



Tails for You

a publication of Can Do Canines®

Middle of the night wakeup calls used to happen six to eight times a night.

Since you helped bring Nolan to the family, Riley hasn't woken his mother up once.



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NOLAN: A COCOON OF SECURITY

You helped provide Nolan; He helped provide a family relief



Photo by Nichole Laase

Two days before receiving a call that an assistance dog would be joining their family, five-year-old Riley Gallo and his mother Cathy were outside getting ready to go trick-or-treating on Halloween. Suddenly Riley bolted, sprinting at full-speed away from the house.

“With Nolan, Riley just has a better way of calming himself down—of dealing with it—than he did before.”

Cathy had become accustomed to this behavior and immediately sprang into action to catch him. She launched herself off the front stairs, but landed wrong, twisting her ankle and hitting her head on a pickup truck in the driveway. To make matters worse, she knew Riley would keep going if she didn't stop him. Despite her injury, she jumped up and continued the chase. Luckily, Riley's grandfather was able to catch up and save him from harm. While this situation was an extreme case, days like these were not uncommon in the Gallo house.

Riley lives in Ramsey, Minn. with his mother Cathy and an extended family of five. While his actual diagnosis is more than 80 pages long, Riley's primary disabilities include a variety of pervasive developmental disorders, such as autism. His symptoms began when he was just a year and a half old and Cathy says that for much of his early life, Riley would stare into space in an almost catatonic condition.

“Basically, the only time he would ever make any sound was if he was crying,” Cathy says.

Despite these setbacks, the Gallo family was determined that Riley grow up and live as independent a life as possible. They began by enrolling Riley in more than 40 hours a week of physical, speech and behavioral therapy, which Cathy says helped Riley progress “by leaps and bounds” from age two to four. However, she noticed sleep issues escalating, an increase in bolting, and trouble relating to peers. After the family's doctor recommended that an assistance dog might help, Cathy applied to Can Do Canines.

Enter Nolan, a four-year-old black Labrador retriever. In no time this calm, attentive Autism Assist Dog has had a profound effect on the Gallo family.

“In the past, Riley would probably not talk to you, but now if you ask him about his dog, he will tell you everything you need to know,” Cathy says. “Even information about Nolan you don't care to know about, he will let you know!”



*When out in public Autism Assist Dog Nolan is tethered to Riley to prevent him from bolting.
Photo by Nichole Laase.*



Photo by Angie Koos Photography

OUTSIDE THE FENCE

How your support, a puppy and a prison inmate transformed Rich's life for the better

It's a rainy Tuesday morning outside the Can Do Canines facility in New Hope, Minn.

The sound of raindrops echo off the walls of the building and in the distance the muffled roar of cars on Highway 169 can be heard zooming past. But underneath this typical spring soundtrack, the tiny voices of Labrador retriever puppies can be heard as they carefully take their place in crates in the back of a Subaru.

"These guys are Coal, Noel and Candy. They're four months old," says Kaity McGinn, Puppy Program Instructor, as she secures Coal into his crate. "They're headed for the Federal Prison Camp in Duluth to be raised by inmates."

A key component in raising future assistance dogs, Can Do Canines Prison Puppy Program operates in four Minnesota prisons and involves 40 to 50 dogs at a given time. The puppies usually enter at around 18 weeks of age and each are assigned two handlers. This is a special privilege for carefully selected inmates. Inmates raise the dog, teach obedience, and in some cases, even teach assistance dog skills, such as pulling open a door or turning on a light switch.

One former inmate is Keith Ward who spent 15 months in the Minnesota Correctional Facility at Faribault. During that time, Keith helped raise three dogs—two of which are now assisting people with disabilities. Not only did he feel good about raising dogs that would one day help someone living with a disability, but the program provided focus and an avenue for self-improvement for Keith.



Former inmate Keith Ward with Seizure Assist Dog Journey. Photo by Angie Koos Photography.

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There is also a marked difference in Riley's sleep difficulties. If he wakes up in the night, he will call Nolan for comfort instead of waking his mom. And if Nolan is sleeping and doesn't respond, Riley will just get up and crawl in bed with him! Cathy says that middle of the night wakeup calls used to happen six to eight times a night. Since Nolan joined the family, Riley hasn't woken her up once.

Riley also has anxiety about people watching and judging him when he makes a mistake. Nolan changes that dynamic because he offers no judgment. Riley feels it's okay to be himself and maybe even make a mistake. When he does

begin to feel anxious or overstimulated, Riley cuddles with Nolan and is able to calm himself down. Cathy describes it as a "cocoon of security" for Riley. She is grateful that Nolan can create that feeling.

"It's different," Cathy says. "The stress level is still there, the anxiety is still there, but with Nolan, Riley just has a better way of calming himself down—of dealing with it—than he did before."

Since Nolan has come into their lives, the Gallos report that Riley is calmer, happier and even healthier. "Nolan is not only a blessing," Cathy says, "but he is Riley's best friend."

JULY 2012



Journey is born through Can Do Canines breeding program.

NOVEMBER 2012



Journey enters the Minnesota Correctional Facility at Faribault to be raised by Keith Ward.

AUGUST 2014



Journey returns to Can Do Canines for final training and to await placement with a client.

NOVEMBER 2014



Journey moves in with Rich Sheehan and the two become a certified Can Do Canines assistance dog team.

APRIL 2015



At Can Do Canines Graduation Ceremony, Keith Ward ceremoniously passes Journey's leash over to Rich.

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"The dogs gave me purpose every day to make the right decision," Keith says. "I found myself looking out for the dog's best interest before my own. In short, they helped me become a 'model inmate.'"

Keith was released in September 2014 and is now employed full-time in residential construction. He says that much of his positive rehabilitation comes from the confidence, dedication, and patience he learned in the puppy program. Prison officials report that it's not only the participating inmates that benefit—the entire prison environment seems to be positively transformed. They say that some offenders haven't seen a dog in decades, and when they pet one, their whole demeanor changes.

"The units are definitely calmer and carry a sense of shared focus," says Bruce Reiser, Warden of the Minnesota Correctional Facility at Faribault. "These puppies are changing lives both inside prison and out."

One of those lives changed is Rich Sheehan of Coon Rapids, Minn. In May, 2010, Rich was working on his house and fell 25 feet to the ground below. Two days later, he suffered a massive stroke, which left him with little use of his right arm, difficulty moving his right leg, speech issues, and prone to seizures. So, Rich applied to Can Do Canines for help.



In addition to retrieving dropped items and other mobility-related tasks, Seizure Assist Dog Journey licks Rich's hands and face which helps him acclimate after a seizure.

Journey, a two-year old black Labrador retriever was currently working his way through the Prison Puppy Program and being trained by Keith. After Keith said his goodbyes, Journey was returned to Can Do Canines for final training. It was decided Journey would be a good match for Rich.

Rich's mother Mary remembers, "He was more excited than I've ever heard him. He kept saying 'Journey's coming in two days!'"

Journey is now an integral part of Rich's life, paying close attention for any way he can help. He picks up dropped items and places them in Rich's hand. Journey can get the phone for Rich and find another person to help if Rich needs it. Most importantly Journey helps him during a seizure by curling up beside him and licking his hands and face. This helps Rich acclimate to his surroundings after an episode, which Rich reports is "very comforting."

Summing up their new partnership together, Mary says, "There is no way our family can thank you enough for this special

gift that you have given our son. The joy and comfort that your dogs bring, not only to our son, but to all those people who need help most, is amazing. You will forever be in our thoughts and prayers."

You Can Give Our Puppies a Prison Break!

As the dogs in our Prison Puppy Program will one day be helping people "outside the fence"—we need your help opening the gate! Volunteers are needed to provide our puppies in training a minimum of two "furloughs" a month to work on good house manners and expose them to social settings, such as stores or restaurants.

Do you live near Duluth, Faribault, Sandstone or Waseca and can help "jailbreak" a puppy? We'll provide the supplies and instruction, you provide the love!

For more information on how to get started contact Volunteer Coordinator, Laurie Carlson at 763-331-3000 x113 or lcarlson@can-do-canines.org.



YOU MADE

the following possible.

Since the start of 2015 ...

15 puppies receive a 'Great Start'



15 volunteers gave 15 of our puppies a 'Great Start.' These volunteers raise a pup for six to eight weeks, socialize the puppies in public and teach basic obedience and crate training.

17 people live independent lives

Can Do Canines trained and placed 17 specially-trained dogs with people in need since the start of 2015. All dogs were provided free of charge due to your support.

See the back cover for the list of our recent graduates.



Raise \$17,998 by "sharing"

You "Shared the Love" by purchasing a vehicle at Luther Bloomington Acura-Subaru in late 2014. Subaru shared the proceeds which totaled almost \$11,839!



In May 2015, 684 people like you took time out of their busy day to text their support of Can Do Canines. The texting contest was part of the Thrivent Financial Stonebridge of Bloomington Group's "Share the Vote" campaign.

Out of five participating organizations, Can Do Canines received 31% of the vote, which resulted in a contribution of \$6,159.



It started many years ago with a bit of curiosity. Kim Medin was driving past the former home of Can Do Canines in south Minneapolis, not far from her own house. She noticed people cleaning the outdoor kennels. "One day I stopped and asked if they needed volunteers. They replied 'Sure!'" she recalls. "So my husband, Tom, and I started volunteering, mostly doing little maintenance jobs."

Kim's volunteer work, along with her love for dogs and desire to help, eventually morphed into her membership in the Can Do Canines Legacy Club, ensuring that part of her estate will help further the organization's efforts. She considered a number of options when deciding which non-profit would receive proceeds from her individual retirement account. "Ultimately, I decided I wanted to do something local," she explains.

From videos, newsletters, TV stories and Can Do Canines graduation ceremonies, Kim learned about many individuals whose lives were transformed by receiving a Can Do Canines assistance dog. "Having a dog has made them feel better about themselves and has enabled them to lead more active lives. Each case is so impactful."

What Kim appreciates most is that the dogs are trained and placed free of charge. However, her generous nature makes her wish she could help everyone on Can Do Canines waiting list. "So many people have needs, yet there are only so many dogs, only so many trainers and only so much money to make it happen."

Kim is happy knowing her planned gift will help Can Do Canines serve even more individuals. She also loves the small treasures that come with each person-dog partnership. "My favorite thing about Can Do Canines is seeing the smiles on people's faces when they get their dogs ... and seeing the smiles on the dogs' faces, too—it's like they're saying, 'hey, that's my person!'"



The Can Do Canines Legacy Club honors and recognizes individuals who have thoughtfully provided our organization with a planned gift. We would love for you to join!

Contact Janet Cobus at [jacobus@can-do-canines.org](mailto:jcobus@can-do-canines.org) or call 763-331-3000 x153 to learn more about estate giving. You can find a list of all Legacy Club members on our website: can-do-canines.org/donate/legacy-club.

YOU MADE THESE PARTNERSHIPS POSSIBLE

Read these stories at can-do-canines.org.



Holly Arnold-Rains & Mobility Assist Dog Link



Riley Gallo & Autism Assist Dog Nolan



Collin Germundson & Autism Assist Dog Thor



Matthew LaMott & Autism Assist Dog Lloyd



Becky Meyers & Mobility Assist Dog Ginger



Shea Yaeger & Autism Assist Dog Kylie

Take a Tour—Meet Our Dogs

One of the best ways to see your support firsthand is to come to a **Tails To Tell Tour**. You'll have a chance to meet a volunteer Puppy Raiser, one of our graduates and see the facility where our dogs learn their life-saving skills.

All tours take place at our facility located at the address below. Please call our office at 763-331-3000 or email tour@can-do-canines.org to reserve your spot!

- **Thursday, July 23, 11 a.m.**
- **Saturday, August 22, 10 a.m.**
- **Thursday, September 24, 7 p.m.**



SAVE THESE GREAT DATES

- **Woofaroo:** Saturday, September 12
- **Fall Graduation:** Saturday, October 24
- **Fetching Ball:** Saturday, December 5

You Provided Our Ride

Ten Rotary Clubs throughout Minnesota generously provided Can Do Canines with a new Ford Transit to safely transport our assistance dogs in training. If you see us around town, give us a honk or a howl!



OUR MISSION

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



CONNECT WITH US



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