



A Dog's Gift: The Inspirational Story of Veterans and Children Healed by Man's Best Friend

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A decade ago, former military counterintelligence officer Terry Henry joined his precocious young daughter, Kyria, on a trip to a nursing home in order to allow its residents to play with their family dog, a golden retriever named Riley. Terry was astounded by the transformations that unfolded before his eyes. Soon after, Terry and Kyria started their service dog organization, paws4people, with the goal of pairing dogs with human beings in need of healing, including traumatized and wounded war veterans and children living with physical, emotional, and intellectual disabilities. In *A Dog's Gift*, award-winning journalist and author Bob Drury movingly captures the story of a year in the life of paws4people and the broken bodies and souls the organization mends. The book follows the journey of pups bred by the organization from their loving, if rigorous, early training to an emotional event that Terry and Kyria have christened "the bump," where each individual service dog chooses its new owner through an almost mystical connection that ignites the healing process. Incorporating vivid storytelling, insights into canine wisdom, history, science, and moving tales of personal transformation, *A Dog's Gift* is a story of miracles bound to be embraced by not only the 60 million Americans who own dogs, but by anyone with a full heart and a loving soul.

A Dog's Gift: The Inspirational Story of Veterans and Children Healed by Man's Best Friend Details

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Jane Night says

I think how good this book is depends on a person's expectations going in. It gives a very basic overview of how Paws4People works and so anyone looking for a deep insight into the organization might be disappointed. The reader is told a bit about it's founding, how the dogs are trained, and how they are matched but this book doesn't have the feel of an in depth documentary about the organization.

The subtitle of the book is "the Inspirational story of Veterans and Children Healed By Man's Best Friend." While the book does tell some stories about people who received dogs from the organization this isn't like a chicken soup book either. The stories overall are shallow and barely scratch the surface of how the dogs changed their person's lives. Many stories are told but they are basically a few paragraphs long about a person's story and how the dogs helped them.

Deep down I think this book is more about showing the connection between dogs and how that connection can be used to help those with disabilities. Many scenes in the book, such as watching the dogs get matched (bumped) to their new owners are awesome and made me cry.

I am a huge dog lover and so I really enjoyed this story and it certainly made me want to donate to the organization.

If I had to describe this book I would say it was a brief intro to the Paws4People program. It gives an overview of who they are, what they do, and who they help. Expect lots of tears.

Regina says

A warm and wonderful story of two people who created the wonderful organization, Paws4People, and have helped so many children and adults with special needs, especially veterans, with support dogs. Fascinating.

Catherine Milmine says

This book was amazing, to see how this Father and Daughter started this amazing gift for all the people who need help from children, injured Veterans ect. and the way they did the bumping process was great that they let the dogs pick who they wanted to help and was most drawn too. I did not want this book to end, these dogs are an inspiration of affection, love and caregiving. Amazing from the birth of these dogs to the end process and the happiness they brought to the person in need. Thank you so much for this book and I greatly recommend this book to everyone not just dog lovers, you will be amazed.

Kirsti says

I would first like to state that my rating has nothing to do with the work done by the charity represented in this book, Paws4people. It is entirely in the way the book was written and the format that the author has chosen that reflect for me, a poor score. Firstly, putting himself into the story never really worked for me. I wanted to know how the dogs interacted with their people, and maybe with their previous trainers. I wanted to know more about their lives together, but instead the author puts himself into the story, telling it from his point of view and adding his odd commentary. It frustrated me, especially since the title claims to be the story of Veterans and children healed by Man's best friend. I needed more of this.

I also didn't really see the significance of the birthing sequence constantly cropping up, since the pups haven't been bumped with any of the people in the book yet. I would have preferred more back story on the dogs and the people united with them through the course of the book.

Now that I've gotten the reasons why I didn't like this actual book off my chest, I will reiterate that the charity work done by this group is obviously awesome and it is a five star rating all on its own. They match dogs with people that truly need them, provide training etc. They obviously love dogs AND people. I just wanted more of the dogs and less of the author.

Darlene Stericker says

An awe inspiring story about paws for people service dogs.

Judi Hoggatt says

Great book about Paws4People. Providing service dogs to vets, PTSD, disabled kids, etc. about the start of organization by Terry Henry and his daughter Kyria.

Kristin says

The author profiles a well-known service/assistance/therapy dog program, paws4people, after being introduced to one of their clients during his previous research on service members who have returned home from the front lines. Although I wasn't familiar with the program, I actually did know of one of the families mentioned in the book, as I had read news articles about the separation of the Buckles sisters, who were born conjoined, and followed their blog, including updates on Erin, who was left paralyzed as a result of complications from the surgery and has an assistance dog provided by paws4people.

Telling pieces of the paws4people story with each chapter opening with Claire, one of paws4people's dogs who is both an assistance dog for a retired servicewoman and a breeding female for the program, delivering another puppy in what was her final litter before being retired from that job. We learn about the origins of the program, which started with young Kyra Henry wishing to take her family's golden retriever to the local nursing home to cheer up the residents and her father, Terry, providing transportation and quickly evolved

into the family adding more goldens and taking them to special education classrooms in schools too, with Terry handling some of the dogs so that more people would have a chance to interact with the dogs. As Terry and Kyra saw the impact the dogs were having in just short visits, they realized the potential dogs could have when paired one-on-one with humans who needed them. From there, Drury talks about the training of puppies in women's prisons before 'bump' day when the dogs choose their humans (many programs do the opposite or simply assign a dog to a human, but the Henrys have found that the results are excellent when the dog does the choosing), the further training to ensure the dog is capable of meeting the needs of their human, and the process of acclimating the humans to their new partners. The program hasn't abandoned its original purpose either, as p4p dogs also continue to make the rounds at schools and senior citizen facilities as general therapy dogs, particularly dogs who haven't 'bumped' with a particular person but are ready to leave prison, or dogs who don't end up making the grade while in prison and are offered as pets with the capability to be certified as therapy dogs with a little more training by their new families.

Overall a nice look at an organization that is doing a great thing, particularly with our wounded veterans and use of not only golden retrievers bred for the purpose of becoming p4p dogs, but also rescue dogs, some of whom are former strays from overseas that accompanied the wounded soldiers home and have already bonded with them.

Natalie says

I wanted to like this book... but between the writing about children with "horrendous handicaps", the paws4people jabs at the way other service dog organizations do things... I just wasn't feeling it. The writing style seemed too close to the organization to make it feel more wide-ranging.

Rena Sherwood says

Predictably heartwarming treacly sweet affair about one therapy dog organization. This is an awfully short book for chronicling one year in paws4people. The title is a bit misleading. The Story of Paws4People would have been more accurate. This reads more like a long Chicken Soup for the Soul essay than anything approaching a factual look at therapy dogs in America.

There is not much about the dogs themselves, which is highly annoying. They are treated like Virgin Mary sightings -- they sort of flit in and out of the text. There's practically nothing about training methods or even why prisoners are used for main training and not the organization itself. Shelter dogs are run down but then again are shown to be shining stars in the program. Nothing is mentioned of the death of the dog the book is dedicated to (the foundation dog of paws4people) other than "suddenly died." What the hell happened to her? Why the big mystery? It's unanswered big questions like this that make me turn sour on this book.

I haven't read anything else by Drury but this book had to've been a disappointment for readers of his previous works since Drury constantly mentions how different this book is to his other written work.

Therapy dogs are worth their weight in solid gold but this book makes me wonder about how soon

paws4People is going to crash or have some sort of scandal. It just sounds too good to be true. And the paws4people apparently frown on other therapy dog programs. *Wha ---?*

Adam says

I won this book for free from the Goodreads free book giveaway contest and what a joy this book is. My only regret was taking way too long to read it. Honestly, I was a little worried that it would hit too close to home, so I shelved it. I would look at it and avoid it knowing from my own experiences how things can affect me. As a disabled veteran, I know too well the pitfalls, so I was scared.

I had heard of the paws4people organization through my volunteer work at my local animal shelter. I've worked with various organizations on improving shelter animals quality of life, especially Dogs Playing For Life or DPFL, and that was life-changing work. I love it.

So anyways, this book was an absolute joy to read and I thank God I won it. If you can get through this book without letting a few tears flow, I'd be surprised. I appreciate how so many people are working to help others struggling with surviving, with every day life challenges. And what really captivates me about P4P, is it isn't just military centric. They incorporate children with disabilities too. Which is fantastic. So please, please, please read this book and then go and look up p4p. See what they really do. See how they positively affect and save lives. If you can donate, anything helps. And I'm not affiliated in any way with P4P in case you're wondering. But this book does give a great view into this program, the lengths it takes to train a service dog, and IMO helps to give us, the reader, a look into something most of us have never thought a single second about.

Thank you Mr. Drury

Karen M says

Great story about Service dogs with truly passionate and dedicated people

Kathryn says

I listened to this as an audiobook. This was not as good as I hoped, but some of it was not the most interesting. I wish there would have been more stories about the dogs and the people they were placed with. I did find it interesting how the dogs were trained by prisoners in a couple prisons, I believe in West Virginia and later how the dogs more or less picked the people they were to be match with. Some of the stories also just were not necessary to this book. For these reasons I feel this book should actually be 2.5 stars.

Monical says

I agree, this was an inspirational book, but would be improved with additional editing. I was disappointed that none of the areas of the book were covered in any depth. I would have liked to learn more about the prison training programs, the training of the dogs, more about the dogs in general, and maybe a little less about the clients. If you like this book, I recommend "How Dogs Love Us" which goes further into the workings of the canine brain. "Inside of a Dog" is also very good. and also one of my favorite jokes, attributed to Mark Twain-- Outside of a dog, a book is man's best friend; inside of a dog, its too dark to read.

Deborah Mills says

I thought this book was exactly what the subtitle said" The inspirational story of the veterans and children healed by mans best friend". This book did not claim to be a ' how to' book, and it was not just about the dogs so if that is what you are looking for, it is not for you.

My bias is I have three dogs, and I enjoy reading true stories about dogs and their different personalities and achievement. There are few books in this vein, compared to millions of books about people and their activities.

I enjoyed the time line of the story. I thought it was well written and gave an insight into the world of these tremendously committed people, and the history of how they came to be doing this work. I liked the pictures also. Clearly a lot of thought and work went into the writing of this book and I would like to thank Mr Drury for giving his time to this project and sharing the many stories which I did indeed find MOST inspiring.

MMc14 says

I really enjoyed this book. The learning about dogs, and their interactions with people, was my favorite part.
