

THE Companion

Issue
36




**Canine
Companions®**

Summer 2021

Together WE LEAD

Leadership is not about being the biggest or oldest – it's tangible and measurable. It's the realization that as an organization, we are responsible for driving innovation and quality in everything we do.

One of the core pillars in our strategic plan is to become the most recognized service dog organization in the world for the great work we do every day – not only training and placing the highest quality service dogs in the world, but also leading holistically through advocacy initiatives, our inclusive program model and valuable community collaboration ([read about our collaboration with volunteer pilots on page 12](#)).

As one of our newest initiatives, we have prioritized advocating for our graduate teams to make meaningful change. Our staff and volunteers are providing feedback on state and federal bills that impact service dog users. We continue to support the expansion of



legislation that impacts the industry as a whole and our clients in particular ([read more on page 15](#)).

The Canine Companions community helps us lead, and we couldn't do it without you – our donors, volunteers, corporate partners, research partners and clients. Your collaboration on new and exciting projects including our volunteer technologies ([read more on page 15](#)), expanding our therapy dog program and outreach opportunities is appreciated.

We have placed 183 teams so far in 2021 – a true reason to celebrate. It is the heart of our community that shapes the Canine Companions brand you

see in this issue of The Companion. We continue to be a friendly, welcoming, inclusive community, committed to the highest quality as we forge ahead and do more to change the lives of people with disabilities.

With you, Canine Companions is leading the way, so more people with disabilities and their service dogs can lead their lives to the fullest. We thank you.

Best regards,

Paige Mazzoni, Chief Executive Officer

John McKinney, Board Chair



New Look, Same Mission

During the past several years, we conducted research, worked with stakeholders and finalized a new brand strategy which will allow us to meet our strategic plan goal to serve more people with disabilities.

"Canine Companions' brand has evolved over the 45 years since our founding in order to be more recognizable and relevant within the service dog industry," says CEO Paige Mazzoni. "We're looking forward

to how Canine Companions can evolve now and in the future, and the new brand is a strategic component to reach our goal of providing service dogs to all qualified candidates."

We based our new brand on the pillars that align with our core values – teamwork, compassionate service, integrity, community, excellence and innovation. The new brand is open, bright, dynamic and connected, and shows the power of the human-canine bond.

While we're implementing our new brand elements slowly, be on the lookout this fall for new puppy capes and service dog vests, updated graduation tools, signage at our training centers and more.

Learn more at canine.org/newlook.

Celebrating Service Dogs

September is National Service Dog Month – the perfect time to show the profound difference a service dog makes in the life of a person with a disability. Canine Companions service dogs are working in all 50 states, opening doors, turning on lights, alerting to sounds and retrieving dropped items. Our volunteer puppy raisers are providing our future service dogs the crucial socialization experiences for their professional careers. Celebrate and raise awareness with us. Tag us and use **#leadwithindependence** on social media in September.

Find our social media handles at canine.org/socialshare.



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Tortilla Is My Perfect Match

San Francisco Bay
Area resident Arash
Bayatmakou was always
extremely active –

constantly riding his bike around town, hiking
and backpacking in the mountains, playing
soccer and exploring the outdoors.

Arash's life changed in 2012 when he broke
his neck after falling from a third-story
balcony, resulting in a spinal cord injury. Arash
went from hiking California's beautiful John
Muir Trail to waking up in Northern California's
John Muir Hospital. While Arash now uses a
wheelchair for mobility, he continues to enjoy
the active lifestyle he loves.

In 2018, Arash was matched – free of
charge – with Canine Companions Service
Dog Tortilla. Tortilla is expertly trained in 45
commands to empower Arash to lead life
with greater independence. Tortilla was bred
for a calm temperament and exceptional
health, raised to be comfortable in any public
environment and professionally trained in a
set of physical tasks.



"Since I get dressed in bed every day, I used
to have to reach down on the floor to grab
my shoes and socks off the ground and then
struggle to get back up into sitting up in bed,"
Arash says. "Now, I just call for Tortilla, and he
comes running in and grabs my shoes and
socks for me."

A writer, speaker and advocate for people with
spinal cord injuries, Arash lives with his wife,
Brita, and their two young children. Arash enjoys
time with family, runs a non-profit, works on his
physical rehabilitation and swims with his wife in
the chilly San Francisco Bay.

Tortilla picks up dropped items for Arash,
opens and closes doors and drawers, and
even pulls him in his manual wheelchair, an
invaluable skill that helps protect Arash's
shoulders from overuse injury. Tortilla adapted
immediately when Arash and Brita's children
were born and is sweet, caring and cheerful
with them. Tortilla also offers constant
companionship. He happily helps Arash with
many everyday needs with a cold nose, a
warm heart and a wagging tail. Together,
Arash and Tortilla make a remarkable team.

**"Tortilla brings more joy to my life.
I feel like I am matched with the
perfect dog – when I need him,
he's always there."**





360° of Canine Companions - The Bittikofer

John and Dianne Bittikofer, volunteers from Pennsylvania, have invested their hearts and souls in the Canine Companions mission. They're raising puppies, spreading awareness and providing financial support for the North Central Region's New Albany campus. The couple also included Canine Companions in their estate plans.

In 2000, the Bittikofer learned about Canine Companions from a volunteer puppy raiser at

church. "We were drawn into the mission," John says. "We had our own pet dogs and realized the joy and companionship a dog can provide. We were also impressed and overwhelmed to learn how much a person with a disability can utilize a service dog."

Puppy raising may have started their journey and continues to be part of their support for our mission

after 17 puppies, but the Bittikofer recognized that they could help Canine Companions as financial supporters now and through a lasting legacy as members of the Heritage Society. **"Although we started with Canine Companions as puppy raisers, we realize the need to support the mission of Canine Companions beyond our lifetime with a financial commitment."**

When the opportunity came to help fund the construction of the new North

Central Region Training Center in New Albany, Ohio, the Bittikofer jumped at the chance to make a once-in-a-lifetime change for the betterment of our dogs, staff, puppy raisers and clients.

"It is so exciting to see the dream come to fruition. To know the clients no longer have to pay for their housing is extremely gratifying. The new training center allows the staff to be more comfortable and focused in a state-of-the-art facility they have so desperately needed for many years."

John and Dianne are constant champions for our mission—always looking for opportunities to raise funds and awareness for Canine Companions. They are passionate about the mission of Canine Companions and approach their volunteer role with professionalism and enthusiasm. We are truly fortunate to work with the Bittikofer to advance our mission in Pennsylvania. Learn how you can donate or get involved today at canine.org.



Independence Times Two

In Texas, the Copp family has not one, but two furry family members, both with a very special purpose.

Brothers Calan and Lawson both have a rare genetic disorder that took years to diagnose, as there are only 20 known cases in the world. The mutation of the PNPT1 gene affects their mobility and cognitive development.

Calan and Lawson had difficulty just getting around their home, until two expertly trained four-legged family members stepped up to help – first for Calan in 2018 and then for Lawson in 2020.

The boys' independence has been enhanced thanks to their Canine Companions service dogs.

Calan, partnered with Service Dog Jaia, and Lawson, matched with Service Dog Jolt, can now rely on their dogs for help with daily tasks.

From picking up dropped items and tugging open doors, to providing endless kisses and cuddles, the impact of the dogs in the family's life has been significant.

"The possibilities are really endless," says Jody, Calan and Lawson's father. "These dogs are able to help our boys with so many things to give them more confidence and independence."

The dogs are also incorporated into physical therapy to make exercises more fun and provide motivation. They act as a social bridge in public

and help with building awareness and advocating for people with disabilities – even traveling to the Texas State Capitol to visit with legislators!

"We couldn't be more thankful to Canine Companions," says their mom Melissa. "It's changed our lives for the better."



Canine Companions places hundreds of service dogs yearly, but thousands apply to receive our dogs. Our aspirational goal is to provide service dogs for every qualified applicant.



A Canine Companions Journey – 25 Years and Counting

In the mid-1990s, Sharon Heyer, from Minnesota, met a Canine Companions puppy being raised by her middle school's assistant principal. Sharon, who has muscular dystrophy, begged her mother to apply for a service dog to no avail. At that stage in her life, a service dog didn't seem like a good fit.

When Christmas rolled around, there was one present under the tree that would change Sharon's life forever – a single dog bone and a letter of acceptance from Canine Companions. Sharon's mother had secretly applied for a service dog for her teenage daughter. "To this day, that is the best gift I've received in my life," Sharon says.

In 1996, Sharon was paired with Service Dog Rex, followed by Service Dog Ezra a few years later.

"Ezra escorted me into adulthood," Sharon recalls. "I graduated from college, got a driver's license, started student teaching and got married." When Sharon started teaching full-time, Ezra's sensitive nature made it clear that he would be happier as Sharon's loving pet.

Sharon's third service dog, Keaton, was not only trained in over 45 commands – like opening doors, picking up a dropped cell phone and turning on

lights – but he was also an exceptional ice breaker for his typically shy partner. Keaton drew people to Sharon, and as an educator, Sharon was always happy to teach people about Keaton's job. On his last day of work, over 700 teachers and students lined the halls to honor Keaton's well-earned retirement. "They recognized the power of his service and the humanity in making the world a better place for someone else."

Currently, service Dog Roman is providing independence for Sharon 25 years after she received the gift of Rex.

"My journey began with a simple gift of a dog bone, but Canine Companions took that gift and transformed my life."



THE COLLAR SCHOLARS ARE FIRST CLASS!

Volunteer puppy raiser and recent Carroll College graduate Ashley Wilt is raising future service dog Zucchini. Before graduating from the Montana college, Ashley created a puppy raising club on campus called The Collar Scholars. The first club of its kind on campus is a big success, with 20 members, two puppies raised and five students currently in the application process to raise puppies! As the club was getting started, the students worked with the Big Sky Volunteer Chapter and our prison puppy raising program in Montana to give future handlers training experience by having Canine Companions puppies on campus.

In addition to raising future service dogs, The Collar Scholars raise significant awareness about Canine Companions and our important work. Ashley shares,

"I'm super excited to see the club continue to grow and be embraced by the college. After four years and four puppies by my side at college, it was so special to have Zucchini cross the graduation stage as we started our new journey."

Meet Our New Staff



New Program Leadership

We'd like to congratulate and introduce Melinda Sowers who has been promoted to vice president training and client services. This position oversees all client services, training and puppy program departments nationwide as well as working with the development and marketing team. Melinda began her career with Canine Companions in 2004 and has held multiple roles during her time with the organization. Melinda was most recently the program director at the Southeast Region in Orlando, Florida supporting all aspects of the program at the region.



New Director of Corporate and Foundation Relations

We are excited to welcome Marcia Dowds to the Canine Companions team. She has more than 15 years of experience as a non-profit leader. Marcia comes to Canine Companions as the former chief development officer at Girl Scouts of Western Ohio.

If you are interested in partnering with Canine Companions, please visit canine.org/partners or contact Marcia at mdowds@canine.org.



FACILITY DOGS MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE

On October 12, 2011, a gunman entered a hair salon in Seal Beach, California and shot nine people, killing all but one of the victims. All mass shootings are a tragedy, but for a community as small as Seal Beach, this devastated everyone. One of the Seal Beach Police Department's biggest priorities following this incident was finding ways to help the community heal.

When Lieutenant Nick Nicholas, SBPD's public information officer, found out about Canine Companions facility dogs, he immediately thought back to the salon massacre and how valuable a highly trained dog would have been in the days and weeks after it occurred. Lieutenant Nicholas was matched with Facility Dog Yosa in February.

"I am so incredibly grateful to Canine Companions for providing Yosa to the Seal Beach Police Department," says Lieutenant Nicholas. "She is an

incredible addition to our team and a very important resource in our mission to improve the quality of life for those in Seal Beach, especially with victims and witnesses of crime."

"Yosa has provided comfort to parents following the death of their child, helped investigators interview victims, calmed the nerves of those who witnessed a fatal traffic accident and so much more."

Canine Companions has nearly 500 facility dogs currently working across the country in a variety of settings including rehabilitation, education and the criminal justice system.

For witnesses and victims, sitting through interviews and preparing for trial is a very stressful time – especially for child witnesses, victims of domestic and elder abuse, and victims of sexual assault. Retelling and reliving those moments can be

extremely difficult.

Yosa and her fellow facility dogs' calm and loving demeanor is perfect for their roles in the criminal justice system. Their training in 45 specialized commands to assist during witness interviews, including providing deep pressure and remaining relaxed through stressful events, is an important asset.

Learn more about our facility dogs at canine.org/facilitydogs.



Jerad Bortz and his partner Steven Skeels

Canine Companions has six task-trained facility dogs working with professionals at Kessler Rehabilitation Hospital.

Expanding the Ripple Effect

Canine Companions' therapy dog program is expanding to the Southwest Region! This program certifies Canine Companions dogs released from professional training that have been assessed to be good therapy dog candidates, as well as retired breeder dogs like Jade. With her handler, Mary Nobbe, the clients of the Sacramento Law Enforcement Chaplaincy benefit from Jade's calming comfort. "People's guards come down, strangers become friends, all with the presence of our therapy dogs." Mary helped bring Jade's litters into the world as her breeder caretaker. Now as a Canine Companions therapy dog team, they're making a difference in a new way. Learn more at canine.org/therapydogs.

Did you know? Facility dogs are specifically trained in tasks to assist professionals working with clients. Therapy dogs are well behaved pets who work with volunteers to bring joy and comfort to many through their presence.

Broadway Star Honors Canine Companions Facility Dogs

In February 2018, Jerad Bortz was a rising Broadway star whose love of theater and potential for success seemed unlimited. But in an instant, a car accident

put his career on hold. "When the accident happened, I had surgery the next day. Four days later, I found myself working with an occupational therapist and a Canine Companions facility dog at Kessler Rehabilitation Hospital in New Jersey," Jerad says. "We spent 3-4 hours a day in the gym on a mat doing things that are extremely uncomfortable and new. I'm sure I was in a state of shock about what happened, but there's something comforting about having a dog with you during occupational therapy."

The Broadway community wanted to give back to the organization that changed Jerad's rehabilitation into something manageable. They created a benefit album, Thankful: An Album for Jerad Bortz, with a portion of proceeds donated to Canine Companions. "I'm hoping with this album, we can shed some light on the great work Canine Companions dogs do with occupational therapists. I hope more people with spinal cord injuries can get to know the amazing ways these Canine Companions dogs can help."



Puppies, Planes & Pilots

Since the beginning of the pandemic, Canine Companions has relied heavily on volunteer pilots to transport our puppies to their volunteer puppy raisers. Recently, Canine Companions volunteer breeder caretakers and puppy raisers who are also pilots have stepped up their support to fly puppies to their volunteer raisers across the country!

Pilot Owen Leipelt, who is 21 years old, transported puppies to their volunteer puppy raisers in Southern California. Canine Companions' mission is close to Owen's heart since his family has been raising puppies for years. Owen shares, "It was so rewarding bringing the puppies to their raisers since I know what that excitement feels like firsthand, and also know the incredible work they go on to do."

Not long after, volunteer puppy raisers, breeder caretakers and donors David and Kenny Tuckerman flew puppies, including two born in their home, to excited puppy raisers in Arizona. David humbly shares, "This was a special opportunity for us to personally deliver the puppies we raised from birth."

We'd like to recognize all our volunteer pilots, including Martyn Lewis and Josh Hochberg, who helped us start our program and continue to contribute to its growing success. If you or someone you know is interested in volunteering to transport our future service dogs, visit canine.org/aviationpartners for more information.



Volunteer pilot Owen Leipelt; breeder caretakers, puppy raisers and volunteer pilots David and Kenny Tuckerman



Moving Forward With Harness

Florida resident DiAnna Zelt knew it was time to ask for help when her hearing loss became so significant that she felt it was running her life. Fortunately, a doctor recommended she turn to Canine Companions to help move forward.

In 2019, DiAnna was matched with Hearing Dog Harness, a confident and attentive sidekick expertly trained to alert DiAnna to important sounds in her environment that she can no longer hear, including the phone, the oven timer, someone calling her name and emergency vehicle sirens approaching while driving.

Prior to receiving Harness, DiAnna didn't feel safe at home or in public. "Harness has made my quality of life so much better. My fear of missing important situations in public has greatly diminished," DiAnna says. "I can do more tasks every day knowing that he is there."

With Harness as her ears, DiAnna took her doctor's advice and moved forward – literally! She moved to a new town and started a new job. Looking back, DiAnna realized she couldn't have done it without her service dog. She credits Canine Companions for improving her quality of life.

"I'm so proud that I don't have to count on anyone anymore. Independence is something that I truly value, and I didn't even realize how much of life I just allowed to pass me by until I got Harness."

Apply for a service dog at canine.org/apply.

APPROPRIATE DISABILITY ETIQUETTE MIGHT SEEM OVERWHELMING, BUT THERE ARE A FEW SIMPLE WAYS YOU CAN IMPROVE YOUR ETIQUETTE:

- > **Speak directly to the person with a disability, not to their interpreter, parent, spouse or service dog.**
- > **Don't ask specifics about someone's disability. Instead, try asking how the person's service dog helps them.**
- > **Always ask before helping. Not only should you ask if a person needs help, also ask how you can assist if help is needed.**
- > **Avoid interacting with a service dog. Ask before petting and remember, service dogs are working dogs and need to focus on their handler.**

For more guidance, visit canine.org/etiquette.



Love at First Sight

“It was truly love at first sight – Naomi burst into joyful tears the moment they met,” says Naomi’s mom Stephanie.

Naomi and her parents live in Colorado. Adopted from Niger at age 5 and born with schizencephaly, a congenital brain malformation, Naomi relies on a power wheelchair to get around and uses a computerized “talker” to speak. Despite these incredible technologies, Naomi has been dependent on caregivers to meet all her needs. That began to change at age 11 when she was matched with her Canine Companions service dog, a Golden Retriever named Inga.

Inga plays board games to encourage Naomi’s engagement in therapy, retrieves items that are

frequently dropped due to dexterity issues, helps Naomi contribute to family chores and is learning to respond to commands directly from Naomi’s talker. When Naomi is hospitalized, Inga comforts, entertains and provides a social bridge with doctors because she’s there. But Service Dog Inga’s most valuable skill wasn’t even trained – when Naomi becomes anxious in public, Inga has the uncanny ability to interrupt a panic attack before it happens and draw Naomi back into the moment. Because of Inga, Naomi can live with more independence.

THE DEAL WITH ACCREDITATION

It may sound like a fancy accolade, but becoming an accredited service dog organization isn’t easy and requires more than well trained dogs. Canine Companions is a founding member of the service dog governing body, Assistance Dogs International (ADI). The standards are high – ensuring top notch animal care, health and safety in the workplace, managing finances, working with appropriate mental health professionals for PTSD programs and renewing accreditation every five years are just a few of the accreditation requirements.

Canine Companions’ ongoing accreditation by ADI indicates that we have satisfied the highest standards in the industry repeatedly. The next time you spot that “Accredited Member of Assistance Dogs International” seal, you’ll recognize the hard work and integrity it takes to be accredited. Look for the ADI logo on our new graduate equipment this fall!



ON THE ROAD WITH TEAM TRAINING

In an effort to place effectively as many teams as possible during the pandemic, the Northwest Region innovatively hosted two Team Training classes in Sacramento, CA near students’ homes. First, we provided service dogs to two veterans living with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), followed by a service dog for a young boy with disabilities including autism. Because of the nature of their disabilities, it was more comfortable to be closer to home for training and not have to sleep in a new place. These classes not only helped us manage increasingly frequent classes on campus – they also provided a wonderful opportunity for us to try a new method of Team Training with success.



LEADING THE CHARGE TO MAKE LASTING CHANGE

Canine Companions has been advocating for the rights of our graduates since our founding in 1975. **We’re continuing to lead the charge to ensure 100% access in stores, restaurants and planes for task-trained service dog teams, including our graduates.** Our volunteer advocacy program has over 1,600 advocates. These advocates play a key role in our initiative, educating new audiences and supporting organization positions.

In 2021, we hosted virtual trainings for large hospital systems and provided education and guidance for legislation impacting facility dogs, service dog fraud and access to services for veterans.

Our grassroots Advocacy Initiative is amplifying our voice and, recently, two petitions garnered over 50,000 signatures in support of better education for legislators on the issue of service dogs for veterans with PTSD. Be a part of leading change by visiting canine.org/stopfraud.



STEPPING UP FOR VOLUNTEERS

This year brings some exciting new changes in volunteer management and onboarding. Canine Companions is using a new system, VolunteerHub, to help volunteers track hours and sign up for shifts and events all in one place. This system will allow us to more accurately measure and manage the scope of volunteers’ impact on our organization.

A volunteer mentorship program is underway to pair new Canine Companions volunteers with experienced volunteers. Mentors share guidance, tips and answer questions, while offering a warm, welcoming connection to the volunteer community. This new program helps new volunteers feel more connected to our mission from the start. Stay tuned for more information on the volunteer mentorship program in the coming months!





A Lion's Share of Fundraising

When decades-long Lions Club member Bob Skubis became his local Los Gatos, California club's liaison to Canine Companions in 2015, he never imagined all they would accomplish. At the beginning of his term, his Silicon Valley area club raised money for their local Canine Companions DogFest event through a silent auction, spearheaded by Bob. Each year since 2015, the Los Gatos Lions Club has raised over \$10,000 for Canine Companions through DogFest, gaining the honor of naming Canine Companions puppies Scoobie, Tootsie and Emmy.

"I'm a big dog lover," Bob shares. "When I learned about the program, from the puppies to the fundraising, I knew I wanted to get involved."

Last year, the Los Gatos Lions Club raised over \$17,000, bringing their grand total to well over \$50,000! Now the president of the Los Gatos Lions Club, Bob continues to lead his club while advocating and fundraising for Canine Companions.

For more information on the Lions Project for Canine Companions, contact National Administrator Sarah Habethur at lions@canine.org or call 707-577-1774.



1,077 Lions Project for Canine Companions clubs have raised over \$4.5 million in support of our mission since 1983.

Buy A Bottle. Give \$1.00.

For every bottle of St. Francis wine purchased online and in stores through 2021, the winery will donate \$1.00 to Canine Companions up to \$100,000.

wine365.com/StFrancisWines

Ways to Support Our Mission

There are numerous ways to support the work we do and help people with disabilities lead lives with greater independence with a Canine Companions service dog by their side. We are grateful to our donors whose contributions - large and small - make our mission possible.

> Return the enclosed envelope with your donation or give today at canine.org/donate.

Recognizing Donors Yearly

The Southwest Region staff and board of directors are deeply grateful to the outstanding philanthropic leaders who have helped us transform the lives of countless children, adults and veterans. To express our gratitude in a tangible way, we are listing the names of all Southwest Region donors who have a lifetime giving of \$10,000 or more, on a yearly basis. This donor wall will be prominently placed in the lobby of our Oceanside campus. For more information, contact Piero Berlonghi at pberlonghi@canine.org.

Sustaining a Region Through Significant Gifts

The Northeast Region would like to recognize donors whose significant gifts keep the region's programs and facilities running sustainably.

[Richard Perlman's](#) gift in memory of his wife, Cynthia, funded a functional outdoor space including a serenity garden and gathering area for our clients and staff.

Puppy raisers [Bob and Ann Benson](#) of New Jersey generously donated funds to sponsor one of the campus' most widely utilized spaces, the Long Team Training Room, now known as the Benson Family Long Team Training Room.

[Terry and Nancy McGraw](#) made a generous donation that provides seed money to sustain our program for veterans with PTSD with matching gifts. "If you want to help people—and you believe dogs are the way to do it—you need to be involved with Canine Companions," says Terry.

Thank you to our donors for their generous gifts, big and small. Give today at canine.org/donate.



Paving the Way for Independence

The North Central Region wants to honor your favorite pet or service dog when you support Canine Companions. Supporters can purchase a paver to display at the North Central Region campus. Donate today at canine.org/northcentral.

A Tale Worth Celebrating

Rodney Sparks served our country in the United States Army for 20 years. He has experienced lasting effects impacting his daily life, including a diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

While the adjustment to civilian life was tough, Rodney found hope through a Canine Companions service dog named Novella, provided to him completely free of charge.

Novella spent two years training for this important role. She is expertly trained in specific tasks to mitigate the symptoms of PTSD including turning on lights, creating a

buffer in public, and anxiety and nightmare interruption.

"She does nightmare interruptions," says Rodney. "If I'm sleeping and start to kick or move, she'll pull the covers or jump on the bed."

Novella was specially matched with Rodney in January and has been life changing. Their partnership may have even been fate.

Canine Companions service dogs spend the first year and a half of their lives with a volunteer puppy raiser who helps build an early foundation, providing socialization and basic training.

While Rodney was still in the process of applying for a service dog through Canine Companions, he attended an open house event at our South Central Training Center in Irving, Texas. At the event, he began talking to a local puppy raiser who provided some encouragement.

"She said 'Hey, I have a young puppy here, and when you're ready, she'll probably be ready,'" shares Rodney. "And her name was Novella."

Over a year later, Rodney could not believe he was meeting Novella a second time, this time as his service dog.

The Canine Companions Veterans Initiative has provided over 385 veterans with service dogs to help lead a life of greater independence. Learn more at canine.org/veterans.

The Veterans Initiative is made possible by major donors and foundations including Nancy and Terry McGraw, K/T Foundation and the Wounded Warrior Project®.



[NextHome] IS PUTTING HUMANS OVER HOUSES



NextHome's **#HumansOverHouses** mindset means that as real estate professionals, NextHome puts people first. In keeping with that mission, NextHome invited Canine Companions graduate David Rozelle, a retired U.S. Army Colonel, with Service Dog Kylynn to speak to 1,200 attendees at their 2021 NextHome Virtual Conference.

Col. Rozelle recently retired after 26 years of honorable service. In addition to numerous assignments around the globe, he is also the first servicemember to return to the same battlefield after an amputation since the Civil War.

We're proud to be NextHome's national non-profit partner and their generosity continues to help people with disabilities lead more independent lives.

BarkYard Gives Back

Now in our second year of partnership, we're happy to announce that BarkYard has launched another new product to join the BarkYard dog-friendly lawn care kit called Lawn Dog!

"BarkYard is a simple and easy lawn care program, delivered right to your door and fueled by our love for dogs and lawns! We wanted a way to solve damage in the lawn without the worry that it's safe, when used as directed, for your furry friend," says Sadie Oldham, brand director for BarkYard. "We are so excited that BarkYard now offers multiple solutions to keep your lawn lush, even in areas where pups play and toilet. At BarkYard we also value giving back, so a percentage of all profits goes to support our friends at Canine Companions."

Learn more about Lawn Dog and other Barkyard lawn care kits at getbarkyard.com. Products can be purchased online or at PetSmart stores.



2021 Events

AUGUST

Enchanted Canines Golf Classic – August 27 – Albuquerque, NM
DogFest Southwest – August 28 – Virtual Event

SEPTEMBER

DogFest Alabama – September 11 – Birmingham, AL
DogFest North Central – September 12 – In-Person and Virtual Event
Dog Days of Summer Golf Classic – September 17 – Scottsdale, AZ
Putting for Pups Golf Classic – September 17 – San Jose, CA
Sit Stay Sparkle Northwest – September 18 – Virtual Event
DogFest New England – September 19 – Worcester, MA
North Texas Giving Day – September 23 – Virtual Event
DogFest Long Island-NYC – September 25 – Massapequa Park, NY
DogFest Philly-NJ – September 25 – Campus Town, Ewing Township, NJ
DogFest Space Coast – September 25 – Melbourne, FL

OCTOBER

DogFest Texas – October 2 – Austin, Dallas and Fort Worth, TX
The Perfect Pairing – October 7 – Virtual Event
Sit Stay Sparkle Orange County – October 9 – Newport Beach, CA
Sit Stay Sparkle North Central – October 14 – New Albany, OH
DogFest Washington DC – October 23 – Reston Town Center, Reston, VA
25th Annual Tales & Tails Gala – October 23 – Orlando, FL – In-Person and Virtual Event
Canine Companions Invitational Golf Classic – October 25 – Carlsbad, CA
DogFest Northwest – October 30 – Virtual Event

NOVEMBER

Salute Independence – November 9 – New Hyde Park, NY

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON EVENTS IN YOUR AREA, VISIT OUR REGIONAL EVENT WEBSITE PAGES:

North Central Region | Visit canine.org/northcentralevents

Northeast Region | Visit canine.org/northeastevents

Northwest Region | Visit canine.org/northwestevents

South Central Region | Visit canine.org/southcentralevents

Southeast Region | Visit canine.org/southeastevents

Southwest Region | Visit canine.org/southwestevents



Celebrating 25 Years of the Tales & Tails Gala

Join us on **Saturday, October 23** in person at The Rosen Shingle Creek in Orlando, Florida, or virtually, for an amazing event celebrating 25 years of independence, teamwork, compassionate service and our life-changing service dog placements.

We will honor the past and look to the future and will pay tribute to all the people who have made the Tales & Tails Gala magic happen.

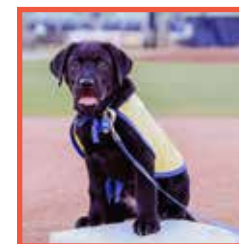
Trish and Rick Walsh of Florida, have supported the Tales & Tails Gala for many years as sponsors, and Trish has served in several leadership roles for the gala in addition. “We know how much independence and unconditional love these dogs bring to people with disabilities. It is truly incredible to be a part of this inspirational organization. I am honored and so proud to be part of providing exceptional dogs for exceptional people,” says Trish.

Want to become a sponsor?

Contact Jeanne Cooley, director of donor and corporate engagement, at jcooley@canine.org or at 407-522-3349. Learn more about the event at canine.org/galacelebration.

Catch Up With Our Sponsored Puppies!

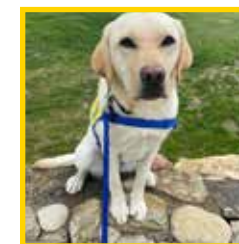
Canine Companions is lucky to have corporate, sports and media partners that raise awareness of our mission through sponsored puppies. We are grateful for the support of all our sponsored puppies across the country.



Wahoo for Watson

Canine Companions has teamed up with the MLB Pensacola Blue Wahoos to add another star player to their roster – a future service dog.

Fans had the opportunity to help select the puppy's name and Watson was chosen after the team's co-owner and PGA golfer Bubba Watson. Watson is being raised by TV reporter and volunteer puppy raiser Kathryn Daniel.



Puppy Scarlet

For the past year and a half, Canine Companions puppy Scarlet has been appearing on NBC4 Today Columbus. While unable to be at the station in person, Scarlet and

her puppy raiser stream live video updates from home on the morning show and Facebook. This August, Scarlet will start the next part of her journey entering professional training at the North Central Region Training Center. Good luck, Scarlet!



Meet Audio!

Radio station 106.1 BLI Long Island has a new staff member! His name is Audio, an appropriate name for a future Canine Companions service

dog – who will be a superstar on the local airwaves. The adorable puppy will soon be featured regularly with the station's morning team on Skye & MJ in the Morning. Welcome Audio!



Bolt and Striker Go Pro

We are excited to announce our new partnership with the Colorado Springs Switchbacks Football Club! The soccer team will be following Canine Companions puppy Striker

on his journey to become a service dog for a person with a disability. Striker is in good company in the Southwest Region with Canine Companions puppy Bolt, who is being sponsored and followed by the Los Angeles Chargers!



DOGFEST

Get ready for Canine Companions DogFest this fall! Events are virtual and in-person, so everyone can join the fun! Participate, register, fundraise and support the mission of Canine Companions and the human-canine bond. With your help, we can make DogFest 2021 the best yet! Find an event at canine.org/dogfest.

2021 Team Training Yearbook

1. FEBRUARY

Alex with Goldy; Annah with Weaver; Jana with Osprey; Louise with Hocus; Megan with Brandt; Scott with Noah

2. MARCH

Emily with Hunley; Gabrielle, Michele & Sean with Alf; Halie with Reggie; Josslynn, Amanda & Joseph with Tuck; Kati with Thor; Makenzie & Malorie with Brigitta

3. MAY

Annastashia with Monroe; Brett with Osmer; Dan with Oma; David, Diane & Moshe with Hawkeye; Davis, Anne & Joel with Vesper; Isaac, Jill & Dan with Frisco; Jill with Glover; Kristen with Niner; Noah, Lori & George with Willoughby; Sarah with Peg



1. FEBRUARY

Ami with Irvine; Dave with Zynga; Gerry with Duke; Ian & Nancy with Travis; Jeanne with Naylor; Lillian with Fenway; Lore with Dawson; Randy with Smitty

2. MARCH

Andrew with Jilly; Ethan, Heidi, & Rick with Harpo; Jennifer with Gaston; Jodi & William with Camelot; Rebecca with Irene

3. APRIL

Barbara with Jovi; Beverly with Neo; Jeff with Ashworth; Kenneth with Holmes

4. MAY

Caleb & Stefanie with Tate; Jessica with Wellie; Larry with Koz; Megan with Tova; Omar with Bernard; Reid & Peter with Waltham; Roger with Dixon; Samantha with Rylynn; Tisha, Rajani & Atul with Rhonda



1. FEBRUARY

Adam with Vislee; Alette with Bixby; Carlene with Briley; Gavin, James & Michelle with Faline; Jane & Bonny with Vera; Jonathan with Jorge; Juri & Ken with Greg; Karen with Huli; Kristin, Lynn & John with Isabella; Mike with Flash; Riley, Lorraine & Tom with Jiffy; Sarah with Natasha; Tonni with Yale; Wyatt, Justin & Amanda with Yahvi

2. MARCH

Barb with Ashlynn; Frances with Gaia; Nathan with Starlyn; Rachel with Guinevere; Richard with Joker; Sharon with Fergus; Steve with Presley

3. APRIL

Aurora & Diana with Kara; Braylen, Brandi & Steven with Starla; Julian, Erik & Kathrine with Glennon; Katelyn & Jennifer with Teller; Katie, Dennis & Susan with Maple; Kristen with Daniels; Logan, Aaron & Stephanie with Jean; Nicole with Ireland; Owen & Amy with Suki; Rachel with Tobias

4. MAY

Donna with Wes; Emily with Helga; Katie with Calypso; Lily with Dax; Preston with Ira; Ron with Bowers; Thida with Jeeves



1. FEBRUARY

Cheryll with Berkeley; Christian, Angela & Mike with Ebony; Lawson & Melissa with Jolt; Lynette with Willadean; Matt with Linus; Meghan with Otto

2. MARCH

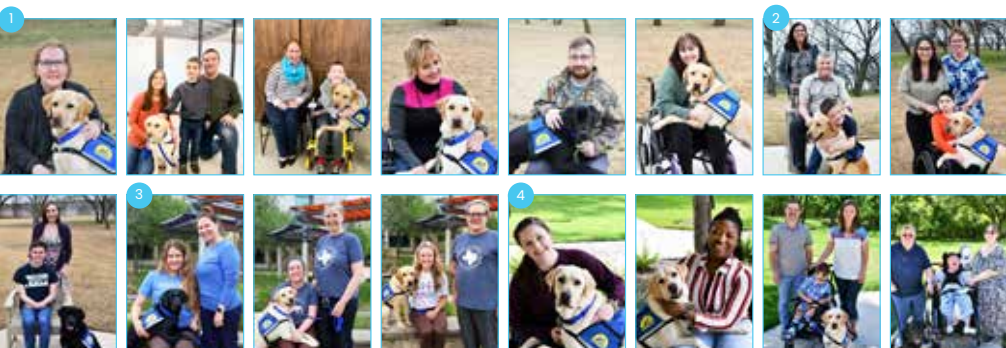
Eli, Brint & Kristen with Stella; Travis, Deborah & Nancy with Yeaton; Tyler & Kathy with Kermit

3. APRIL

Catherine & Sasha with Savannah; Kelly & Jen with Reba; Sierra & Chris with Junie

4. MAY

Amanda with Asher; Arianna with Patches; Barrett, Brittany & Wade with Raleigh; Edward, Kathy & Dot with Kansas; David with Cassie; Hilary with Data; Jay with Kahlua; Kelsey with Huck; Luke, Molly & Kevin with Ninja



1. FEBRUARY

Breanna with Alden; Leah with Brea; Mark with Haver; Miranda with Ely; Barbara with Vasco; James with Hopper; Lauren with Zakeara

2. MARCH

Dixie with Brinley; Jim with Wafer

3. APRIL

Anna with Selina; Elijah & Gabe with Yule; Gordon & Lindy with Warrior; Misty with Jezebel

4. MAY

Abby & Valerie with Jeneva; Cameron, Amy & Adam with Norse; Ernie & Nikki with Pax; Joshua, Dawn & Andy with Marvel; Stephen & Eva with Kirby



1. FEBRUARY

Andy & Chris with Cayenne; Caleb & Karrie with Briella; Nick with Yosa; James & Christine with Kismet; Samuel & Alicia with Yosha; Susan with Diamond; Zachary & Andi with Dempsey

2. MARCH

Andrew & Tara with Jango; Knightly, Drexelle & David with Byanca

3. APRIL

Brett with Zip; Cheryl with Cowboy; Gabe with Zima; Ivy with Nonna; Jett & Rachel with Ina; Joey & Julie with Decker; Sasha with Honor; Valentina, Elia & Pedro with Turcotte

4. MAY

Ame with Jujube; Bernard with Rusty; Bob with Bingley; Brooke with Paul; Joseph with Jewel; Kara & Coree with Posey; Leizelle with Bravo; Renee with Lois; Tasman & Amy with Tito; Valerie with Scranton



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National Corporate Partner

Eukanuba



**"After four puppies by my side at college,
it was so special to have Zucchini cross the
graduation stage with me." Read more on page 9.**

—Ashley Wilt, college puppy raiser

PLEASE CONTACT US IF YOU NEED A READ ONLY VERSION OF THE COMPANIONS