

# THE Companion

Issue  
45



Canine  
Companions®

Fall 2023



Puget Sound and Seattle areas, supporting these very active Canine Companions hubs.

In our pursuit of excellence, we have increased our efforts to continually improve our programs from training to fundraising. Some examples include:

- An innovative fostering program for dogs in professional training, an initiative that is already showing success.
- Outreach to educate and support public policy, helping to protect the rights of service dog teams, their safety and increase access in public places.
- A new Sponsor a Puppy program, allowing our supporters to sponsor specific Canine Companions puppies on their journey to graduation.

## Leading With Innovation

There is a special science for success enabling us to grow our impact here at Canine Companions. It takes a great deal of innovation and integrity, a strong community and good old-fashioned hard work. The end result? Excellence. But it involves more than a great organization to make this possible. We succeed because of you – our volunteers, supporters and clients.

We are proud to announce that this past spring we launched a new pilot program in Seattle, Washington, designed to serve our community in the Pacific Northwest. The pilot program is proving to be a positive step towards more effective service, providing training, client support services and philanthropy efforts into the

As always, it is our community that inspires us to reach further, work smarter and harder, and make independence even more attainable for our clients. You have our sincere gratitude for the critical role you play in helping us maintain excellence, changing lives through exceptional service dog partnerships.

With gratitude,

*Paige Mazzoni*

Paige Mazzoni  
Chief Executive Officer

*W. R. White, III*

Bill White  
Board Chair



# CELEBRATING THE PROS



Future Pro    Rock    Patriek    Wickie    Yago    Gucci

In September, we celebrated National Service Dog Month, highlighting the remarkable work of service dogs and reaffirming our continued leadership role in the service dog industry. This second annual commemorative month surpassed expectations, engaging an even larger audience than last year! Through interactive and entertaining activities, we educated our communities and policy makers, received official state and county proclamations, participated in fun quizzes and games, and of course, celebrated the important role service dogs play in the lives of people with disabilities.

Learn more at [canine.org/service-dog-month](https://canine.org/service-dog-month).

**113**

State and Local Proclamations

**50**

Activity in All U.S. States

**5,240**

New Audience Members



Scan here!

## HIGHLIGHTS

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## Making a Return Journey for 35 Years

One in four clients have returned to Canine Companions as the organization they know and trust to receive their next service or facility dog. Among them is Jeanette Kaliska, who has made the journey four times in the nearly 35 years since receiving her first service dog, Jolly, back in 1989.

Jeanette has spinal muscular atrophy, a progressive condition that causes muscles to weaken, requiring the use of a motorized wheelchair. Although she navigated day-to-day life a little differently, Jeanette was a dedicated elementary school teacher for

decades, and her four dogs have been devoted to a life of service and adventure. Jolly happily carried items into the classroom, opened and closed the door at the start of the day and motivated children to work on their reading skills.

**Make decades of amazing matches possible.  
Donate now by returning the enclosed envelope  
or give online at [canine.org/gift](https://canine.org/gift).**

Each of Jeanette's expertly trained service dogs, Jolly, Serena, Thelma and Fiji has gone above and beyond to ensure Jeanette can remain as independent as possible, learning to open sliding doors, retrieving lunch from the fridge and even putting dirty dishes in the sink.

"I love life. I love adventure," Jeanette says. "Without my dogs, I might not be so willing to do all of those adventures." Over the years, Jeanette and her dogs went on countless trips - from canoeing to skydiving!

**"I can do anything I can dream up because I have my support. Because of my dogs, I have my independence."**

Currently, Fiji holds the torch in Jeanette's long legacy of lifesaving service dogs. Partnered in 2021, Fiji keeps Jeanette as active as ever, while ensuring her needs are met. Jeanette remarks that Fiji and her predecessors have given her strength and courage to tackle whatever comes her way.

We are proud to serve clients, like Jeanette, who have entrusted their peace of mind and independence to an expertly trained Canine Companions service dog, year after year.

**Watch Jeanette and Fiji's Story.**

Scan here with your phone's camera.





## New Prison Collaborations

The prison puppy raising program at Canine Companions has an impact that reaches beyond just our mission, enhancing many lives within prison walls that are touched along the way. We are pleased to announce the addition of six new prison facility collaborations bringing our total prison partners to 12:

- > **Federal Correctional Institution Aliceville**  
Alabama
- > **Federal Correctional Institution Three Rivers**  
Texas
- > **Federal Correctional Institution Pollock**  
Louisiana
- > **Federal Correctional Institution Phoenix**  
Arizona
- > **Federal Correctional Institution Tucson**  
Arizona
- > **San Quentin Rehabilitation Facility**  
California

## TWO LIVES FOREVER CHANGED

A special dog can forge bonds better than almost anything - especially a dog like Diya.

While incarcerated at California Health Care Facility in Stockton, California, Aaron Hargrove was making a difference, diligently training future service dog Diya to be ready to change a life. Diya was also helping Aaron prepare for his exit from the Stockton facility, providing unconditional love and purpose.

For U.S. Marine Corps veteran Daniel Rhyne, Diya means a future with less anxiety and hypervigilance as his service dog, trained in tasks to lessen his symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Aaron was able to reunite with Diya as she and Daniel graduated, ceremoniously passing the leash along to Daniel, helping him regain his independence.

Thanks to Aaron's efforts to provide the best start for one special puppy and the expert training by Canine Companions, Diya is inextricably tied to independence, freedom and new beginnings for two.

## San Quentin Puppy Raising Program

This spring, a puppy raising program with double the impact began at San Quentin Rehabilitation Center in Northern California, when two future service dogs, Artemis and Wendel, entered the facility to begin their journeys.

"I am able to give back to a community that I took so much from," one handler shares. "This dog is going to serve a veteran, someone with disabilities. He has a job to do, and I have a hand in it."

The puppies will be raised at San Quentin and will be socialized with volunteer puppy raisers in the

surrounding community. The program started with two puppies and four handlers and has quickly expanded to eight handlers with more puppies to come!

"It's a great opportunity to be of service," another incarcerated handler says. "I just wanted to help out and give back any way I can. This is groundbreaking for us. To have this here in San Quentin, it's real rehabilitation. The possibilities are endless."



READ MORE IN OUR NEWSROOM

### Small Puppies, Big Futures!

Sponsor these canine heroes and receive a heartwarming surprise along the way!



Scan here!



## THE GIFT THAT KEEPS ON GIVING

As a person living with hearing loss, Barb Sphar applied to Canine Companions with the hope that a service dog could assist her as a second set of ears. But Canine Companions Service Dog Vasco has done so much more than that.

“Vasco silently keeps me aware of my surroundings,” says Barb.

Vasco alerts Barb to sounds in the environment that she wouldn’t otherwise hear. Now, Barb feels comfortable doing things she loves, like walking on the trail near their home, because she knows Vasco is listening on her behalf.

The Sphars knew they wanted to give back to the organization; the question was, “how?”

Barb’s amazing journey with Vasco encouraged the Sphars to decide to raise a puppy. “Someone selflessly raised Vasco,” reflects Barb. “We wanted to provide that for someone else.”

They now have their hands full raising future service dog Link. Barb says watching him grow is well worth the challenge.

But, her giving doesn’t stop there. Barb says her experience with Canine Companions is also why she became a monthly donor.

“The impact on so many people is just so worth the support that we provide,” she remarks, explaining why she donates monthly. “I feel so fortunate to be the recipient of one of these dogs.”

## More Smiles With Santana

Unfamiliar places used to cause 9-year-old Ryden extreme discomfort due to anxiety associated with cerebral palsy. Ryden is unable to speak, and his muscle movement is limited as a result of his disability. However, a snuggly, affectionate service dog named Santana changed everything.

“It was a perfect match right away, and Ryden’s life has drastically changed for the better,” says Ryden’s mom, Heather.

With Santana by his side, Ryden and his family can go out to public places with ease. If Ryden starts to feel uncomfortable, Heather will have Santana lay his head on Ryden’s lap, redirecting anxiety towards petting Santana’s head, playing with his ears and rubbing his back.



Santana bridges a gap between Ryden and other kids his age and provides unbeatable, unconditional love.

“Santana brings so much joy by being someone that doesn’t distinguish Ryden as having a disability, but simply sees him as a friend,” states Heather. “Ryden knows how much Santana loves him.”

There is no doubt that Santana is making a difference in Ryden’s life. As Heather says, “I have seen Ryden smile more since he was matched with Santana than I have in his entire life.”

## Get 365 Days of Puppies!

2024 is right around the corner! You’ll feel joy all year when you order the Canine Companions 2024 Puppy Calendar, FREE with a \$25 donation. Plus, you’ll receive \$60 in coupons from Eukanuba!

Get yours now at [canine.org/calendar](http://canine.org/calendar) or scan the QR code.



### Gift the Gift of Independence!

This holiday season, make an impact for years to come. Give independence, and you’ll help match children, adults and veterans with life-changing service dogs.

GIVE NOW!



Utilize the enclosed envelope or scan the QR code.



**Emily Bell**

Emily joins the Canine Companions North Central Region as executive director. She has over a decade of experience in fundraising for nonprofits and leading fundraising teams, primarily in higher education. Emily has a background in social work, nonprofit management and public and international affairs. She looks forward to furthering our mission in the North Central Region.

**Taylor Chang**

Taylor is our vice president of technology, leading the organization’s efforts in leveraging technology to further our mission. She has a background in consulting, software implementation and nonprofit finance. Taylor began her career at IBM, and was most recently at Meta. Taylor believes technology can drive positive change, expand reach and provide a powerful support system for staff, graduates and volunteers.



**Rich Mallow**

Rich brings more than 40 years of experience to his new position as executive director for the Southeast Region. Prior to joining Canine Companions, Rich was the vice president of field operations for Mothers Against Drunk Driving. He received a degree in Business Management from the State University of New York at Plattsburgh.

**Adrena Spreacker**

Adrena recently stepped into her new role as the program director for the North Central Region. During her 29-year career with Canine Companions, Adrena has worn many hats, starting as a kennel technician in 1995 and working as a senior instructor and training manager before moving to client services. Adrena is passionate about advocating for our staff, clients and service dogs.



**Brittani Uribe Sleets**

Brittani is our new senior director of inclusion and diversity. She manages a variety of initiatives to oversee equity in all areas of our organization, from staffing and volunteerism to outreach and meeting strategic goals to reach a broader audience with our mission. Brittani has a background in consulting, as well as experience at major for-profits to support inclusion.

**Serving in Seattle**

This spring, an exciting new pilot program began, aimed at increasing our impact and presence in the Seattle, Washington area. This new field office in the Northwest Region is serving clients and supporters in the Puget Sound area, including placing service and facility dogs and providing client follow-up services. For the first time, dogs in professional training will be hosted in the homes of volunteer fosters, who will transport the dogs to the center daily for training by our expert staff. We would like to thank the generous donors who have made this innovative pilot possible, and look forward to all we can learn along the way.



**Jamaica’s Journey to Independence**

Jamaica Cooper was browsing Instagram and stumbled across a post by Canine Companions. Living with cerebral palsy, she was instantly attracted to the idea that she might benefit from an expertly trained dog – so attracted, in fact, that she applied for a service dog the very next day.

“I had been struggling,” she says. “Even going on walks alone scared me because I worried something would happen and I wouldn’t have help.”

When Jamaica was matched with Canine Companions Service Dog Getty, she was overwhelmed with joy, knowing he was a perfect fit. “There are no words to describe that feeling, I just knew he was an incredible dog,” Jamaica remarks.

Getty provides the physical support Jamaica needs to be confident in her self-care. From retrieving her phone and water bottle, to opening doors, opportunities are greater with Getty there to help.

Jamaica works at the University of Alabama with Getty’s assistance, couriering documents across the vast campus and its many buildings. She has come a long way from being fearful of being alone because she can rely on Getty to be independent, no matter where they are.

**“My confidence has grown so much that I have become an advocate, sharing my story at conferences and teaching others that I don’t need help because Getty is there,” she says. “Our team is independent.”**

# Fritter Brings Hope for the Future

While serving in the U.S. Army, Rob developed resilience and tenacity as a leader of a multi-cultural team. But his service took a toll.

“In combat, I saw things no human should see,” Rob shared. “The trauma caused me to isolate myself and avoid social situations.”

Dealing with effects of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), Rob sought help from Canine Companions, applying for an expertly trained – albeit furry – therapeutic intervention: a service dog.

Rob was matched, free of charge, with Service Dog Fritter, trained in tasks to interrupt anxiety and hypervigilance, reduce the impact of symptoms of PTSD in public places and to awaken him from nightmares.

“I never realized how little sleep I was getting until Fritter came into my life,” shares Rob. “Fritter’s warm personality and sweet demeanor provide a sense of calm, interrupting my anxiety before it escalates. I am building confidence in our ability to go out as a team in public.”

But Rob didn’t just gain a best friend in Fritter. He forged bonds and found a network of support from the other veterans he met during his Team Training class. It was a comradery he hadn’t felt in more than a decade.

With Fritter by his side and the newfound connections he has made, Rob says he is now hopeful for the future.

“Fritter has given me a second chance at life. I am grateful to the volunteers, donors and staff at Canine Companions who made it possible for me to live with greater independence, confidence and joy.”



**“Fritter has given me a second chance at life.”**



## Volunteering from A to Z

If there is ever a Canine Companions event or outreach opportunity in Central Ohio, chances are long-time volunteer Marty is part of it. Marty first became involved with Canine Companions in 1989, not long after our organization's expansion to the North Central Region.

From leading corporate training sessions, spearheading a newsletter to engage Central Ohio volunteers, and providing a community for fellow puppy raisers, Marty has continuously been there to offer support and a helping hand.

Throughout these many efforts, Marty has also raised dozens of puppies, whose names have started with every letter of the alphabet! This summer, Marty picked up her 30th puppy, Paola. "It's an interesting feeling, like the start of a new decade," she says.

As much as Canine Companions has been a part of Marty's life, she has also played an important role to help shape our North Central Region. We are continuously grateful for her long-time support and dedication.



## A Gift to Give

After the loss of her pet dog in 2016, Kate O'Connor didn't think she could bear the heartache of falling in love with, and losing, another dog. However, one month later, she was in the audience when her cousin, Bill, graduated from Canine Companions with his new service dog, Izzy. Kate was moved by the impact these dogs have on people with disabilities.

"On the ferry ride home from Bill's graduation ceremony, I submitted my puppy raiser application," she says.

Now, Kate has raised five puppies and recently watched her fourth Canine Companions puppy, Dozer, pictured above, graduate as a service dog for a child.

**"How lucky am I that Dozer was my gift to receive and now my gift to give!"**

## HEALING THROUGH CANINE THERAPY

On an ordinary Tuesday, Aleeta Lehtinen's day took an unexpected turn when her community faced a dreaded alert no parent ever wants to hear: "active shooter."

In response, the teachers immediately went into preparation and protection mode. "A lot of the kids didn't think they were going to live," Aleeta recalls.

Luckily, it turned out to be a cruel prank. Although the situation was not a true emergency, the emotions students, teachers, staff and parents endured were real.

The principal of the school knew Aleeta was a Canine Companions puppy raiser and a volunteer handler for Canine Companions therapy dog, Mark. They quickly made plans for Mark to spend time at the school the following day. He helped students and teachers relax and open up about their feelings, some simply sat on the floor hugging Mark and crying into his fur.

"I am so thankful to have Mark," Aleeta says. "He is the best listener anyone could ask for. I couldn't have asked for a better therapy dog."



Learn more about our therapy dog program at [canine.org/therapydogs](https://canine.org/therapydogs)



## Bringing Joy to Soldiers

As 200 active duty soldiers unloaded from a bus during a stop along their travel route, they were greeted by an unexpected friend: Canine Companions Therapy Dog Neva. With her wagging tail and her favorite blue ball in her mouth, she was ready to play fetch and have a snuggle, bringing much needed joy to the service members. Canine Companions therapy dogs, like Neva, give back to their communities in a variety of ways, with unconditional love and support.

## Giving Back To Local Communities With NextHome

The partnership between Canine Companions and NextHome is a perfect example of making a positive impact on local communities. By supporting our mission, NextHome is not only helping to improve the lives of children, adults and veterans with disabilities, but also promoting the important role that service dogs have in our society.

“As a firm believer in investing in your own team and giving back to local communities, it made perfect sense to associate NextHome with an organization

that is equally dedicated to society by delivering the greatest resources to individuals in need,” says James Dwiggins, CEO of national partner NextHome, Inc.

Like Canine Companions, NextHome is committed to putting people first. By working together, we are meeting this shared goal of helping people across the country live more independent lives by matching them with expertly trained service dogs.



NextHome CEO James Dwiggins meets future service dogs.

## Better Together

Care is more than just a part of our national partner CareCredit’s name – it’s a core value. For the past two years, CareCredit and Pets Best, both Synchrony Financial solutions, have been dedicated supporters of National Service Dog Month. In addition to being financial supporters, the companies have raised critical awareness of service dogs, our mission and the importance of inclusion beyond September’s celebratory month.

“CareCredit is proud to have been able to successfully support and celebrate Canine Companions during National Service Dog Month in 2022 and 2023,” says CareCredit SVP, Veterinary/Pet Care Boo Larsen. “During the month of September, we were able to live out our shared goal of empowering a lifetime of care, companionship and independence through awareness, education, financial support and advocacy.”

We are grateful for their ongoing support and partnership. Canine Companions, CareCredit and Pets Best are truly better together.



Synchrony solutions



## Fetching It Forward

We are excited to announce a new partnership with Dogtopia Foundation. Through the foundation’s Fetch It Forward initiative, Dogtopia dog daycares raise funds to support service dogs for military veterans. We are honored to have support from Dogtopia communities across the country, changing the lives of veterans one service dog at a time.

Learn more at [canine.org/corporatepartners](https://canine.org/corporatepartners)



dogtopia foundation  
fetch it forward



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Make everyone smile with the cutest holiday cards around. Order yours today and grab the perfect gift too!



SHOP NOW!





Jennifer Johnson and Facility Dog Millie

## 20 Years of Facility Dogs at Sutter Health

For over two decades, Sutter Medical Centers in Northern California have been receiving the invaluable help of expertly trained Canine Companions facility dogs. It all began with Facility Dog Hazel, who blazed a trail worn deep by her successors. Currently, there are 15 facility dogs actively working in Sutter Hospitals in Northern California. These furry experts are partnered with child life specialists helping children through cancer treatments and long-term hospitalizations, as well as

physical, occupational, speech and recreational therapists and social workers working with adults.

Child Life Specialist Jennifer Johnson received her first facility dog, Millie, in 2004, and is now matched with Facility Dog Glimmer. Jennifer shares, "The majority of my career, I've had a facility dog by my side. It's immeasurable what they bring to my work. All of the qualities that these expertly trained dogs bring to the table to help me; you can't measure how impactful it is."

## Baylor Scott & White Goes to the Good Dogs

The six facility dogs of Baylor Scott & White Health serve in a variety of roles, but each have the same goal – improving the patient experience and providing a unique kind of motivation.

Companions therapy dogs have joined the animal-assisted therapy program, providing comfort to patients and staff, and some employees have even taken on the role of volunteer puppy raisers!

These six expertly trained facility dogs – and counting – use their 45 tasks to support patients in rehabilitation clinics, a children's medical center and a heart hospital.

The furry faces in Baylor Scott & White facilities are part of the nearly 10-year, one-of-a-kind collaboration between a service dog organization and a healthcare system.

And facility dogs aren't the only paws you'll see around the Baylor Scott & White system. Canine



Make rehabilitation and independence possible for years to come. Give now.



The STEP@UCF college puppy raising club at DogFest Orlando, where they raised enough in donations to name puppy Knightro.

## New Adventures With Knightro

At the University of Central Florida (UCF), there is a dedicated group of volunteer puppy raisers making a major difference. The STEP@UCF college puppy raising club raised over \$27,000 at DogFest Orlando, topping the fundraising charts for 2022 events. Their fundraising efforts culminated in naming the group's next Canine Companions puppy, Knightro, after the UCF mascot. We're grateful to STEP@UCF for their hard work and dedication to our mission!

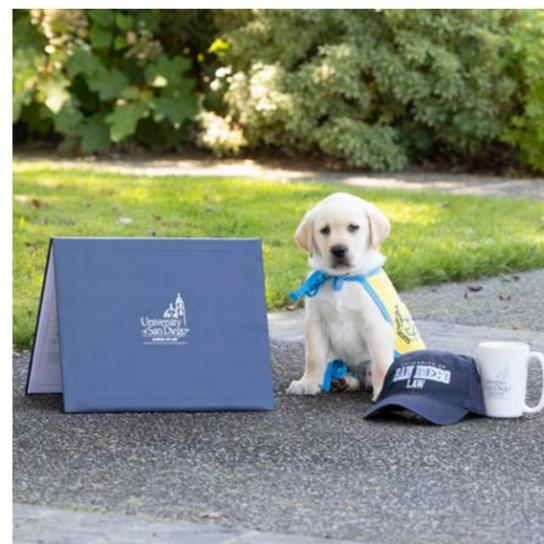
Individuals who raise over \$15,000 for a DogFest event are eligible to submit a puppy name. Those who raise over \$25,000 may choose to raise the named future service dog. Join the fun today at [canine.org/dogfest](https://canine.org/dogfest).

### MEET AMICUS!

The University of San Diego (USD) School of Law community is welcoming a new friend - puppy Amicus! Amicus will take part in different events and activities with the USD School of Law while also learning skills with his volunteer puppy raiser to prepare for his important future as a service dog.

This partnership was made possible through Canine Companions National Board Member and three-time USD alumna Dr. Leslie A. Hennessy, M.B.A., Ph.D. Leadership, J.D.

Read more about our puppies at [canine.org/puppyspotlight](https://canine.org/puppyspotlight).



# UPCOMING EVENTS

### National Graduation Day

November 3

### Arizona Valley of the Sun Golf Tournament

November 6 - Chandler, Arizona

### Salute Independence

November 8 - Medford, New York

### National Graduation Day

February 9

Stay tuned for more events in 2024!

### DogFest Jacksonville

February 17 - Jacksonville, Florida

### Sit Stay Sparkle Texas Style

March 2 - Fort Worth, Texas

### DogFest Orlando

April 20 - Winter Park, Florida

### Sit Stay Sparkle North Central

June 13 - New Albany, Ohio



## Making a House a Home

If you ask Chris Kittredge, a house isn't a home without puppies in it. Chris began volunteering for Canine Companions over 30 years ago as a puppy raiser. She added "breeder caretaker" to her repertoire, caring for 27 litters of future service dogs in her home for their first eight weeks.

Now, Chris is caring for her fifth breeder dog, Friendly, and is currently raising her sixth puppy! Her volunteering doesn't stop there: Chris has been a longtime member of the Canine Companions national board, is the chair of our program committee and volunteers her time as a professional photographer to take beautiful photos of our puppies, volunteers, dogs and client teams.

Learn how you can get involved at [canine.org/volunteer](https://canine.org/volunteer).

# RESEARCH UPDATE | BREAK THE STIGMA: AUTISM

## How do service dogs impact children with autism and their families?

Methods	Results: A Family Systems Approach	
<p><b>50</b> caretakers of children with autism</p> <p> involved in a service dog program</p> <p> wrote about their experiences</p>	<p>Service dogs improved <b>social well-being</b> for the family <b>externally</b>:</p> <p>enhancing &amp; increasing <b>social interactions</b></p> <p>decreasing public <b>stigma &amp; judgment</b></p>	<p>Service dogs <b>strengthened &amp; stabilized</b> the family <b>from within</b>:</p> <p>as an <b>individualized</b> intervention for the child</p> <p>building <b>resilience</b> as a member of the family</p>

Canine Companions is proud to collaborate with research partners to advance the service dog industry. Recently, we partnered with the O’Haire Lab at the University of Arizona to investigate the benefits of Canine Companions service dogs for children with autism. The findings have now been published in the journal *Frontiers in Psychiatry*.

Few studies have explored the impact of service dogs for children with autism. Of those that have, there have been mixed findings. The new study with the University of Arizona aimed to understand how these findings fit within broader psychological science and family theories.

The multi-year study sheds light on the positive impacts service dogs have on not only children with autism, but also their entire families.

By asking our clients open-ended questions about their experiences via an online survey, we found that service dogs enhanced and increased social connections, while decreasing stigma for the whole family within their larger communities.

Within the family, the service dog acted as a unique and individualized intervention for the child. Service dogs are seen as family members, and help increase the family’s resilience by improving interactions, helping to improve emotional well-being, and acting as a source of joy themselves.

Our partnership with the University of Arizona underscores our commitment to enhancing the lives of individuals with disabilities. With 175 service dogs provided to children with autism and a dedication to advancing research, Canine Companions continues to make a meaningful impact in the service dog industry.

Learn more at [canine.org/research](https://canine.org/research).

Leighton, S.C., Rodriguez, K.E., Neieforth, L.O., O’Haire, M.E. (2023). Service dogs for autistic children and family system functioning: a constant comparison analysis. *Frontiers in Psychiatry*. doi.org/10.3389/fpsy.2023.1210095.



## DECADES OF MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Whispers of “There’s a dog!” float through a group of children walking into the North Star Elementary School library. Their attention belongs to Scooby and his 22-time volunteer puppy raiser, Mike Hartsky, who works at the school.

Each day, Mike and Scooby greet 617 students at the front door, coaxing shy children from cars during student drop-off and visiting classes. The impact they have is evident as they receive an abundance of heartfelt letters from students they meet.

“I learned that we help make Scooby ready to be a service dog. I think it was really fun seeing and learning about Scooby and how he can help people,” a letter said.

Mike has been a dedicated puppy raiser since 2002, and he doesn’t intend to stop. “The beauty of the program is that I’ve always got another puppy coming,” he says. “It’s so close to my heart.”



## A LIFE-CHANGING LESSON

When Bonnie Stinson retired from teaching, she wondered if she had left as big of an impact on any of her students as they left on her.

Throughout her career, Bonnie raised 26 puppies for Canine Companions, some of whom she would bring into her classroom. She didn’t know it at the time, but one of these visits would forever change the life of a young student, Trevor.

Trevor was diagnosed with progressive multiple sclerosis several years ago. When the time came for him to apply for a service dog, he thought back to Miss Stinson’s class and knew Canine Companions was what he needed.

Bonnie now works as dorm caretaker at our Northeast Region Training Center. When she learned about Trevor’s story, she knew she had to see him again. The two tearfully reunited at the North Central Region Sit Stay Sparkle Gala, where it left no doubt that Miss Stinson made an impact.





## It All Starts With a Puppy...AND YOU

The heart and soul of the Canine Companions mission relies on our supporters, staff and volunteers. Together, we can place hundreds of expertly trained service and facility dogs with people living with disabilities, entirely free of charge to our clients. However, according to Assistance Dogs International, the service dog industry governing body, a global shortage of volunteers to care for puppies and dogs in training could severely impact the lives of people with disabilities.

**There is a critical shortage of volunteers – and Canine Companions is no exception.** And, with unprecedented demand for our service dogs, our programs continue to be impacted. There are nearly 600 children, adults and veterans currently waiting for placement with our service and facility dogs.

“Volunteers are the backbone of our organization,” says Director Puppy Program James Dern. “Without volunteer breeder caretakers and puppy raisers to give our future service dogs the best start possible, we can’t serve people with disabilities by providing the service dogs they need. Our volunteers are truly lifechanging.”

It’s not just the dogs that benefit – volunteer puppy raisers gain physically and mentally from their experience through improved companionship, exercise, well-being and social life. With a common goal of supporting people with disabilities, the result is a winning one for everyone.

Learn more at [canine.org/raise](https://canine.org/raise).

**3,711**

current volunteers

**1,151**

puppies with volunteer raisers

**584**

clients on our waiting list

## 2022–2023 Team Training Yearbook

### NORTH CENTRAL

**1. MARCH** L-R: Rob with Fritter; Brian with Puma; Christopher with Vanya; Sharon with Bernie.

**2. MAY** L-R: Elizabeth & Angie with Forste; Abigail & Anna with Olina; Jennifer with Otter; Jeffrey with Oshi; Kade with Alpha; Zackery & Judy with Fame; Jacob with Tenor; Allyson with Finneas; Trae & Jackie with Trevor; Bob with Fozzie; Olivia with Carter.

L-R: Laura & Tara with Rossi; Pamela & Beth with Tank; Emily with Lassen.

**3. AUGUST** L-R: Camille, Eric & Valerie with Chase; Alyse with Adam; Kyrielle, Janna & Andrew with Max; Mary with Victory; Tammy with Violet; Breanne with Bryn; Amanda with Bert; Zoe & Jen with Shereen; Jennifer with Pebble.



**“Seeing the joy graduate teams experience when they are perfectly matched shows us we are spending our time on the right thing.”**

– JOYCE, PUPPY RAISER AND SUPPORTER

### NORTHEAST

**1. MARCH** L-R: Jessica with Mango; Kristen with Deen; David with Kellen; Michelle with Sarge.

**2. MAY** L-R: Leigh Ann with Benicia; Skylar & Brenda with Luddy; Aaditya, Sajith & Megah with Dozer; Alanna with Nico; Ben with Sims; Jimmy with Micah; Phillip & Maribeth with Dressel; Kate with Oric.

L-R: Wayne with Elroy; Michael with Claudio; Jeff with Anchor.

**3. AUGUST** L-R: Jazmine, Kevin & Sandra with Bonus; Brian with Radcliff; Mary with Fantasia; Michelle with Biscuit; James, Patrick, Cynthia & Daniel with Vero; Christy & Rebecca with Goldie.



## NORTHWEST

**1. APRIL** (L-R) Sarah with Lavender; Kari with Carmel; Beatrix with Tulip; Owen & Kaelin with Parker; Jack & Jacinta with Justice.

**2. MAY** (L-R) Pat with Wendy; Joshua with Don; Nikki with Honora; Naomi with Windsor.

(L-R) Benjamin with Mateo; Dave with Darian; Daniel with Diya.

(L-R) Bob with Derry; Christina with Katie; Carol with Haddix; Holly with Morocco; Erna with Daisy.

**3. JULY** Namsar & Vitaly with Krystal.

(L-R) Molly with Floretta; Christy with Roper; Erica with Arnie; Kevin with Ty.

**4. AUGUST** (L-R) Stewart and Janelle with Julie; Jackson, Jody & Rick with Mystery; Jeffrey, Bonnie & Mark with Teagan; Emily with Vera; Kathleen with Chip; Nina with Patsy; Samson, Anne, Hattie & Josephine with Charleston; James & Gregg with Huxley; Matt with Ralph (not pictured).



## SOUTH CENTRAL

**1. APRIL** Rick with Cammy.

**2. MAY** L-R: Caleb with West; Katie with Francesca; Colin with Nema; Rob with Vayden; Kellen with Halpert; Hailey with Raider; Aspen with Jojo; Alex with Nilla; Gautam, Damodhara & Jeeva with Eureka.

**3. JULY** Dana with Becca; Lauren with Thornton; Kathy with Dakota; Meghan with Karissa; Sarah with Fanny (not pictured)

**4. AUGUST** L-R: Branddi & Nikki with Pizzaz; Yukta & Sneha with Greer; Joel with Marino; Kaliyah with Falen; Morgan with Nature; Celeste with Misha; Lucas & Kacee with Addy; Laura & April with Verdi.



## SOUTHEAST

**1. MAY** L-R: Kim with Loopie; Tiffany with Dunn; Ashley & David with Negri; Hannah with Revere; James with Bruin; Mari & Lisa with Ocho.

Hannah with Nichols; Patricia with Scouty; Karissa with Legend; Bethany with Carli.

**2. AUGUST** L-R: Kara with Jude; Detrick with Poet; Kim & Brielle with Chester; Nico & Nicole with Jane; Will & Sarah with Banner.

L-R: Valentina & Maria with North; Jackson, Heather & Kyle with Axle; Edie with Dell; Christine with Shep.



**“I really knew what a difference Erik was going to make in my life when he first opened a door for me.”**

– ALLI, U.S. ARMY VETERAN, WITH SERVICE DOG ERIK

## SOUTHWEST

**1. MAY** L-R: Connor with Vespa; Jason, Nancy & Tim with Oasis; Haley with Klondike; Grey & Arielle with Orly; Laura with Ruby; Lyena with Grant; Robert & Theresa with Macy; Kaila with Danya; Vanessa with Connie; Terri with Montreux; Nathan & Jessica with Cinnamon.

Courtney with Tuckerman.

Carson & Theresa with Tessa.

**2. AUGUST** L-R: LaVonne with Valencia; Melissa with Ava; Rob with Rainy; Chris & Robin with Aiden; Tim with Wichita.

L-R: Ruth with Howdy; Jeremy with Jenny; Elle & Julia with Denver; Davis, Amie & Brad with Becker; Flash, Oliver, Brooke & Ryan with Adler; Tori & Diane with Virgo; Josephine with Monty.



**“Having Ziti to pick up things I drop and knowing that he loves helping me has been awesome!”**

– OLIVER WITH SERVICE DOG ZITI

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