



News Release

***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE***

**PATTERSON FOUNDATION AWARDS \$25,000 GRANT  
TO KSDS ASSISTANCE DOGS, INC.**

September 3, 2015 (St. Paul, MN) – The Patterson Foundation has awarded a \$25,000 grant to KSDS Assistance Dogs, Inc., toward renovating and expanding onsite facilities for KSDS students to train with a canine partner. Located in Washington, Kan., KSDS started 25 years ago as Kansas Specialty Dog Service. KSDS professionally trains and places guide dogs to provide mobility assistance for individuals who are blind or visually impaired; service dogs to assist people with disabilities; and facility dogs to work alongside professionals such as teachers, counselors or social workers who have a need for a dog in their occupation.

With its Class Expansion Project nearly complete, KSDS hopes to increase assistance dog placements by about 25 percent annually. “We thank the Patterson Foundation for their generosity in helping KSDS finish this special project. This support is so helpful in serving people and keeping our mission alive,” KSDS Development Director Marcia Funke said, adding that KSDS has a long waiting list of people who have been approved to receive an assistance dog. “With funding from the Foundation for this newly renovated building, and previously for the accessible housing complex, KSDS has fine facilities that will help us provide assistance dogs to more people who need them,” she said.

“Having sufficient training space not only provides the framework for increasing placement of assistance dogs,” Patterson Foundation President Gary Johnson said, “it opens doors to greater independence for more people, and that’s a commitment to improving quality of life that the Patterson Foundation passionately supports.”

For Funke, the impact of KSDS services comes full circle on graduation day, in heartwarming ways. “For me, that’s the best part, when graduates sit with their new canine partner and usually say a few words about their training and receiving their dog,” she said. “They are most grateful, and many who have a dog for the first time describe how they feel about their newfound independence and how much they appreciate everything.”

(Continued on next page)



### **About the Patterson Foundation**

Patterson Foundation is a private grant-making foundation that is separate from Patterson Veterinary and Patterson Companies business operations. The Foundation focuses its resources on human services and education programs related to oral health and animal health, especially programs in which healthcare professionals in these fields volunteer their services to disadvantaged people or individuals with special needs. The Foundation also awards higher education scholarships to children of Patterson Companies employees. The Patterson Foundation is funded primarily by current and former employees of Patterson Companies, Inc. Visit [www.pattersonfoundation.net](http://www.pattersonfoundation.net) for more information.

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