



A World of Difference Jean Lundquist and Juno

By Anne Ingvoldstad

Jean Lundquist of Good Thunder, Minn. loves the outdoors, especially working in her huge garden. Type 1 diabetes has been a way of life for Jean since she was 16 years old. Because she also lives with hypoglycemic unawareness as well, she often can not feel when her blood sugar goes too low – which can be very dangerous.

Jean was at the pharmacy when she noticed a man with an assistance dog. She struck up a conversation with him, and found that it was a Diabetes Assist Dog. Jean had never heard of dogs that could alert people to low sugar by a scent on their breath, but through further research on the web she found Can Do Canines. She applied in 2009, was accepted and began training in late 2010.

This spring, Jean finished training with Juno, a chocolate Labrador Retriever, one of a trio of puppies donated to Can Do Canines. “When I started out I was terrified that I was going to take this perfect dog and wreck her, because I wasn’t going to know how to do things with her.” Jean says “I was so nervous when I brought her home. But training was a lot of fun, and I soon got over being so nervous.”

Juno was very attuned to Jean right from the start. One of their very first days together, Juno alerted her to a low blood sugar by jumping up and putting her nose right in Jean’s face. Jean recalls, “I said, ‘OK Juno, I don’t think I’m low but I’ll check’, and Juno was right!” Juno has also started to alert Jean when her blood sugar is high - which is not something that was included in her initial training.

Juno has also been learning to fetch Jean’s glucose tablets if she detects that her blood sugar is low. One day Juno checked her blood sugar level and then just walked away, which Jean thought was odd until Juno came back with the tablets! Jean marvels that Juno was smart enough to link the two skills very quickly.

When asked what she would say to others considering applying for an assistance dog, Jean says she would absolutely encourage it. “You have to understand that it is a big responsibility to have a dog with you all the time. It’s important to let everyone know what to expect if you are going out to dinner or a movie, for example. For anyone who likes dogs, it’s the best thing that could possibly happen.”

Jean added “I am so thankful that Can Do Canines does the work that they do every day. I know they must hear this all the time, but it makes such a world of difference to people like me. I never knew what having a dog like this could mean. Thank you.”



A Member of the Family Matt Pruner and Teddy

by Laurie Carlson

Matt Pruner of Sioux Falls, SD leads a busy life with his wife, Amber. He goes to work, enjoys sports like hunting and fishing, and attends sporting events.

Something else that keeps this twenty-seven year old busy is physical therapy. Four years ago he had a spinal cord injury due to a swimming accident. Diagnosed as having C3-C4 quadraplegia, Matt is paralyzed from the neck down, with minimal strength in his upper body. The added challenges don't keep him down, though. Described by friends as having a positive attitude, he's determined to make the most of every situation.

While surfing the internet, Matt learned about service dogs. He checked out several organizations and decided to apply with Can Do Canines. Once his application was completed and he met with trainers, Matt was matched with Teddy, a two-year-old Australian Labradoodle. "Before we started training, I didn't know how a Mobility Assist Dog could help me, and it was fun learning with Teddy."

In the midst of training, Matt developed a pressure sore, which became serious enough that he had to quit his job and be on bed rest for 8 weeks. It was a difficult time but with Teddy around to help, the couple was able to avoid hiring someone full time to help Matt. A part-time care attendant was able to fill in the gaps. Teddy gave Matt a lot of comfort and companionship during the long healing process. "I felt more secure having him here. It gave Amber peace of mind too when she couldn't be home with me." He laughs "Teddy would get as close as he could to me in bed, sometimes climbing on top of me."

Now, Teddy retrieves dropped items for Matt and opens the door with a tug rope. Out in public, Teddy hits push plates for automatic door openers. Another added bonus is the social bridge the dog provides for Matt. "Before Teddy, people tended to shy away from a person in a wheelchair. Since Teddy arrived, I find myself talking more to people."

Matt's advice to those interested in applying for their own assistance dog? "It's 100% worth it! Be patient, it will happen. Teddy is now more like a family member to us, and it's hard to remember life when he wasn't here."



Changing Lives Megan Krantz and Savi

by Laurie Carlson

Megan Krantz is a lively, bright and happy eleven year old girl. She lives in Blaine, Minn. with her parents, Catherine and Jason, and twin brother Brian. She shares some of the same interests with other kids her age including music, dance and sports, as well as movies and TV.

Megan and her brother Brian were born 16 weeks premature. She had difficulties that come with being born too early and spent three months at the hospital before coming home. Then Megan was diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) at the age of two. Catherine says "She just stopped interacting, stopped talking. At first we didn't go out at all; it was too hard. Megan had tantrums and we ended up carrying her everywhere."

Megan also lives with obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD). At times she becomes overstimulated and upset if things don't happen the way she expects. With OCD, it is hard for her to adjust to change. While Megan is very verbal, she has difficulties feeling a sense of safety, using good judgment, and physical sensations are difficult for her. This year, however, she is thrilled to join a mainstream classroom at school and is very interested in building friendships with her new classmates.

Three years ago Catherine and Jason decided that an Autism Assist Dog would be a good fit for their family and researched several organizations around the country. "They all required that we travel to their facility for several weeks." Catherine says. "We just couldn't do that. With her OCD, Megan must be able to be in her own bedroom." In 2008, Catherine struck up a conversation with another mother of a child with autism, Ali Jarvis. Ali runs Sidewalk Dog, an online newsletter for dog lovers. She suggested that Catherine and Jason contact Can Do Canines.

Due to the long waiting list for Autism Assist Dogs, it took more than two years for Megan to receive her dog. Savi, a two-year-old Golden Retriever, was a perfect match. During the training process Catherine says, "I was nervous at first, but everything happened slowly and comfortably. The staff was always available to answer any questions."

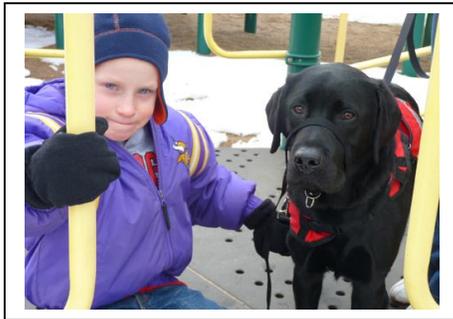
Now that Savi has come into their lives, Megan is calmer when they go out of the house. Their first trip as a team was to Target. Catherine was thrilled when they were able to leave the Barbie toy aisle with minimal fuss. "Before, it would have been a major meltdown. It's easier now and I don't get dirty looks from other people if Megan does act up. They see the dog in cape, realize the situation and are more understanding. I'm not used to that!"

Savi also sleeps with Megan and that has helped her parents. Catherine says, "Megan sometimes wakes up in the middle of the night. Before, that meant I had to get up too. Now

that Savi is here, Megan just lies in bed and talks to Savi for awhile before she falls back to sleep.”

When asked for advice to others contemplating applying for an Autism Assist Dog, Catherine says “You definitely should do it. I thought with Savi coming into our lives, the changes would be drastic and hard to adjust, but it hasn’t happened that way. What Savi does for Megan so outweighs any small adjustments we had to make. It was worth the 2 ½ year wait!”

She and Jason would like to thank Can Do Canines supporters for donating the money needed to train Savi. “I’m a stay at home mom with two children with autism. There is no way we could afford the cost ourselves. Savi has changed our lives, and we’re very appreciative of what you all do!”



New Found Freedom Dylan Orndorff & Munroe

By Shelly Hiemer

The Orndorff family of Golden Valley, Minn. was used to a hectic lifestyle. Mom Laurene and Dad Dave easily handled the doctor and therapy appointments for their 22 year- old daughter, Jamie, who has cerebral palsy. Then add in twin boys,

Dylan and Davis and the house became joyful pandemonium. Then things began to change. Dylan seemed to withdraw and have outbursts on a more frequent basis. The once bright and bubbly little boy lost his social skills and his fear dangerous situations. He would often bolt away from his parents. Soon, Dylan was diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

The once active family started to feel their world becoming smaller. They avoided going out in public where Dylan could become overwhelmed. Even a simple walk through the neighborhood was trying as Dylan would bolt away with no fear of running into the street.

When Laurene heard from a friend about dogs assisting children with ASD, she was intrigued. In July of 2008 the Orndorffs applied to Can Do Canines. In their application they wrote, “We hope a dog will assist in keeping Dylan safe, be a calming influence for him and help him stay calm at night.” After being accepted into the Autism Assist Program, they waited patiently until this winter when Client Services Coordinator Dora Schroeder, who Dylan calls “Dora the Dog Lady”, visited them again. Laurene wrote in a note to Dora:

“I needed to write and thank you for visiting us this afternoon. We are so excited to know that we “are close” to having an assistance dog for Dylan and our family.

Tonight we started talking about the possibilities our family will be able to experience with Dylan in the future. Simple things families take for granted such as going to McDonald's; out for pizza, a movie, or walking to the park instead of driving hoping Dylan did not have a meltdown. We envision this as our "get out of home free" pass since we are very cautious as to not over stimulate Dylan in a new environment, therefore staying close to home or places Dylan is familiar with.

We view the service dog as a new way that Dylan can interact with other kids. With the dog calming Dylan, we are hoping this increases the opportunity for him to develop additional social skills. We are looking for a strong friendship/partnership to develop between Dylan and his dog, with each day passing growing stronger which will allow him the chance to use his newly developed skills with his classmates, neighborhood kids and others."

Soon they were informed that a beautiful black Labrador Retriever named Munroe was ready to meet the family. Laurene and Dave began basic dog training and quickly learned the necessary assistance dog handling skills. Then it was time for Munroe to meet Dylan and the rest of the family. Laurene says, "The very first night that we had Munroe, the boys (Dylan and Davis), knowing that Munroe would be in his crate in their bedroom, were bugging us to go to bed. This was unheard of. At 8PM we decided what the heck, and let them go to bed to see what would happen. Well, within 15-20 minutes I went up to check on them and all three of them were sound asleep and stayed asleep and in bed until about 7:30 the next morning! This was the first time in 7 years that Dylan actually slept all through the night. Before Munroe, just going to bed was a 2-3 hour ordeal. He would come down stairs for a drink, or a book, or want to lie on the couch and this would go on for hours. So the first night and every night since then have been awesome!"

Now Dylan is in charge of "taking care of Munroe". In the morning it is cute to hear Dylan say "come on Munroe, time for you to eat. Now you need to sit while I get your food and water. Now keep sitting Munroe - ok now you can eat". Then Dylan sits down, watches and giggles because Munroe eats the food up in about 30 seconds! Then Dylan takes him out to get busy, lets him in, and gives him a treat. Then Munroe runs upstairs to wake up Davis.

Now, Dylan and Munroe like going to stores, out on walks, and to the nursing home where his Grandma and Grandpa live. He tells everyone, "this is Munroe the Dog, pet him gently."

Laurene says of the new found freedom, "We never in a million years thought having an assistance dog for Dylan would ever happen but it did. We would not change a single thing. The walks we now enjoy are a wonderful time to spend with the boys and Munroe. Knowing that we can take Dylan and Munroe in public and not worry about him sprinting off is just like a having a big weight lifted off of our shoulders!

On a recent visit to the veterinarian, a woman in the waiting room commented on how beautiful Munroe was. When Laurene told her he came from Can Do Canines, the woman said that she and her husband donate to Can-Do-Canines and will watch for watch for Munroe's picture in one of the upcoming newsletters that she receives. Laurene says, "So it is people like them that make it all possible for families like ours – thank you."

