

## Raise a puppy, change a life

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Peggy Jensen with her 14th puppy, Fawn.

At **Canine Companions for Independence**, every assistance dog starts out as a puppy raised by a volunteer. And right now, volunteers are desperately needed.

Puppy raisers provide these specially bred dogs a safe home, take them to obedience classes, serve up a healthy diet, help to socialize them — and give them a big dose of love.

It's not something everyone is cut out to do — for a variety of reasons. But one thing that stops a lot of people is the fear that they won't want to give up the dog when it's time. Peggy Jensen of Orlando knows the sentiment. It almost stopped her from raising her first **CCI puppy**. Then she thought about the people whose lives she might change by giving them a well-trained assistance dog.

That was in 1993. Jensen is now raising Tallulah, her 16th CCI puppy.

"Giving back, even just a little bit, has become the highlight of my life and has shaped me in so many ways," she says.



So what would you need to do as a volunteer?

- Provide a safe environment for a puppy in a home where there are no other dogs younger than 1 year old.
- Work closely with CCI monitoring the puppy's progress and submit monthly reports.
- Attend CCI-approved obedience classes.
- Teach the puppy manners and basic commands.
- Provide financially for the puppy's food, medical and transportation expenses.
- Feed the puppy a diet recommended by CCI.
- Provide a kennel or crate for sleeping indoors.
- Provide the puppy with age-appropriate socialization opportunities, such as public outings and medical appointments.
- Keep the puppy on a leash at all times unless it's in a securely fenced area.
- Supervise the young puppy throughout the day.
- Agree to return the puppy upon request

"Puppy raisers are integral to the success of CCI," says the nonprofit's puppy program manager, Ed Burger. "Every puppy raiser shortens our client waiting list."

And there is always a waiting list. Those are the **adults and children with disabilities** who need assistance dogs.

If you want to learn more about becoming a volunteer puppy raiser, contact Burger at (407) 522-3304 or [eburger@cci.org](mailto:eburger@cci.org). Volunteer applications are also available on-line at [www.cci.org/southeast](http://www.cci.org/southeast).