



Tails

FROM MINNESOTA
for the friends of Can Do Canines



Summer 2010 Vol. 21 Issue 3

Three Cheers for Casper

Patrick Duggan and Casper

by Jessi Hiemer

The Duggan family of Bloomington, Minnesota never thought they'd bring a dog home. Today, however, they're doing a lot of things they didn't think they would do.

The youngest Duggan, Patrick, is 6 years old. His family describes him as sweet, snuggly, and happy. Unlike most children his age, he doesn't run home after school with stories from the playground. Patrick has autism spectrum disorder, experiences seizures, and is nonverbal. He can't tell his parents where he hurts, when he's happy, or that he loves them.

Until a few months ago, Patrick's life was quiet, centered on his family and their home. The Duggans didn't go out much as a family, because they were concerned it would be too overwhelming for Patrick, and he might bolt into a dangerous situation. Their daily life is structured to minimize Patrick's sense of overstimulation and frustration.



Patrick and Casper

When they heard a story on the local news about a child with autism and his assistance dog from Can Do Canines, the Duggans grew excited. They began the application process in 2008. Like most families who enter the Autism Assist Dog program, they were surprised by the demand for these special dogs.

When Patrick was matched with Casper, a 2-year-old Standard Poodle, Sherry Duggan hoped Casper would help Patrick remain calm in stressful situations, assist in maintaining a safe environment for Patrick, and improve Patrick's social skills. "But we never expected the quick results we've seen!" she says.

In just a few weeks, Patrick and Casper have developed a growing friendship. Before Casper, Patrick didn't pay attention to dogs. Now,

when Casper lays his head on Patrick in the car, Patrick laughs. "He's already more vocal than he was before Casper came home," Sherry says. "We hope his interaction and vocal skills will continue to grow."

To build their bond, the two share Cheerios. In public, if Patrick wants to run from his parents, Casper is a calm, steady anchor. "We have been very lucky to have great people working with us and Patrick," says Sherry. "The school, his therapists, and our Can Do Canines trainer, Dora, all helped us adjust to having Casper in our lives. He's calm, and having him around is already helping the whole family. Hearing Patrick laugh and make noise is a wonderful gift, and Casper gave us that gift." ♥

For information on helping to make other autism placements possible for those who are waiting, please contact Janet Cobus at 763-331-3000, ext. 153.

Inside This Issue

From the Executive Director	2
Greg Lee and A.J.	3
Eve Clark and Gander	4
Zachary Yanz and Midas	4
A Legacy of Love	5
New Board Member	7
New Staff Member	7
Development News	8
Cole Anderson and Dixie	9
Spring Graduation	9
Alex Nunes and Gibson	10
Jordan Gatzke and Waylon	10
Volunteer Spotlight	11

THOSE WHO MADE THIS PLACEMENT POSSIBLE

Dog Source

Rebecca Amlaw

Veterinary Services

Arden Shoreview Animal Hospital

Field Trainer

Dora Schroeder

Puppy Raisers

The Williams-Higgins Family

Foster Home

The Turner Family and
The Rog-Weisner Family



From the Executive Director Al Peters

100 Puppies!

It's hard to believe, but Can Do Canines™, home of Hearing and Service Dogs of Minnesota, now has more than one hundred puppies in training to become assistance dogs for people with disabilities. Isn't that amazing? I am so proud!

Most of those dogs are in the homes of puppy raisers throughout Minnesota. In addition, five trainees continue to live at the Faribault State Prison and ten very young puppies have recently taken up residence at Sandstone Federal



Penitentiary. These dogs are learning wonderful new skills from their dedicated trainers.

More puppies in training means more dogs delivered to people who need them most.

Our waiting lists continue to grow and the need seems to be never ending.

Thank you for supporting our work with your time, talent, and treasure. We can't do this without you.



Annual Report

I'm also proud to announce the availability of our third formal annual report in July 2010. This report will be sent to some readers through the mail, but will be available to everyone on our website. The annual report gives details of the hard work that was done during 2009 and acknowledges those who have made our work possible. I know you'll enjoy looking through it.

Heel and Wheel

One of my favorite events of the year is the Heel and Wheel Walk fundraiser that takes place each year in September.

This year we're moving to a new location in Plymouth, Minnesota at the French Regional Park on Medicine Lake. If you like dogs, this is the place to be! Whether you want to meet puppies in training or graduates with their assistance dogs, this is a wonderful way to learn more about the people who are most closely involved with the organization. It's also a great opportunity to support the organization by asking others to pledge in support of your participation. Please help us while having a good time as well. Join me on Sunday, September 19, 2010 at 1:00 p.m. for the Heel and Wheel walk.

An Opportunity

We have settled into our wonderful new facility in New Hope.

We have spacious training, meeting, and dog care facilities.

We have puppies coming in regularly and puppy raisers anxious to take on the task of giving them good manners and skills.

What's missing is enough training staff to take us to the next level. If we could add one new trainer to our staff next year, I believe we could increase the number of graduates from 30 this year to 40 next year. This is a 33% increase in graduates for less than a 4% increase in budget expense. This opportunity is a highly leveraged investment.

Last year was a difficult year for us financially. Due to the general economic climate, contributions were lower and our expenses were high. I can't risk that happening this year, so I can't add this position without knowing that I also have donations to pay the expense. To help more people get the assistance dogs they need in 2011, I need an independent investment to pay for this additional expense.

I know there's someone in our extended family that will understand this unique opportunity and will want to make this happen. Please call me at 763-331-3000 ext. 116. Thank you. ♥

Volume 21

Issue 3



In 1988, Lucky, pictured above, was the first dog we adopted from an animal shelter. She was homeless and was scheduled to be euthanized that day. Lucky served as our demonstration dog for 11 years. She is symbolic of our commitment to save homeless dogs while fulfilling our mission to serve people with disabilities.

Tails From Minnesota

Published quarterly for friends and supporters of

Can Do Canines™
ASSISTANCE DOGS

Editor/Layout/Design

Alan M. Peters Sue Schuster Shelly Hiemer

Can Do Canines is dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for people with disabilities by creating mutually beneficial partnerships with specially trained dogs.

We envision a future in which every person who needs and wants an assistance dog can have one.

Assistance dogs provide the gifts of freedom, independence, and peace of mind to our clients and their families. Our fully trained dogs, often adopted from local animal shelters, are provided to our clients who live with disabilities that involve mobility challenges, hearing loss or deafness, seizure disorders, autism, or diabetes complicated by hypoglycemia unawareness.

Dogs, training and supplies are provided to each client free of charge.

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To reach a staff member via phone, dial 763-331-3000. When you hear the greeting, dial the extension number or press 3 for an employee directory.



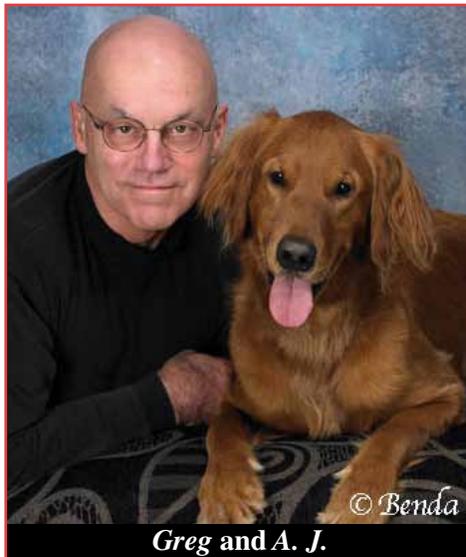
A Sense of Possibility

Greg Lee and A.J.

Greg Lee of Mendota Heights, Minnesota has never taken life lying down. His life is filled with stories of adventures as a competitive athlete, businessman, and father. When Greg was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes at 33, he took it on as one more challenge. For more than 26 years, he has carefully maintained his diet, kept active, and monitored his blood sugar levels with regular testing and insulin management.

In spite of his best effort to stay healthy, however, Greg has developed hypoglycemic unawareness. His blood sugar can become dangerously low without the usual symptoms most people feel as their blood sugar drops. That problem is most concerning when Greg is sleeping, at home alone or driving. He explains, "People think it would be easy to fix — just check your blood sugar often. I do, but it takes a certain amount of glucose in your brain to remember simple things like that. Once you cross that threshold, you don't think like a normal person. It's frightening to not remember basic, lifesaving things you do every day."

Because of his condition, Greg was placed in a University of Minnesota pancreatic cell transplant study. During the study, staff recommended he contact Can Do Canines for information on a Diabetes Assist Dog. Until then, Greg had no idea such assistance dogs existed or that they were being trained so close to him! After beginning the application process, Greg experienced a severe episode of hypoglycemic unawareness. Approximately one month before being matched with A.J., Greg's blood sugar dipped to 17 — the lowest level from which emergency personnel had seen anyone recover.



Greg and A. J.

That scare solidified Greg's determination to succeed with A.J.

Through training with the Can Do Canines staff, Greg learned how to command A.J. in a way that was most helpful to the active, loving Golden Retriever. "I was amazed at the variety of things A.J. could do!" Greg says. A.J. quickly honed in on exactly what his partner needed. Early in their training, A.J. woke Greg in the night. Once Greg realized he needed to check his blood sugar and got up to do so, A.J. left. He quickly returned and bumped into Greg's legs, carrying the tube of glucose gel from the other room. A.J. wouldn't rest until he knew Greg was OK. "Stories like this allow my family and friends to rest easy at night, knowing A.J. is on duty to help me in any way possible," Greg says.

Today, A.J. is a full-time companion for Greg. He detects low blood sugar levels, retrieves glucose gel or a bottle of pop when needed, and carries important

by Jessi Hiemer

information and supplies in his pack. He has a place under Greg's desk at work, is a regular running partner, and has even learned to bow before entering the dojang at the local martial arts studio. Together, Greg and A.J. are becoming ambassadors for Can Do Canines.

"I'm amazed at the amount of time, energy, and money that went into training A.J.," Greg says. "I know the donations of individuals and community organizations allowed me to be matched with A.J." To help other families on their road to independence with an assistance dog, Greg shares his story and served as a table captain at the annual Tails of Independence fundraising luncheon this spring. "The continued support of generous individuals is the only way Can Do Canines is able to provide assistance dogs free of charge," he adds. "And that's money and time well-spent. A.J. opened up a whole new sense of possibility for me. It seems like a new world with him by my side." ♥

Would you like to help? Call Janet Cobus at 612-729-5986, ext. 153, to learn how.

THOSE WHO MADE THIS PLACEMENT POSSIBLE

Dog Source
Sharon Lanz

Veterinary Services
Inver Grove Heights Animal Hospital and Veterinary Surgical Specialists

Puppy Raisers
Diana Adamson & Paul Oberhaus

Foster Home
Al Peters & Penny Marsala

It's Time to Update Your Will with our New Name!

by Mike Branch

As you have probably heard, Hearing and Service Dogs of Minnesota is now known as Can Do Canines.

An important part of estate planning is a regular review to be sure your estate plan is consistent with your goals, reflects current changes in tax law, and properly identifies the legal names of your intended beneficiaries. If you have included Hearing and Service Dogs of Minnesota in your will or if you have listed them as beneficiary on your IRA or retirement plan, you will need to update those documents to reflect the new name and address change as soon as possible.

Your documents should be updated to reflect the new name change to: "Can Do Canines, home of Hearing and Service Dogs of Minnesota, 9440 Science Center Drive, New Hope, Minnesota 55428".

For more information, consult your financial advisor, a qualified estate planning attorney, or call Janet Cobus at 763-331-3000, ext. 153.

A Perfect Match Eve Clark and Gander

by Anne Ingvaldstad

Eve Clark lives in Roseville, Minnesota with her husband Henry. “Ten years ago I had a remarkably ordinary life. I did all my housework, painted the house, gardened, walked and jogged. Then the falling down and walking difficulties began. My jogging and long walks stopped. My falling eliminated outside work. After several years of neurologists, Mayo Clinic determined my condition as auto-immune ataxia in 2004.” Ataxia compromises Eve’s balance, coordination and speech. She now uses a walker.

Eve was not sure if she would qualify for an assistance dog, because she felt that there were so many other people with greater needs than hers. “What really sold me on the program was going to the graduation, and seeing the diversity of people with their needs being met by their assistance dogs. It was all good, and I felt ‘Boy, I hope I get one.’”

“I didn’t know what to expect at the beginning, and I saw this big, beautiful, healthy, muscular dog, who was kind and sweet. We just fell in love. Gander has really made a profound difference in my life.” Gander is the 2-year-old yellow Labrador Retriever who has become indispensable to Eve in the short time they have been together. As Henry says, “These guys found Eve the perfect dog. It seems like he’s always been here.”



Eve and Gander

Eve says that Gander likes to retrieve and loves being a Mobility Assist Dog. He can bring Eve her shoes and bag, pick up dropped items like keys or his leash, and get Eve her afghan when she takes a nap on the couch. He responds to Eve’s soft voice, able to hear her from the other end of the house. “He loves her,” says Henry. Eve adds, “I believe, too, that he feels connected. He feels like he’s supposed to help me. He understands that and he really works with me.”

Gander has also been trained to get a phone and to get Henry, tasks that have come in handy during the short time he and Eve have been together. Eve says, “I feel more free to be independent. I

know that, with Gander able to get the phone, I can be on my own. If Henry decides to spend the afternoon going to a football game, Gander’s here and gives me company, gives me support, and helps deal with an emergency.” Eve also enjoys the other side of dog ownership – playing. She will throw the ball for Gander and take him for walks, something that her doctor has recommended to keep her fit, too.

As Eve so eloquently puts it, “Life is a work in progress. Sometimes you need a little helper.” To Can Do Canine supporters: “If you want a big bang for the buck, these dogs are the best. It makes you feel like you have a little bit of control over your life. I want to thank all the people who volunteer or donate or develop the program – everyone at Can Do Canines – for providing a great service to so many people.” ♥

We have had great success with both mixed breed dogs and purebred dogs like Gander. If you would like to make a partnership like Eve and Gander’s possible, see our website at www.can-do-canines.org

THOSE WHO MADE THIS PLACEMENT POSSIBLE

Puppy Raiser
Dora Schroeder

Foster Home
Inmates at Minnesota
Correctional Facility at Faribault

Golden Opportunities Zachary Yanz and Midas

by Anne Ingvaldstad

Zachary Yanz, 11, lives in South Minneapolis with his parents, Julie and Craig Yanz, and his brother and sister. The newest member of the family is Midas, a gorgeous, laid-back Golden Retriever from Can Do Canines. Midas is an Autism Assist Dog who has changed the Yanz family’s life in ways both subtle and dramatic.

A subtle difference is the new sparkle in Zach’s eyes now that Midas is around. Zach is non-verbal, but his mom says he loves to go on walks around the neighborhood, holding onto Midas’s harness. “What’s different now is that it’s not an adult that encourages Zach to be part of the world – it’s



Zachary and Midas

a dog, Midas,” Julie says. “It’s his friend. Zach’s needs are covered, both physically and mentally. We couldn’t ask for more.”

Zach enjoys petting Midas and throwing a ball for him. Julie comments, “Zach is able to show Midas that he loves him. A lot of kids with autism aren’t able to do that. I think that has helped the bond to grow.” Midas has also made it easier for his family to show Zach that they love him. “Zach’s body is not so defensive, which helps all of us reach him,” Julie explains.

Before Midas joined the family, it was difficult for them to go to a store

(continued on page 5)

A Legacy of Love

We recently received this wonderful letter from Legacy Club donors Fran and Cindy Herman.

*Dear Janet,
Thank you for the opportunity to tell your readers about the importance of including Can Do Canines into our Estate Planning. Both my husband and I know the importance of the love and companionship of a dog and what it can do for us humans and our well being. We also know how important quality of life is. Can Do Canines helps bring back the quality of life for individuals that desperately need it. Your dogs enable your recipients to regain self-confidence, quality of life and so much happiness. This could not happen if it was not for Can Do Canines expertise, a wonderful, caring training staff, and the dedicated foster families that prepare the dogs to*

the best they can be. When I watch the dogs at graduation and witness how happy and proud they are to be doing their new job with their new partner, I am so confident that we are doing a really great thing and our bequest will go on giving for years. When we see a client with a dog wearing a cape from Can Do Canines, we are so proud to be part of something so wonderful.

*Warm Regards,
Fran and Cindy Herman*

Legacy Club donors remember Can Do Canines in a will or trust. This is an act of thoughtful generosity they make while living and assures one of the last acts of kindness is to benefit people with disabilities and the dogs we provide to assist them. ♥



Cindy & Fran Herman with their German Shepherd, Yeager.

THANK YOU VOLUNTEERS!

A recent study showed that approximately 61.8 million Americans volunteered through organizations in 2008, up one million from the previous year. According to "Volunteering in America 2009," a study conducted by the Corporation for National and Community Service, 37% of nonprofit organizations reported increasing the number of volunteers

they use. Forty-eight percent foresee increasing their use of volunteers in the coming year.

The Midwest was listed as the top volunteer region with Minnesota listed with the third largest volunteer rate in the nation at 38.2%.

Non-volunteers say that they are more likely to serve if a trusted friend asks

them to serve. Who will you ask to join you in supporting Can Do Canines? ♥

To find out more about volunteer opportunities at Can Do Canines, contact Laurie Carlson at lcarlson@can-do-canines.org or call 763-331-3000 ext. 113.

Zachary Yanz and Midas (continued from page 4)

or a restaurant with Zach, because he would often become distressed, have meltdowns, or bolt away. "We felt isolated, as though we were the focus of negative attention because of Zach's behavior," Julie says. With Midas, she says she notices a difference not only in Zach being calmer in public, but in the public's opinion of him. "Midas clues people in that there's something going on here, and they have more compassion," she says.

Zach and his family were on the Can Do Canines waiting list for two years before meeting Midas, but Julie says it was worth the wait. "What Midas has brought our family in four weeks, we haven't felt in years," she says. "Maybe

ever!" Midas has brought a sense of peace and calm to the whole family."

Julie adds that she is grateful to Can Do Canines and its supporters for bringing Midas into her family. "Midas provides Zach with opportunities for the future," she says. "You can't put a price tag on that. We wouldn't be here without you." ♥

Team Sponsorships A Wonderful Feeling...

Mr. Bill McNeely generously sponsored Zach and Midas' training. This is the fourth Can Do Canines team he has sponsored for \$25,000. Bill receives a great deal of joy meeting the team, hearing about their progress and knowing that his

gift makes it possible for them to receive this life-changing dog at no charge to the family. Thank you, Bill!

If you would like to help change someone's life through sponsorship, contact Janet Cobus at 763-331-3000 ext. 153.

THOSE WHO MADE THIS PLACEMENT POSSIBLE

Dog Source
Sievers Retrievers

Veterinary Services
Maryland Avenue Pet Hospital

Puppy Raisers
Bill Beddie and Kathy Grant

CONTRIBUTORS

Thank you to all of our generous contributors.
Without your support we would not be able to make our mission and vision a reality.

In consideration of the best use of all you give to us, beginning January 1, 2010 all financial, service and merchandise contributions will be recognized in our annual report published once each year. Volunteers and memorials will continue to be listed in the Tails From Minnesota. This will allow us additional pages to tell our tale without additional cost! Thank you for your understanding.

VOLUNTEERS

Puppy Raisers are noted by 🐾 a beside their names - Thank You!

🐾 The Abrahamson family	Megan Ehlert	Don Knutson	John & Zach Robinson
🐾 Diana Adamson & Paul Oberhaus	🐾 Sara Ehlert	🐾 Kim Kriesel	The Rog family
🐾 The Alexander family	Sharon Elbert	MarySue Krueger	Kristina Rudd
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Suzanne & Richard Kraft	Annie & "Cody"
Liz Lucast	Kim & Ken Olson's Birthday!
Linda & Michael Schuveiller	Warren & Karen Kamps
	50th Wedding Anniversary
Jennifer & Mark Warner	"Amos"

New Board Member

Mike Branch

Mike Branch has been a supporter of Can Do Canines for several years. Last year he volunteered in many ways including as a dog foster home provider, a table captain at Can Do Canine's annual Tails of Independence Luncheon, and as table sponsor for the Fetching Ball in November. In January 2010 Mike joined our Board of Directors.

In his professional life Mike is a Certified Financial Planner™ with Focus Financial in Roseville. He works with many retired clients and

often has the opportunity to help them leverage their retirement plans and other resources for the benefit of the charitable organizations they support.

Mike's personal life is filled with many family activities and personal interests. He lives in Lino Lakes with his wife, Lynn, two daughters, Laura and Sarah, a rescue cat named Logee and a lovable 14-month old Labrador Retriever named Leo. This summer he is focusing on training Leo to become a certified Therapy Dog. ♥



Mike Branch

New Staff Member

Laura Waudby, new full time trainer at Can Do Canines, is responsible for the in-house training of our dogs. Having volunteered as a puppy raiser for the organization several years ago, she has a unique knowledge of the skills needed to make an outstanding assistance dog. She has worked in several areas of dog training, including leading group obedience courses and teaching private lessons.

Laura's family includes her husband, Adam, her Welsh Corgi, Lance, and her Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retriever, Vito. Laura enjoys obedience and agility competitions.

Welcome Laura! ♥



Laura with Vito and Lance

Join the Minnesota Renaissance Festival and Can Do Canines for the 2010 Charity Auction on September 25 & 26



Patrons at the Renaissance Festival will have the opportunity to join the Charity Auction and bid on items

like concert tickets, theatre tickets, restaurant gift certificates, bottles of wine, vineyard tours, pet gift baskets and more. All proceeds of the auction will benefit the Can Do Canines.

Don't have your tickets to RenFest yet? Go to www.renaissancefest.com/mrf and enter promo code **CanDo** to receive a \$5.00 discount!

Payroll Deduction Makes Giving Easy!

When you take advantage of payroll deductions to support Can Do Canines, you don't even need a stamp—the payroll department at work takes care of everything. A small gift, taken from each paycheck, can amount to a significant contribution to our organization. If your company offers matching funds, we can receive a gift from your employer as well.

Can Do Canines has met all standards of the Charities Review Council, so you know your money will be invested well.

Can Do Canines is not a United Way agency. However, you can make a donation to Can Do Canines through

the United Way by using the payroll-deduction option called "donor choice." To make a contribution through the United Way, use the "other" line, mention "donor choice," and write our name and address:

Can Do Canines
9440 Science Center Drive
New Hope, MN 55428

If you are employed by the federal government—whether in a military or a civilian position—you can make contributions via payroll deduction through the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC). Our CFC number is 67285. Sometimes Can Do Canines is listed under our previous corporate name,

the Companion Dog Connection, Inc. or Hearing and Service Dogs of Minnesota.

If you choose to contribute through payroll deductions, please let us know so we can thank you and recognize your gift. This year, we expect United Way designations and CFC contributions to surpass \$15,000! Thank you for your generosity. ♥



#67285

DEVELOPMENT NEWS

by Janet Cobus

We have many great fundraising ideas this summer. For information on any of the projects listed here, contact Janet Cobus at [jacobus@can-do-canines.org](mailto:jcobus@can-do-canines.org) or 763-331-3000, ext. 153.

Are you a Thrivent Policy Holder?

We need you! Thrivent contributes to nonprofits that have Thrivent Policy Holders as volunteers. Contact Janet Cobus if you are a policyholder.



Minnesota Renaissance Pet Gate-Volunteers Needed

August 21st – October 3rd
Weekends, Labor Day, &
Friday, October 1st

Help raise \$2,500 or more by working at the Pet Gate and checking in dogs visiting the festival. Receive free admission to the festival on the day you work, a \$6.00 food coupon and a ticket to come back another day. The minimum age is 16 with an adult or 18 without an adult. To volunteer, contact Patty Wirz at pattywirz@yahoo.com. Sign up now, volunteer slots fill up fast!



It's Chocolate Time - New Flavors this year, too!

Everyone loves a good chocolate bar! Would you help us sell our World's Finest Chocolate bars? You can check out a box of 50 and sell them for \$1.00 each. The organization earns 50¢ for each bar sold. They are delicious! They will be available at the Heel and Wheel walk on September 19 or in our office. Contact Jessica at 763-331-3000, ext. 152 or jnadeau@can-do-canines.org to reserve your box!



Order of the Eastern Star

has chosen to raise funds for assistance dog agencies during the next three years. Three graduate teams attended a kick-off dinner in May to speak about Can Do Canines and thank the Eastern Star members for committing to helping us place more assistance dogs with people who need them. Dick McGinnis is in charge of the project and we thank him for his efforts.



Clyde with Dick & Bonnie McGinnis

Dollars for Doers

Do you work for a company that offers charitable contributions for their employees who volunteer? We have benefited from the Kohl's policy to donate dollars for their store employees' volunteer efforts. This program has resulted in \$5,000 in support of our programs. If your company has the same policy, please contact us to learn how you can volunteer.

Tails of Independence Fundraising Luncheon



Our Sixth Annual Luncheon was our best yet! More than 300 people reserved a spot. We received \$35,990 in gifts and pledges from more than 140 people. Thank you to all our table captains and speakers for a wonderful job this year! ♥

In the Spring 2010 issue of Tails from Minnesota, we incorrectly identified the veterinarian pictured with Al Peters and Annie Craft. Pictured was Dr. Andrew Mills of Veterinary Dermatology and Allergy Centre. Thank you Dr. Mills for nominating Cody for the Animal Hall of Fame! ♥



June 15th - Saint Paul Saints Game Fundraiser

Thanks to everyone that attended!

Mary Rhatigan and her Diabetes Assist Dog, Ebony, kicked off the game by throwing out the first pitch. We all had a great time! Thanks to Sharon Steinbrecher for organizing this effort again this year and to Culligan Water for donating water bottles for our participants. ♥

Mary Rhatigan & Ebony
throwing the first pitch

Well Worth the Effort
Cole Anderson and Dixie

by Karen Zemniak

The first thing you notice about 12-year-old Cole Anderson is his infectious smile and sweet voice. He lives in Chisago City, Minnesota with his parents, Eric and Stacia and his brother, William. In many ways, Cole is a typical sixth grader: he enjoys Legos, reading, swimming and using his computer. He also loves camping and is fond of animals, especially dogs.

Cole has a condition called Duchenne muscular dystrophy, which is characterized by rapidly progressing muscle degeneration. Over the years, it has become a challenge for Cole to do everyday activities like picking up dropped items. He uses a power scooter to get around in public and at school, but as his disease progresses, even that is becoming difficult.

At the Minnesota State Fair, Cole and his family learned about Can Do Canines through a brochure and decided to look into being matched with a Mobility Assist Dog for Cole.

In his application, Cole wrote, "An assistance dog would be a companion. It would be able to provide assistance with my physical environment as I progressively lose my abilities. It could help me get off the floor, open doors,



Cole and Dixie

pick up items from the floor, carry objects and open drawers."

Once Cole was accepted into the program, he didn't have to wait long to be matched with Dixie, a sweet, enthusiastic yellow Labrador Retriever. One of Dixie's most important tasks is to retrieve an emergency phone for Cole on command. Now Cole's family knows that, if he needs help while alone and cannot reach the phone, Dixie will bring it to him.

Dixie also retrieves Cole's backpack, which can be too heavy for Cole sometimes. She opens the back door for him, and she can retrieve a soft book

as easily she can as a metal spoon. The most endearing of her all traits? Cole reports, "She likes kissing and snorting!"

Cole will soon attend a muscular dystrophy conference, and he wants everybody there to know what a difference Dixie has made in his life. "It's well worth the effort of training her," he says. "That's not even a question, although she gets up at six in the morning, even on Saturdays." He also gives a heartfelt thanks to all the donors at Can Do Canines, saying, "It's a great cause. We couldn't do it without all of you." ♥

To make more dogs available for children like Cole, visit us at www.can-do-canines.org.

THOSE WHO MADE THIS PLACEMENT POSSIBLE

Dog Source

The Lenneman Family

Foster Home

Mike McCarthy & Janice Parrow

Puppy Raisers

The Holicky Family

Special Thanks

Jenny Mitchell, Tealwood Labradors

Veterinary Services

Inver Grove Animal Hospital and Veterinary Surgical Specialists

14 New Teams Say "We Can Do It!" at Spring Graduation

Can Do Canines proudly introduced fourteen new client and assistance dog teams at their May 23, 2010 graduation ceremony. This was the first time graduation was held on-site at the new Can Do Canines facility in New Hope, Minnesota.

The teams included two Hearing Assist Dogs, six Mobility Assist Dogs, one Diabetes Assist Dog, one Special Skills Dog and four Autism Assist Dogs. Clients' families and friends, puppy raiser families, foster care providers, supporters and volunteers made up the audience of more than 250. Each team was honored with a video presentation demonstrating their skills, a certificate, and each dog received a mortarboard hat and a Nylabone diploma. ♥



At left, graduate teams (bottom row) Katherine and "Summer", Christy and "Eli", Eve and "Gander", Courtney and "Honey", (top row) Peter and "Guido", Kim and "Bishop", Deb and "Oma", and Mary and "Ebony" all proudly celebrated their successful completion of the Can Do Canines certification program.



Above, Autism Assist teams Owen and "Elmer", Carter and "Rodney", Alex and "Seymour", and Nick and "Fisher" celebrated with their families.



Lions Club dignitaries joined in the celebration.

A Dog and His Boy

Alex Nunes and Gibson

Life with children is hectic enough, but Stephanie and Ed Nunes of Carver, Minnesota got triple the diapers, bottles, and love when they had triplets Audrey, Emma, and Alex in 2003.

Then they learned that Alex has autism spectrum disorder (ASD). “Now, not only is your life hectic, but it is chaotic, loud, and sometimes very frightening if your child bolts away or has a meltdown,” Stephanie says. “You do everything possible to help them, including special teachers, at-home schooling, looking for whatever could make their world easier, safer, and more comfortable.”

The Nunes family heard about Autism Assist Dogs and wondered if one would help Alex. When their pet Boxer passed away, Stephanie says, “We realized what a special relationship Alex had with her. If Alex got upset, he would go to the dog and throw his arms around her head, which seemed to help calm him.”

Stephanie began researching assistance dog organizations and found Can Do Canines right in her own backyard. Two years after Alex was accepted into the program, he and his family were matched with Gibson, a lanky 4-year-old yellow Labrador Retriever.

Stephanie describes the difference Gibson has made during something as simple as a walk in their neighborhood. “In the past, Alex might have



Alex and Gibson

screamed the entire way around the neighborhood,” she says. “He would run away from us to ring people’s doorbells. We tried bringing his therapist along, we tried giving him little treats - nothing helped. He might stop and refuse to walk any further. We had to hold him by the wrist, and every day he was getting older and bigger.”

Now, Alex realizes he can’t break away from Gibson. He still has tantrums, but Gibson holds him in place. When the tantrum subsides, they walk together again. Gibson has allowed Alex and his sisters to go more places and do more things. “The girls know that Alex has special needs. They say “Gibson helps

by Allison Schildknecht

Alex,” Stephanie says, “and they have suggestions for where we can go next. They’re excited to try going to the zoo.”

Gibson doesn’t just help Alex and his family in public; he is a source of comfort around the house, too. “When I told Alex he couldn’t play on his computer, he ran into his sister’s room, and Gibson followed him,” Stephanie recounts. “Then, I heard him telling the dog, ‘I wanna cry. I need a hug, Gibson!’”

Gibson seems to feel the same way about Alex. Stephanie says, “Gibson knows who ‘his boy’ is. He howls in happiness when he sees Alex’s school bus coming around the corner.” ♥

Contributions are critical to helping us serve more people with disabilities and give a good life to homeless dogs, but volunteering is just as important. We can’t continue this work without dedicated puppy raisers like Marge and Dave Skeie, who raised Gibson. Visit our website at www.can-do-canines.org to learn about the many ways you can help. Or call Laurie Carlson about volunteer opportunities at 763-331-3000, ext. 113.

THOSE WHO MADE THIS PLACEMENT POSSIBLE

Dog Source
Jennifer Frederickson

Puppy Raiser
Marge and Dave Skeie

Smoothing Out the Transitions

Jordan Gatzke and Waylon

Anyone who works with children knows that a schedule provides order and gives children a sense of security, but not every minute of the day can be orchestrated. Most children learn to “go with the flow”, but that isn’t the case for Jordan Gatzke, 9, of Brooklyn Park, Minnesota, who has autism spectrum disorder (ASD). “Going shopping meant at least an hour trying to get Jordan away from clocks, timers and watches – anything with a dial,” says Tammy Gatzke, Jordan’s mother.

Like many children with ASD, Jordan has difficulty moving from one activity to the next. He engages in repetitive behaviors, and he will wander or bolt away from his mom. “I have to keep a



Jordan and Waylon

by Jan Charwood

constant eye on him and hold his hand when we leave home,” she explains. “That’s becoming more difficult as he continues to grow.”

Watching a local newscast one day, Tammy heard about Can Do Canines Autism Assist Dog program. In the application, she wrote, “My hope is that an Autism Assist Dog will be a calming influence on Jordan, and that it will help to increase his independence by calming some of the fears we have of losing him.”

After being accepted into the program, they waited patiently for two years for a match for Jordan. They were introduced to Waylon, a handsome
(continued on page 11)

Volunteer Spotlight - Jessi Hiemer

by Laurie Carlson

Jessi Hiemer of Fridley, Minnesota first became aware of Can Do Canines when her mother, Shelly, was partnered with a Diabetes and Mobility Assist Dog, Grace. Grace is trained to detect Shelly's low blood sugar and to help with physical tasks when Shelly is feeling the effects of fibromyalgia. At the time, Jessi lived out of state, but she realized what an difference having Grace made in her mother's life.

Jessi wanted to find a way to give back to Can Do Canines as a way to say thank you, but was living in Parkersburg, WV. Even though she couldn't do traditional hands-on volunteering, she found ways to get involved. Jessi organized puppy supply drives with her students each year and wrote newsletter articles while visiting family over winter break.

In the spring of 2009, Jessi moved back to Minnesota and started volunteering for the organization. By then, her mother, Shelly, was part of our staff, and her father, Al, was already quite involved volunteering in indispensable ways. She jumped right in and got busy! Jessi began by helping with different office projects, staffing booths representing the organization at numerous events, assisting with the Heel and Wheel Walk



Jessi on the go for Can Do Canines

and working on the Gala fundraising event. She also assisted with the new facility makeover, helped us pack up the office and helped during our big move in January 2010. Whew!

In addition, her parents had begun puppy raising a chocolate Labrador Retriever named Joy and she assisted in the training.

Jessi has been instrumental in promoting Can Do Canines to the Minnesota Jaycees and encouraging chapters to take

on our organization as a charity project. She also served as Table Captain for the 2010 Tails of Independence luncheon, encouraging her fellow Jaycees to invest their time, talents, and resources in the organization.

Jessi is always willing to help in every way she can, and she has such a wonderful attitude. We are truly fortunate to have her involved with Can Do Canines. Thank you, Jessi! ♥

What about you?

Are you willing to give the gift of time? We need help in the following areas:

- Puppy raiser (14 to 16 months)
- Short-term dog foster home (2 to 4 weeks)
- Special Events Fundraising Committee – help think up new ideas for raising funds!
- Heel and Wheel Dog Walk committee member – help out at the event on Sunday, September 19th

Contact Volunteer Coordinator Laurie Carlson, for more information at lcarlson@can-do-canines.org or 763-331-3000 ext. 113.



Clients told their stories in our presentation

CAN DO CANINES PRESENTS A SEMINAR!

Can Do Canines was honored to be asked to present a seminar at the Assistance Dogs International Conference in Toronto, Canada on our method of training Diabetes Assist Dogs. Executive Director Al Peters and Director of Training Julianne Larsen presented to a full room and were well received at the convention. Congratulations to the entire training staff for a job well done! ♥



Jordan Gatzke and Waylon (continued from page 10)

2-year-old black Labrador Retriever. Now, when the Gatzkes go out, Jordan holds the handle on Waylon's vest and the two are tethered together. If Jordan sees something that piques his interest and dashes toward it, Tammy gives the command, "Stay!" and Waylon stops, preventing Jordan from running away.

Jordan and Waylon's relationship has brought other benefits. Recently at Walmart, Jordan wanted to look at watches. "I told him we couldn't and prepared to do battle," Tammy says. "He just said, 'OK, mom.' I about fell over! When we got to the car, he asked,

'Mom, was I a good boy in Walmart?' I told him he was a very good boy and asked if having Waylon helped him. He said it did. Then he wanted to go to Menards and again I had to say no. He just said, 'OK.' I almost cried, because he's never given in so easily."

Waylon is also helping Jordan learn new skills. The bond they share is strengthened as Jordan learns to feed, exercise and even care for Waylon by putting him in the kennel before school and bedtime. ♥

The waiting list for Autism Assist Dogs is still too long. Visit our website at www.can-do-canines.org to see how you can help provide more dogs to those who wait.

THOSE WHO MADE THIS PLACEMENT POSSIBLE

Dog Source

Georgine Abramson and Rosalee Rogers

Puppy Raiser

Mary Nelson



Nonprofit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Minneapolis, MN
Permit NO. 4744

Can Do Canines

home of Hearing and Service Dogs of Minnesota
9440 Science Center Drive
New Hope, MN 55428



Wish List

Dog Supplies

- ✓ Gift cards to pet supply stores
- ✓ Frontline flea and tick preventative
- ✓ Giant Nylabones and large & medium Kongs
- ✓ L or XL Vari-Kennels, new or gently used
- ✓ Donated veterinary services
- ✓ Purebred puppies

Electronics

- ✓ Network printer/scanner/copier
- ✓ **Apple computers (Macbooks, Minis, iMacs)**
- ✓ LCD computer monitors
- ✓ USB and external hard drives
- ✓ Home theater system for conference room
- ✓ LCD projector with ceiling mount

Automotive

- ✓ Gasoline cards
- ✓ Minivan
- ✓ Garmin GPS
- ✓ Auto repair/maintenance

Equipment

- ✓ **Riding lawnmower or donated lawn services**
- ✓ Gas-powered power washer
- ✓ **Platform truck, 1,000-lb capacity**
- ✓ **Warehouse pallet truck, 5,000-lb capacity**
- ✓ Wet/Dry ShopVac
- ✓ 6 ft. plastic tables

Miscellaneous

- ✓ Gift cards to grocery and office supply stores
- ✓ Office supplies (paper, markers, mailers, stamps)
- ✓ Bleach, surface cleaner, laundry detergent

Building Materials

- ✓ 12' x 16' stage with ramp
- ✓ Stage lighting
- ✓ Kitchen cabinets
- ✓ Bathroom storage cabinet, small
- ✓ Gift certificates to home improvement stores

Items in **bold** are our most pressing needs!

For more wish list items, please go to www.can-do-canines.org/donate/wish_list.shtml

A special thanks to all of you who previously supplied us with wish list items! You made our wishes come true! ♥

Upcoming Events

- July 31 *Tails To Tell* Tour 10:00 a.m.
- August 19 *Tails To Tell* Tour 7:00 p.m.
- September 19 *Heel and Wheel Walk* 1:00 p.m.
New Day! Join us on SUNDAY for a beautiful walk at Clifton French Park in Plymouth!
- October 2 *Tails To Tell* Tour 10:00 a.m.

* All *Tails to Tell* tours take place at our facility, located at 9440 Science Center Drive, New Hope, MN 55428
Please email info@can-do-canines.org or call our office at 763-331-3000 to reserve a spot.

17th Annual Heel and Wheel Walk September 19th, 1 PM Clifton French Park Plymouth, Minnesota



Independence Sponsors

graphic Resources

Thrivent Financial for Lutherans

Peace of Mind Sponsors

**Spring Lake Park Lions
PETCO Foundation
Collision Center**

Training Sponsor

**Pampered Pooch
Playground**

Supporting Sponsor

Culligan Water

A Heel and Wheel brochure is enclosed in the center of this issue of **Tails from Minnesota!** ♥

Register online at www.heelandwheel.com