our Associate of Science in Assistance Dog Education degree program and got matched with Bergin Facility Dog Nando in 2022. Together, Ellen and Nando provide individual therapy to teenage and adult clients at a group practice in Truckee, California. She says that Nando "loves working with teen clients" and enjoys being brushed and training for apples and other treats.



Nando

From teachers and school directors to mental health professionals and social workers, our Facility Dogs make the perfect right-hand man. Canine assistance has proven to be effective in helping humans achieve their fullest potential, calm their nervous system, and give them the courage to go after their goals. If you are interested in adding a Facility Dog to your team, please email [servicedogrequest@berginu.edu](mailto:servicedogrequest@berginu.edu) or find our Facility Dog Application at [www.berginu.edu](http://www.berginu.edu) under the "Our Dogs" tab.



## Bequest Appreciation

We express our deepest appreciation for Ms. Winifred Miller who worked with the Law Office of Kathleen Bock Stewart to leave us in her will. It warms our heart to know that she felt strongly about our mission and wanted to support us in advancing the human-canine connection. May Winifred and her family rest with ease knowing that her contributions have made a lasting impact on our organization and have allowed us to place numerous assistance dogs with those in need. Our most sincere gratitude goes out to you, as we send many tail-wags.

**If you would like to leave Bergin University of Canine Studies in your trust, consider leaving a legacy with a charitable bequest today! Thank you for choosing to fuel our program and expand our reach.**

## Honoring Keith



07/16/12 - 12/05/22

Keith Rieck was our beloved demonstration dog that touched the lives of many. Valued Staff Member Shinya Kawasaki honored the demonstration team's contributions to our organization during our April graduation saying, "Keith and Sherri showed us not only what a Service Dog can do, but also the beauty of teamwork between Service Dog and Handler." He continued, "I cannot count all of the positive impacts he made with our students, dogs, guests, and staff. Keith played a significant role at Bergin University... his legacy will continue through the students who graduated from Bergin as well as the canine students he taught to become service dogs." His memory will live in our hearts indefinitely.



Bosco

### Interested in a Facility Dog?

Email [ServiceDogRequest@BerginU.edu](mailto:ServiceDogRequest@BerginU.edu) or download the Facility Dog Application on our website ([www.BerginU.edu](http://www.BerginU.edu)) today!

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