

MISSION EMPAWTHY NEWSLETTER

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MISSION EMPAWTHY, LLC



Welcome!

Thank you for signing up for our newsletter. We hope you find some useful tips and tricks and learn a little something along the way!

We hope this newsletter finds you all healthy and well into the new year. In this issue, we introduce you to our friends at Mission Ready Retrievers, share some helpful tips and tricks, and discuss when getting a puppy from a breeder or a puppy from a rescue might be best for your personal circumstances.

Upcoming events!

FREE EVENT! Join us at the Willoughby Hills Public Library (35400 Chardon Rd. Willoughby Hills, OH 44094) on March 18, 2025 from 6-7PM EST for a free presentation and demonstration on the power of positive reinforcement dog training! Registration is required:



Visit us at
www.missionempawthy.com
and follow us on Instagram and Facebook!





Here's Allie and her litter- born 12/23/24

Have you met our friends at Mission Ready Retrievers, Ltd.???

Mission Ready Retrievers LTD. is a breeding and training company located in Chardon, Ohio. Their passion is helping others through top quality service, therapy, and companion retrievers.

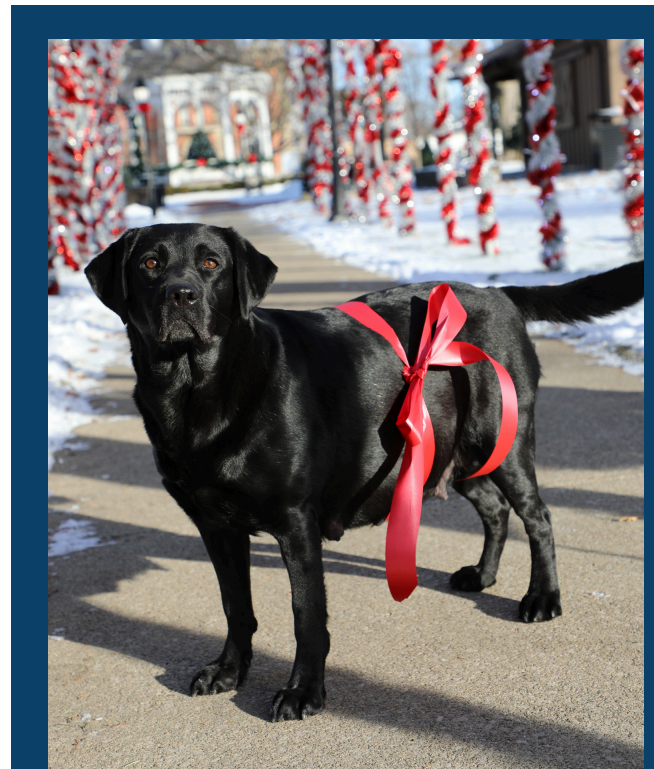
Megan Wessels, the owner of Mission Ready Retrievers is a United States Veteran, graduate of the CATCH Canine Trainers Academy, a Certified Professional Dog Trainer- Knowledge Assessed (CPDT-KA), as well as a certified Service Dog Coach, who knows the deep healing power of animals. Megan knows first-hand the impact of service dogs as a handler herself, has the knowledge and skills of a professional dog trainer, and understands the critical need for the highest standards in breeding, thus making Mission Ready Retrievers uniquely qualified to produce well-balanced, healthy, and confident canines.

Mission Ready Retrievers is pleased to announce that just this past December 23, 2024, Megan's black Labrador Allie whelped a litter of 10 beautiful pups! Both mom and dad are fully health tested through OFA and have excellent temperaments.

All pups have been meticulously raised in a loving, nurturing, home environment. All puppies are sold with limited AKC registration, a full health contract, and will be ready to go home around the first week of March. Please reach out to Mission Ready Retrievers for further information and be sure to mention this article!

Mission Ready Retrievers Ltd.

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Why buying from a breeder may be a better option for your needs

So what gives? If I'm looking for a service dog candidate, why go through a breeder anyways?

As rescues and animal shelters seem to be overflowing, and kill shelters are prevalent at an all-time high, why would you recommend someone get a pup through a breeder and not just rescue it?

Before I answer this question, let me preface this article, with this thought in mind- I do not wish to choose sides on the never-ending debate of "breed vs. rescue," however, I wish to describe why there is a need for both. Both sides have pros and cons. This article is designed to offer some objective points to consider. Choosing between a breeder and a rescue often comes down to the individual person's preferences, circumstances, and goals for their future canine companion.

When beginning the journey of looking for a service dog candidate, or other specialized working dog, it is critical to understand why someone might choose a breeder over a rescue dog. We must try our hardest to think objectively and remove our emotions from the equation to ensure we're setting up disabled handlers for success. So first, we must talk about the science...



There is a critical "**socialization window**" from the time puppies are born till the time they're roughly 16 weeks of age. During this time, puppies' brains are like little sponges absorbing information very quickly and processing that information to help them understand the world around them. This is when **fear imprinting begins** and when **social development peaks**. External influences will typically have the highest impact on the dog's life at this young age.

Next, they hit the "juvenile" stage in which their brains are still consolidating and they will start seeking independence- think the teenager phase! Following this stage, they hit the adolescent period (roughly puberty to around 18 months of age) - this is when they really test boundaries, but more importantly, this is when **situational fears appear**. Dog-directed fear/aggression/reactivity may appear and seem to "come from nowhere." This may also be when stranger-directed fear, or territorial aggression can appear. This all depends on three pieces of information: **1) Nature/Genetics, 2) Nurture/environment and how much positive socialization you've given them, and finally 3) brain development.**

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Why buying from a breeder may be a better option for your needs (Continued)

When purchasing a pup from a breeder there is a sense of predictability. Each breed is uniquely suited to specific tasks due to their inherent traits and instincts (e.g., pointers point). This includes their temperament, size, coat type, whether they're hypoallergenic or not, and what energy level you might expect from the canine. Reputable breeders carefully screen both the sire and the dam for genetic problems and any health conditions that they may be able to prevent through OFA testing (e.g., hip dysplasia). They will also provide a health guarantee and lifetime warranty should you ever need to re-home the dog as well as providing the first vaccinations and deworming and will not let pups leave mom before 8 weeks of age. Excellent breeders will also start the socialization process of your pup before they even leave the litter and some even begin potty training.

Unfortunately, not all breeders are ethical and prioritize profit over the well-being of their dogs and their litters. It is critically important that you chose a breeder that breeds dogs for the right reasons and adheres to the most ethical breeding practices to ensure the health of the offspring. Purebred dogs also generally come at a premium cost for these reasons.



Going through a rescue or animal shelter very often saves the life of the dog or puppy in need. It is a compassionate and kind choice that reduces the overall stray and homeless dog population and is a very emotionally rewarding experience for both the canine and the human adopter. Some rescues even have target breeds that they work with to aid with predictability of the puppies.

Many rescues provide vaccinations, spaying/neutering, and some behavioral assessments before placing the dogs. You may also have a detailed history of the dog's prior circumstances. Rescue dogs/puppies are often much more cost effective in the short term as compared to breeders. However, one must be careful that long-term costs may actually be more expensive with a rescue dog/puppy due to the unknown trauma, medical history, lack of socialization, or abuse that a rescue has been through so behavioral modification training, medication, and patience will be required to address the potential anxiety, fear, and/or trust issues the puppy or dog may have developed. Conversely, You could also adopt a rescue that has absolute perfect health and no behavioral issues, but it's important to keep in mind, this is still a gamble. Getting a rescue puppy, you may also be in a situation where you don't know any prior medical information or information on the size, temperament, or coat-type of the dog.

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Why buying from a breeder may be a better option for your needs (Continued)

For the case of owner-training a service dog, please keep in mind the person that is training their dog must have a legal disability to have a service dog in the US in the first place. They will then be training that puppy from the time he or she is 8 weeks old, till at least two years of age. This will require hundreds of hours of training, and thousands of dollars of vet bills, training fees, specialized equipment, and frankly, some good old fashioned blood, sweat, and tears. We want to put disabled handlers in the position that sets them up for the utmost success.

This is typically why we always suggest that owner-trainers purchase a puppy through a very reputable and ethical breeder who ensures to breed the dogs for the sound health of the puppies. A good breeder will even start socialization through scent-training on day 2 after the puppies are born! Recall the science section of this article. If we can set up a disabled handler for as much success as possible by breeding two dogs who have excellent health, are raised in a home with no trauma, and are provided excellent socialization practice through positive trust building exercises, then perhaps you can see



why someone who is owner-training their own service dog would want to go with a puppy from a breeder. Imagine spending a year and a half training your puppy to find out their hips are faulted and you have to retire them for ethical reasons !

-Victoria Brody, MPH, KPA-CTP, FFCCP

Training Tip: Work with your puppies to get them used to handling!

When you bring your 8-week old puppy home, we all do a great job at potty training and starting to teach basic obedience cues. However, have you ensured to start socialization to basic animal husbandry yet? This is a great time to play with your puppies feet, ears, and teeth/gums. Tactile stimulation and ensuring your puppy is comfortable with being handled in these zones will ensure to make nail clipping, ear cleaning, and teeth-brushing a breeze! Make sure that all experiences are positive and rewarding for your pup!

