



# NEWSLETTER



OCTOBER, VOL 1



## SISTERS OF SILVER STATE SERVICE DOGS

Dr. Diane Villa

Grateful to have her son back and moved by the suffering of the other patients, Dr. Villa began volunteering to help families of deceased service members. However, she wanted to intervene before a veteran was lost, and not after. So, in 2016, after volunteering at other nonprofits for a while, Dr. Villa told her cofounder that they should start their own service dog agency.

"One day, I was talking to Terri, and I said, 'Let's just do it,'" "So, we just went and formed a nonprofit, and the rest is history." Thus began the journey that is now Silver State Service Dogs.

Dr. Villa envisioned a two-fold mission: serving veterans and incorporating UNLV students through service work and internships. The opportunity to give back was a powerful incentive to take on the challenge, she said.

"I wanted to help veterans and make opportunities for my students," Dr. Villa said. "An internship gives students someplace to practice their skills and gain real-world experience."

Dr. Villa and her cofounder personally oversee the care and training of each service dog. The organization breeds and trains about one to two litters annually, and she insists that there is no cost to veterans.

"We raise the funds ourselves and it can be expensive," Dr. Villa said. "But worthwhile -- I mean, when you see the veterans and their dogs, it's incredibly rewarding." 🦴

Dr. Diane Villa founded Silver State Service Dogs with her cofounder and sister, Mrs. Teresa Keller. Dr. Villa, is also an Associate Faculty in Residence at the University of Nevada Las Vegas' department of Psychology. Her story begins about 20 years ago, when she and Mrs. Keller began breeding competition Labradors for dog shows.

However, when her son was critically injured in Iraq in 2005, she started on a path of service to other veterans and their families. Dr. Villa and the rest of her family stayed with her son at the hospital and saw how he and other patients suffering physical and emotional injuries struggled to recover.



## LET'S GET SPOOKY AT GROWL-O-WEEN



SSSD will have a booth at this year's Growl-O-Ween event, October 17, from 11 am - 4 pm, at Three Dog Bakery Inc. Each year, this free event features countless activities for attendees and their dogs, such as games, prizes, costumed canines, and trick-or-treating for both human and dog treats.

At this year's Growl-O-Ween, you'll see SSSD pups dressed in their best costumes as we pass out treats and sell Halloween-themed goodies, swag, and greeting cards. We will also have a raffle of prizes for humans and dogs. The proceeds from this event benefit rescues and other organizations like Silver State Service Dogs. We hope you'll come to see us and share in the fun -- bring along your pup for fun and photos.

Three Dog Bakery Inc is located at 2110 N. Rampart Blvd., Suite 150. For more details, check out our [Facebook event](#) or visit [pawpartnersunleashed.org](#) for more details. 🦴

## VOLUNTEER WITH SILVER STATE SERVICE DOGS!

Here are some ways you can make a BIG difference this month:



**Do some laps!** Help our service dogs get their exercise, practice commands, and get used to public environments in our Lab Laps dog walking program. Walk on Saturdays or reserve a flex walk that fits your busy schedule. (Lab Laps training required)



**Raise a puppy!** We have many pups but little space. Provide temporary shelter to a puppy and help socialize them. Plenty of cuddles and adorable moments included when you choose to help raise a puppy.



**Get Spooky!** Help our interns set up and tear down for Growl-O-Ween. Hang out with us during the event and be surrounded by dogs dressed up for Halloween.

A little time can make such an impact for our dogs and those who receive them! Email [volunteer@silverstateservicedogs.com](mailto:volunteer@silverstateservicedogs.com) or message us on social media to get started. 🦴