

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
March 23, 2010



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FROM CUDDLY PUPPIES TO TRAINED COMPANIONS

ORLANDO, FL...Tallulah is the sixteenth. A black Labrador with a hint of Golden Retriever mixed into her breeding. She, like the previous fifteen, will soon leave the caring tutelage of Peggy Jensen for “graduate school.”



At 16 months of age Tallulah already knows 30 commands, ranging from sit, down, let’s go and shake. But once she is turned into the Southeast Regional Campus of Canine Companions for Independence (CCI) in May for advanced training, she will begin her final quest that hopefully ends with her aiding an adult or a child with a disability. Jensen has high hopes for Tallulah’s future. As a volunteer puppy raiser for CCI, she has taken Tallulah to many different places, allowing her to socialize with strangers, walk amid crowds and traffic, open doors, calmly wait, and otherwise become familiar with the world around her. She has also taken her to obedience classes, provided a safe home and has given lots of love.

“Giving back, even just a little bit, has become the highlight of my life and has shaped me in so many ways,” said Jensen, who has been a volunteer puppy raiser for the organization since 1993. After turning in Tallulah she will immediately begin raising Slaven, her 17th puppy.

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CCI has its own breeding program in Santa Rosa, California and the volunteer puppy raising program offers a unique opportunity for volunteers to assist CCI with its mission. CCI assistance dogs are provided free of charge, though costs to CCI exceed \$45,000 to breed, raise, train and provide ongoing support. Charitable contributions, grants, special events and corporate support fund the substantial costs involved with this process

“Puppy raisers are integral to the success of CCI. Every puppy raiser shortens our client waiting list,” said CCI Puppy Program Manager Ed Burger. If you would like to learn more about becoming a volunteer puppy raiser please contact Burger at (407) 522-3304 or at eburger@cci.org. Volunteer applications are also available on-line at www.cci.org/southeast

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Canine Companions for Independence is a non-profit organization that enhances the lives of people with disabilities by providing highly trained assistance dogs and ongoing support to ensure quality partnerships. It is the largest non-profit organization in the world that provides assistance dogs for people with disabilities. The Southeast Region of Canine Companions for Independence serves Florida, Georgia, Alabama, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Louisiana and Mississippi. For more information about CCI contact the Southeast Regional Center at 800-572-BARK, or visit their Web site at www.cci.org