



Southwest Companion

The Southwest Region Newsletter of Canine Companions for Independence



Winter 2010 Issue: Join us for WOOFSTOCK on April 10 in San Diego; Canine Companions to Salute Texas Veterans; Los Angeles Welcomes Canine Companions; I, TRIXIE, WHO IS DOG by Dean Koontz

Canine Companions Facility Dog is Employed by Horse Therapy Program

Canine Companions for Independence and the Shea Center for Therapeutic Riding are organizations with similar missions and parallel methods. Like Canine Companions, the Shea Center's clients face physical and developmental challenges. Shea's instructors and therapists use horses to improve clients' coordination, strength, balance and confidence. At Canine Companions, one of the types of assistance dogs we train is a facility dog.

Facility dogs work alongside professionals in therapeutic or special education settings to motivate, comfort and assist clients.

It seemed like a perfect fit when we received a facility dog application from one of the therapists at the Shea Center. Trish Evans was matched with Facility Dog Emerson II last November. Trish is amazed by the contributions Emerson has made to the Shea Center.

One of Emerson's biggest fans is a 17-year-old girl named Meagan who cannot ride horses because of her disability. This is especially

please see Horse Therapy on page 6



Facility Dog Emerson II motivates the Shea Center's clients to push themselves in their physical therapy.



Physical Therapist Assistant Trish Evans was matched with Facility Dog Emerson II in November.

Photo by Jenna Castello, www.whinnysnap.com

Director's Chair



by Linda L. Valliant

Introductions are in order. To your left is puppy in program Chiara, an eight-month-old Golden Retriever who joined me last month. She is a bundle of exuberant puppy energy, thinly disguised by wonderful puppy manners. To your right is Elaina, a three-and-a-half-year-old Labrador/Golden Retriever cross that I adopted. Elaina was retired early from a Canine Companions assistance dog career. Elaina is the epitome of grace and impeccable training; she has become an Ambassador dog who travels with me and other staff members to presentations and Canine Companions events. Chiara is an Italian name that means “bright, famous”—that sounds like a prediction of graduation to me! Elaina is a French name that means “shining light.” It is

a pleasure to be between these two luminous canines!

When not surrounded by my canine bookends, I am in the midst of a talented and dedicated group of 27 that comprise the staff of Canine Companions Southwest. The people who call Canine Companions their work-home care about making a difference in the world. Each loves dogs and most have one or two of their own that report to work with them. The occasional cat lover quietly bonds with campus distraction cat, Bob. But everyone, without exception, is drawn to Canine Companions because of the people with disabilities whom we serve. We have all seen the moments of intense power between human and dog that some call miracles. Canine Companions matters.

When this group was faced with the uncertainty of 2009 and its trembling economy, we became resolute. Energy and invention were summoned at every turn to hold firm and keep Canine Companions’ program strong. At year’s end, the numbers showed achievement

Graduate Placements	50	125% of goal
Graduate Follow-Ups	200	125% of goal
Puppy Placements	187	110% of goal

of a record year in every category.

Happily, regional income also set a record, thanks to a magnificent gift of \$1,000,000 from our benefactors Dean, Gerda and Trixie Koontz, along with loyal contributions from a legion of other supporters. They all know that their gift to Canine Companions matters, whether it is \$1 or \$100,000. All donations are immediately and wisely used to change lives.

Now 2010 looms in front of us with continued economic uncertainty. This year also presents fresh opportunities to make a difference in the lives of more people with disabilities. This *Companion* offers highlights of a few of our major initiatives for the year. Read about the plan for Texas 2010 and a *Salutes Independence* event in the Lone Star State. Get involved with our goal to make Los Angeles the territory of Canine Companions. Be a walker at this year’s *WOOFSTOCK*. Participate in one of four upcoming fundraiser golf tournaments. Follow the anticipation for Canine Companions’ 35th Birthday Celebration. You are essential to Canine Companions’ success. Canine Companions matters.

Linda Valliant



Volunteer Appreciation Party

Puppy Program Manager Stu Wahrenbrock emceed a game of musical doggie down at the *Volunteer Appreciation Party* in January at the Dean, Gerda & Trixie Koontz Campus. This Olympic-themed party honored our “gold medal volunteers.” Staff members served pasta to help the volunteers “carb load” before the games and 25 lucky individuals won raffle prizes. A few select volunteers received special recognition awards for their outstanding dedication to Canine Companions during the last year. Thanks to all of our volunteers for their invaluable contributions!

AKC-Eukanuba National Championships

Olympic gymnast Shawn Johnson met Professional Training Dog Inoch at the AKC-Eukanuba National Championships in Long Beach, California in December. Thanks to Eukanuba, Canine Companions had a booth at this prestigious event that drew a crowd of thousands.

Canine Companions Service Dog Benton won an Award for Canine Excellence at the show. Benton’s partner, Margo Dietrich, was one of four graduates to give presentations about Canine Companions on a small stage at the entrance. Thank you to all of the volunteers and graduate teams who represented Canine Companions at this event.



November Graduates



Trish Evans
Facility Dog Emerson II
Rancho Santa Margarita, CA
Dorene Robertson
San Diego, CA



Lee Gardner
Successor Service Dog
Zendo
Edwards, CA
Patricia & Jason Urie
Santee, CA



Kelsey Hopson
Facility Dog Samantha II
Denver, CO
Amy Steider
Albuquerque, NM



Matthew Keil
Service Dog Gus III
Parker, AZ
Kit Carson Correctional Center
Burlington, CO



Ronni Keller
Successor Service Dog
Harris II
Dolan Springs, AZ
Navcon Brig - Miramar
San Diego, CA



Mary Moore
Successor Service Dog
Embree
Grand Junction, CO
Navcon Brig - Miramar
San Diego, CA



Jason Morgan
Service Dog Napal II
McKinney, TX
James Siegfried
Santee, CA



Gail Nagel-Erickson
Successor Service Dog Dayle
Los Angeles, CA
Kristine & Jay Scrivener
Oceanside, CA



Janine Shelton
Facility Dog Kenta
Oceanside, CA
Janice & Dan Flynn
Santee, CA



Peter Wolcott
Successor Service Dog
Connor IV
Santee, CA
Melanie & John Dutcher
Salt Lake City, UT



Jake Morgan
With Facilitator Shannon Morgan
Skilled Companion Dog
Rhoda III
San Diego, CA
Sharla & Robert Purnell
Yorba Linda, CA



Austin Waite
With Facilitators
Judy & Kevin Waite
Skilled Companion Dog Io II
Murrieta, CA
Maeve Cooney
Austin, TX



Stuart Parsley
with Facilitator Kingsley Parsley
Skilled Companion Dog Rinah
Englewood, CO
Jane and John Walstrom
Lakeside, CA



Canine Companions will launch the celebration of its 35th anniversary at the May graduation ceremonies nationwide.

For the Record In the last Southwest Companion, volunteer puppy raiser Theresa Barnes was not acknowledged for co-raising Graduate Dog Flora VI with Kathleen and Robert Love. Our sincere apologies to Theresa, whose love and hard work made possible Flora's placement with James Osborne of Colorado Springs.

The City of Angels Welcomes Canine Companions

Recently, Executive Director Linda Valliant and Instructor Becky Hein hosted *A Good Dog Morning* in West Los Angeles. The purpose of the event was to connect with Canine Companions' current and prospective applicants, volunteers and supporters in the area. It was a huge success! More than 50 people packed the room to hear from five exceptional, local graduate teams.

Los Angeles County residents and five-time puppy raisers Marilyn Cohen and Chris Malburg were also in attendance. They will soon receive puppy in program Renata to teach, socialize and nurture until she is ready for Professional Training. Plans are underway to follow Renata's journey all the way to her (hopeful) graduation. We know Los Angeles County residents will be especially interested in following this irresistible puppy as we track her progress through photos, stories and video clips.

The *A Good Dog Morning* event was the 2010 kick-off to a new



focus on the City and County of Los Angeles. This focus was given impetus by a proactive philanthropist who is working with us on an aggressive plan to make Canine Companions the preferred assistance dog organization of Los Angeles County. Los Angeles County is the largest metropolitan area in the Southwest Region's ten-state service area, yet our organization does not have a major presence there. A pending grant from the McKernan and Ruby Family Foundation will finance opening a field office in Los Angeles for a two-year period. The office will

coordinate outreach activities and serve as a base where program staff can conduct applicant interviews, graduate follow-ups and puppy raiser meetings. The grant will give us all of the tools we need to make Los Angeles Canine Companions territory. If you are an Angeleno and would like to help in this exciting quest, please give us a call at (760) 901-4300 and check the website www.cci.org/southwest for regular updates.

Volunteer Highlights

Colorado Satellite Office

by Kelly Gorman

The last few months of 2009 were very busy for Canine Companions in Colorado! In September, we held a *Puppy Raiser Workshop*, which provided lots of helpful information to more than 40 volunteers. In December, about 25 volunteers and graduates raised over \$1,200 for Canine Companions at the *2009 Annual Holiday Gift Wrap Event*. Also at the end of the year, supporter Joe Turcotte finished his amazing *2009 IronPuppy*, in which he raised almost \$12,000 for Canine Companions by biking, swimming and running in some of the world's most competitive races. The excitement continued when the Colorado Veterinary Medical Association Auxiliary gave another \$10,000 sponsorship to Canine Companions.

The momentum of 2009 has continued into 2010! This year, we hope to attract new puppy raisers with a series of informational meetings for prospective volunteers. The meetings will provide an overview of Canine Companions and how puppy raising works. Our existing puppy raising program at the Kit Carson Correctional Center continues to be a success. Service Dog Gus III was



Triathlete Joe Turcotte received some much deserved love from puppies in program. In three years of racing, he has raised \$50,000 for Canine Companions!

raised at this correctional facility, and we are proud to report that he recently graduated with a Colorado veteran of *Operation Iraqi Freedom*. Matthew Kiel has realized greater independence thanks to Gus' daily assistance.

Finally, save the date of June 7 for the *13th Annual Glen and Lynn Ann Balenseifen Golf Tournament* in Evergreen. Please contact the Colorado Satellite Office at (719) 260-6151 for more information.

Utah Wasatch Champions

by Melanie Dutcher

The continuing growth of the Wasatch Champions will be marked soon by the launch of a quarterly newsletter. Thanks to the efforts of Dawn Thorne, the *Wasatch Wag* will feature chapter news, reader polls and profiles of local graduate teams and puppy raisers.

Since the last *Southwest Companion*, nine more puppies have come to Utah and six of them went to new volunteer puppy raisers. To better support this plethora of puppies, the Wasatch Champions now has a Puppy Program Committee chaired by Dawn Thorne.

In October, a huge crowd of Wasatch Champions including graduates, puppy raisers and friends attended the *Fall Potluck Dinner* hosted by Debbie and Dick Tompson. Also in October, the Canine Companions booth at the *Hill Field Combined Federal Campaign* event attracted attention and volunteer puppy raiser awareness.



Graduates, puppy raisers and volunteers gathered for a Wasatch Champions potluck dinner in October.

At the end of 2009, the *Wasatch Champions Annual Gift Wrap Fundraiser* was held at three Barnes & Noble stores in different counties! Coordinated by Linda Weiskopf, Amy Kernan and Erica Forbush, total donations were significantly higher year to year thanks to the many hardworking volunteers and all of the generous shoppers. We are grateful to the Barnes & Noble stores in Layton, Sugarhouse and Orem for hosting the Wasatch Champions.

The Wasatch Champions is a group of talented and passionate individuals who are achieving amazing results in outreach, fundraising, recruiting and chapter support! Thank you all!

New Mexico Champions

by Mary Aynn Shoemate and Amy Steider

Move over and stop for emergency vehicles with Canine Companions puppies on board! During a recent training outing,



New Mexico puppies in program visited a fire station on a field trip.

New Mexico puppy raisers and their charges were guests of the Albuquerque Fire Department. Captain Cordova and Station 20 personnel welcomed the group enthusiastically and allowed careful canine inspection of Engine 20. The group was not only pleased to visit the fire station but happy for the opportunity to wish a safe journey to Tanya III and Cadence as they prepare to travel to Oceanside to begin Professional Training.

Recently, Hearing Team Stan Sander and Tashi took the opportunity to reach out to people outside of New Mexico. While visiting the Tulsa, Oklahoma area, the team gave a presentation to a group of adults and young children. Tashi demonstrated her alert skills and Stan spoke about Canine Companions and answered questions.

In December, Facility Team Mary Aynn Shoemate and Jibar were honored with a certificate acknowledging their completion of more than 2,100 hours of community volunteer service in Albuquerque. That's a lot of gets, gives, ups, tugs and laps!

Valley of the Sun Chapter

by Cheryl Goode

Arizona's 6th annual *Dog Days of Summer* golf tournament on September 25 was an outstanding success. In light of the economic climate this fall, the \$54,000+ that the tournament raised for Canine Companions was far beyond expectations.

We are all very proud of our chapter president, Kerry Saxby. Kerry was awarded the *Geneva Davis Volunteer Leadership Award* at the Southwest Region November graduation ceremony. Kerry

truly leads by example, and her infectious smile is present at all events where our volunteers or puppies are involved.

December brought the *Desert Valley Christian Ringers* to a beautiful *Holiday Bell Choir Concert* benefitting Canine Companions. Chapter members and the public were treated to an hour and a half of great music, including a rousing final number that featured some of our puppies in program barking in tune (almost)! Our *Volunteer Appreciation Party* followed the concert and provided a fun opportunity to recognize the heroes who help make the chapter successful.

On January 16, puppies and puppy



Arizona puppy raisers gather for the opportunity to ride the Valley Metro Light Rail with their puppies in program. Photo by Pat Lawson

raisers had an adventurous day of riding the Valley Metro Light Rail and mingling with the crowds at the Phoenix Convention Center. Graduate Gary Frandino planned the outing, including an escort from Valley Metro and free passes for all. Our puppies not only learned how to ride the rail, but also got to experience big crowds, traffic noise, strange dogs and crowded elevators.

We are looking forward to a busy spring in the Valley of the Sun. The *Ryan Fun Run*, a benefit and awareness-raising activity hosted by a local elementary school, will be followed by our first-ever *Chapter Garage Sale* and a *Puppy Workshop*. Our volunteers will certainly stay busy!



Doug Serre holds his new puppy in program, Domi. He is the second teacher at Shawnee Middle School to puppy raise for Canine Companions.

The Red Earth Champions

by Dawn Ramsey

The Red Earth Champions are already enjoying a busy 2010. We are excited to welcome a new puppy raiser who works at Shawnee Middle School in Oklahoma. Doug Serre will join longtime puppy raiser Linda McMahan in bringing his Canine Companions puppy in program to their school everyday. Doug teaches eighth grade math and Linda teaches eighth grade science. Doug received Domi in January, much to the excitement of the students.

Currently, we are gearing up for the *Shawnee Mall Easter Mutt Strut* on April 3. The Mutt Strut is an annual fundraiser in which the public is invited to walk their pet dogs inside the mall for a donation to Canine Companions. Next, our *Celebrity Waiter Gala* will be held in June. This fun-filled event features table service by local celebrities who collect tips to benefit Canine Companions. Next, *Bark in the Park* is Shawnee's annual fall celebration of man's best friend. In addition to the opportunity to learn about Canine Companions, the event features a parade of pets, vendors and demonstrations by disc dogs and flyball dogs. Of course, in addition to these special events, we will continue educating through speaking engagements, school programs and information booths at other events throughout the year.

The Best is Yet To Come

Cole Massie received Skilled Companion Dog Ilia III in 2004. Cole's inspiring journey since graduating from Canine Companions was one his mom, Michelle, felt compelled to share. Here are some excerpts from their story, which will be included in Two Plus Four Equals One by Kathy Nimmer. The book will be published sometime this year.

Immediately following surgery, Cole's painful screams tore at my heart. The agony came in waves. I was holding him and trying to will it all away but an odd, distant sound kept needling at my occluded consciousness. I finally looked up, and there was Ilia. In an extraordinary act of defiance, he had popped up out of his "down" command and was standing there, tail spinning, ears perked and eyes wide. When my gaze met his, he grunted his irritation at what was clearly my impenetrable obtuseness. I



moved aside. In a flash, he bounded up and began licking Cole furiously. The pain vaporized.

The following day, Cole took his first steps with his heels touching the

Canine Companions Skilled Companion Ilia III won an Award for Canine Excellence in 2008 for his service to his human partner, Cole Massie.

ground, Ilia by his side. Afterward, we laid him back on the bed to ease the intense pain behind his knees. We put Ilia on the bed too, but instead of going up near Cole's shoulders, he stopped and placed his head on Cole's knees. Terrified, I asked Cole if I should move him. "No, mom," he said with stunning calmness. "It actually feels really good." Ilia kept his head there for two days; something he has not done before or since.

One day, Cole will walk Ilia by himself. No walker, no parents. No cameras, no press. Just a boy and his dog, because Ilia has made Cole want that more than anything.

And that's how I know the best is yet to come.



Raise a Puppy, Change a Life

The Southwest Region of Canine Companions needs volunteer puppy raisers! Do you want to help create a miracle for someone with a disability? Are you ready for a challenging and rewarding experience? Canine Companions depends on volunteers to foster our future assistance dogs for 14 to 16 months. Puppy raisers provide socialization opportunities, basic training and lots of love to our Labrador and Golden Retriever puppies. To learn more, visit www.cci.org or call Puppy Program Manager Stu Wahrenbrock at (760) 901-4315.

Horse Therapy

continued from page 1

difficult because her twin sister can. Thanks to Emerson, Meagan is now having just as much fun as her sister at the Shea Center, in addition to reaping significant physical benefits. "Meagan has even started to walk short distances alongside Emerson and with the assistance of a therapist," Trish explains.

Emerson is also a great motivator to three-year-old Maddie, who was afraid of dogs before meeting Emerson. Emerson won her over by giving her a plush toy that she now calls "Baby E." Emerson's contributions to Maddie's therapy have been enormous. "She will crawl upstairs and downstairs to Emerson, which is a big skill," Trish explains. "She also made a breakthrough with walking endurance because of Emerson." Maddie walked over a quarter of a mile with Emerson's help!

Considering all of his accomplishments, Trish found it difficult to answer when asked what her most memorable moment with Emerson has been so far. "If I have to pick one, it would be walking with a little girl name Lillian," Trish says. Trish holds Emerson's leash, and then Lillian holds a second leash with a therapist spotting her. "One of the first times we walked together, she was so motivated that we walked approximately 50 feet. Emerson was so patient walking at Lillian's pace. You could see her expression was joyous, and Emerson's attention to her and me was amazing. It was a very heartwarming moment."

Canine Companions Salutes Texas

In 2008 and 2009, the Southwest Region welcomed military veterans, active duty service members and their friends and family to the Dean, Gerda and Trixie Koontz Campus for an open house. The goal was to raise awareness of Canine Companions' *Wounded Veteran Initiative*, a targeted effort to provide highly trained assistance dogs to disabled veterans who have served our country during the current Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts.

The *Wounded Veteran Initiative* is showing results. In 2009 alone, the Southwest Region matched and graduated 13 veteran teams. Though many factors have contributed to the positive momentum, the open house events—*Canine Companions Salutes Independence*—were critical first steps in establishing Canine Companions as a resource for disabled veterans.

Salutes Independence 2010 will be held in Texas! A generous grant from the Pacific Life Foundation is providing support to stage five *Salutes Independence* events nationwide, one in each Canine Companions region. The grant also funds critical outreach strategies to assure that injured veterans who could be helped by an assistance dog know that Canine Companions' highly regarded services are available to them free of charge. The Lone Star State is home to major military installations and an extensive population of veterans. *Salutes Independence*, tentatively scheduled for November in Austin, is open to all Texans. Visit www.cci.org/salutes for updates and call (760) 901-4300 to learn how you can help.

Texas 2010

In addition to *Salutes Independence*, all Canine Companions Texas activities are increasing statewide. At year's end, thanks to a series of informational presentations and fundraising events, Texas will be home to more Canine Companions graduate teams, puppy raisers, volunteers and supporters than ever before. Further, this expanded presence will produce a sustained growth curve for years to come. A dedicated corps of volunteers and Canine Companions staff is working hard to make this happen. An astute group of community leaders is providing wise counsel.

Nancy Bush

Customer Contracts Administrator, TTI, Inc.,
Fort Worth

Perry Cockerell (invitation pending)

Partner, Cantey Hanger LLP, Dallas

Dr. William Cunningham

Former Chancellor of the University of Texas
System, Austin

Kathrine Glass

President, C&S Creative Solutions, Inc., Dallas

Dr. Robert James

Director, Sulentic Family Foundation, Dallas

Carol Polasky

Vice President, Investment Banking & Capital
Markets, Wells Fargo, Dallas

Roger A. Soape, CPL

President, Roger A. Soape, Inc., Houston



Service Team Jason Morgan and Napal II met Texas Governor Rick Perry at the NAPE Expo in Houston, Texas in February. Both Jason Morgan and Governor Perry served in the Air Force.

Upcoming Events

March 5

"A Good Dog Evening"; Las Vegas, NV

March 6

Puppy Raiser Workshop; Phoenix, AZ

March 27

Puppy Raiser Workshop
Salt Lake City, UT

April 10

WOOFSTOCK: A Festival for Dogs &
People; Balboa Park, San Diego, CA

April 30

Puppy Raiser Workshop; Los Angeles, CA

May 15

Canine Companions Graduation
Mission San Luis Rey, Oceanside, CA

For more information about these events,
please call (760) 901-4300.

Wish List

- Gift cards for volunteer recognition—movie theaters, restaurants, etc.
- Plastic play set with slide (large, for ages 3+)
- Everest & Jennings Rehab Shower Commode Chairs
- IV pole
- Sound machines
- Three foldable, canvas camping chairs
- Adjustable height tables (8' long x 2.5' wide x 22-32" high)
- Dog crates—XLG (500), M (300), S (200)
- Two electric heating pads
- Two CD players
- Dremel tools
- Potted plants with vines

Thank you to Hank Mahan for granting a wish from our last newsletter.

Regional Board
Tim Gackstetter, *President*
John Brunton
Robert Cartin, DVM
Louise Copeland
Dale Feine
Jack Feller
Leslie Hennessy
Michael E. Hennessy
Tom Hollenstein
Ron Ignelzi
Cynthia Miley
George "Jeep" Rice
Bob Street
Lance Weir
Margaret "Pegge" Wilson

Regional Staff
Katie Malatino, *Editor*
Precision Assembly, *Distribution*
Komin Design, *Layout*

The Companion is published three times a year for distribution to CCI supporters, volunteers and Graduates. ©2009 Canine Companions for Independence, Inc. All rights reserved. Printed in USA. Canine Companions for Independence,® its logo, and Exceptional Dogs for Exceptional People® are trademarks of Canine Companions for Independence, Inc.



Post Office Box 4568, Oceanside, CA 92052
(760) 901-4300

www.cci.org

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Nonprofit Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit #455
San Diego, CA

Mission statement: CCI is a nonprofit organization that enhances the lives of people with disabilities by providing highly trained assistance dogs and ongoing support to ensure quality partnerships.

A Festival for Dogs & People

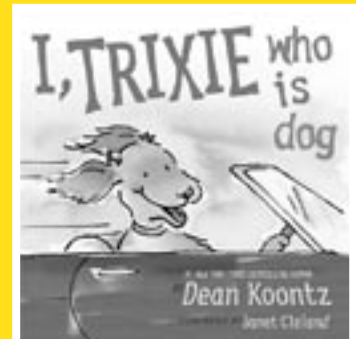
Woofstock



Saturday, April 10, 2010
Balboa Park, San Diego
www.cci.org/woofstock

The 6th Annual WOOFSTOCK Festival will feature flyball, disc dogs, a K9 playground, contests, great shopping, delicious food and more! \$5 general admission. All proceeds benefit Canine Companions. Sponsorship and vendor opportunities are still available by calling Annie Scott at (760) 901-4306.

Go the extra mile and register for the easy Walk n' Roll Fun Dog Walk. Walk registration fee (\$35/adult, \$15/child, \$60/family) includes a cool WOOFSTOCK tie dye t-shirt, Festival admission and a SWAG bag filled with great surprises. Register online at www.cci.org/woofstock.



I, TRIXIE, WHO IS DOG is a delightful picture book written by bestselling author Dean Koontz and illustrated by Janet Cleland. Dean Koontz gives readers a fun, lighthearted glimpse into the imagination of Trixie, his beloved Golden Retriever who was a retired Canine Companions service dog. Her quirky narration and irrepressible spirit will delight readers young and old. Buy your copy at cci.org/giftshop. 100% of author's royalties are donated to Canine Companions.

