



MIRACULOUS TAILS

A Publication of Dustin's Paw of Idaho

SPRING 2011 ISSUE

DIRECTORY

Dustin's Paw of Idaho
A Non-profit Corporation
ID #20-8449841

795 West Tallulah Drive
Kuna, ID 83634

Canine Modality Specialists

**Integrating
Assistance Dogs
into learning
experiences and
therapy sessions**

Contact Us:

Telephone: (208) 922-2024
Fax: (208) 493-3064

Visit our Website:

www.dustinspaw.org

Contact us by email:

diane@dustinspaw.org

Facebook

(Become a fan of Dustin's Paw):
[www.facebook.com/
dustinspawidaho](http://www.facebook.com/dustinspawidaho)

Staff: Canine Modality Team

Diane Rampelberg
Ovelle
Prairie IV

Board of Directors:

Diane Rampelberg, President
Ron Gambassi, Vice President
Melody Dean, Secretary
Allison Demarest

Advisory Board:

Mike Rampelberg
Annie Williams

Kids, Dogs, and a Personal Connection

By Ron Gambassi
Vice President, Dustin's Paw of Idaho

So many people serving on non-profit boards or volunteering time do so out of a personal connection to the mission of the agency. So it is with me and Dustin's Paw.

At age three, our daughters were accepted into an outpatient therapy program through the local hospital, Saint Alphonsus. The facility was new and the therapists were top notch but there was one aspect that we didn't know. A dog was used in the therapy sessions! It was Ovelle.

It sounded very cool and we were eager to go along with it. Like most people who hear about dogs in a therapeutic setting, we thought the dog's job was to create smiles and laughter only. However, after seeing one visit that included Ovelle our eyes were opened wide.

We learned that Ovelle was from Canine Companions for Independence (www.cci.org) and how she was placed with Dustin's Paw to be a Facility dog under the direction of her handler Diane Rampelberg. A Facility dog is specially bred and trained as an "instrument" used in very emotional and or physically demanding situations with patients. The dog is both motivator and calming force. And that's how Ovelle was used with our girls as they were learning to walk and do other physical tasks.

The girls bonded with Ovelle instantly. After a day of therapy the girls would use the sign language they learned to represent



Service dog Zane, Claire, Julia, and
Service dog puppy in training Wave

"Ovelle". It warmed our hearts in an unimaginable way.

All the kids in the program worked harder and got better results when Ovelle was included in their therapy sessions. So, when Diane asked if I would join her board I couldn't say 'yes' fast enough. That was five years ago. Since then our family has received our own service dog from CCI named Zane. We have Dustin's Paw to thank for that as well.

Given the girls' success with Ovelle, Diane encouraged us to apply for our own service dog from CCI. We applied and one year later were training in California as Zane's handlers. Diane and Ovelle accompanied us to Santa Rosa. Diane, Ovelle and the girls would cruise around in the Radio Flyer wagon while the rest of our family learned to be dog handlers.

Today Dustin's Paw has two facility dogs, Ovelle and Prairie, Zane is almost five and our family is raising a puppy for CCI named Wave. The goal is for Wave to become a service dog. In May she begins six months of professional training. Maybe when she graduates she will get assigned as a facility dog to Dustin's Paw of Idaho. How cool would that be?



People With Disabilities Are Just People

Meredith Vieira once said, "As children, we are curious - pointing to anything unfamiliar and asking questions. We have few, if any, inhibitions. As adults, we learn to censor our queries, feeling uncomfortable with anything unfamiliar. It is human nature and not unusual, therefore, to be concerned about interactions with people who use wheelchairs, who are blind, who are deaf, or whom we find difficult to understand. We may be concerned that we will say the wrong thing, ask an inappropriate question, or unintentionally offend. We do not want to appear uninformed or insensitive. We might feel intimidated by communicating with someone with a disability because we are unaware of appropriate etiquette. If all you see is the disability...you might be missing a lot. People with disabilities are just people."

Supporting the children and families with whom we work out in the community is a vital mission of Dustin's Paw. Dogs have an amazing ability to create a "bridge" between people. They are a magnet for communication and understanding. We are proud to support our children and their families by attending community events with them and raising community awareness through a variety of presentations/appearances.

This year Ovelle and Adam (one of our patients at STARS) did a presentation for his school classmates.

Adam LOVES sign language. He has been learning sign by telling Ovelle and Prairie what to do – sit, down, roll, jump, open, close, etc. His classmates were very impressed and signed right along with Adam as Ovelle faithfully responded. One child commented that he wished he was disabled so he could have a dog like Ovelle.

We did several other school presentations along with a special presentation for Canine Companions for Independence Puppy raisers. And, we Marched for Babies, did the Buddy Walk and participated in Saint Alphonsus' Capital Classic. A highlight was the Annual Kuna Day's Parade. Proudly wearing our doggie hats with family carrying our Dustin's Paw banner, we marched down main street throwing candy to those watching. Would you believe, we won Second Place in the organization category!

Closing out the year, Ovelle and Prairie got a call from Santa. As some of you might know, Santa uses Reindogs when there isn't enough snow. So, Ovelle and Prairie volunteered, donned antlers and went with Santa to the Saint Alphonsus Neonatal Intensive Care Unit Reunion Christmas Party for some 250+ children and then to Jumpstart's Christmas Gift Opening sponsored by the Saint Alphonsus Auxiliary.

Sincerely,

Diane Rampelberg

Diane Rampelberg

President, Dustin's Paw of Idaho





Let's Play Tea Party

*A little cup of friendship
With a cookie and tea
When you eat and drink this
Think of love from me.*

Ovelle, Prairie and their children at Jumpstart spent an entire month getting ready to have a special tea party with their moms. They exercised their manners, learned how to set the table and practiced dressing up in beautiful hats and accessories.

And, then the day came! They picked out what they wanted to wear and something special for their moms to wear. Ovelle and Prairie, dressed up too and with their communication switches read through a book created just for the day, Let's Play Tea Party.

It was so much fun! We poured tea, ate little cakes and cookies, had a fashion show, got our pictures taken and talked about so many things.

Many parents of disabled children struggle with how to play with their children. Working beside the STARS therapists with Ovelle and Prairie during the tea party, parents got an opportunity to practice their "play" skills. The Tea Party has become such a success that it is now an annual event.



A Star Is Born

The Dustin's Paw Team have been such a great asset to our Jumpstart program. Not only do they motivate our patients to work harder and try new things that may be difficult or scary, they provide our patients with opportunities that they may not have outside of Jumpstart. Often times in school or the community, our children do not get the opportunity to be the star of a play or even an active part of a school program due to their disabilities. The money from donations has allowed Dustin's Paw to host special programs and parties for our children and their parents. Last year, the Jumpstart children put on the play "The Mitten" for our families. The play was attended by parents, aunts, uncles, and grandparents. One grandparent came from over 100 miles away just to see her grand daughter in her first play. After the play, she told me that she was so thankful that her grand daughter was able to participate. She thought she would never have the opportunity to see her grand daughter be a "star". The pride and joy in her smile brought tears to my eyes and really exemplified our mission to heal body, mind and spirit.

Here's a picture from Ovelle and Prairie's birthday party this past year. We have another play scheduled for this year! Your help makes such a difference in our patients lives every day!!!

Diann Davis Martin
Jumpstart Coordinator
Saint Alphonsus Rehabilitation Services

Photo collage by River Street Studio www.riverstreetstudio.com



A Tribute to Geralyn

November 3, 1998 – June 15, 2010



In January of 1999 our sweet Geralyn came to live with us. As a Canine Companion for Independence puppy she was bred for a career as an assistance dog and it was our job to get her ready. She was a true treasure – smart and happy with the ability to brighten up your day with her antics. Unfortunately or fortunately depending on how you look at it, she was released due to a medical condition. We loved her and wanted her. So, we adopted her as our own dog in March of 2000.

We soon realized that she was a dog who loved people and needed a job. So, Diane and Geralyn attended Bonnie Bergin's Social Therapy Dog Class. Upon completion of the class Geralyn joined Dustin, namesake of our organization and our first Canine Modality Specialist, working off and on with disabled children in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Her greatest moment came when Dustin passed away in 2004. After just one day at school without a dog, Diane called Geralyn into service. She faithfully served the children at Chandler Tripp,

Della Maggorie and Saratoga Sub-Acute Children's Hospital. She was just what we all needed. Although she was not as skilled as Dustin, she provided the unconditional love, motivation and comfort to get through our grief and paved the way for Ovelle who arrived six months later.

Geralyn's greatest achievement was with a young man who had been bedridden for an entire year. He refused to get up and was very discouraged and depressed. With the hard work and love provided by Geralyn and Diane this young man got up, out of bed and into his wheelchair within three days! He went on to become an American citizen and got his High School Diploma.

In April of 2006 Geralyn moved to Idaho. She loved Idaho especially the snowballs and delighted in chasing them and busting them to pieces! She also loved riding in the back seat of Mike's 1971 Malibu. Acting as his secretary, she took her job seriously making sure everyone was properly greeted. In addition, she continued to work on a limited basis with Ovelle at STARS PEDS/ Jumpstart and attended many of the community special events.

We do miss her and are so thankful for the time the Lord gave us with her. She truly brightened our lives and the lives of many others!

Dustin's Paw of Idaho

795 West Tallulah Drive
Kuna, ID 83634

PLACE
STAMP
HERE

Spring is the time to renew your membership with Dustin's Paw of Idaho!

Your donation helps us to continue to touch the lives of disabled children and their families.

Not a member? Please join us!

