



# Tails for You

a publication of Can Do Canines®

Celebrating 30 Years  
1989-2019

You gave  
**Sgt. Corey Briest**  
independence again.



Summer 2019  
V. 30 | Issue 3



Above photo and cover photo by Tiffany Hendrickson Photography

# A HERO FOR A HERO

*Quiz gives Corey independence again.  
Your support made their partnership possible.*

While serving in the Army National Guard in Iraq, Sgt. Corey Briest sustained injuries which left him legally blind and affected his mobility. He had lost the independence he once had. But thanks to your support, he was matched with Mobility Assist Dog Quiz who has given him a sense of freedom again.

It's 2005 and Corey is riding in a humvee as the Army National Guard

drives through Iraq. He's in the third vehicle of the convoy. The first humvee passes through a checkpoint. As the second moves forward, a roadside bomb explodes. Corey's humvee stops to assess the situation. Serving as their squad's medic, Corey knows they have to assist the injured—but when they move on, their humvee is hit as well.

"I trust Corey with my life," says 1st Sgt. George Arends, a friend and

fellow soldier. "Sgt. Briest displays all the values and characteristics of a true hero. He demonstrated this the very day of his injury by moving forward into the kill zone to assist fellow members of his squad."

Corey was severely injured that day. He sustained traumatic brain injuries, which left him legally blind and affected his ability to speak, his balance, and short-term memory.

He spent a hectic year of recovery with his wife, Jenny and their 4-year-old daughter, Kylie and 1-year-old son, Connor. "At the beginning, he couldn't walk, talk—anything," explains Jenny.

A journey of surgeries and rehabilitation began in Germany, moved to Maryland, Minnesota, back to Maryland, and finally ended in California.

While Corey and his family were bouncing from state to state, their hometown in South Dakota was hard at work building the family an accessible home.

After moving into their new home, the couple went a few years juggling young children, rehabilitation, and therapy, while trying to navigate life with Corey's new disabilities. But it was difficult for Corey, relying on his wife for most of his daily needs. He didn't feel independent anymore, and he wanted that feeling again.

So the couple researched their options and decided to apply to Can Do Canines. They liked that they wouldn't need to travel elsewhere for training and that Can Do Canines would work with them in their home. "Corey has had enough time away from his family," Jenny said at the time.

In 2010, Corey was matched with Baker, a solid Black Labrador Retriever weighing in at 83 pounds. Corey could hold onto Baker's harness while they walked giving Corey better balance. At home, Baker would lead Corey to the bathroom and then back to his favorite chair in the living room.



Besides the puppy love, Quiz is making a big difference in Corey's life—and his family's. "Quiz gives him that little piece of independence back," Jenny says. Now Corey can stay home alone while Jenny runs errands or takes the kids to school.

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### "Quiz gives him that little piece of independence back."

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But they're doing more than just the day-to-day. In fact, Quiz hopes to rack up some frequent flier miles with her partner Corey. They've already traveled to Washington, D.C., and she's even visited the White House!

Quiz also attends therapy with Corey, where he's working on walking again. "Some days it's easier, some days it's really hard," Jenny says. But every day is better with Quiz by Corey's side. "We'll make memories," says Corey with a big smile.

The Briests are grateful for Quiz. Without all the selfless volunteers who raised her and the generous donors who made her possible, Corey and his family's life would look much different today. "Thank you, she's a good girl," Corey says. "She always makes me laugh," he says with a smile.

#### **A Special Thank You to the Following Volunteers and Donors—**

Puppy Raiser: Jennifer and Shane Newman  
Whelping Home: Patti and Rick Dougherty  
Breeder Host: Patti and Rick Dougherty  
You: Thank you for your donations!

He picked things up for Corey or could get a phone if there was an emergency. Baker gave Corey a sense of security. He gave him his independence back.

After almost ten years working together, Baker passed away in February 2018. His friend, safety net, and sense of security wasn't there anymore. For a year, Corey didn't stay home alone. Not once. It just wasn't safe. And Corey didn't like that. "He had that independence, and it was taken away," Jenny says. Just like when he was first injured, Corey needed to adapt to significant changes in his life.

His day-to-day living was harder without Baker. During their time together, Corey had another surgery. Since the operation, he's had more

trouble walking, and his left hand lost some function. With Baker around to help, the changes weren't as noticeable. But without Baker, Corey was becoming frustrated. "His frustration level—after Baker passed you saw that increase," Jenny says. "A lot," Corey adds.

They wanted Corey to feel independent again, and to have the ability to get something he dropped, to get the phone, and to stay home alone. "That helps the whole family out—when dad feels good and dad feels safe," Jenny explains. This was a job for an assistance dog.

Thanks to generous donors and volunteers, when Corey applied to Can Do Canines again, he was matched with Mobility Assist Dog Quiz. "Remember how excited you were when we stayed [at Can Do Canines]? She got to be overnight with you the first night," Jenny says to Corey. "She was my dog already," Corey says.

The two bonded quickly, and they're the best of friends. Corey's favorite part of the day? When he wakes up in the morning and Quiz comes to greet him. "She is right there like 'Oh my gosh I haven't seen you for 8 hours!'" Jenny imitates the Black Labrador Retriever.



### You can help train a dog like Quiz.

You can volunteer to raise and train a dog for someone like Corey. Visit [can-do-canines.org/volunteer](http://can-do-canines.org/volunteer) to learn more.



# DEEPLY GRATEFUL

*Thanks to you, Tristan is making Haddayr's life even more rewarding.*

Haddayr has mobility difficulties. Because of your support, she was teamed with Tristan, a Mobility Assist Dog who enriches Haddayr's life and makes the possible more rewarding.

"I have a neurological disability that can manifest itself as mildly as one leg giving out when I walk, to having such crushing fatigue that I can't get out of bed," Haddayr says. "I use forearm crutches, a wheelchair, or a scooter to get around, and I sometimes make sudden, non-voluntary movements."

From the outside, the Minneapolis resident seemed to be managing her condition. "Before Tristan, I went to work. I met friends for a cup of coffee. I parented. I cooked. I cleaned. I functioned just fine—from the outside," Haddayr explains. "What

[I hoped for was] ... not a service dog to make things possible in my life, but to enrich my life, and to make the possible things even more rewarding."

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**"I functioned just fine—from the outside."**

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Because of your support, Tristan is doing just that. He picks up things Haddayr has dropped, retrieves her crutches, opens door and drawers, and helps Haddayr take off her socks and gloves—all which help her conserve energy. If Tristan can't help, he knows how to go find someone who can.

Tristan knows his job is to take care of Haddayr, and he isn't afraid to be stern with her. "I am terribly addicted to knitting, so I often stay up late after the family is in bed, trying to finish 'just one more row.' Tristan now stands in front of me when it gets late and gives me a VERY hard stare. He will not stop until I pack up my knitting and follow him up to sleep," she says.

Haddayr is very appreciative of the volunteers who helped bring Tristan into her life. "I am so deeply grateful to the families who cared for him, for

the inmates who trained him ... I will always feel so blessed by your hard work, dedication, and caring."

She is thankful to all the donors who brought Tristan into her life. "I wonder, too, if donors understand how incredibly personal their donations are to me. My dog is so healthy and happy and strong, and it's because you have helped to feed him, get him medical care, and pay for top-notch, expert training. Sometimes donations can be so abstract, but it is just really, really personal."

**A Special Thank You to the Following Volunteers and Donors—**

- Great Start Home: Amy O'Keefe
- Puppy Raiser: FCI Sandstone
- Special Thanks: The Hartmann family, Lindsay Merkel
- Dog Donor: Stephanie Hunt
- You: Thank you for your donations!



**Help us place more dogs like Tristan.**

Your donations make it possible for Can Do Canines to place assistance dogs free of charge. Visit [can-do-canines.org](http://can-do-canines.org) to donate today.



## LEADING WITH LEXIE

*This graduate is helping others get matched with an assistance dog.*

Jean and Hearing Assist Dog Lexie are giving back to Can Do Canines so others can experience the same benefits of an assistance dog partnership.

“I loved her from the moment I laid eyes on her,” Jean says of meeting her assistance dog. “Lexie helped me feel safe. She gave me more of a reason to get out in the world.”

Jean wanted to get an assistance dog when she lived in Texas, but she couldn’t afford the high cost to buy one. So when she moved to Minnesota and learned of Can Do Canines and how the dogs were provided free of charge, Jean says, “My first thought was that my dream could come true.”

And it did. Jean was matched with Lexie, a rescue dog, in 2007. “Lexie

really helped my life for the better,” Jean explains. “Once I had Lexie, I really wanted to pay it forward.”

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**“Once I had Lexie, I really wanted to pay it forward.”**

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Before having a Hearing Assist Dog, “I did not venture out much ... Home is where I felt safe,” Jean says. With Lexie, she was now comfortable going out and volunteering for Can Do Canines. She volunteers at the Can Do Woofaroo, graduations, and other events.

She also began speaking to Lions organizations, helping to spread the word about Can Do Canines. “I started to have so much fun giving speeches,” Jean says—so much so that she became a Lions member. Now part of the Lions 5M8 cabinet as a co-chair for Can Do Canines, she informs Lions members about the assistance dog organization. “Both Can Do Canines and the Lions are like an extended family to me,” Jean says.

Perhaps where she is most involved is the Can Do Woofaroo. Not only does she volunteer, but she raises money for the event as well. She asks Lions

clubs and businesses to sponsor her, sits outside stores to ask shoppers for donations, and talks with anyone who will listen. “For the last several years I have been on this quest to be the person who raises the most money for the Can Do Woofaroo,” Jean says. “I have not been able to achieve this goal of mine, but I keep trying.”

Jean’s dedication and passion are what keeps Can Do Canines going. The organization is made up of countless supporters who give their time, money, and heart to help others.

Thanks to Lexie, Jean lives an active life of giving back to her community. Jean explains, “I raise funds to pay it forward so that others can have their dream fulfilled.”

**You can pay it forward too.**

Can Do Canines graduates are great ambassadors. Email [info@can-do-canines.org](mailto:info@can-do-canines.org) to learn how you can get involved like Jean.



# YOU HELPED

make the following possible in the spring of 2019.



17  
teams graduated at the  
Summer Graduation Ceremony

Dogs that are in for final training  
at the Can Do Canines facility

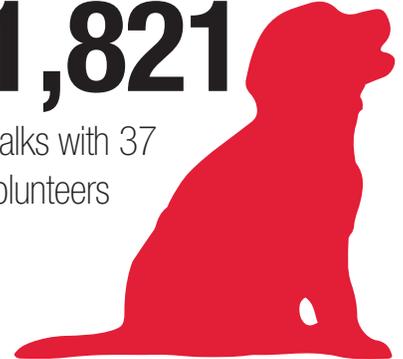


27

Dogs in for final training went on

1,821

walks with 37  
volunteers



115

115  
individuals donate monthly to  
support our programs

New households joined the  
Puppy Program



82

Active working teams who  
receive continuous follow-up  
and support from  
Can Do Canines

319



## Do You Like Tails for You? Take Our Survey

We want to hear from you! Fill out this short survey to let us know what you're interested in reading in future issues of Tails for You.

[www.can-do.link/reader-survey](http://www.can-do.link/reader-survey)

## Upcoming Events

### Can Do Woofaroo | September 14

Where: 9440 Science Center Dr., New Hope, MN 55428

When: September 14 at 10 a.m.

### Fall Graduation Ceremony | October 26

Where: 9440 Science Center Dr., New Hope, MN 55428

When: October 26 at 1 p.m.



#### 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.

9440 Science Center Drive, New Hope, MN 55428  
763-331-3000 | [info@can-do-canines.org](mailto:info@can-do-canines.org) | [can-do-canines.org](http://can-do-canines.org)

