

# THE Companion

Issue  
41



Canine  
Companions®

Spring 2022



## Looking Forward TOGETHER

We would like to extend our gratitude to each and every one of you for being part of the Canine Companions community. As we enter springtime, we see new growth and beginnings all around us – including at Canine Companions. Children, adults and veterans with disabilities are starting new chapters with a Canine Companions service dog by their side.

Year after year, our graduates look to us for expertly trained service dogs that will increase independence and joy. Many clients return for a new beginning with their second or third service dog and beyond. ([Read more on page 13.](#))

2022 is a year for looking ahead. Not only are we expanding our program for veterans with PTSD and therapy dog program to all our regions, we are breaking ground on a new Canine Health and Wellness Center on the Jean and Charles Schulz Campus to ensure the longevity and quality of care for the dogs and puppies in our programs.



A new animated short film is making the rounds in the film festival circuits, thanks to Ignite Animation and Jean Schulz, which will bring our mission to many in a touching and accessible way. ([Read more on page 21.](#))

After more than two years of uncertainty and unimaginable challenges, we are still here, innovating and adapting, holding on to the fabric of our mission while recognizing that the world we live in has changed us as individuals and as an organization. ([Read more on page 7.](#)) In doing so, we've set Canine Companions up to maintain the highest quality, to expand our community and to keep our mission at the forefront in everything we do.

Thank you for adapting and innovating with us. We couldn't do it without you!

Best regards,

Paige Mazzoni, Chief Executive Officer

John McKinney, Board Chair

## New Board Member Michelle Ludwig, M.D., Ph.D.



Canine Companions' national board of directors welcomes Dr. Michelle Ludwig as its newest member.

In 2007, Michelle was partnered with Canine Companions Service Dog Marguerite and recently received her second service dog, Pam. Both were trained to alert Michelle to sounds in her environment that she is unable to hear.

**"I look forward to continuing to improve the experience of graduates and to work towards the goal of improving diversity among the applicants, volunteers and Canine Companions teams,"** Michelle says.

Michelle is an associate professor at Baylor College of Medicine and earned her medical degree and master's in public health and epidemiology from Emory University, as well as her doctorate in cancer epidemiology from the University of Texas Houston School of Public Health.

"Michelle is a wonderful asset to the board," says Board Chair John McKinney. "Her professional experience as well as her unique perspective as a client of Canine Companions can't be understated. We look forward to working with Michelle for years to come."

Cover photo credit: Sunni Martini.

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## National Graduation Day Is Coming

Join us on Saturday, May 14 (May 13 for our Southwest Region), for the first in-person graduation celebration of 2022! National Graduation Day celebrates the newest service and facility dog teams placed free of charge.

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



# Facility Dog Olaf Brings Joy to Patients

Child Life Specialist Kristen Bishop worked on her own for seven years before receiving a new four-legged partner that would forever change the way she provides care.

Facility Dog Olaf knows 45 commands to help Kristen in her work with young patients at Mary Bridge Children's Hospital in Tacoma, Washington. Olaf excels at using skills like tugging and pushing to interact with children by "playing games" that are actually integral to therapeutic goals. Kristen shares, "Helping kids be successful in their medical care is my job as a child life specialist, and Olaf really enhances what I'm able to do." She continues, "When I walk into a room with Olaf, I see a dramatic change in our patients' demeanor. There are even a few patients who will only undergo treatments if Olaf is there."

Olaf was by the side of 11-year-old Dylan during a brain tumor diagnosis and pre-op, all the way through treatment and recovery. Olaf's skills were incorporated into physical therapy sessions. Dylan would kick a ball to Olaf, and Olaf "kicked" it back using his nose on command. This helped Dylan recover in a more enjoyable way. Kristen shares, "Olaf always brought a big smile to his face."

**"There's a magic about Olaf. He motivates our patients in a way that humans aren't capable of."**

For 12-year-old Jack, Olaf's presence was life changing as he battled leukemia. Jack has a tough time with needles and when he had to get seven pokes in one day, many more than usual, Olaf helped reduce his stress. Olaf calmly stayed with him during the procedure, allowing Jack to pet him as a distraction. Jack's time in the hospital was made much more tolerable because of Olaf's unflappable presence.



Photo credit: Sunni Martini.

Similarly, 2-year-old Penelope loved interacting with Olaf while receiving treatment for a bone marrow disease. She would play with Olaf and show him her toys while he calmly sat beside her. Because of his expert training, Olaf knows Penelope's toys aren't for him to play with. His gentle interaction was perfect for young Penelope. "Her parents also really benefited from Olaf's presence,

knowing that he was there to make Penelope's hospital days easier. I would hear a sigh of relief when Olaf entered the room," shares Kristen.

"It's been incredible to see the impact Olaf makes. He's a very important part of our team." Kristen continues, "There's a magic about Olaf. He motivates our patients in a way that humans aren't capable of."

You can make life-changing matches possible by giving today. Fill out the enclosed envelope to get started or give online at [canine.org/gift](https://canine.org/gift).





## Marilyn's Heart of Gold

In the late 1970s, while working on her master's degree in art education at Case Western Reserve University, Marilyn White learned about Canine Companions through a guest speaker, famed cartoonist Charles M. Schulz. Schulz was a passionate supporter of Canine Companions and inspired Marilyn to become one as well.

In 2021, the North Central Region staff arranged a special 90th birthday surprise for Marilyn. She received a birthday card from Jean Schulz, who shares her late-husband's passion for our mission and serves on Canine Companions' national board.

Marilyn has also formed an unbreakable bond with the Northern Ohio Volunteer Chapter. During the pandemic, the chapter became her family, taking care of her, bringing food and puppies! "They were just so wonderful, and they kept coming back," Marilyn says.

Marilyn wanted to do more for our mission. With the support of the Northern Ohio Volunteer Chapter, she raised more than \$15,000 for DogFest North Central, and Marilyn is naming a future service dog.

"She's been donating for nearly 30 years and has a heart of gold," says volunteer Staicey Scholtz. "We're so grateful to be friends with Marilyn!"

## 2021 Jack Warnock Award Honoring Outstanding Volunteerism

In 2000, our national board of directors established a national volunteer award given yearly to one volunteer from each of our six regions. The highest honor is the Canine Companions Jack Warnock Award, a tribute to longtime volunteer and graduate Jack Warnock. This prestigious award acknowledges exceptional volunteerism at Canine Companions. We are pleased to recognize the 2021 Jack Warnock Award winner, volunteer Kathy Zastrow of El Dorado Hills, California, as well as congratulate the five regional winners.

Kathy has dedicated nearly 30 years of her life to the mission of Canine Companions, devoting countless hours as a puppy raiser, breeder caretaker, founding chapter member, fundraiser, event organizer and presenter. In the late 1980s, Kathy read a newspaper article and thought Canine Companions was something her family could do together.

Kathy is currently serving her 16th year on the Northwest Region board, raising her 28th puppy and is caring for her third breeder dog, Albert.

### Congratulations to our winners:

Northwest Region – Kathy Zastrow, Jack Warnock Award

Northeast Region – Jackie McCool

North Central Region – Kevin Cullen, Colonel, US Air Force (Ret.)

Southeast Region – Mary Ashlyn Theide

South Central Region – Dawn Thompson

Southwest Region – Susan Ryan, M.D.

Read more about the Jack Warnock Award winners across the country at [canine.org/warnock](https://canine.org/warnock).



## Remembering Joann Elliott

Joann Elliott joined Canine Companions' national board of directors in 2001 with her husband, John. "Joann was an enthusiastic supporter of Canine Companions and our mission," says John McKinney, board chair.

The Elliots served as board members for nearly 19 years before stepping down in 2020 to enjoy retirement. Sadly, Joann died after an illness in January 2022. She is remembered as an avid traveler and a keen golfer, as well as a loving wife, mother and grandmother. Family brought Joann the most joy, pride and love of all.

We are grateful for Joann's many years of service, and she will be missed.



## "CANINE COMPANIONS GAVE ME A PURPOSE."

Volunteers are the backbone of non-profit organizations, including Canine Companions. April is National Volunteer Month, and we are so grateful for the support of our 4,700 volunteers, including Clint Audiss.

In 2015, Clint began volunteering at the Schulz Campus doing office work and answering phones. As a volunteer, Clint's happiness increased so dramatically that his doctor decided Clint no longer needed anti-depressants. "**Canine Companions gave me a purpose**," Clint says.

Thank you to every volunteer puppy raiser, breeder caretaker, advocate and those raising awareness for our mission. We couldn't do it without you! Learn how you can get involved at [canine.org/volunteer](https://canine.org/volunteer).



Clint and his service dog Mac.



# Serving Those Who Served Our Country

Canine Companions has been serving veterans with disabilities since our founding in 1975, and launched our Veterans Initiative in 2007. We have placed more than 400 service dogs with service members, including two Navy veterans who are living more independently thanks to their expertly trained service dogs.

Randy Wight has a spinal cord injury from his time in service, causing him issues with mobility, balance and stamina. Service Dog Niosh “Neo” provided nearly a decade of assistance increasing Randy’s independence. When Randy saw Neo slowing down, he knew he would benefit from another four-legged partner. Randy was recently matched with Service Dog Virginia.

Virginia joyfully picked up where Neo left off. “Virginia has greeted me with affection since the very first day we met in class,” shares Randy. “She always has her eye on me.” Virginia opens doors for Randy, including the push button at his local VA hospital. She also picks up dropped items like his wallet and car keys – even his crutch! “She performs commands with such energy and enthusiasm that it causes me to smile and laugh, bringing more joy into my life.” Randy continues, “These dogs are truly transformative.”

Fellow Navy veteran Eric, who goes by his last name “Moose,” agrees with Randy. Moose has mobility issues and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) from his time in service. To assist with his symptoms of PTSD and help with mobility, he applied for a Canine Companions service dog. Moose shares, “With mobility restrictions, a dropped cane, phone or car keys would be an issue, but Lynn very enthusiastically helps out.”



Randy with Service Dog Virginia.

Service Dog Lynn also performs commands to help mitigate Moose’s symptoms of PTSD, including waking him from nightmares. “Lynn can sense when I am getting anxious and will physically intervene. When I’m having a nightmare, she will jump up on the bed and wake me. This not only stops the nightmare but redirects my thoughts,” shares Moose.



Moose with Service Dog Lynn.

We are proud to support our veterans with disabilities to help regain independence, joy and peace of mind. Learn more at [canine.org/veterans](https://canine.org/veterans).

“Lynn can sense when I am getting anxious and will physically intervene.”





# Puppies in the Classroom

Canine Companions puppies impact many lives throughout their journey to become expertly trained service dogs. For one Houston, Texas, teacher, the four puppies she has raised have brought so much joy to students at her school.

Heather Hillery is a speech-language pathologist and educator, working with children with communication delays and learning disabilities. Each puppy she raises goes to school with her and becomes an important member of the class.

“The puppies have been instrumental in increasing awareness for Canine Companions,” shares Heather.

And there are additional benefits for the puppies, too. Being raised in this environment creates a solid foundation for these future service dogs.

“Puppies become accustomed to a wide variety of sights and sounds and learn to maintain focus with many distractions, in many different surroundings,” says Heather. All these things help prepare the dogs for their important futures as service dogs.

For Heather, puppy raising combines her love for working with dogs and serving people with disabilities. She says, “Puppy raising has brought joy and enrichment to my life in ways I had not anticipated.”

Volunteers are the foundation of our mission. Learn how you can help at [canine.org/volunteer](https://canine.org/volunteer).



Students enjoy the benefit of a Canine Companions puppy in Heather Hillery’s classroom.

“Puppy raising has brought joy and enrichment to my life in ways I had not anticipated.”

# Paramount Honors Clifford the Big Yellow Service Dog

Clifford the Big Red Dog™ is known for being a beloved best friend to a little girl. However, there’s another big dog with the same name – Clifford the Canine Companions service dog. Clifford assists 8-year-old Alexis to lead a more independent life.

At the age of 2, Alexis experienced a catastrophic health event due to a hereditary disease. Doctors weren’t sure she would survive. They brought the hospital’s trained facility dog to see how – or if – Alexis would respond.

“After 10 minutes of guiding her hand to pet him, she started moving her hand on her own,” says Alexis’ mom, Tiffany.

**Tiffany turned to Canine Companions while Alexis was recovering, knowing that a dog had changed her daughter’s life once before.** In 2021, Alexis and Tiffany were matched with Service Dog Clifford, entirely free of charge. Clifford is trained to assist Alexis with tasks she finds difficult, including retrieving toys, helping with chores and motivating Alexis to walk.

Coincidentally, Alexis and Clifford graduated from Team Training the same week that the Clifford the Big Red Dog movie was released in theaters.



This coincidence caught the eye of Paramount Pictures, the production company behind the Clifford movie, and the team was featured in a segment on TODAY with Hoda & Jenna featuring comedian and actor Kenan Thompson. To support our mission and help provide more service dogs like Service Dog Clifford, Paramount Pictures generously donated \$35,000 to Canine Companions.

“When I look back at Alexis’ inability to even pet the facility dog to now looking at her walking around the room holding Clifford’s leash, it’s just really miraculous,” Tiffany remarks.

View the TODAY Show segment by visiting [canine.org/clifford](https://canine.org/clifford).



Want to take it to the next level? Show your support monthly!

Become a monthly donor at \$25 or higher and receive a Canine Companions tote bag. Visit [canine.org/gift](https://canine.org/gift) to sign up now.





## A Teammate for *Life*

Alex Maryman dreamed of playing baseball for the big leagues since childhood. Though he was diagnosed with hearing loss as a toddler, he played baseball every chance he got, eventually joining the club team at Kansas State University.

Despite his prowess on the diamond, Alex experienced anxiety in his everyday life, fearful of missing important sounds.

He found it difficult to relax. Was someone knocking on his door? Did he miss an important phone call? Alex started to stay home where life was safer and more familiar, leaving behind his typically outgoing personality. His mother worried about his isolation and waning involvement with others. She discovered Canine Companions and the service dogs expertly trained to alert deaf or hard of hearing handlers to important sounds.

### “The level of confidence and reassurance I feel having Prince is so impactful.”

Since receiving Service Dog Prince in 2021, Alex feels more confident and ready to take on the day. Prince wakes him up every morning with a nudge when the alarm clock sounds. When someone comes to his front door or pulls into his driveway, Prince alerts him.

Today, Alex’s family can relax knowing that he and Prince are ready for anything. “The level of confidence and reassurance I feel with Prince is so impactful,” says Alex.

Alex no longer stays away from the sport he is so passionate about. With Prince by his side, he doesn’t miss a beat, on or off the field. With his outgoing personality restored, Alex hopes to share his love of the game by coaching young athletes and encouraging them to do what they love, even if it means getting out of their comfort zone.

Visit [canine.org/dogs](https://canine.org/dogs) to learn more about our service dogs.



Anna with Service Dog Flynn.

## Waiting for the Call That Changes Lives

No matter how many puppies she raises, Diesta Gundacker is always anxious to find out if they are matched during Team Training. In 2021, she was waiting for news about Flynn.

Meanwhile, Canine Companions staff member Anna Willard was working in the training department despite chronic illnesses including Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome and postural orthostatic tachycardia syndrome, not realizing that one day she, too, would be waiting for Flynn.

When it became clear that walking and bending were causing increased joint and neurological effects, Anna started using a wheelchair. “My wheelchair gave me a taste of freedom and happiness that I had not experienced in years,” Anna shares. “But it was also then that I realized a service dog would be my next big step towards independence.”

Canine Companions carefully matches each service dog based on their temperament, skills and the needs of the handler. Anna applied and spent a year and a half waiting for a call inviting her to Team Training. The call arrived last October – she was going to be partnered with a service dog. Diesta also got the call she was waiting for – Service Dog Flynn had been matched!

### “With Flynn, I feel confident going out alone.”

Anna says that Flynn has changed her life. “Although I can propel my wheelchair, it does cause physical stress and fatigue, so Flynn gives me a boost,” she states. “With Flynn, I feel confident going out alone knowing that if I drop something, I don’t have to risk causing a medical episode by bending over to pick it up.”



### Beyond the Call

In addition to puppy raising, Diesta understands what it means to give back, volunteer and serve. That’s why she volunteers in so many other ways – including serving in a leadership role for many years for the Tales & Tails Gala. Last year she secured numerous sponsors and she and her husband, Charlie, hosted a virtual party. Join us this year for the 26th annual Tales & Tails Gala on October 22 at the Rosen Shingle Creek in Orlando, Florida.





## Crossroads Correctional Facility's Change for Good

In 2011, the warden of Montana's Crossroads Correctional Facility walked into the office of Correctional Counselor Susan Kloos and handed over an enormous, life-changing project on her lap. He was giving her responsibility for the prison's puppy raising program with Canine Companions – a partnership that started in 2006. The result would change her life and the lives of over 150 men who would go on to raise 128 puppies for Canine Companions.

"Prison is a negative place, but the dogs are positive," Susan says. "It's a privilege for these men to be a dog handler. Inmates can't touch anyone at all, but the dogs meet that human need for contact."

### "This program has changed my life."

The program is also changing the outcomes of our inmate handlers' lives. The national rate of recidivism is 50% – but 95% of the men who have been part of the puppy raising program have stayed out of prison after parole. Crossroads Correctional is one of 10 facilities raising puppies for Canine Companions.

"Prison is not the type of environment that welcomes vulnerability," says Susan. "On the final day with the puppies, the handlers used to cry alone in their cells, afraid to show emotion in front of other inmates. Over the years, the puppy raisers have established trust in the group. Now, the inmates share in the bittersweet day and cry together."

After 20 years leading the Crossroads puppy raising program, Susan is headed to a well-deserved retirement. "This program has changed my life. You don't realize how fortunate you are until a graduate thanks you for giving them back their life."

We are so grateful for our prison programs and the coordinators who help facilitate puppy raising in this unique setting.

### Medical Association and Veterinary Clinics Give Back

Puppies raised at Coffee Creek Correctional Facility in Wilsonville, Oregon receive exceptional veterinary care, completely free of charge, thanks to the work of the Portland Veterinary Medical Association (PVMA). The PVMA recruits and coordinates participating veterinary clinics who offer puppies free care, provides additional financial support as needed, and hosts a supply drive each year.

Since 2005, area veterinary clinics have cared for over 120 Canine Companions puppies. Thank you to the PVMA and all the veterinary clinics nationwide that make the prison puppy raising program so successful!



## Service Clubs Supporting Service Dogs

Service clubs have been wonderful supporters and advocates for Canine Companions for decades – raising millions of dollars and greater awareness in their communities.

We are fortunate to be an affiliate partner of the General Federation of Women's Clubs (GFWC), an international women's organization with more than 6,500 clubs in the United States and more than 20 countries.

In recognition of GFWC's long-standing support, Canine Companions puppy Sims was named in honor of current GFWC International President Marian Simmons St. Clair. Thanks to Sims' volunteer puppy raiser, Bryna, Marian met her namesake at the GFWC headquarters in Washington, D.C., and it was love at first sight.

GFWC members are dedicated to community improvement by enhancing the lives of others through volunteer service, advocacy and more. A perfect match for Canine Companions, where we participate in club, district, state and national meetings and conventions by providing materials and people to share Canine Companions' mission. We are grateful for GFWC and their continuing support.

Learn more about service clubs supporting our mission at [canine.org/serviceclubs](https://canine.org/serviceclubs).

### Announcing the Emerald Coast Volunteer Chapter

Graduate teams, puppy raisers and volunteers are the heart of the Canine Companions mission. They often come together to serve the mission in an even bigger way by becoming a Canine Companions volunteer chapter. Volunteer chapters support our mission in a variety of roles and lifelong friendships are often made. We are excited to announce the establishment of the Emerald Coast Volunteer Chapter, encompassing the Florida coastal areas along the Gulf of Mexico, as well as Mississippi and Alabama.



GFWC International President Marian Simmons St. Clair and future service dog Sims.

## SIT. STAY. Sparkle.

Join us for Sit Stay Sparkle, Canine Companions' signature gala, hosted in several locations across the country!

- Live and silent auctions
- Adorable puppies
- Heartwarming stories
- Life-changing service dogs

See page 19 for more information on upcoming events.





# In Our Community

Our community of volunteers, clients and supporters makes our mission stronger. As one of our core values, our community and the relationships we build are the foundations of our work.



Graduates Avery and Greta celebrate success of Annie Live!



New van for puppy transport.



Friends and pups at the wedding of Shannon and Anthony.

## Annie Live!

Canine Companions graduates Avery and Greta are members of the National Dance Institute DREAM Project. Along with a cast of 50 dancers, the two girls performed in the opening of the hit musical Annie, live on NBC.

"It was the most amazing experience," says Avery. "Meeting Alan Toy, the disability rights activist who played President Franklin Delano Roosevelt in the production, was amazing. Alan told us never stop pursuing what we like to do!"

Avery was matched with Service Dog Rainbow in 2015, and Greta received Service Dog Midas in 2019. Both service dogs were in the NBC live studio audience for the performance!

Photo credit: Yakir Ben-Hur, Courtesy of National Dance Institute

## Flying High

Because of the pandemic, volunteers near our Jean and Charles Schulz Campus have stepped up in a new way – transporting puppies to area airports so the puppies can be delivered to their volunteer puppy raisers across the country. This often includes early mornings and a lot of driving. Since the program began, volunteers have transported over 630 puppies to airports. Recently, generous supporters at the DMARLOU Foundation purchased a new van that has been extremely helpful with our larger transports, having already transported more than 25 puppies! Thanks to our volunteers and the DMARLOU Foundation for making this possible!

## I Do(g)

Volunteer puppy raisers Shannon and Anthony Dilluvio tied the knot in September 2021 surrounded by their Canine Companions community. Kristen Dunn with Facility Dog Heiress – who was the first puppy Shannon raised – met the couple at the end of the aisle, symbolizing her presence on the couple's first date. Juliana Brisco and Service Dog Rowdy also joined them as a bridesmaid and honorary groomsman, along with Luddy, Shannon's current puppy.

"It was so special to be surrounded by our Canine Companions 'family,'" Shannon says.

Congratulations Shannon and Anthony! Thank you for including Canine Companions and our community in your special day.

Photo credit: Marco Photography and Video



Hilary with Hudson, her first service dog.

Hilary Pircher has had three Canine Companions service dogs by her side over the years and credits each of them with a unique purpose in her life.

Growing up with cerebral palsy, Hilary often had to rely on her parents. But like any teenager, she longed for autonomy and greater independence. She found that and more with her first service dog, Hudson.

"Hudson was a huge source of security for me for 10 years," she shares. Matched at age 16, he allowed Hilary to live independently in four different cities, go to college and begin a professional career – all things that she and her parents had dreamed about.

She was then matched with Service Dog Geiler, who Hilary credits as the "fun and silly" one. Geiler pushed Hilary to be more active and outgoing, allowing her to connect with the world around her in a new way.

**"My service dogs helped me realize who I am as a person. Hudson made me brave, Geiler made me fun, and Data made me affectionate."**



Hilary with Service Dog Data.

Now, her most affectionate service dog, Data, is by her side each day, working and living in Houston, Texas, assisting with life-changing daily tasks.

Service Dog Data carries items in his mouth so Hilary can propel her wheelchair, tugs open doors and retrieves any item that is dropped or out of reach, all with a wagging tail.

"My service dogs have helped me realize who I am as a person. Hudson made me brave. Geiler made me fun. And Data made me affectionate," says Hilary. "They allowed me to chase my dreams."

Learn more about applying for a service dog at [canine.org/apply](https://canine.org/apply).





Brisket and his nine siblings. Brisket is sponsored by the Los Angeles Chargers.

# Victory Brisket!

We are excited to announce our continued partnership with the Los Angeles Chargers. The Chargers followed and sponsored Canine Companions puppy Bolt for 15 months before he entered professional training. Recently, the Chargers welcomed their newest teammate, an adorable Canine Companions puppy named Brisket, who touched down in Los Angeles in December. The Chargers will follow and sponsor Brisket on his journey to become a service dog for a person with a disability. Follow his journey on



Canine Companions graduates and staff participate in a Los Angeles Chargers pre-game show and receive a donation to support our mission.

Instagram at @chargerspup and read more about our puppies in the spotlight at [canine.org/puppyspotlight](https://canine.org/puppyspotlight).

# Bubba Watson Follows His Heart

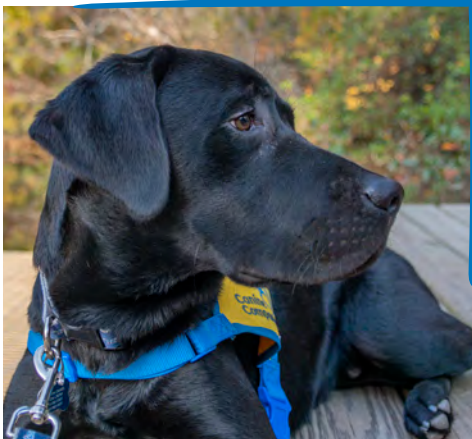


Photo Credit: Stacey Bruntlett Paden.

Two-time PGA Masters Tournament champion Bubba Watson is an all-American superstar. He is also known as a true philanthropist and supports people in need.

Bubba is the co-owner of the Pensacola Blue Wahoos baseball team and was honored with a future service dog sharing his name, Watson. Puppy Watson is sponsored by the Blue Wahoos and joins them at games to raise awareness of our mission.

"It warms my heart that we can be part of Watson's journey to become a service dog," Bubba shares.

We are grateful for the support of Bubba and the Blue Wahoos!

## UPCOMING

# 2022 Events

Join us at our 2022 events! Interested in volunteering? Contact us at [info@canine.org](mailto:info@canine.org).

### APRIL

- DogFest Jacksonville – April 9 – Jacksonville Beach, FL
- Imagine Independence – April 21 – Virtual Only
- DogFest Orlando – April 23 – Winter Park, FL
- Chip in for Canines – April 25 – Atlanta, GA

### MAY

- Southwest Region Graduation – May 13 – Vista, CA\*
- National Graduation Day – May 14\*
- Putting for Pups Golf Classic – May 20 – San Jose, CA

### JUNE

- Sit Stay Sparkle North Central – June 16 – New Albany, OH
- Sit Stay Sparkle Santa Rosa – June 18 – Santa Rosa, CA\*
- New Mexico Golf Tournament – June 27 – Albuquerque, NM
- Blind Brook Golf Tournament – June TBD – Blind Brook, NY

### SEPTEMBER

- DogFest Alabama – September 10 – Birmingham, AL
- DogFest San Diego – September 17 – San Diego, CA
- DogFest Tri-States – September 17 – Ewing Township, NJ
- Dogfest North Central – September 18 – New Albany, OH
- North Texas Giving Day – September 22 – Online Only
- DogFest Long Island-NYC – September 24 – Massapequa, NY

### OCTOBER

- DogFest Texas – October 1 – Irving, TX
- Sit Stay Sparkle Orange County – October 15 – Newport Beach, CA
- DogFest Bay Area – October 22 – Oakland, CA\*
- Tails and Tales Gala – October 22 – Orlando, FL\*

### NOVEMBER

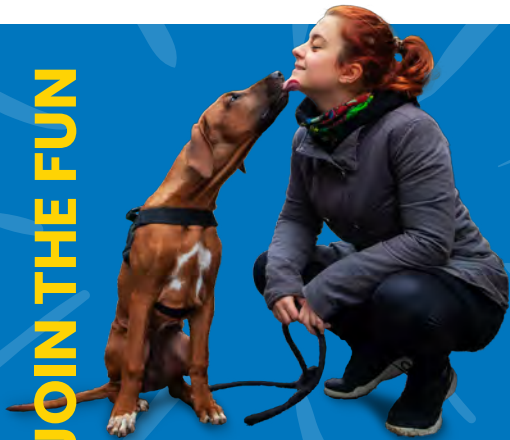
- National Graduation Day – November 4\*
- Salute Independence – November 9 – New Hyde Park, NY
- Sit Stay Sparkle Seattle – November 5\* – Seattle, WA
- Arizona Valley of the Sun Golf Classic – November 7 – Chandler, AZ

\*Hybrid in-person/virtual event

## Go TEAM!

Join us in San Diego for the TEAM 2022 Volunteer Leadership Summit July 8-10! Our popular volunteer conference is designed to engage, inspire and educate our volunteers with the tools and leadership skills to raise awareness in their communities and move our mission forward. You'll have the opportunity to network with volunteers from across the country, too! Stay tuned for more details and save the date!

## JOIN THE FUN



## Grab a Leash and Join the Fun at DogFest

This family- and dog-friendly event has raised over \$9 million to support our mission. Join us in person or register and fundraise. We'd love to have you be a part of Canine Companions' national signature event. Learn more at [canine.org/DogFest](https://canine.org/DogFest).



# Teaching to Make Change

Erica and her service dog, Jett, have become well known for their work promoting disability rights in their local community of Amherst, New York. Erica says Service Dog Jett has given her a second chance at independence, and she is using her role as a middle school educator to teach children tolerance, acceptance and compassion.

“I like to pretend the students love seeing me more than they love seeing my service dog,” she jokes. **“But it’s important for children to see a person with a disability working in the community, and it’s important for them to learn proper service dog etiquette.”**

A recent incident involving a ride-share driver reminded her there is much work left to do. “I requested a ride-share to get to work. When our driver arrived, he called out his window that Jett wasn’t getting in his car.” When Erica explained to the driver that his company’s policy and federal law required him to transport her and Jett, he refused and drove away.

“I arrived late to work. It’s tough explaining to kids that the rules in place to ensure everyone in society has equal access aren’t always followed. The Americans with Disabilities Act is not optional, and Jett is not the one being discriminated against – I am.”

Erica is one of many individuals working tirelessly to teach others – but she can’t advocate if she’s left stranded on the curb.



various animation projects for Disney including Star Wars Episodes I, II and III, and the notorious Pirates of the Caribbean villain Davy Jones.

“I am thrilled to release ANDY, a story of a puppy whose journey resonates universally,” Jamy says. “Our furry hero’s bravery exemplifies a deep truth that applies to every human story. Andy faces his biggest fear and ultimately finds his purpose in life —to help others as a Canine Companions service dog!”

This special project was made possible by Executive Producer Jean Schulz, Canine Companions board member and president of Charles M. Schulz Creative Associates.

“It’s so exciting to finally introduce Andy to the world,” says Jean. **“This short will raise awareness around the wonderful work of Canine Companions and is also a joy to watch.”**

Andy will hit the film festival circuit in March and will be screened throughout the year in the U.S. We have plans to provide special viewing opportunities for Canine Companions supporters!

## Andy’s Big Debut

The journey of an adorable puppy named Andy is capturing hearts in a new short film, Andy: A Dog’s Tale. This animated short, which chronicles Andy’s journey to becoming a service dog, was directed by Jamy Wheless of Ignite Animation. Jamy is just 20 minutes from our Santa Rosa headquarters and has worked on

We are grateful for the hard work and dedication of the production team over the past three years to make this short film a reality, and the ongoing support of Jean Schulz in her efforts to showcase Canine Companions as the leader in the industry.

Get your popcorn ready and stay tuned for more updates on Andy: A Dog’s Tale.



## Advocacy Victories

2021 brought significant wins for legislation that impacts our graduate teams. With our colleagues at Guide Dogs for the Blind, a new bill was passed into California law to reduce confusion and fraudulent business practices for sellers of emotional support dog equipment. Our grassroots advocates also helped pass the Hot Cars Act, requiring all vehicles to have sensors to ensure dogs and children are not accidentally left behind in hot cars. Learn more about the role of our advocates and register for access to exclusive webinars and meetings with government officials at [canine.org/advocate](https://canine.org/advocate).

## Expanding the South Central Region

We are pleased to announce that the states of Arkansas, Louisiana and Oklahoma are joining Texas in an expansion of the Canine Companions South Central Region. Aligning geographically closer to the South Central Training Center located in Irving, Texas will help us to better serve our constituents.

This shift will allow our South Central Region community to grow stronger and operate more smoothly by reducing travel for Team Training, events, graduation ceremonies and matriculation, and especially for our ongoing follow-up for our graduates.





# 2021-22 Team Training Yearbook

The teams pictured below have been expertly matched during two weeks of Team Training, where handlers learn how to work with their service dog to enhance independence. Congratulations!

## NORTH CENTRAL

### 1. OCTOBER

Amber with Chewy; Chelsea with Humble; Jon, Margene & Ron with Penguin; Kim with Wambach; Tom with Vegas

### 2. NOVEMBER

Alexis & Tiffany with Clifford; Anthony with Erin; Chelsea & Heather with Hector; Chrissy with Huey; Faith & Jennifer with Wander; Joey & Kelly with Landau; Lori with Edison; Mary with Quebec; Pam with Archer; Quinn & Brian with Hanes; Steve with Zilford; Tim with Arnold

### 3. DECEMBER

Geneine with Koji



## NORTHEAST

### 1. OCTOBER

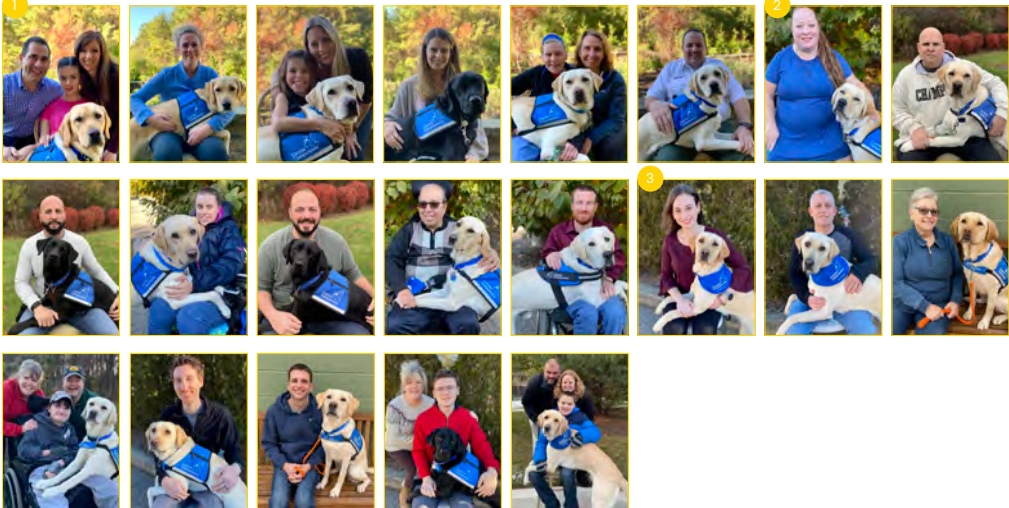
Ava, John & Jenn with Ogden; Betsy with Iden; Drew & Jamie with Dasha; Erin with Franklin; Katie & Paulette with Pluto; Mik with Huckleberry

### 2. NOVEMBER

AnnMarie with Malfoy; Ken with Zeus; Kevin with Que; Maureen with Yosemite; Ryan with Filmore; Safwat with Betsy; Will with Moose

### 3. JANUARY

Allison with Bayley; James with Haber; Jane with Vana; Matt, Sharon & Tom with Dacey; Michael with Kya; Mike with River; Paul & Stephanie with Sugar; Tyler, Tom & Jen with Inigo



## NORTHWEST

### 1. OCTOBER

Daniel, Dyer & Kiara with Korey; Daniel, Teresa & JoAnne with Viola; Diane with Leopold; Hania with Wasabi; Sashka & Cristina with Agnes; Teddy, Chris & Anne with Olga

### 2. NOVEMBER

Allie with Kapi; Jeanette with Fiji; Linda with Demi; Mikayla with Bernadette; Paul with Prudie; Randy with Virginia; Robyn with Gianna; Ruth with Pete; Sean with Milton; Tami with Larry; Terri with Gemini

### 3. DECEMBER

Richard with Waimea; Sean with Vito

### 4. JANUARY

Kevin & Kitwana with Nimbus; Nina with Kiwi; Rob, Dave & Amy with Koraline; Sam with Margene



## SOUTH CENTRAL

### 1. NOVEMBER

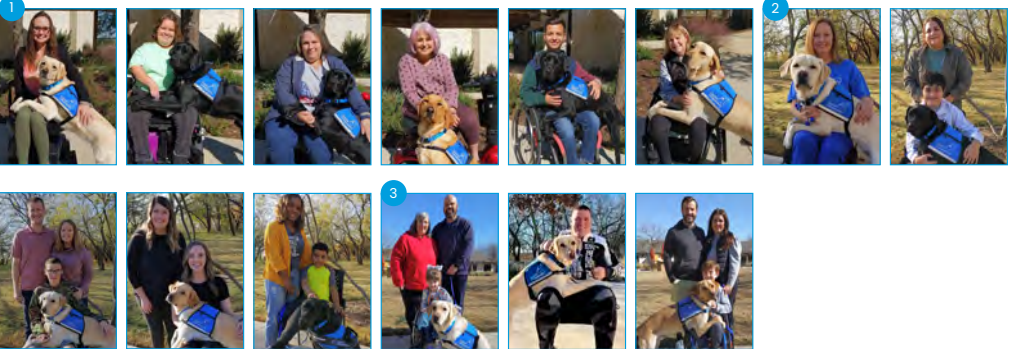
Amanda with Glamour; Bailey with York; Kimberly with Heska; Kryss with Langley; Nate with Licorice; Roberta with Patrick

### 2. DECEMBER

Ashley with Rio; Isaiah & Nadia with Evie; Jeremiah, Bill & Jenna with Musette; Meg & Hannah with Angus; Myles & Brittany with Hollywood

### 3. JANUARY

Callie, Andrea & Michael with Gucci; Jason with Celeste; Oliver, Stephen & Lacy with Ziti



## SOUTHEAST

### 1. OCTOBER

Anna with Flynn; Caroline with Fenwick; Charlie, Lu-Ann & Chris with Toulouse; Cooper, Heather & Ronnie with Everett; Kelley with Van; Mikisa & Christina with Aries; Morton & Sara with Verano; Thomas with Kevin; Violet, Matt & Mandy with Expo

### 2. DECEMBER

Erin with Fritz; Lisalee with Shiloh; Mike with Plenty



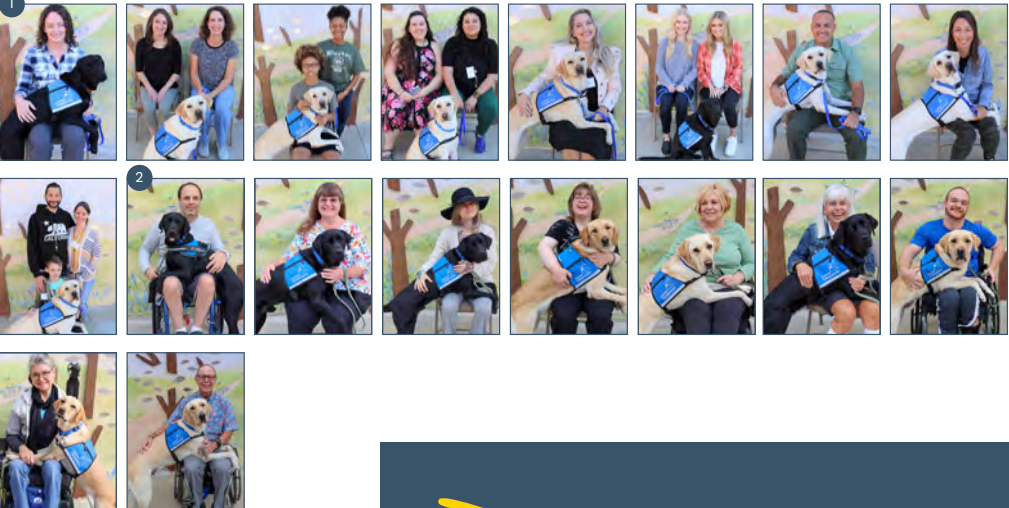
## SOUTHWEST

### 1. OCTOBER

Amber with Fancy; Angela & Michelle with Toronto; Deonte and Lena with Yurio; Evelyn & Hilary with Dreamy; Janelle with Galaxy; Janessa & Madeline with Odessa; Jose with Kendrick; Kim with Coco; Logan, Icon & Katie with Marcel

### 2. NOVEMBER

Albert with Miner; Debbie with Arwen; January with Echo; Kelly with Yukon; Lin with Catherine; Marcie with Tabatha; Patrick with Turner; Renee with Kiki; Richard with Logo





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Email: [info@canine.org](mailto:info@canine.org) Website: [canine.org](http://canine.org)

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**Eukanuba**



**Service Dog Prince answers the front door for Alex.**

Read how on page 12.