

The Companion

Summer 2019, issue thirty-three



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Living Our Values to Further Our Mission

At Canine Companions for Independence, we strive to make every day independence day. Our expertly-trained assistance dogs are opening doors, picking up dropped items, turning on lights and so much more. Highly skilled and ready to work, Canine Companions assistance dogs bring a powerful change to the people they are matched with: a student feels confident to go away to college; a patient is motivated and looks forward to physical therapy; a veteran sleeps better and has less anxiety; and a person with hearing loss is more engaged with her surroundings.

With summer in full swing, we are thrilled with what we've achieved as an organization and community. Some highlights of the year so far have been: 19 graduations, 190 teams matched, nearly 700 follow-up visits with active graduates, breaking ground on the new campus for our North Central Region and soon opening our training building to support veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) on our Jean and Charles Schulz Campus.

We've also articulated our core values for the organization, which are instilled in all we do to serve our mission and community. They are:

Teamwork — We believe in the joyful, transformative power of the human-canine partnership.

Compassionate Service — We act with respect, empathy and collaboration in service of our community, our constituents and each other.

Integrity — We do what is right guided by honesty, accountability and sincerity.

Community — We practice inclusion and acceptance to build impactful relationships within our diverse community.

Excellence — We conduct ourselves with professionalism in pursuit of the highest standards.

Innovation — We reinvent possibility to unleash our greatest potential.

In addition to our core values, we've developed a comprehensive five-year strategic plan that will allow us to reach our long-range goals which include dynamic growth, innovation to improve our operations and programs, volunteer support, sustainable funding, engaged partners and community, and more teams.

Our accomplishments, values and goals emphasize the dedication we have to our mission. We continue to provide expertly-trained assistance dogs to children, adults, veterans and care professionals FREE of charge thanks to the commitment of supporters like you. Thank you for being a part of our community — our achievements are possible thanks to your generous support and involvement.

Sincerely,

Paige Mazzoni, CEO

John McKinney, Board Chair



Making Rounds at Vanderbilt

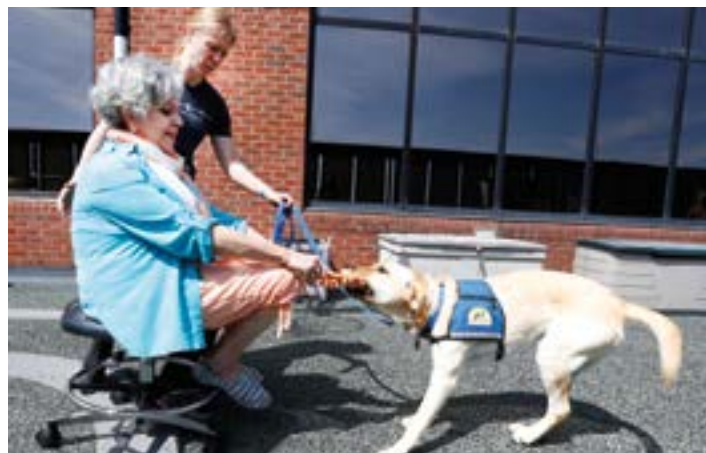
Norman has only been on the job since January, but he works regular office hours, sees roughly eight patients per day and is capturing the hearts of all the patients and staff at Vanderbilt University Medical Center.

Norman also has a wagging tail and four paws. He is Vanderbilt's Canine Companions facility dog, working for the Department of Hearing and Speech Sciences' Pi Beta Phi Rehabilitation Institute. Although Vanderbilt has an extensive pet therapy program through its volunteer services, they are very excited to have Norman, whose expert training extends well beyond the basic obedience skills of both therapy and emotional support animals.

At Vanderbilt, Norman assists patients with skills such as balancing while walking or standing. He can pass a soccer ball back and forth to practice coordination and gently tug a rope held by a patient who is sitting on a rolling stool to build core strength.

According to Christina Durrrough, a physical therapist at Vanderbilt and Norman's handler, Norman instantly helps engage patients who may be otherwise be uninterested in rehabilitative tasks. "Many patients tell me they come to therapy even when they don't feel up to it because they know that Norman will be there," says Christina.

Learn more about facility dogs at cci.org/facilitydogs.



Christina and Facility Dog Norman working with a client.

Support Independence Monthly



There's a group in our community that is almost as faithful as the assistance dogs we train: our monthly donors.

Canine Companions relies on the generous contributions of these supporters to provide our expertly-trained assistance dogs free of charge to people with disabilities. Each gift makes an impact, and we are grateful to have donors who have committed a portion of their monthly budgets to us.

Donor Adrian Bubb says, "I enjoy being a monthly donor because it is rewarding to know my contributions are helping on a daily basis. I feel a little part of me is going into every graduating class throughout the year."

It's true — those who give monthly are making a difference all year long by providing a reliable source of income for our organization. We appreciate and recognize the contributions of this dedicated group of donors.

To learn how you can become a monthly donor, visit cci.org/givemonthly.



A Heroic Team: Tom and Halona

When Tom Prin followed in his father's footsteps and chose a career as a New York City firefighter, he pledged a life of service to others.

As a young man, Tom was one of many courageous firefighters to respond to the horrific events of 9/11. His unit returned to the debris at the World Trade Center for months of clean-up and recovery, embodying the firefighters' oath of bravery, pride and a willingness to serve unselfishly.

But Tom's life path changed in 2005. When climbing the fire escape of a burning building, a ladder gave out, and Tom fell two stories, fracturing a vertebra and ending his career. Despite five surgeries, his injuries caused 10 years of chronic pain, making bending down and everyday tasks challenging.

After finally convincing himself to seek help, Tom was paired with Service Dog Halona in 2015.

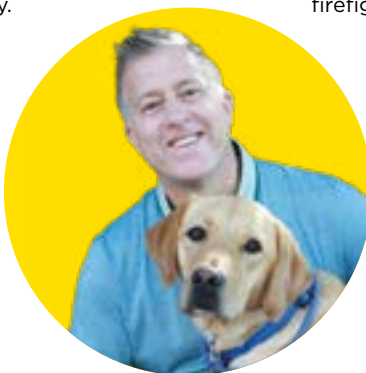
Halona had a story of her own.

Halona was a 15-month-old puppy when her volunteer puppy raisers, the King family, arrived at a vacation beach rental. Halona was always eager to please, but that day, she clearly showed her reluctance to ascend the stairs. Once inside, she paced and remained unsettled. At 1:30 a.m., she woke up everyone with

incessant barking from her crate.

The house was burning from an overheating dehumidifier that had likely been smoldering since their arrival. Half of the family members were able to escape and call the local fire department, who swiftly rescued the rest from a third-floor balcony.

"This proves that Halona was not just a service dog, she was a firefighter too," says Tom.



Since graduation and her arrival at the Prin home, Halona has been responsible for retrieving dropped items for Tom, tugging open bottom drawers and picking up the kids' toys. With reduced physical demands, Tom decreased his pain medication shortly after her arrival.

Tom realizes that calling Halona "life-changing" might seem dramatic to some, but to Tom, Halona brings the perfect mix of skills and support. Their immediate bond has touched the hearts of many, and the pair's success was recently featured on the TODAY Show.

One can call it fate, kismet or just plain luck, but Tom feels "we've been on a path to each other since she was born." Two heroes, now one team.

Read more stories like Tom's at cci.org/stories.

Above: Tom and Service Dog Halona visit with friends at the fire station.

Breaking Ground on the Future

On April 3, 2019, Canine Companions broke ground on a new state-of-the-art campus for the North Central Region in New Albany, Ohio. The celebration was attended by nearly 200 friends, supporters, volunteer puppy raisers, graduates and staff from around the country.

“As we embark on our strategic plan, we are looking at ways to innovate, ways to get more dogs to more clients; this region will now become critical to that,” shares Canine Companions CEO, Paige Mazzoni. “Not only because it will be state of the art and able to house our pilot programs, but also because it has a tenured and innovative staff. The North Central Region is a huge part of what comes next. It’s more than the shiny new building. It’s in the thinking and in the way we try new things and how we do more to fulfill our mission.”

This historic day was celebrated by Canine Companions and in the community the North Central Region will soon call home. “On behalf of the city of New Albany, we couldn’t be more excited about today’s announcement,” shared New Albany Mayor Sloan Spalding. “The city of New Albany, our retailers, our restaurants, we are all going to be excited to play host to the graduates, applicants, volunteers and donors that come to visit this facility in the future.”

This new campus will grow the number of people that Canine Companions can serve and will set a new standard for kennels and training space across the country. Plus, it will provide more research opportunities to ensure that we continue to provide the highest quality, healthiest, most successful assistance dog partnerships possible.

Construction began in May and continues to be on schedule and on budget. The new training center is slated to open at the end of 2020. For more information, or to donate visit cci.org/invest.



Canine Companions CEO Paige Mazzoni, NCR Executive Director Megan Koester, graduate team Brandon Scott and Service Dog Karry, and community partners break ground on the new campus for the North Central Region.

Home Is Where the Heart Is

Finding the right home for someone with a disability requires planning, research and a little extra heart. The heart comes from Karen Londos, a real estate sales associate in Florida and a Canine Companions hearing dog recipient.

"It can be overwhelming for people with disabilities to think about moving or buying a home. A lot of people don't know what options are out there, so I am here to help," says Karen.

Generally, the Americans with Disabilities Act does not apply to residential housing. "Our society is changing. Homes need to be equipped for my clients with disabilities or have the capability of being equipped with minimal cost," says Karen. "My hope is that more listing options will identify the unique housing features that can meet the varied needs of people with disabilities, such as identifying if a wheelchair can fit through the doorway, or whether an ambulance can easily negotiate the street."

Karen was born with degenerative hearing loss, and 80 percent of her communication is done through reading lips. Karen has been overcoming obstacles most of her life, and she has learned to embrace her uniqueness. But Karen realized that accepting help was not a sign of weakness, but a sign of strength. When her deafness became a safety risk, Karen applied for a hearing dog from Canine Companions, and in 2016, Hearing Dog Ninja became her best friend and guardian. Ninja is trained to alert Karen to important sounds in her environment, like someone knocking on the door or ringing a doorbell, an alarm clock buzzing and more.

With a strong passion to be of service to others, she is now using her expertise and personal story to help others who have disabilities. "If I can help change someone's life, like how Ninja has changed mine, it's a priceless feeling. I am a better real estate agent, a better person, and I am living a purposeful and fulfilling life."

Learn more about hearing dogs at cci.org/hearingdogs.

"If I can help change someone's life, like how Ninja has changed mine, it's a priceless feeling. I am a better real estate agent, a better person, and I am living a purposeful and fulfilling life."

— Hearing Dog Recipient Karen



More Than a Vest

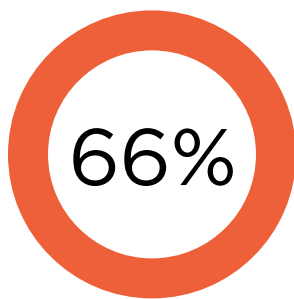
Mia Ives-Rublee has had a Canine Companions assistance dog by her side for over 22 years. She was born with osteogenesis imperfecta, sometimes known as brittle bone disease, which makes fractures occur frequently and affects mobility. At age 11, Mia was matched with Skilled Companion Steven. Once he retired, Service Dog Arianne took over.

Both Steven and Arianne were highly-trained assistance dogs who performed life-changing tasks to mitigate symptoms of Mia's disability. Ari helped Mia by pulling her manual wheelchair and carrying items, and Steven retrieved anything she dropped and reduced Mia's reliance on her parents.

With Ari's help, Mia went on to compete in wheelchair track and field, fencing and CrossFit events, all while pursuing undergraduate and graduate degrees. Mia has become a well-known national advocate for people with disabilities. Service dog fraud is a growing threat to people with disabilities like Mia who rely on service dogs for independence.

After Ari's passing, Mia received Service Dog Vizzini, to further the legacy of the expertly-trained service dogs that have enhanced Mia's independence. With Vizzini by her side, Mia hopes to help the public understand that service dog fraud has a real impact on the independence and safety of legitimate service dog teams. Mia isn't alone. In a recent poll of Canine Companions graduate teams, 66% had an out-of-control dog interfere with or even bite their Canine Companions assistance dog.

Canine Companions continues to support graduates like Mia by providing advocacy education training to businesses and corporations, by providing input for legislation, and more. Learn how you can help eliminate service dog fraud by visiting cci.org/stopfraud.



of Canine Companions graduates have had an out-of-control dog interfere with or even bite their Canine Companions assistance dog.

Mia with Service Dog Vizzini



High-Profile Pups

Several “high-profile” Canine Companions puppies are being raised by volunteers who are sharing our mission with their employees, followers and television viewers. While they are visible to a larger audience, they are still working and training to become an assistance dog to a person with a disability.

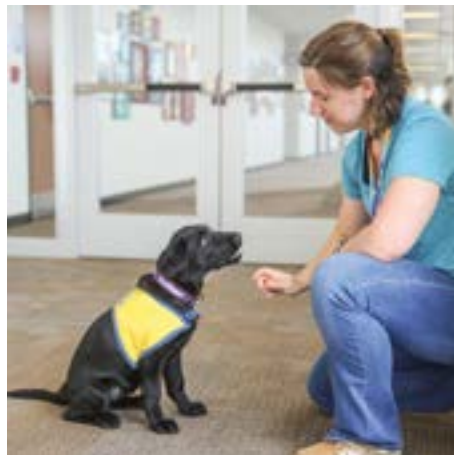
Puppy Spike



Last year, Canine Companions puppy Spike started his journey with puppy raiser Jennifer Williams, an executive producer for Fox News’ The Daily Briefing with Dana Perino. Spike was named in memory of Jennifer’s brother, nicknamed “Spike.” Puppy Spike has been featured in his own weekly blog, The Daily Spike, on Fox News’ website and makes frequent appearances on The Daily Briefing to raise awareness for Canine Companions.

You can follow Spike’s journey at [Foxnews.com/shows/the-daily-spike](https://www.foxnews.com/shows/the-daily-spike) or on Instagram under @cccaninepuppy.

Puppy Carol



For several years, Southwest Airlines has had an exclusive policy permitting Canine Companions puppies to travel in the cabin of the plane free of charge. The company and employees at their headquarters in Dallas, Texas have also engaged with our mission in numerous ways, including puppy raising. The newest addition is Canine Companions puppy Carol, being raised by a Southwest Airlines employee and named after Carol Kelly, the wife of Southwest Airlines CEO Gary Kelly.

Puppy Buckeye



Canine Companions is partnering with NBC4-Columbus to share Buckeye’s journey to become an assistance dog. Since arriving in Ohio, the Buckeye State, he has become a beloved member of the community. He joins the morning team in studio every Friday, gives everyone an inside look at his journey through social media, loves to practice shake and meets new friends at community events. Follow Buckeye on social media @buckeyebc4.

Puppy Finn



The San Jose Sharks are partnering with Canine Companions to follow puppy Finn (like a shark fin) from his adorable beginnings to his time with his puppy raiser and beyond. While he's being raised, he'll be a regular at the SAP Center (also known as The Shark Tank) attending events and games, getting great socialization with players and fans, and raising awareness for Canine Companions along the way! We'd like to extend a huge thank you to the San Jose Sharks for their support of our mission. Follow Finn on social media @sharkspup.

Puppy Phil



Famous canine photographer and *New York Times* bestselling author Elias Weiss Friedman, known as The Dogist, is following Canine Companions puppy Phil throughout his journey to become a future assistance dog. The Dogist Instagram account has over 3.5 million followers and is extremely popular with dog lovers everywhere. We're excited about this incredible opportunity to raise awareness of Canine Companions through this partnership and can't wait to see what Phil has in store.

Puppy Chappie



Meet Canine Companions puppy Chappie. He's named after Daniel "Chappie" James Jr., who was born in Pensacola, Florida and became a United States military legend. This name reflects the strong military heritage of Pensacola. Chappie is being raised by WEAR-TV reporter Kathryn Daniel and arrived in early June. Kathryn will begin her 18-month puppy raising journey, and her dream is that Chappie will serve long and well, just like his namesake.

Follow Chappie's journey at cci.org/abcpuppy.



The “Best Boy” Helping Neglected Children

When those impacted by traumatic events or crime in Riverside County, California need some compassion and support, Canine Companions Facility Dog Raider knows what to do. Raider works with Corona Police Department Sgt. Adam Roulston and Police Dispatcher Erin Lennox to improve community relations and provide compassionate support for those impacted by traumatic events or crime as they navigate the criminal justice system. Raider is the only facility dog in

Riverside County, home to approximately 2.4 million people.

Raider was recently deployed to work on the highly-publicized case involving the Turpin children and adults who were victims of severe abuse and neglect. Raider interacted with the siblings for several hours on different occasions. The siblings spent time with Raider playing cards, playing fetch and lying on the floor cuddling with him. During their parents' sentencing, Raider utilized the

expert training he received from Canine Companions to sit quietly at their feet as they recalled painful details in front of a room full of strangers. Raider's presence at the sentencing was reported by more than 75 major media outlets.

“It is an honor and an absolute privilege to hold his leash,” Erin said. “We love him with all our hearts! We have the best boy!”

Above left: Facility Dog Raider with Corona Police Department Sgt. Adam Roulston and Police Dispatcher Erin Lennox

Lions Supporting Canines for Over 36 Years



LPCCI District Governor Doug Wight and volunteer puppy raiser Mark Steffens present check to Northwest Region Executive Director Margaret Sluyk

The Lions Project for Canine Companions for Independence (LPCCI) was founded in 1983 and is supported by Lions Clubs in 30 states across the nation. To date, LPCCI has donated over \$4 million to Canine Companions. The generosity of their clubs and members has allowed us to place more assistance dogs free of charge to children, adults and veterans with disabilities.

One of their largest fundraisers — The LPCCI Crab Feast, held near Sacramento, California — just celebrated its 29th year and has raised over \$500,000. The event is always well attended (over 700 guests). Many of the attendees were Canine Companions graduates or volunteer puppy raisers. Our Sacramento area Gold Rush Chapter has been a huge supporter in making the Crab Feast extremely successful. Thanks to LPCCI for their incredible support!

On Base with Canine Companions

Canine Companions is known for the quality of our assistance dogs and the support we provide to veterans through our Veterans Initiative.™ What some may not be aware of is the presence we have on military bases around the country.

Pease Greeters

Pease, New Hampshire

The Pease Greeters are a group of volunteers who greet every flight coming or going overseas from Pease Air Force Base. It consists of many Canine Companions volunteer puppy raisers and graduate teams.

AJ Lundgren, brother to Canine Companions puppy raiser Becky Lundgren, stopped at Pease AFB on the way to his current deployment. He was surprised to meet long-time puppy raisers Mary and Scott Mace and their current puppy Pippin. "It's an awesome feeling knowing that wherever I go, I might run into a Canine Companions family member," wrote AJ.

Naval Consolidated Brig Miramar

San Diego, California

The puppy raising program at the Naval Consolidated Brig Miramar began in 2004, and the program is currently raising their 64th puppy for Canine Companions for

Independence. Southwest Region Puppy Program Manager Becky Hein teaches bi-weekly puppy classes to help track the progress of the dogs and handlers, provide guidance and share the positive impact they are having on the world outside the penitentiary.

Every few months, puppies being raised at the Naval Consolidated Brig Miramar go out on two-week furloughs for socialization with experienced puppy raisers in the area. This helps the puppies gain socialization experience in the outside world to prepare them to eventually be placed with a graduate.

The Naval Consolidated Brig Miramar puppy raising program recently became an apprenticeship program. Inmates can now earn a certificate through the U.S. Department of Labor that they can use to gain employment in the field of animal training upon release. It is a two-year, 4,000-hour apprenticeship.



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You can support Canine Companions when you shop using AmazonSmile. It's so easy, and it doesn't cost you a penny. Go to smile.amazon.com and select Canine Companions for Independence as the charity you wish to support. A portion of your purchase will come back to us, so we can place more assistance dogs with people with disabilities.



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“Elmer is My Best Friend”



“Living with a disability can feel isolating and highlights differences, but Elmer normalized that for Gavin,” shares Amanda, Gavin’s mom. Gavin is 6 years old and already has a lot of life experiences despite his young age. At the age of two, Gavin experienced a traumatic brain injury resulting in cerebral palsy, epilepsy and vision problems. “Gavin had to relearn everything following his brain injury. His recovery has been remarkable but difficult. In kindergarten, we recognized that reading was a challenge for Gavin. It became a huge struggle for us. In October 2018, we were matched with assistance dog Elmer. Right away we told Gavin that it was important that he read to Elmer every day. It worked like nothing else had,” explains Amanda.

Elmer isn’t the first Canine Companions dog to make an impact on Gavin’s life. Gavin first learned about Canine Companions working with AJ, a facility dog at Triangle Therapy in Indiana. AJ helped Gavin make huge strides. When Gavin was old enough to get a Canine Companions dog of his own, his family knew it would be a life-changing partnership.

Gavin says it best, “Elmer is my best friend. He is the best dog ever!”

New Commands to Combat Trauma

Supporting U.S. veterans has always been an important part of the work we do at Canine Companions. In 2018, we were proud to place our inaugural class of service dogs for veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) at our Northwest Training Center. Each dog was expertly-trained in over 40 commands as well as a set of unique commands designed to mitigate the

effects of PTSD. These commands include: altered “retrieve” and “light” commands, positional “front” and “behind” commands, and nightmare and anxiety interruption.

We have expanded our PTSD service dog program to our Northeast and South Central Regions to help even more veterans. Learn more at cci.org/veterans.



Front

Stand in front of handler



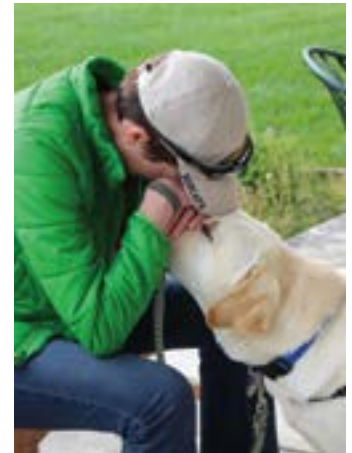
Behind

Stand behind handler



Nightmare interruption

Tug off blanket or jump onto bed to wake handler



Anxiety interruption

Place head in handler's lap or nudge handler's hands and face



DogFest 2019 Is off to a Great Start

People from across the country are joining the fun at DogFest 2019 to support the mission of Canine Companions. This dog- and family-friendly community event attracts dog lovers of all kinds to enjoy a day with pet and assistance dogs, friends and family. While learning about the Canine Companions mission, attendees participate in a variety of activities such as agility courses, canine and human craft projects, games, face and fur painting, great food and more. Three events took place in the spring, raising over \$150,000 with hundreds of people and dogs having a great day celebrating the human-canine bond and Canine Companions. Our goal is to raise over \$1M in 2019 — enough to fund 20 graduate teams. For more information and to find a DogFest near you, visit cci.org/DogFest. Grab a leash and join the fun!

Upcoming events include:

September 7 OKC

September 21 Long Island

September 21 Reno

September 22 Cleveland

September 22 Washington DC

September 28 Philly-NJ

October 5 DFW

October 12 San Diego

October 26 Bay Area

Mad About You



Madalyn "Mad" Fandrei first learned about Canine Companions as a child, when she spent time with our facility dogs while undergoing treatment at Sutter Medical Center in Sacramento. After struggling with fatigue and chronic fainting for over a decade, Mad was diagnosed with a rare autoimmune disorder. Throughout her care, there was often a Canine Companions facility dog with Mad to help her heal both physically and emotionally.

In February, Mad's story with Canine Companions came full circle when she received her own Canine Companions assistance dog, Service Dog Luxe. Mad still struggles with fatigue and fainting — especially when she stands too quickly — and having expertly-trained Luxe by her side to pick up items and retrieve them is especially helpful for reducing fainting incidents.

Mad, who is now 21 years old, is living on her own and planning to attend junior college. Luxe has helped create independence and Mad and Luxe make a beautiful team.

Sit. Stay. Sparkle.

On Saturday, June 15, over 400 people gathered at the Jean and Charles Schulz Campus to enjoy delicious food, wine and beer, campus tours, live and silent auctions, and mingling with Canine Companions graduates, assistance dogs and puppies. Guests were introduced to Canine Companions graduate team Morgan and her mom Teresa with Skilled Companion Sonic. Their story was incredibly impactful and *Sit. Stay. Sparkle.* raised over \$350,000 — another record-breaking year! Thank you to all who supported the event.

Familiar Faces in New Roles



Shannon Chaney,
Participant Program
Manager

Shannon has a Master of Social Work and was an instructor assistant and apprentice instructor from 2012 to 2014. She continued to volunteer with Canine Companions while she worked at the Alzheimer's Association of Marin and in 2016 was rehired as a part-time assistant in our program department, before accepting her new full-time role.



Halli James,
Participant Program
Manager

Halli graduated from Rutgers University with a bachelor's degree in animal science and joined Canine Companions in 2015 as an instructor assistant. Halli recently became an instructor with Canine Companions while transitioning into her new role.



Susan Porteous,
Puppy Program
Manager

Susan most recently worked as an apprentice instructor in the Northeast Region. She brings many years of puppy raising experience, as she led Cornell University's puppy raising club. Susan currently raises puppies for Canine Companions.

SOUTHWEST REGION



Meet Simi Balter,
Executive Director

Simi Balter is no stranger to Canine Companions for Independence. In fact, she has been a familiar face in the Southwest Region for the past 17 and a half years.

Simi left the corporate world and started her career with Canine Companions in January 2002 as an instructor assistant, achieving her instructor credentials in 2005. She was the graduate coordinator from 2006 to 2007, and in 2007, became the Southwest Region program director.

"After 9/11, I wanted to return to meaningful work. I found Canine Companions and never looked back, it has been a perfect fit," she says.

Simi was promoted to the Southwest Region executive director position in February 2019.

Simi says some of her favorite moments at Canine Companions include watching the students get matched with their new canine partner, seeing a puppy raiser meet the graduate for the first time, and meeting with teams one-year post-placement and seeing how much they have grown together. She is awestruck by the dedication and passion of our volunteer community.

Simi explains, "I love to share first-hand stories about the impact of our mission. I am as passionate today about the mission of Canine Companions as I was 17 years ago."



Canines at the California Science Center

Canine Companions is featured in the new California Science Center exhibition, Dogs! A Science Tail. You can discover life from a dog's point of view by exploring the way a dog sees, hears and smells the world through fun and engaging hands-on exhibits.

The exhibition also features live demonstrations of working dogs in action, like Canine Companions assistance dogs. Southwest Region puppy raisers will be there monthly to share the Canine Companions mission. The exhibition will be open through the end of 2019 at the California Science Center in Los Angeles before traveling to different locations throughout the U.S.

Enjoy a 20% discount on the Dogs! A Science Tail Exhibition (as well as the IMAX movie Superpower Dogs 3D!) at the California Science Center location only by using the promo code TREAT.

Tito, the Yappy Hour Pup



Meet Canine Companions puppy Tito!

This future assistance dog was named after Tito's Handmade Vodka to show our gratitude for all their support during Yappy Hour events at The Ritz-Carlton, Laguna Niguel. Tito's Handmade Vodka teamed up with the resort to help raise awareness and funds for the Canine Companions Veterans Initiative.™ Since 2013, The Ritz-Carlton, Laguna Niguel has donated more than \$1.5 million to our organization.

To see dates for this year's Yappy Hour events at The Ritz-Carlton, Laguna Niguel, visit cci.org/swrevents.



Canine Companions for Independence presents the 23rd annual Tales & Tails Gala — The Indies. Join us to celebrate the best of the best assistance dogs, trainers and puppy raisers. You will be inspired when you hear heartwarming tales of compassion and joy, while enjoying exquisite food, entertainment and one of the best silent and live auctions in town.

Get your tickets or become a sponsor and help us celebrate another year of transforming the lives of children, veterans and adults with disabilities.

Visit cci.org/galacelebration for more information.

Presenting Sponsors:

World of Beer



Event Sponsor:

Anne Gittinger
Rosen Shingle Creek



Major 2019 Sponsors:

ABC Fine Wine & Spirits, Coca Cola Florida, SunDance, MLB Creative, SeaWorld Parks & Resorts, Fonda and Don Cerenzio, Trish and Rich Walsh, and Edyth Bush Charitable Foundation

Leigh and Nerf Go to College

Leigh Dittman was born with osteogenesis imperfecta, or brittle bone disease, her bones are weaker than normal and more prone to fractures. When it was time for her to apply to college, she knew that she could use help. That's where Nerf enters the picture.

Now, a freshman at The University of Tampa, going to public places is a regular part of her life. But often in these settings Leigh struggles with access and picking up dropped items. Nerf assists by retrieving those dropped items, pulling her wheelchair, carrying her backpack and performing other tasks that enable Leigh to lead a more independent life.

Besides providing practical support, Nerf also offers support and companionship when Leigh is feeling overwhelmed from her class load and final exams.

Leigh and Nerf will be one of our special guests at the October 26 Tales & Tails Gala as our program presents "Class Acts." You will learn how students are giving puppies a purpose by training them on college campuses and how assistance dogs help students navigate a path to independence.



Thank You SeaWorld Orlando



SeaWorld offers a beautiful backdrop for puppy matriculation photos.

SeaWorld Orlando has hosted our May Team Training Graduation and Puppy Matriculation Ceremony for many years, generously contributing thousands of park admission tickets that allow guests to attend the graduation ceremony and stay to enjoy the theme park for the rest of the day. This wonderful partnership gives us the opportunity to share our mission with more people, allowing them to witness our transformative work.

Virginia Beach Finds Comfort in Murph After Tragedy



As bereaved families mourned the 12 people who were killed during a mass shooting in Virginia Beach, Canine

Companions Facility

Dog Murph and his handler Janet Balser of the Staunton, Virginia Victim Witness Program were meeting families, friends and coworkers.

"They immediately seek out Murph," says Janet. "When I don't have the right words to say, he is there letting people hug him and cry. Whoever he encounters, he helps them work through their pain. Truly amazing and so emotional!"

Janet and Murph are May 2017 Canine Companions for Independence graduates. Murph was named for U.S. Medal of Honor recipient Lt. Michael "Murph" Murphy.



PenFed President and CEO Honored for Commitment to Serving Veterans



PenFed CEO James Schenck, Fox News Channel's Dana Perino with puppy Maverick, and Northeast Executive Director Debra Dougherty

The 16th annual Hearts & Heroes gala brought together over 175 Canine Companions supporters on June 13 at Apella in New York City.

PenFed President and CEO James Schenck was honored for his company's commitment to serving people with disabilities, including our nation's veterans.

Dana Perino of Fox News Channel's The Daily Briefing was the Honorary Chair of the event. Thanks to all who attended!

Join us for the annual Veterans Day event at the Northeast Region

November 7, 2019, 6 - 8 pm

The Inn at New Hyde Park
New Hyde Park, New York

To learn more about the event, become a sponsor or reserve tickets, contact Northeast Region Development Director Cathleen Garry at 631-561-0236.



Playwright Gemini: Canine Companions Assistance Dog Writes First Stage Production

Titled, "I'm Hungry, A Monologue Not About Squirrels," assistance dog Gemini humorously describes what it's like to be an assistance dog for his 12-year-old partner Julian. Their acting and writing debut were part of the annual "Healing Voices: Caregivers Stories on Stage." Julian's father, Fred, served as the dog's literary agent. Despite being an animal lover, before Gemini, Julian feared even the smallest dog because his disability left him with unsteady balance. But Gemini has given Julian greater mobility and has supercharged this Jersey boy's friendly personality and propensity to give back.





Giving Independence

“My dogs have been with me every step of the way and help me live life to the fullest — from high school and college to my wedding and the birth of my daughter,” shares Brandon Scott.

Brandon was matched with his first Canine Companions assistance dog almost 20 years ago. Born without arms or legs, Brandon’s assistance dogs have been by his side through the most important moments of his life, serving as his arms, hands and best friend.

“Kary has become my hands — all of my service dogs have been my hands. They have given me the ability to go out and live a successful life amongst my peers in public. Not only have they given me that independence, they have helped my family, my wife, my loved ones. They have given my family a peace of mind knowing that when I am out in public that I am in good hands. Over the past 19 years, a Canine Companions dog was right there by my side making sure that I was okay and that I was taken care of. Whatever I needed, my dogs were right there to jump in and help me. That is something you can’t put a dollar sign on. That is something that is unmeasurable. That ability, that peace of mind, that independence; I cannot thank the Canine Companions staff enough, not just for my independence, but everybody else’s independence.”



Time to Take to the Runway!

HAUTE DOG | CHICAGO is back for its fourth year! Celebrate fashion with Canine Companions for Independence on September 19 at the Peninsula Chicago. Watch as some of Chicago’s finest and their very haute couture canines take to the runway modeling fashion from local boutiques and fantastic tail wags. Don’t miss out on a great evening — you never know who may show up. Visit cci.org/HauteDogChicago to find out more.





Supporting the Mission as a Family

United States District Judge Ed Kinkeade has been involved with Canine Companions for many years and played an instrumental role in bringing Canine Companions and Baylor Scott & White Health together to form the South Central Region in Texas. Now, his family members are getting involved in a new way.

Judge Kinkeade's daughter Mandy and her husband Thomas along with their two children, Carole Beth and Tripp, recently became volunteer puppy raisers when they welcomed Canine Companions puppy Junie into their hearts and home.

"When we attended our first graduation ceremony and heard the stories of how these dogs change lives, we knew puppy raising was something we wanted to do," says Mandy.

The family waited eagerly for Junie's arrival, setting a 10-day countdown and getting the children out of school early on her arrival day. Mandy says they fell in love the moment they met Junie. Now, they are working with her each day in hopes of preparing her for a life-changing future.

"We sometimes tell Junie before bed that she is destined for big things, and we believe that," says Mandy. "We know that someday soon Junie will enhance others' lives, just as she has enhanced ours."

New Staff at the South Central Region



Michelle Davison,
Executive Director

Michelle comes to Canine Companions from the American Red Cross where she worked in administration, public relations, development, health and safety, and countless disasters large and small. She has one cat and four dogs — all rescued. She is thrilled to be part of the amazing South Central Region team as we continue to grow and develop in Texas.



Bryan Harding,
Senior Development Director

Bryan brings to the South Central Region his experience in strategic planning, sales development and creating initiatives that build brands, drive business and generate revenue. Bryan has a background in non-profits, working in senior marketing and development roles in organizations including Alzheimer's Association, The Nature Conservancy, American Heart Association and PetSmart Charities.

Watching Heartley Grow

Assistance dogs often become best friends to their human partners, and Build-A-Bear Foundation has joined this ongoing mission of providing quality partnerships and forever friendships. “At Build-A-Bear, the love for furry friends is central to our mission of adding a little more heart to life — which is why we decided to partner with Canine Companions this year to help raise an assistance dog,” says Emily Fuhrman, senior manager, cause marketing and foundation.

After an exciting naming contest with over 15,000 votes, Build-A-Bear’s special puppy, Heartley, was named. True to his name, Heartley is a bundle full of heart and joy. “We can’t wait to follow Heartley’s journey as he grows up and trains to become an assistance dog,” remarks Emily.

Heartley will spend approximately 18 months with his volunteer puppy raiser, Cathy Reed, who will provide him basic obedience training, crucial socialization and lots of love. Cathy is no stranger to Canine Companions. In 2017, Cathy’s daughter Shruthi graduated with Skilled Companion Gambit, who will no doubt be a great big brother and teacher to Heartley.

“Miracles happen when you watch one little girl with her service dog being independent and doing things we all take for granted,” says Cathy of her daughter Shruthi. “I am excited that these two organizations are partnering together to enhance the lives of many more children, adults and veterans with disabilities. And I am honored to be raising Heartley because it all starts with one tiny puppy.”

In addition to following Heartley and his adventures, Build-A-Bear is also running a special promotion in honor of International Assistance Dog Week at Build-A-Bear Workshop stores across the country and online. You can support Canine Companions from August 1 – September 4 by adding \$1, \$3, or \$5 to any Build-A-Bear purchase.

Follow along on Heartley’s journey to become a Canine Companions assistance dog at buildabear.com/puppy and learn more about our partnership at cci.org/buildabear.



2019 Events Across the Country

National Graduation Days

August 9

November 8

Hearing Dog Graduation Days

Northwest and Southeast Regions Only

August 30

November 22

Skilled Companion and Facility Graduations

Northwest Region Only

October 18

Southeast Events

September 21 **PawSUP & Surf Competition**, Fort Lauderdale, FL

October 14 **Chip In For Canines Golf Outing**, Atlanta, GA

October 26 **Annual Tales & Tails Gala**, Orlando, FL

North Central Events

August 16 **Pups & Polo**, Westerville, OH

August 19 **Northern Ohio Golf Outing**, City, ST

September 19 **HAUTE DOG | CHICAGO**, Chicago, IL

September 20 **DogFest Cleveland**, Medina, OH

Southwest Events

August 2 **Invitational Golf Classic**, Carlsbad, CA

August 4 **Sit Stay Sparkle Vail**, Avon, CO

September 7 **DogFest OKC**, Oklahoma City, OK

September 14 **Colorado Barn Event**, Lakewood, CO

September 20 **Dog Days of Summer Golf Classic**, Scottsdale, AZ

September 23 **Colorado Golf Tournament**, Englewood, CO

October 12 **DogFest San Diego**, San Diego, CA

October 20 **HAUTE DOG | LA**, Los Angeles, CA

October 24 **Yappy Howl-o-ween**, Laguna Niguel, CA

South Central Events

September 19 **North Texas Giving Day**

October 5 **DogFest DFW**, Irving, TX

Northeast Events

September 21 **Dogfest Long Island**, Deer Park, NY

September 22 **DogFest DC**, Reston, VA

September 28 **Dogfest Philly-NJ**, Ewing, NJ

November 7 **Veterans Day Event**, New Hyde Park, NY

Northwest Events

September 21 **DogFest Reno**, Reno, NV

October 14 **Dawgs in the Ruff Golf Tournament**, Sacramento, CA

October 26 **DogFest Bay Area**, Oakland, CA

October 26 **Sit Stay Sparkle**, Seattle, WA



2019 Team Training Yearbook

Northwest Region

1 March: John with Fajita; Carole with Hartley III; Faye with Oneida V; Lynn with Zella IV; Dennis with Timberly II

2 March: Francisco with Vitani

3 March: Scott with Fortune IV

4 March: Wallis with Renata II

5 April: Gretchen & Deborah with Jared IV; Kristin with Yuko; Denise, Kim & Makenzie with Deputy; Cassidy & Kyle with Brulee; Julie & Olivia with Josephine IV; Drew, Renee & Andrew with Frankie VII; Kristen with Olaf III; Lisa & Michael with Wiley IV

6 May: Diana with Hadron; Sylvia with Omea II; Cindy with Hollis II; Jenna with Handy; Marv with Feisty; Izzy with Maeve II; Katie with Dizzy; India with Nico V; Susan with Dream

7 May: Ellen with Simone IV; John with Truffle II; Dean & Michele with Fanta II; Lynn with Lunette; David with Liliana

8 June: Tony with Nirvana



South Central Region

9 May: Brandy with Rya II; Madison with Josette II; Valerie with Zuni IV; Grace & Jacolyn with Siesta; Ashlyn & Cindee with Russet II; Stephanie with Yaris; Riley with Caesar VII

Northeast Region

10 April: Ryan & Barbara with Metro II; John with Oakland IV; Edith with Juno VI; Danielle with Preston VI

11 May: Jennifer with Nevada VII; Jennifer with Nitro V; Kayla, Margarita & Matthew with Vada; Lisa with Nashville IV; Paul with Valor VII; Austin & Austin Sr. with Loris; Peter with Nigel VI; David with Deuce II; Leeanne, Tom & Bonnie with Comet IV



Southeast Region

1 May: Arielle with Varona; Annie with Fallon V; Lauren with Elroy III; Maggie with Ruby X; Lori with Olea; Stephen with Kenzie III

2 May: Lexi with Viper; Meg with McGuffy; Melanie with Harley VII; Linda with Valentine III; Mia with Vizzini; Shannon with Nermal; Jaimee with Czar II; Kearria with Darling II; Jessica with Wexy; Matt K. with Sarge V; Matt L. with Zeego; Jackson, Chip & Emily with Boston V; Aiden & Tammy with Malcolm III; Lewis with Navy II; Traci with January

Southwest Region

3 May: Sam, Tara & Dan with Samir III; Stacy with Salsa; Christopher, Barbara & Sonja with Padre II; Jana & Ann with Wilson VI; Sonya & Brent with Voyager II; Colton, Tammy & Geoff with Frosty II; Jenna with Gregory III; Jean Paul & Patrice with Tucson II; Sarah & Sarah with Fergie III

North Central Region

4 May: Dan with Fritter; Brittany with Quiche III; Lorna with Truett; Heather with Lester IV; Abigail with Nifty III; Jessica with Natalie

5 May: Bernie with Iyaz; Grace with Dearborn; Jessica with Feta; Neil & Prajakta with Daria V; Emily with Fran IV; Joseph & Bethanie with Pasha IV; Matthew with Piazza II; Jack, Gina & David with Byron; Andrew & Chastity with Dena II; Robin with Alfredo II; Christina with Tayla; Isaiah & Christine with Belle V; Cathy with Lexie IV; Alexis with Fritto



Each team is matched free of charge, thanks to your donations. Visit cci.org/donate or return the enclosed envelope to give the gift of independence and give a dog a job.

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