



Sheri Soltes
Texas Hearing & Service Dogs
Founder and President

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Sheri Soltes founded Texas Hearing & Service Dogs in 1988 on the concept of using dogs rescued from animal shelters. An honors graduate from both the University of Texas School of Law and the University of Texas Plan II Honors undergraduate program, she left her law practice to devote her full time to building THSD. Under her guidance, THSD leads the industry combining the use of all rescue dogs with positive reinforcement training methodology.

Sheri and THSD have mentored assistance dog programs around the world including Australia, Japan, Spain and Chile. She has been a featured speaker at many conferences and institutions including

- The Association of Behavior Analysis
- *Asociación Española de Perros de Asistencia*, Madrid, Spain (2000, 2001, 2003)
- International Marine Animal Trainers Association, Mexico
- National Coalition of Councils for Developmental Disabilities
- Animal Behavior Management Alliance (2004; Keynote Presentation 2005)
- *Fundación Bocalán del Perro de Ayuda Social*, Barcelona, Spain (2006)
- *Carabineros de Chile Escuela de Suboficiales Curso de Adiestramiento Perros Policiales*, Santiago, Chile (2006)

Sheri's articles on the legal rights of Assistance Dog users have been published by Assistance Dogs International, the International Association of Assistance Dog Partners and Leader Dogs for the Blind. She drafted the 1995 revisions for Texas' Assistance Dog accessibility statute.

Sheri served two 3 year terms on the Board of Directors of Assistance Dogs International, the most recent as Vice President. ADI is the coalition of training organizations for Guide, Hearing, Service and Seizure Dogs. She also served as ADI Conference Chair from 1999-2002.



She assisted the Austin Police Department in creating its Search and Rescue Dog program. THSD donated the first SAR dog and provided the initial training. K9 "Austin" was named "Search and Rescue Dog of the Year" by the American Kennel Club.

THSD Service Dog “Honor” was named Ralston Purina’s “Hero Dog of the Year 2000” for saving her wheelchair-bound partner’s life, including pushing an emergency button for 911 and barking into the phone. Honor had been scheduled to be euthanized in 3 days when THSD adopted her from the shelter.

THSD won *The Austin Chronicle’s* Critic’s Choice for “Mightiest Dogs on Earth” received in October 2005. THSD’s Mighty Texas Dog Walk also has won two Guinness World Records for “Largest Dog Walk”. (1999, 2002)

In 2006, the Austin Mayor’s Committee for People with Disabilities voted to award its Chairman’s Commendation to Texas Hearing and Service Dogs.

Sheri hosts *Café Woof* on FOX-TV in Austin. It is a monthly pet training segment, which debuted in June 2007.



Sheri with Texas Hearing & Service Dogs graduate David DiTraglia and his Service Dog “Clifford” at the 9th annual Mighty Texas Dog Walk, an event Sheri created, which has won two Guinness World Records.



Sheri (blue jacket in front of door) has been a guest lecturer for two years at the Bocalan Foundation in Barcelona, Spain, a Spanish Assistance Dog facility.



Sheri filming an episode of her pet training show *Café Woof*.