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Finding Aid

➤ Assistance Dogs of America, Inc. Records, 1986-2007 ◀
MSS-175

Size: 5 linear feet

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Access: open

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Processing Note: None

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Completed by: Deborah Marinski, July 2003

**Assistance Dogs of America, Inc.
Records, 1986-2002**

Biographical/Historical Sketch

Assistance Dogs of America, Inc. was founded in 1984 as the Guide Dogs for the Handicapped, Inc. by Joe and Pamela "Sam" Maxwell in Columbus, Ohio. "Sam" Maxwell began the organization by training dog Abby for her husband, who was a quadriplegic. Joe also assisted in training several dogs. The purpose of the Guide Dogs for the Handicapped was to "provide specially trained dogs and/or adaptive equipment that aid the handicapped, enabling them to become more independent." The organization was also concerned with educating recipients about dogs and educating the public about disabilities and the program. In 1986 the first Board of Directors was created with twenty-two members, and in 1987 the organization obtained 501 (C) (3) tax exemption status. The group became registered at local, state, and federal levels and began to expand its name and message to the nation.

The name formally changed in 1989 to Assistance Dogs of America, Inc. (ADAI). The Board of Directors voted to change the name because the word "handicapped" was seen as offensive, primarily concerned with an individual's limitation, and politically incorrect. The group wanted to recognize people as individual beings, not as disabled. Also, guide dogs referred largely to the visually impaired, which was not the concentration of the program. Also in 1989 the ADAI received a new home. The National Training Headquarters was moved to Swanton, Ohio, about 20 miles west of Toledo. The owner, Richard Ransom, donated half the cost of the property and the Kiwanis of Toledo paid for the other half. The property was situated on 2 ¾ acres with a twenty-two kennel run, grooming areas, isolation spots, insulated and air conditioned kennels, an out-building for training, and a six bedroom, four bathroom house that provided offices and quarters for live-in staff. In 1995 the property was paid off and the deed handed to the Kiwanis who leased the facilities to ADAI for \$1.00 a year. Throughout the late 1980s and 1990s the organization continued to grow and expand on the local, state, and national levels. Besides the Toledo chapter, another was established in Pontiac, Illinois, and others were trying to organize in Texas and Wisconsin. In 1991 a National Headquarters was set up in Columbus, Ohio, and in 1996 an executive office was created in Florida. The non-profit organization became nationally renowned for its help to disabled individuals.

The clients of ADAI are individuals with mobility problems or those who have multiple disabilities. Recipients may suffer from a variety of diseases including ataxia, cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, poliomyelitis, rheumatoid arthritis, spina bifida, and stroke while others have suffered accidental trauma or are disabled veterans. The hearing impaired may be given dogs, but the visually impaired are not unless they have other physical problems as well. Some dogs are used as therapy dogs in nursing homes, as companions to the elderly, or may be given to Easter Seals children. The ADAI wants to give people facing a variety of disabilities more independence, mobility, and a better quality of life.

The dogs provided are generally Labradors, Golden Retrievers, or mixes of the two; however, other large breeds such as collies, shepards, greyhounds, and Great Danes have been

approved for use. These dogs come from animal shelters, humane societies, pounds, breeders, and pet owners. Some have been abused or abandoned while others were slated for destruction. After a lengthy training program some of these dogs move on to become great companions and help to disabled people. Some dogs, however, are not up to ADAI quality and go on to become family pets or narcotic sniffing dogs. The dogs that do pass the six-month training period are capable of many functions. For the hearing impaired the dogs are trained to alert their owners to situations like fire or smoke alarms, telephones, doorbells, alarm clocks, or crying children. Other dogs specialize in answering phones, helping with balance in walking, carrying books and small packages, dressing and undressing, getting food from shelves and refrigerators, getting help in emergencies, going up and down stairs, opening doors, operating elevators, covering with blankets, pulling oxygen carts, pulling wheelchairs if stuck, picking up dropped items, turning on and off appliances, and turning lights on and off. Once a specific dog is matched with a recipient, the dog is trained for the individual's specific needs. Typically, dogs will stay with their owners 10-12 years. The dogs support the recipients and provide companionship.

Training is a critical step in the program. Dogs go through a series of stages to final placement. The first 10-14 days consists of observation of behavior and health check-ups. Once approved the dogs are placed in a foster home for 2-6 months of training. Foster parents are responsible for teaching basic obedience commands, socialization skills, housebreaking, and getting them used to public spaces. Foster homes are also required to provide a safe, clean, and loving environment. After foster training the dogs return to the facility for a 7-10 day training sessions with their recipient. Once the dog and recipient pass the class, they have a three-month probationary period and frequent follow-up visits. Finally, owners must pass a public certification exam to receive full ownership of the dogs.

ADAI is a non-profit organization that relies on donations and fundraisers to pay for the daily operations. Individuals who receive a dog do not pay for the animal. Various clubs, organizations, associations, fraternities and sororities, corporations, and hospitals are useful resources. These groups sponsor dogs, giving money, training facilities, living spaces, and time to the program.

Besides providing dogs for the disabled, ADAI provides some community services in order to educate the community about disabilities. ADAI gives demonstrations and lectures free of charge at schools, churches, libraries, and organizations. They try to convey the bonds created between owner and dog, how to care properly for pets, and how the program works. Community outreach is an important part of the program.

ADAI is an organization that benefits the physically disabled in a very positive way by providing them with dogs as helpers and companions. The group continues to grow and expand the number of dogs they place each year and allowing more disabled people to have a better life.

**Assistance Dogs of America, Inc.
Records, 1986-2002**

Scope and Content Note

The records of Assistance Dogs of America, Inc. date from the first board meeting in 1986 to 2002. These years have extensive documentation through administrative records, financial information, photographs, printed materials, videos, tax information, property information, meeting minutes, training reports, applicants and board member profiles, donations, fundraisers, by-laws, correspondence, newspapers, and newsletters.

The collection is broken into four series, each arranged alphabetically and then chronologically. **Series I, Administrative Records**, describe the daily functions of the group. This series includes annual meeting information, by-laws, applicant and board member profiles, correspondence, foster home instruction and applicants, legal issues, board of director's minutes, press releases, restructuring information, and training reports. **Series II, Financial Records**, documents the various facets of funding the program. Included in this series is information on donations, fundraisers, grant applications, property agreements, and tax information. **Series 3, Printed Materials**, include newsletters, fact sheets, historical information, newspaper clippings, pamphlets, and policy manuals. **Series 4, Audiovisual Materials**, include many photographs and a variety of videotapes.

**Assistance Dogs of America, Inc.
Records, 1986-2002**

Series List

S1 Administrative Records

1986-2002, 2.5 linear ft.

Arranged alphabetically then chronologically

Includes annual meeting information from 1989 to 1991, applicants and board member profiles, application information, elections and resignations, by-laws and constitution, correspondence, foster home information, job descriptions, legal issues, chapter information, product information, name change, publication information, and board of director minutes, which include training reports, announcements, invitations, amendments, executive director reports, volunteer reports, developmental reports, and some financial budgets.

S2 Financial Records

1986-2002, .25 linear ft.

Arranged alphabetically then chronologically

Includes information on spending and funding through fundraisers, donations, grant applications, property agreements, insurance, invoices, tax information, monthly budgets, and yearly spending reports.

S3 Printed Materials

1986-2002, .25 linear ft.

This series shows the formation, history, policies, and affect of the program on its recipients through newsletters, newspaper clippings, pamphlets, fact sheets, and policy manuals.

S4 Audiovisual Materials

1986-2002, 2 linear feet

Photographs and videotapes show the facilities, dogs, recipients, events, and volunteers of the program. Most of the photographs are unidentified. The photographs have been divided into major categories by subject.

**Assistance Dogs of America, Inc.
Records, 1986-2002**

Folder List

Box	Folder	Arrangement
		S1 Administrative Records
1	1	Annual meeting, 1988
	2	Annual meeting and anniversary, 1989
	3	Annual meeting, 1990
	4	Annual meeting, 1991
	5	Application information, 1993-94
	6	Applicants, 1989-96
	7	Articles of Incorporation, 1987
	8	Assistance Dogs International, 1989-91
	9	Better business bureau, 1993
	10	Board member profiles, 1992-2001
	11	Board nominations/elections and resignations, 1989, 1994
	12	By-laws, 1989-2001
	13	Certificates of appreciation, 1996-97
	14	Columbus Chamber of Commerce reports, 1987-90
	15	Constitution
	16	Correspondence, 1989, 1993-94, 2008
	17	Disability needs and services, 1986-91
	18	Foster home information, 1993-2001
	19	Governor's proclamations, 1990-91
	20	Job descriptions, 1995-2001
	21	Legal issues, 1992-93
	22	List of officers and board members, 1989- 2001
	23	Kiser personnel file, 1987, 1992
	24	Mayor's proclamations, 1988, 1990, 1991
	25	Minutes, Board of Directors, September-December, 1986
	26	Minutes, Board of Directors, January-June, 1987
	27	Minutes, Board of Directors, July-December, 1987
	28	Minutes, Board of Directors, January-June, 1988
	29	Minutes, Board of Directors, July-December, 1988
	30	Minutes, Board of Directors, January-June, 1989
	31	Minutes, Board of Directors, July-December, 1989
	32	Minutes, Board of Directors, January-June, 1990
	33	Minutes, Board of Directors, July-December, 1990
2	34	Minutes, Board of Directors, January-June, 1991
	35	Minutes, Board of Directors, July-December, 1991
	36	Minutes, Board of Directors, January-June, 1992

2	37	Minutes, Board of Directors, July-August, 1992
	38	Minutes, Board of Directors, September-December, 1992
	39	Minutes, Board of Directors, January-June, 1993
	40	Minutes, Board of Directors, July-December, 1993
	41	Minutes, Board of Directors, January-June, 1994
	42	Minutes, Board of Directors, July-December, 1994
	43	Minutes, Board of Directors, January-June, 1995
	44	Minutes, Board of Directors, July-December, 1995
	45	Minutes, Board of Directors, January-June, 1996
	46	Minutes, Board of Directors, July-December, 1996
	47	Minutes, Board of Directors, January-June, 1997
	48	Minutes, Board of Directors, July-December, 1997
	49	Minutes, Board of Directors, January-June, 1998
	50	Minutes, Board of Directors, July-December, 1998
	51	Minutes, Board of Directors, January-June, 1999
	52	Minutes, Board of Directors, July-December, 1999
	53	Minutes, Board of Directors, January-June, 2000
	54	Minutes, Board of Directors, July-December, 2000
	55	Minutes, Board of Directors, January-June, 2001
	56	Minutes, Board of Directors, July-December, 2001
	57	Minutes, Board of Directors, 2002
3	58	Miscellaneous, 1993-94
	59	National Assistance Dog Awareness Week, 1989-91
	60	Ohio Revised Code
	61	Pontiac, Ill. Chapter – Guide Dogs for the Handicapped, Inc., 1987-89
	62	Presentation requests, 1994
	63	Press releases, 1992, 2001
	64	Product information, 1993-94
	65	Publications, 1993
	66	Recipient correspondence, 1987-97
	67	Recipient and dog profiles
	68	Restructuring, 1986 – Name change
	69	Training Information, 1993-94
	70	Secretary of State filings, 1989-90
	71	Toledo Museum of Art, 2000
	72	Website, 1999
		S2. Financial Records
	73	Balloon lift-off, 1989
	74	Bethel Road property rental agreement, 1992
	75	Donations, 1989-2001
	76	Fundraising, 1990-2002
	77	Golf classic, 2000-01
	78	Grant applications – business donations, 1993-94

3	79	Insurance, 1993-94
	80	Invoices, 1994
	81	"May Day at Muirfield" Dinner/Auction, 1989
	82	Swanton property rental agreement, 1989-94
	83	Tax papers, 1993-95
	84	Walking events
		S3. Printed Materials
	85	Assistance Dogs International Newsletter, 1988-89
	86	History and information
	87	Information/Fact Sheet
	88	Newsletter, <i>Hearts in Harness</i> , 1987, 1995-2002
	95	Newsletter, <i>Wags & Wheels</i> , Spring/Summer & Fall 2006, Spring/Summer & Fall 2007, Fall 2008
	89	Newspaper Clippings, not dated
	90	Newspaper Clippings, 1980s
	91	Newspaper Clippings, 1990s
	92	Newspaper Clippings, 2000-2002
	Oversized	Newspaper Clippings and recipient and dog profiles
	93	Pamphlets
	94	Policies and Manuals, 1991
		S4. Audiovisual Materials
		Photographs:
4	95	Dogs, identified
	96	Dogs, unidentified
	97	Events
	98	Facilities
	99	Recipients, identified
	100	Recipients, unidentified
	101	Volunteers and workers
5		Video tapes, VHS, Beta, ¾ Inch, 1989-2001