

P.A.D. BOARD MEMBER BIOS

Sara Dohrer: Sara has been involved with PAD since 2014. She has a manufacturing background in project management and more recently has earned her Certified Professional Trainer's certificate from the National Canine Master Trainer Course. Sara is now on the PAD staff as a dog trainer. She volunteers as a PAD foster home and also serves on the Board of Directors. She is an avid supporter of our veterans and canines alike.

Nancy Zehnacker: Nancy was the treasurer for P.A.D. for about 4 years. She is the wife of a disabled veteran with a P.A.D. dog. They have two children and live on a hobby farm in Detroit Lakes. She is an East Carolina University graduate with a degree in Recreation Management. She is also an MN State graduate with a degree in accounting. She currently holds four treasurer positions with various boards including the local Cub Scout pack, Detroit Lakes Breakfast Rotary and the local PTO.

Paul Goecke: Paul is a retired Captain of the Detroit Lakes Police Dept. He is also a retired Sargent with the US Army/Army Reserve. He attended N. Dakota State University, Moorhead State University, and Southern Police Institute's 101st Administrative Officers Course. He served in the 172nd Lt, Infantry Brigade at Ft. Richardson, AK. From 1974-78, then in the US Army Reserve at the 311th Evacuation Hospital/4022nd Combat Support Hospital Section 2, Fargo, N. Dakota. He was activated for Desert Shield/ Desert Storm from Dec. 1990-April 1991. Paul served the Detroit Lakes Police Dept. beginning as a summer officer in 1978 and retiring as Captain in 2007. Accomplishments include bicycle safety/bicycle patrol coordinator, trained K-9s, initiated Field Officer Training Program, coordinated Law Enforcement Torch Run for Special Olympics 1987-1997, and Explorer Scout Advisor 1985-1987. With the Detroit Lakes Public Schools: Red Flag/ Green Flag, bike safety rodeos, Citizens Police Academy child fingerprinting, and DARE Officer 1990-97. Paul has been on the P.A.D. board since its inception and has served as Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary/Treasurer and Interviewer for applicants.

Geoff Zehnacker: Geoff Zehnacker is a retired Staff Sgt. in the US Marine Corps. He served 15 years in the Marines. He did numerous tours including Iraq in 2004, 2005, and 2009 Geoff is a Purple Heart recipient. He has his very own P.A.D. dog as well as the first "unofficial" P.A.D. dog "Luke", who was our spokesman at the beginning of this all. He is a past President of P.A.D. Geoff is a graduate of MState (AA), MSUM (BA in Psychology) and current graduate student at NDSU in the Department of Human Development & Family Science. Father of 2 wonderful boys, avid hunter, fisherman and Harley rider.

Darlene Rivera-Spalla: Darlene is a US Navy veteran; she served as a medic in Southeast Asia. She graduated from the University of N. Dakota with a Doctor of Juris Prudence in 2001 and began a 2nd career as the County Attorney for Mahnomen County in MN. She is serving her second term. Her service dog, Thor, is veteran-owned and is the first service dog to be graduated from P.A.D as a Veteran-trained physical support dog.

Cathy Hansen, MSW, LICSW: Cathy earned a BA in English and Spanish from Macalester College, St. Paul, MN. She served as a Guardian ad Litem in the Juvenile Court system, then developed and staffed a Victim/Witness Assistance Program in rural MN. She later went on to earn a Masters of Social Work from the University of MN. Cathy is a Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker. She practiced as a psychotherapist for 16 years in a community mental health clinic, specializing in trauma work. Now retired, she enjoys travelling, reading and sewing quilts as well as spending time with her pets, who are all rescues.

Bruce Kunz, JD: Bruce graduated Cum Laude from Moorhead State University in 1988. He then attended law school at the University of North Dakota, graduating in 1991. He is admitted to practice in State, Federal and Tribal Court. Bruce is also certified as a Rule 114 mediator. His office is located in Perham, MN.

Linda Wiedewitsch: Linda earned a B.S. in Criminal Justice from Bemidji State University. She interned with the MN State Patrol at a high incidence District Headquarters in Golden Valley, MN. She then worked for the suburb of New Hope, MN as a patrol officer and investigator. After moving north, Linda worked as a patrol officer for the City of Frazee, MN and dispatcher for the Becker County Sheriff Department before accepting full time employment with the Detroit Lakes Police Department. She served two tours on the West Central Task Force, working undercover in narcotics and stolen property, as well as working as a patrol officer and investigator for the City of Detroit Lakes. She was a D.A.R.E officer in the city's 5th and 6th grade classes. During her work as a law enforcement officer, Linda came to be known as the "dog lady" for her skill in handling incidences involving canines. Linda served as a county level 4-H Project Leader for 15 years. Linda and her daughters began raising puppies for Leader Dogs for the Blind as a 4-H project: in all they raised 24 puppies. Linda began Lucky Dog Boarding & Training Center in 2005 and retired from law enforcement in 2006. The Patriot Assistance Dog program followed in 2011. She is a field trainer for Can Do Canines based in New Hope, MN. She has been recognized by the Becker County 4H, The Lions Leader Dog program, and Hearing and Service Dogs of America. She is an AKC breeder of Labrador Retrievers and has AKC titled multiple dogs in Obedience, Rally Obedience, Canine Good Citizen and Hunt tests. Linda manages the daily operations of Lucky Dogs Boarding and Training Center and Patriot Assistance Dogs and is the head trainer.

Paula Anderson: A new P.A.D. Board member, Paula has a background in Public Safety dispatching, Fire and Life Safety Education, Inventory Management, and Merchandizing Execution. She has worked in the pet supply industry, as well as pet boarding, private training and assisting with obedience classes. She was the human half of volunteer K9 Search and Rescue teams, certifying in Air Scent and Land Cadaver. She also has urban and rural trailing experience. Paula assists with P.A.D. classes, training dogs and mentoring new teams, coordinates airport training for P.A.D at the Minneapolis/St. Paul airport, and will be heading up the P.A.D. foster program soon. Paula recently earned her Certified Professional Trainer's certificate from the National Canine Master Trainer course. She is on staff at PAD as a dog trainer and also works at the Lucky Dog complex.

Ray Pizarro: Ray honorably served with MN's Army National Guard for over 15 years, first for a short time as a Food Service Specialist, then as a rifleman with 2nd Battalion of the 136th Infantry. He completed training exercises in Hohenfels, Germany, Fort Polk, LA, Fort Knox and Camp Shelby. He deployed to the Balkans and the Middle East. Ray was medically discharged from the National Guard. In November 2013, he applied to Patriot Assistance Dogs and began training in May, 2014. He and Beth E. Boo, his P.A.D. service dog, passed Public Access testing in February of 2015. Since teaming up with Beth, Ray has become more active in his community, has begun to participate with his local VFW, and attends Wounded Warrior functions. Ray volunteers regularly to help train P.A.D. dogs, assist Head Trainer Linda with classes, and mentor new veteran/service dog teams. It is with P.A.D that Ray's heart fills, knowing he is giving back to the organization which has given so much to him.

Michelle Goebel: Michelle grew up volunteering at animal shelters and training dogs in 4-H projects, placing first at all levels of county, regional and state dog competitions. She graduated Summa Cum Laude from St. Cloud University with a Finance degree in 2010. Michelle moved to Detroit Lakes and worked for Lucky Dog Boarding & Training as their full time bookkeeper. In 2011, she assisted in the formation of Patriot Assistance Dogs and its service dog training. Michelle has since worked as an accountant in St. Paul, MN and is currently a financial manager in Sartell, MN.