

OUR MISSION

The Search Dog Foundation (SDF) strengthens disaster response in America by rescuing and recruiting dogs and partnering them with firefighters and other first responders to find people buried alive in the wreckage of disasters. We provide highly trained search dogs and ongoing professional training to task forces across the nation at no cost to their departments or taxpayers.

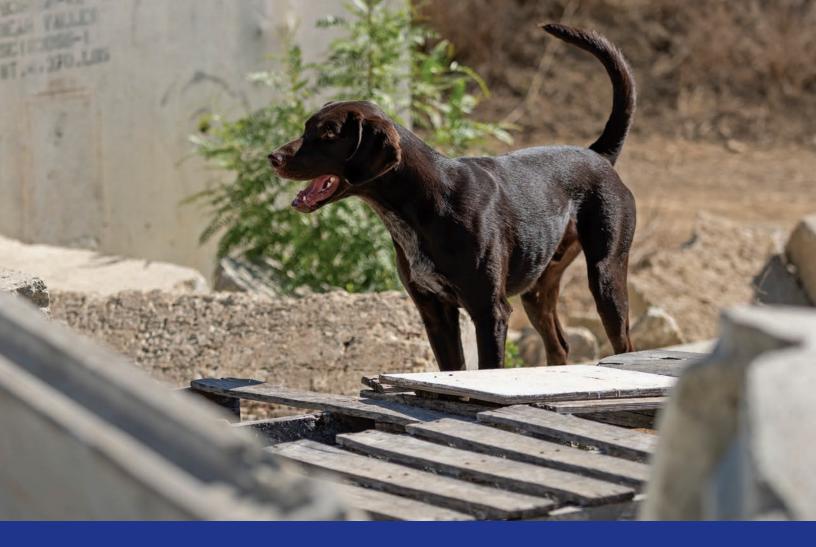
To date, SDF has trained over 225 certified teams that have deployed to over 265 disasters and missing person searches. Thanks to mutual aid agreements, teams can deploy nationwide, and some internationally, wherever disasters occur.

2022-2023 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

George Leis, Chair Richard Butt, Vice Chair Michael J. Diani, Secretary Chris DeVries, Treasurer (interim) Robert Harris George Haynes, Ph.D. Crystal Wyatt

READY, SET, SCAN!





AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Over 3,500 individuals, foundations, companies, and groups came together to support our life-saving mission during our 2022-2023 fiscal year. We are grateful for each of your contributions and worked diligently to use every dollar wisely.

Financial Position September 30, 2023

Total Assets	\$ 38,962,677
Current Assets Investments in Endowment Investments Operational Reserve Fixed Assets Other Assets	\$ 2,081,821 \$ 8,093,397 \$ 1,869,186 \$ 26,859,441 \$ 58,832
Total Liabilities & Net Assets	\$ 38,962,677
Total Liabilities —Current Liabilities —Long-Term Liabilities Net Assets	\$ 2,014,219 \$ 868,741 \$ 1,145,478 \$ 36,948,458

A healthy endowment supports the stability of our work. Unless otherwise restricted, planned gifts are allocated to our endowment or capital projects as needed. The investment income from our endowed funds is reinvested to facilitate diversified income streams and act as a reserve for our programs if needed.

Activities October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023

Total Public Support and Revenue	\$ 7,436,842
Contributions	\$ 2,255,703
Grants	\$ 3,044,111
Planned Giving Income	\$ 1,081,078
In-Kind Donations	\$ 88,767
Investment Income	\$ 872,105
Merchandising Income	\$ 14,033
Other Income	\$ 81,045

A total of \$105,000 in public support received was restricted by donors for use in future fiscal years.

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Total Operating Expenses	\$	6,534,233
Program Services (77%) General & Administrative (11%) Fundraising (12%)	\$ \$ \$	5,056,199 689,101 788,933
Total Non-Operating Expenses	\$	964,774
Site improvements of our National Training Center and other capital items	\$	724,774
Principal payments on the note payable for acquisition of the National Training Center's land	\$	240,000

IN MEMORIAM: FOUNDING HANDLER RANDY GROSS



After a lengthy battle with cancer, one of Search Dog Foundation's founding handlers, Randy Gross, passed away on March 17, 2024, surrounded by his family.

When I think of Randy, I think, I want to be just like him. He was always building and creating something. I specifically remember Randy welding the entire wrought-iron fence around his swimming pool.

His happiness and contentment in all that he did was contagious as I watched him through the years giving his time, energy and encouragement to others.

He gave to his family. He gave to his neighbors.

He gave to his friends.

He gave to his church.

He gave to his fellow firefighters.

He gave to his community.

And he seemed to enjoy every moment of it.

We only have a limited time on this earth, and I am grateful to have known and spent some of that time with Randy, helping give to our country through this little program we started together.

SDF Founder Wilma Melville





From the day I met Randy as one of the three original amigos who started the fledgling Search Dog Foundation, I was totally convinced we could make this happen.

Randy's commitment to the rigors of training and demonstrating to the many skeptics that this was a viable method to produce certified canines in short order, was evident from the very beginning.

His natural empathy for people and dogs resulted in an amazing relationship with Dusty, his canine partner, and the fire family that he won over with his due diligence to maintain his work schedule while putting in the extra hours for his search work. So many good times sharing stories!

I will miss his quirky smile and keen sense of humour and the love he gave to all of us.

SDF Founding Trainer Pluis Davern





Randy was my friend, my best partner and colleague in the canine program.

Randy didn't know what he was getting into, but he stepped up to the plate to help support this new endeavor. He knew that his efforts could change the fire service across the country by putting them on the cutting edge of canine search—and that's an understatement, considering where the program is today.

Randy had a passion for the canine program because he put his heart and soul into it, and that is what set him apart from others. He also exceeded the expectations of the canine program and more.

Randy brought a lot to the canine program—determination, dedication and work ethic for others to follow. He has certainly set a bar for the canine program to follow. He gave all—100% toward the canine program that he loved and he was a natural at it.

Randy's legacy will forever last, not only in the Fire Service Canine Search Program, but with the Search Dog Foundation as well. He will be dearly missed.

— Fellow SDF Founding Handler Rick Lee



Thank you, Randy, for paving the way for so many canine handlers who have followed in your footsteps.

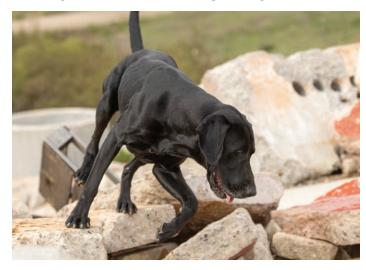
Your life and legacy has and will continue to impact our work for many years to come and you are sorely missed by all in your two- and four-legged SDF family.

Our hearts go out to Randy's family, both at home and at the fire department, as we mourn the loss of this great man.

CANINE RECRUITMENT

FINDING THE RIGHT DOGS FOR THE JOB

238 shelter and rescue groups engaged across 43 states46 dogs recruited into search dog training



Atlas is a large, athletic dog, and though he is a very good boy, his exuberance eventually grew too difficult for his family to handle. Trying to do their best for Atlas, the family engaged a trainer to help them determine how best to manage Atlas' strength and energy. After getting to know Atlas, the trainer suggested he might be happier as a working dog with a focused outlet for his drive, so the family allowed the trainer to try to find Atlas a more

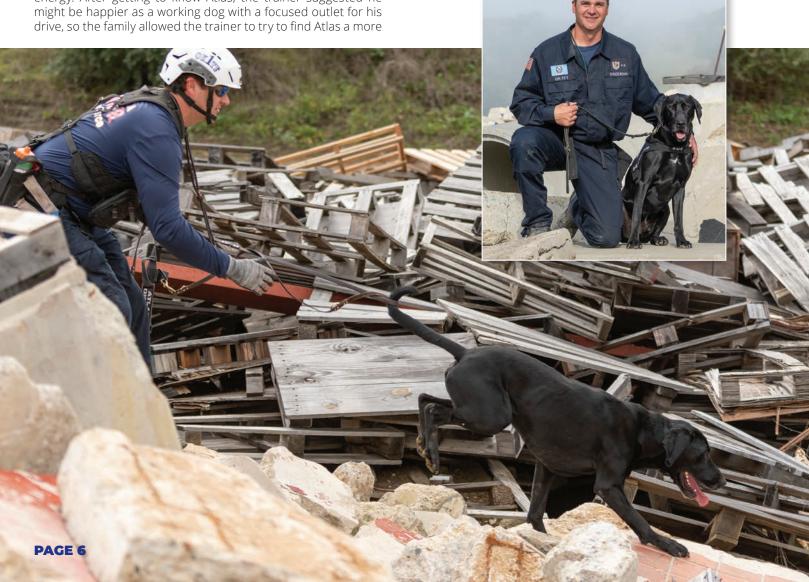
suitable placement. He posted about Atlas on Facebook, which caught the attention of SDF recruiters, and Atlas was soon on his way to our campus.

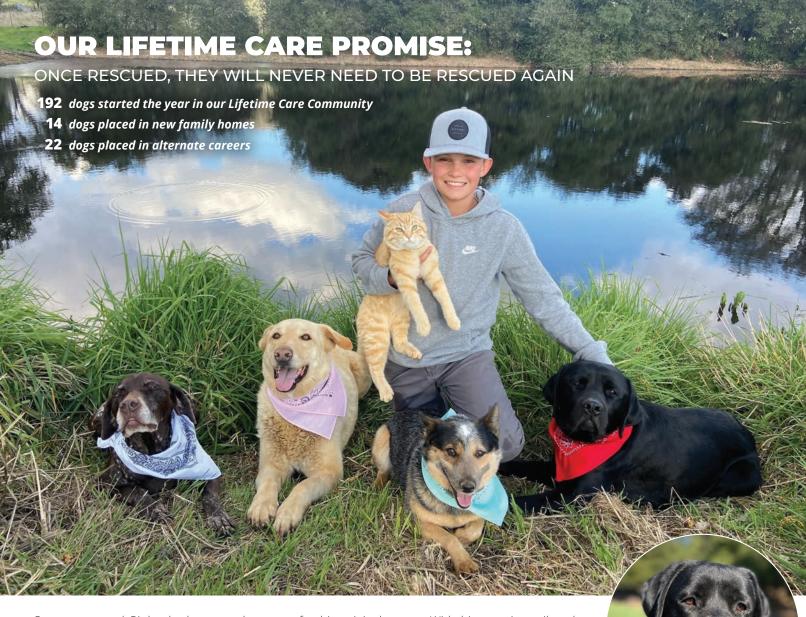
At our National Training Center, Atlas blossomed, embracing his playful nature while developing his foundational skills and search techniques. A goofball at heart, he was a constant source of entertainment for his trainers, making them laugh with his silly antics and funny sounds while waiting for his turn to search. When it was time to work, Atlas was all business, impressing everyone with his perseverance, even on challenging new search problems, and despite his large size, bounced with puppy-like enthusiasm when celebrating the successful find of his hidden person.

Atlas graduated from search dog training and found his perfect match in June 2023 with Oklahoma City firefighter Jarod Freeman. The two will continue training together to achieve certification to help keep their community safe.

We couldn't be happier about the outcome for this sweet, silly boy. We know this big pup, with his big personality and heart, is on his way to achieving big things.

Atlas is sponsored by his anonymous cheerleaders.





Sweet-tempered Ripley had too much energy for his original career as a service dog, so his trainer at Canines for Service, who was also a former handler with New York Task Force 1, thought Ripley might make an ideal search candidate and reached out to SDF.

Before his testing, Ripley had not been exposed to toys, so he had a blast discovering the new phenomenon of playing fetch and hunting for a toy! But although Ripley had plenty of drive and energy, he didn't enjoy walking on rubble. Instead, his friendly and intelligent personality made him a prime candidate for adoption into an active, loving home.

Enter Clint Schepe, SDF handler of search dog Georgia and firefighter with California Task Force 8, and his family. Clint's son, Blake, had been longing for his own dog, and when he met Ripley, it was love at first sight! The Schepe family adopted Ripley, and the lively pup seamlessly integrated into his new life on the ranch with its variety of large and small farm animals.

Ranch life offers plenty of adventure, and good-natured Ripley has proven to be a friend to all, even Whiskey, the barn cat. He's also been a perfect gentleman to the family's resident "lady pack" of dogs. Clint says Ripley settled in incredibly quickly and enjoys following Blake around. "It's heartwarming to see the bond between him and Blake. He is a great dog with some fun commands from being trained as a service dog. As a family, we really enjoy him!"

With his wagging tail and a love for exploring, Ripley is a cherished new member of the Schepe family, especially to Blake: "There is no dog quite as unique as my dog, Rip. He is sweet, friendly, and curious. He loves to grab his food bowl, bring it to me, and grab a treat.

I love how he plays ball with me, hangs out with me, and will watch a movie next to me. Even though my Rip is a pure bred Lab, I am teaching him how to swim in my pond. He is getting better every day! He is my best friend and always will be."

Georgia is sponsored by Mary and Jeff Kroll.



Interested in learning more about adoptable dogs like Ripley? Scan to learn more!

SEARCH TEAMS

PASSING THE LEASH IS ONLY THE BEGINNING

While rigorous training fosters canine aptitude, the success of a search dog team hinges on a deeper connection. Going beyond observable skills, our trainers methodically guide a deliberate pairing process that allows the canines themselves to choose their partners, laying the foundation for a lifelong bond built on trust, respect, and unwavering loyalty. These carefully curated duos become more than colleagues; they become a family united by a singular purpose: saving lives.

- **70** dogs were supported in our training program throughout the year
- **17** search teams paired
- **9** fire departments received SDF-trained teams
- **9** task forces received SDF-trained teams

ACHIEVING CERTIFICATION TOGETHER

To be eligible for deployment with their task forces, search teams must pass an evaluation every three years to ensure their skills remain sharp. We are proud of these teams for their hard work and continued dedication to their training that will help our communities in their times of need.

- **13** re-certifications
- **14** *first-time certifications*





DEPLOYMENTS

In a year marked by unprecedented tragedy, we also witnessed incredible bravery from our search teams. Their compassion, commitment, and tireless dedication to helping others deserves our deepest gratitude.

25 deployments

50 search teams deployed

7 states supported in 3 countries or territories







1 Flood

November 8, 2022 – Tijuana, Mexico Luis Garcia & Montecito, Fidel Gomez & Gemma

2 Building Collapse

November 9, 2022 – Camarillo Springs, CA Eric Darling & Steven

3 Missing Person Search

November 10, 2022 – Nevada County, CA James McCandless & Mac

4 Structure Fire

November 27, 2022 – Santa Paula, CA *Mandy Tisdale & Paul*

5 Missing Person Search

December 30, 2022 – Brea, CA Michael Bruce & Cooper, Imelda Cordova & Diesel, Tyler Green & Mila

6 Landslide

January 9, 2023 – Tijuana, Mexico Luis Garcia & Montecito, Fidel Gomez & Gemma

7 Missing Person

January 13, 2023 – Nevada County, CA James McCandless & Mac

8 Vehicle Crash

January 18, 2023 – Chula Vista, CA *Daniel Thomas & Chester*

9 Missing Person

January 25, 2023 – Middleport, NY Brian Girard & Keila, Adam Leckonby & Luka, Brook Rowley & Echo

10 Earthquake

February 6-20, 2023 – Adiyaman, Türkiye Jake Armendariz & Clancy, Cory Baldovin & Diva, Kristi Bartlett & Ivan, Bob George & Shadow, JP Hilsabeck & Bond, Sean Quigley & Geno, Mike Toepfer & Deacon

11 Missing Person

February 21, 2023 - Brea, CA Eric Darling & Steven, Tyler Green & Mila, Michael Patterson & Kendri

12 Landslide

March 3, 2023 – Tijuana, Mexico Luis Garcia & Montecito, Fidel Gomez & Gemma

13 Missing Person

March 15, 2023 – Ventura, CA *Eric Darling & Steven*

14 Landslide

March 15, 2023 – Tijuana, Mexico Luis Garcia & Montecito, Fidel Gomez & Gemma

15 Explosion

May 16, 2023 – Tijuana, Mexico Luis Garcia & Montecito, Fidel Gomez & Gemma

16 Building Collapse

May 25, 2023 – Holladay, UT *Kalub Lewis & Cyrus*

17 Building Collapse

May 28, 2023 – Davenport, IA Laura Denison & Flyer, Scott Hofstetter & Amber, Kevin Tatro & Dempsey

18 Maui Wildfire

August 12-26, 2023 – Lahaina, HI Nick Bartel & Six, Jon Munguia & Clifford, Ed Ruiz & Harper

19 Missing Person

August 17, 2023 – Catskills, NY Brian Girard & Keila, Brook Rowley & Echo

20 Explosion

August 23, 2023 – Santa Maria, CA Eric Gray & Dee

21 Hurricane Idalia

August 28-September 2, 2023 – Orlando, FL Kristi Bartlett & Ivan, Chris Cook & Ridge

22 Missing Person

September 3, 2023 – Lincoln, NE Adam Schaaf & Dodger

23 Missing Person

September 14, 2023 – Colusa County, CA James McCandless & Mac

24 Missing Person

September 15, 2023 – Amsterdam, NY Brian Girard & Keila, Adam Leckonby & Luka, Brook Rowley & Echo

25 Trench Collapse

September 28, 2023 – San Francisco, CA *Paul Sandigo & Cassie*

ADVANCED SEARCH TEAM TRAINING

Each year, SDF is thrilled to welcome working dog teams from around the world to train on our campus, utilizing training props including multiple rubble and debris piles, a train wreck, a collapsed freeway, and a disaster-ravaged neighborhood scenario.

We look forward to updating our training props periodically and welcoming returning teams and those that have not visited our training center before to train on new deployment simulations and prepare for the next time they are called upon to help others.

331 working dog teams visited the NTC between October 1, 2022, and September 30, 2023

63 training events or visits to the NTC, including teams from:

Urban search and rescue:

California Task Force 1
California Task Force 2
California Task Force 3
California Task Force 4
California Task Force 5
California Task Force 6
California Task Force 7
California Task Force 8
California Regional Task Force 7

Colorado Task Force 1 Iowa Task Force 1 Nebraska Task Force 1 Nevada Task Force 1 Oklahoma Task Force 1 Texas Task Force 1 Utah Task Force 1 Virginia Task Force 2 Washington Task Force 1



Other working disciplines including wilderness search, law enforcement, and home protection:

California Rescue Dog Association (CARDA)
Gold Coast K9
Heritage K9
Kauai Search and Rescue
Monterey Bay Search Dogs
San Bernardino County Sheriff Search and Rescue
San Diego County Sheriff Search and Rescue
San Luis Obispo County Search and Rescue
Santa Barbara County Search and Rescue
Search Dogs 24/7







Interested in training on our campus? Scan to learn more!

SEARCH TEAM FUND

The Search Team Fund is a financial assistance program offered by SDF to help handlers with out-of-pocket expenses not covered by their task forces or government agencies. In the last few years, we have added more benefits to the program and expanded the scope of eligibility to include more working dog teams throughout the United States, regardless of where they were trained.

We are proud to be able to help lessen the financial burden on these teams so they can remain focused on what's important: staying mission-ready to assist communities in need.

23 task forces or departments served:

CA-TF1 (Los Angeles City)

CA-TF2 (Los Angeles County)

CA-TF3 (Menlo Park)

CA-TF4 (Oakland)

CA-TF5 (Orange County)

CA-TF7 (Sacramento)

CA-TF8 (San Diego)

CA-RTF7 (Ventura County)

CO-TF1 (Denver)

FL-TF1 (Miami Dade)

FL-TF2 (Miami)

IN-TF1 (Indianapolis)

MD-TF1 (Montgomery County)

MI-TF1 (Holly)

MO-TF1 (Columbia)

NE-TF1 (Lincoln)

OK-TF1 (Tulsa)

TN-TF1 (Memphis)

TX-TF1 (College Station)

UT-TF1 (Salt Lake City)

VA-TF1 (Fairfax County)

VA-TF2 (Virginia Beach)

WA-TF1 (Tacoma)

Through the following programs:

SEARCH TEAM AND CANINE HEALTHCARE GRANTS

178 Search Team grants totaling \$118,353.74

used for:

\$46,754 in training travel expenses

\$16,927 in training equipment

\$43,014 in canine care equipment

\$11,658 in veterinary care for non-SDF canines

CANINE HEALTHCARE FUND

107 Active and retired search dogs received healthcare services totaling **\$183,796**

PETCO LOVE CANINE CANCER FUND

1 Petco Love Canine Cancer Fund grant totaling \$11.944

Read more about our longtime partnership with Petco Love on page 12.

The training provided the opportunity to expand our ability to rappel from heights, transport on water, and conduct building searches... Thank you to the Search Dog Foundation and their donors for this grant gift. We had a great, wet, muddy, cold time at Muscatatuck Training Center. It was worth every second!

Roger Picard, handler of Pasco (Florida Task Force 2)

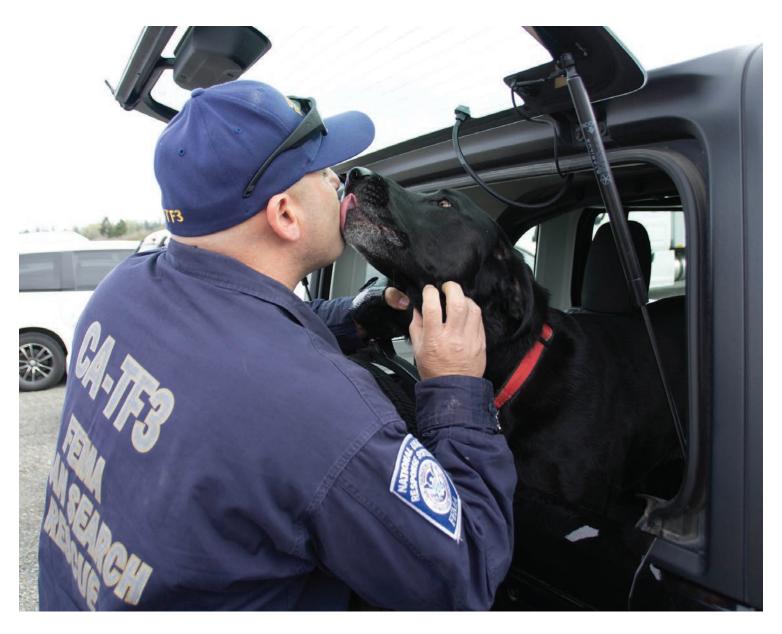




If you know of a working dog team that is interested in applying for one of our Search Team Fund programs, scan here to learn more!

CORPORATE PARTNERS

PETCO LOVE: EASING THE FINANCIAL BURDEN OF CANCER FOR WORKING CANINES



We are incredibly grateful for the ongoing support of Petco Love (formerly Petco Foundation), now at over \$3.2 million, and for their investment in the healthcare of our working dogs. Since 2012, the Petco Love Canine Cancer Fund has helped SDF provide financial assistance to handlers of working dogs in disaster, wilderness, and avalanche search, law enforcement, and the military when their canine partners received a cancer diagnosis.

Vader, an SDF-trained search dog paired with Eli Thomas of California Task Force 3, was in the sixth year of his career and had deployed to Hurricanes Irma and Olivia before his cancer diagnosis in 2021. Because of the tumor's location on an artery in Vader's leg, the leg had to be amputated to save Vader's life.

Vader retired from his task force and did well post-surgery, learning to walk on three legs and enjoying his role as a pet in the family home. Tragically, the cancer returned only months

later and impacted Vader's quality of life, and the Thomas family helped their beloved companion and partner peacefully cross the Rainbow Bridge in February 2022.

As heartbreaking as this situation was for Vader's family, the added burden of veterinary and medical costs was alleviated thanks to SDF's Petco Love Canine Cancer Fund, which helped pay for the diagnosis, treatment, and aftercare required by this life-altering disease. Through this partnership, dozens of working dog heroes have received lifesaving care, underscoring Petco Love's commitment to animal welfare and the unique bond between working dogs and their handlers.

SDF is deeply grateful to Petco Love for their compassion and commitment. Thanks to their support, our four-legged heroes who have dedicated their lives to serving others can receive the critical healthcare they deserve.

Vader was sponsored by the Joel and Dena Gambord Family.

CORPORATE PARTNERS

THE RACHAEL RAY FOUNDATION™



For over a decade, The Rachael Ray Foundation™ has been a dedicated partner in saving canine lives, donating over \$3 million to our programs. Last year, they once again lent their support through the Rachael Ray Rescue Brigade campaign, helping SDF raise \$729,241. Providing nearly half of this total through their own generous grant, these funds assisted SDF in recruiting rescued dogs for our search program, supporting their daily care, and helping them find alternative jobs or loving family homes through our Lifetime Care program if a career in disaster search was not their perfect fit.

We are incredibly grateful to The Rachael Ray Foundation and our SDF community members who donated to this campaign and helped rescued dogs find the place they were always meant to be!

Stay tuned for the launch of this year's Rachael Ray Rescue Brigade to find out how you can help more shelter dogs become search dogs in 2024!

VML

For over 20 years, VML has been a steadfast partner, amplifying SDF's mission to audiences nationwide through ad placements and impactful pro bono campaigns.

Several of these campaigns have run in major publications like the Wall Street Journal, People, TIME, and others, bringing

awareness to the amazing work of our canines and handlers.

We are deeply grateful to the talented team at VML for their unwavering support. Their dedication plays a pivotal role in advancing our mission and saving lives.



DID YOU SEE AN SDF AD?

If you see one of our ads in a publication, raise your paw! Many pro bono placements are secured last minute, so we don't always know when they'll run. If you spot one, snap a photo and email us at Rescue@SearchDogFoundation.org, along with the publication name!

WAYS TO GIVE

All gifts made to support the Search Dog Foundation's annual, capital, and endowment needs are important and put to good use.

CASH CONTRIBUTIONS

Always appreciated, gifts of cash are critical to implementing our programs and tax-deductible to the full extent of the law.

GIFTS OF STOCK

If you own appreciated stock, reviewing your investments with a donation strategy in mind is a simple way to give more to the cause you care about and could garner a significant tax savings at the same time.

MEMORIAL AND HONORARY GIFTS

These thoughtful gifts provide a special way to pay tribute to a friend or family member or to acknowledge a birthday, anniversary, or other significant event.

MATCHING GIFTS

Many employers offer giving programs that double (or even triple) charitable contributions made by their employees. Check with your employer to see if your company has a matching gift program.

IRA CHARITABLE ROLLOVER DISTRIBUTION

At 70 ½ years old, you are eligible to rollover your IRA distribution directly to SDF and can use it to satisfy all or part of your required minimum distribution beginning at age 72. Also known as a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD), this transfer generates neither taxable income nor a tax deduction, so you benefit even if you do not itemize your deductions.

ESTATE GIFTS

The simplest and most popular way to include SDF in your estate plans is through a bequest, designating a specific dollar amount, asset, or percentage of your estate to SDF in your will. You will join over 350 other visionary individuals as an SDF Guardian, ensuring the future legacy of our mission to save lives—both human and canine.

GIVE WITH CONFIDENCE/SPREAD THE WORD

Did you know that Search Dog Foundation has a four-star rating on Charity Navigator? This means you can have confidence that your contribution will be used effectively to advance our mission. There's also an opportunity to leave a review about our work!







To learn more about these or other gift opportunities, please contact Director of Philanthropy, Debra Roets, at 888-4K9-HERO x 112.

You can also make a donation through our website!





VOLUNTEERS

SDF WOOF PACK — 67 VOLUNTEERS CONTRIBUTED 2,198 HOURS IN 3 STATES





We love our volunteers! Always ready to pitch in with a smile whenever and wherever they're needed, our volunteers are an essential part of SDF's mission, providing assistance in the following areas:

- General Administrative Support
- Making Thank You Calls for Donations
- Canine Health Clinic
- Canine Meal Prep
- Kennel Cleaning
- General Assistance in the Canine Pavilion
- Facilitating NTC Tours
- Canine Recruitment
- Canine Training Assistance
- Lifetime Care Canine Advocacy
- SDF Event Assistance
- Transporting Canines



Interested in volunteering with SDF? Scan to learn more!

The countless hours these volunteers dedicated to supporting our programs in the 2022-2023 fiscal year positively impacted our success, and we thank them for their generosity:

Lucinda Anderson lose Anguiano Michaela Boydston Karen Branch Janet Chamberlain Alissa Chavez Michael Cox Sharon Cromartie Celest Delacuvea Lesley Delacuvea Chris DeVries Diana Donofrio Kevin Donofrio Virginia Feyh Joan Field Vita Franco Seth Fullerton Sue Gary Maureen Guerrero Karen Hall Lisa Hammond Estrella Hernandez Tom Higgins

Marilyn Hilton Brad Holt Kate Ingalls Corey Jacobs Kevin Johnson Sandy Kauffman Mary Anne Kendall Nicole Kreutz Iean Krikorian Roberta Lanning Shari Lee Celeste Matesevac Gena Mathwin Travis Mauck Tucker May Carolyn Miller Sean Moran Dan Munday Linda Munday Richard Neill Terry Nelson Diane Noda Pam Nothwang

Ignacio Parra Beth Probert Jessica Pugliese Megan Schmidt Karissa Short Patrick Siemon Diana Skall Mike Skall Michelle Skidmore Kavann Stables Alicia Stratton Amy Stover Anjelica (Angie) Tapia Katie Thompson Stratton Ventrone Michel Wagner Carol Wan Tracy Weiss Leslie Wellington Jessica Zaiss Karen Zuber

We also want to thank the pilots from our nonprofit partners Angel Flight West, Angel Flight Central, and Pilots N' Paws, who donated 100% of their time, planes, and fuel to transport search candidates from all over the country to our campus in California, and the drivers and owners of Four-Legged Kids Bus who transported search dogs to our training center at a discounted rate.

From all of us at SDF—staff, board, handlers, and canines—thank you from the bottom of our hearts!

We're so grateful you're part of the pack!



6800 Wheeler Canyon Road Santa Paula | CA 93060 888.459.4376 www.searchdogfoundation.org

