



Fact Sheet

Canine Companions for Independence

Facility Dogs

One category of assistance dog offered by CCI is the Facility Dog. Facility Dogs are trained to work with a facilitator-handler who is able-bodied and who works or volunteers in settings such as hospitals, extended care facilities, physical therapy programs, hospices, special education classrooms, and programs for people with developmental disabilities.

The work of a Facility Dog team is varied and geared to the range of settings in which a Facility Dog team may participate. For example, a Facility Dog team working at a physical therapy center offers patients opportunities for physical activity. A patient might throw a ball for the dog or build physical strength in grooming sessions with the canine. The very process of scheduling time with the Facility Dog can also be used to broaden independent living skills. All of these contexts give patients extra motivation to participate actively in their recovery process.



One of the most valued qualities of the Facility Dog is the unconditional love and attention it gives to the clients and patients with whom it interacts. For a person in recovery or in extended care, the mere presence of a friendly, safe, attentive dog can be an uplifting experience.

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About CCI Assistance Dogs

Canine Companions for Independence (CCI) is the oldest and largest non-profit provider of assistance dogs for people with disabilities. Established in 1975, CCI is recognized world wide for the excellence of its dogs and for the quality and longevity of the matches it makes between dogs and people.

All CCI assistance dogs are one of three types of canines: Labrador Retrievers, Golden Retrievers, or a cross of these two breeds. They are selected for their even temperament, desire to please, social nature, and adaptability. Each assistance dog completes a minimum of six months of rigorous training under a professional CCI Instructor and then undergoes a two-week Team Training with their future human partner.

Never aggressive or noisy, CCI's assistance dogs display perfect etiquette in public. There is no need, for example, to worry about "accidents" in public, as their behavior training and repertoire of commands prevent such occurrences. They take their work seriously and are recognized for their high level of training. Each has passed or exceeded the level of training required to earn public access under state and federal laws, including the Americans with Disabilities Act. A certified CCI assistance dog team is readily identified by the special vest worn by the canine and an identification card carried by its human partner.

When not on the job, a CCI assistance dog enjoys its off-duty time just as any other well mannered dog would. Once the working vest is placed on the dog, however, the dog must stay alert to the needs of its partner. For this reason, it is important that others never pet, feed, or distract the dog while it is working. Instead, people should ask permission from the dog's partner to pet it or show it attention. Oftentimes, the team will gladly oblige with a paw-shake.

CCI is supported entirely by the generosity of donors who want to help carry out its mission. As a result of this generosity, we are able to provide these highly trained canines and ongoing follow-up services free of charge to people who seek the assistance and increased independence that a Canine Companion can offer.

If you would like to learn more about Canine Companions for Independence, or know someone who may be interested in a partnership with a CCI assistance dog, please contact us at:

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