



# Southwest Companion

*The Southwest Region Newsletter of Canine Companions for Independence*



**Summer 2010 Issue:** *Celebrating the New Los Angeles Field Office, Salute to Texas Veterans, Wounded Veterans Initiative in Action, Golf Across the Region*

## 6,744 Combined Years of Service! And Counting...

**A**t the May Graduation ceremonies nationwide, Canine Companions for Independence launched the celebration of its 35th Birthday. In the Southwest Region, one highlight was the stunning numbers shared by Executive Director Linda Valliant. "6,744!" she proclaimed to the audience. "That is the number of years of service, companionship and love that the graduates placed in the Southwest have enjoyed. That's 843 teams, 6,744 years of everyday miracles!" The audience erupted with applause.

Those who live near Oceanside, or are able to travel here, have the privilege of experiencing firsthand the magic of Graduation. They watch the loving volunteer puppy raisers with their charges in royal blue matriculation capes walk across the stage. They see a slideshow that celebrates each dog's puppyhood and entrance into Professional Training. They get to know each class of graduates through a video presentation, and they learn about the diversity of the people Canine Companions serves. Finally, they share laughter and tears with the class speaker. And they

*please see Years of Service on page 10*

Service Graduate and Air Force Veteran Jason Morgan has been an active ambassador for Canine Companions. He is pictured with Service Dog Napal II at the recent *Warrior Games* for injured service members in Colorado Springs. Photo by Stacy L. Pearsall



## Director's Chair



by Linda L. Valliant

Sometimes, simple questions open the door to the most exciting opportunities!

Our ten-state Southwest Region includes the “Aloha State” of Hawaii on its western extreme and the “Natural State” of Arkansas to its eastern boundary. Southern California and Nevada, Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, Colorado, Oklahoma and Texas round out the territory served by the Southwest Regional Facility.

You do not have to be ‘smarter than a fifth grader’ to pinpoint the most populous city within the region. Los Angeles! The City of Angels with its surrounding

county of the same name is a robust megalopolis with thriving industries and diversified, in-touch residents.

Shirley McKernan is a particularly astute Los Angeles resident who was drawn to Canine Companions because of our *Wounded Veterans Initiative* and made a generous major gift to support that program. Chatting with Shirley about ways she might get more involved with Canine Companions, she asked about what we had going on in her neighborhood of Los Angeles.

After a character-building gulp, I confessed that the answer was ‘very little.’ Yes, Los Angeles is the largest metro area in our region but per capita, we have the least exposure there. And then came that simple question with the tentacles of opportunity dangling—*why?*

Since our Los Angeles footprint is small, the community’s knowledge of Canine Companions is limited. And, it’s hard to fix that because the distance from Oceanside is just too far for frequent day trips and outreach activities. Before our conversation ended, it was decided

that a *Los Angeles Strategic Plan* would be developed to include establishing a Los Angeles field office. Why not?!

The plan came together easily; after all, we had always wanted to become THE assistance dog organization of Los Angeles, so the goals were known. A proposal was crafted to include the metrics of increasing every Canine Companions constituency in Los Angeles, with estimated costs for maintaining the office presence.

The Shirley McKernan Courage Foundation agreed to cover all costs of the Los Angeles field office for a two-year period. A spacious storefront office in bustling Westwood is now home to Canine Companions outreach in Los Angeles. This is proactive philanthropy at its best—asking the right question, identifying the problem and investing directly in its solution.

I look forward to Shirley’s next question!

*Linda Valliant*

## Celebrating the New Los Angeles Field Office



Shirley McKernan hosted an elegant garden party to celebrate the grand opening of the Los Angeles field office.



Garden party guests mingled with graduates and puppy raisers. They also heard about Canine Companions’ activities in Los Angeles from Southwest Region Executive Director Linda Valliant.



Instructor Becky Hein and Skilled Companion Team Max and Michele Dahlerbruch and Calista gave a presentation at the Los Angeles *Puppies in the Park* event in May. In addition to hearing from graduates, attendees observed a puppy obedience class, spoke with puppy raisers and Canine Companions staff, and enjoyed gourmet ice cream sandwiches. The new Los Angeles field office was highlighted at the event.

Photos by Stacey Webb, Scout Photography

**Canine Companions for Independence  
Los Angeles Field Office**  
2312 Westwood Boulevard  
Los Angeles, CA 90064  
phone: (310) 446-5700  
email: LA\_Office@cci.org  
online: www.cci.org/laoffice

**February Graduates**



**Sasha Anand**  
With Facilitator Laura Anand  
Skilled Companion Dog  
Kenzie II  
Irvine, CA  
Connie & Charles Braddy  
La Mesa, CA



**Eddie Garcia**  
Service Dog Benji III  
Muncie, IN  
Kelly Haugh  
Boulder City, NV



**Carole Herbster**  
Service Dog Anders II  
San Marcos, CA  
Susan, Ellie & Vincent Wroble  
Denver, CO



**Matthew Good**  
With Facilitator Marsha Good  
Skilled Companion Dog Duley  
Weatherford, TX  
Teresa A. Woods  
Carlsbad, CA



**Eileen Koniarsky**  
Service Dog Inoch  
Sedona, AZ  
Laurie & Kristin Schmidt  
Parker, CO



**Andrew LaFranchise**  
Service Dog Blue II  
Vista, CA  
Kerinne Levy  
Santa Rosa, CA



**Victoria Salter**  
Successor Service Dog Carmen IV  
Glendora, CA  
Debby Hueber  
Grapevine, TX



**Shawn Miller**  
With Facilitator Sonia Miller  
Skilled Companion Dog Eli  
Wheat Ridge, CO  
Sherry Ford  
San Pedro, CA

**Legoland's Green Wave Goes to Canine Companions**



Legoland California in Carlsbad has chosen Canine Companions as the beneficiary of their Green Wave Recycling Program from April through Labor Day. Legoland's "Model Citizens" will be donating recyclables such as plastic, aluminum and glass through department competitions and challenges. Officially started in 2007, the Green Wave Program has collected over 3,000 pounds of recyclables and has donated over \$2,000 to nonprofit organizations.

*In Their Own Words*

Recently, Oceanside, California City Council Member Jack Feller took a moment out of his busy schedule to share his experience as a Canine Companions Southwest Regional Board Member.

*I have been an Oceanside City Councilmember for the past 10 years. I have been involved in numerous other commissions, committees and activities throughout the City for over 20 years.*

*I heard about Canine Companions from Bob Wilson and Bob Schroder who built the facility*



*in the Southwest Region. I became a Canine Companions board member in 2002 because I felt my position as an Oceanside Council Member would bring attention to the needs of people with disabilities. As a board member, I attend meetings and speak on behalf of Canine Companions and promote it whenever possible. I find a lot of satisfaction in being able to help.*

*My most memorable moments with Canine Companions are always the graduations. There are touching moments with each and every uniting of animal and client.*

# Volunteer Highlights

## Southern California Champions

by Jay Scrivener

The newly revitalized Southern California Champions are examining new possibilities. Just like our puppies in program, we have sniffed a lot of things and have found some ideas we really like! We have held a successful rummage sale. A dedicated group of volunteers is organizing a Canine Companions Drill Team to appear in the July 3 Coronado Parade. We are putting together little bonus bags to accompany Canine Companions' great package. Our Presentation Committee is scheduling guest speakers for our Champions meetings. Other volunteers have worked hard on such events as the WOOFSTOCK Festival and the upcoming *Canine Companions Invitational* on October 29. The South Village cape makers are always busy outfitting puppies in program.

The Champions also launched our own awesome newsletter that will give you much more information about our activities to support Canine Companions. To subscribe, contact Chapter President Jay Scrivener at [blackservicedog@gmail.com](mailto:blackservicedog@gmail.com). You can also join our meet-up group at <http://www.meetup.com/CCI-Puppy-Raisers-So-California/ideas/270582/>.

## Las Vegas Chapter

by Kerry Pettit

Viva Las Vegas! Southern Nevada is home to a new Canine Companions chapter - the Las Vegas Chapter. We were conceived during the Canine Companions *A Good Dog Evening* event in March. We now have five board members to nurture our growth!

**Did you know?** The Southern California and Las Vegas groups are Canine Companions' newest volunteer chapters. Welcome, and thank you for your support!



A child enjoyed the opportunity to meet a Canine Companions puppy in program at the Summerlin, Nevada *Art in the Park* event.

So far, we have hit the ground running! Our group hosted a booth at the Summerlin *Art in the Park* fundraising and awareness event. We raised over \$500 while establishing a promising list of prospective volunteers and puppy raisers.

In other exciting news, Kelly Haugh and her puppy in program, Sully V, participated in an interview for a podcast called "The Petcast" on LVRocks.com. Recently, we welcomed our fifth active puppy raiser into the chapter, and the number of puppy play dates is steadily increasing! Soon, we will organize group outings and training sessions. We are looking forward to a gathering of graduates and volunteers to plan future events and fundraisers, and we will invite the public to learn about Canine Companions and join the cause. For more information, visit our website at [www.ccilasvegas.org](http://www.ccilasvegas.org).

## Arizona Valley of the Sun Chapter

by Cheryl Goode

This has been a busy spring for the Valley of the Sun Chapter! In March, we held our first garage sale to benefit Canine Companions, selling everything from office furniture to roller blades. By the time the last haggler left, we had raised over \$3,000! In February and May, a total of 15 Arizona puppy rais-

ers experienced that bittersweet moment of saying goodbye to their charges. We wish the dogs success in Professional Training. Also in May, two change of career dogs that were raised in Arizona graduated with Guide Dogs of America. We are proud that Gangee and Yuma are now successfully aiding their new partners.

Before the May 26 Phoenix Mercury game, 33 enthusiastic chapter members sold 3,600 tickets for a 50/50 raffle to benefit Canine Companions. On the floor prior to the game, the 2009 WNBA champion Mercury players honored eight graduate teams with autographed basketballs in front of a crowd of about 6,000 fans. What a treat!

Now, we are busy planning fall activities, particularly the annual *Dog Days of Summer Golf Classic* on September 10 in Scottsdale. Details are available at [www.ccgolf.org](http://www.ccgolf.org) under the Arizona tab.



Arizona Graduate Linden Aitken received an autographed basketball from WNBA Phoenix Mercury player Diana Tuarasi.

## Colorado Satellite Office

by Kelly Gorman

The first half of 2010 was off to a fast start for Canine Companions in Colorado. In February, several Colorado dogs started Professional Training in Oceanside. Then, we held two *Volunteer Puppy Raiser Informational Meetings* in Colorado Springs and Denver. As a result, Colorado is now home to more than 50 puppies in program!

In May, the Colorado Satellite Office helped connect 10 Canine Companions



Canine Companions Colorado Director, Paul O'Brien, presented Eric Balenseifen with an appreciation trophy at the 13th Annual Glen and Lynn Ann Balenseifen Golf Tournament. The event has raised over \$340,000 in its 13-year history.

volunteers to assist with the inaugural *Warrior Games*, in which ill and injured service members competed in a wide variety of sports. In addition to Canine Companions volunteers at the event, Service Graduate Jason Morgan actually competed. It was an amazing experience for all involved.

Our momentum continues into the second half of 2010! We are proud to report that the 13th Annual Glen and Lynn Ann Balenseifen Golf Tournament raised over \$29,000 on June 7 at the Hiwan Golf Club in Evergreen. Next, we're looking forward to the annual *Good Times Car Show* on August 15 in Old Colorado City and the annual *Journey to Independence* event on August 16 in Vail Valley. On October 2, we will host a graduate workshop. Visit the Colorado Satellite Office webpage on the [cci.org](http://cci.org) website for updates.

## Red Earth Champions

by Dawn Ramsey

We are proud to report that despite the recent tornadoes, softball-sized hail and torrential rain, our *Celebrity Waiter Gala* went off without a hitch in June. Graduates and volunteers gathered at the Heart of Oklahoma Exposition Center to celebrate and raise funds for Canine Companions.

Previously, the Red Earth Champions attended the *Art Trek* at the Saint Gregory's College campus. At the event, volunteers at the Canine Companions information booth spoke with three new potential applicants.

We were thrilled when Red Earth volunteer Linda McMahan was chosen

to receive the *Pay it 4Ward* award from News Channel 4 in Oklahoma City. This local TV segment surprises people with a \$400 reward in recognition of their charitable efforts. To view the clip, visit the Southwest Regional news page on [www.cci.org](http://www.cci.org).

## New Mexico Champions

by Amy Steider and Mary Aynn Shoemate

Arf, arf, fore! Canine Companions puppies in program, puppy raisers, graduate teams and supporters are preparing for the third annual *Enchanted Canines Golf Classic* on July 23 in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Photo shoots, public appearances and charming everybody are just "par for the course" for busy puppies in program and graduate dogs these days. Visit [ccigolf.org](http://ccigolf.org) for more information on this exciting tournament.

Hearing Team Stan Sander and Tashi II shared an awesome experience in Mississippi this spring. Stan awoke to Tashi's alert in the early morning hours not once, but twice. Fortunately, the culprit turned out to be a faulty smoke alarm sensor rather than a fire, and Tashi's alert provided a safe and timely exit for the team. Good work, Tashi!

One New Mexico puppy in program began Professional Training in May and two more will begin in August. Lest

we all faint from puppy withdrawal, however, we are expecting the arrival of two new puppies in July.

## Wasatch Champions

by Kelly Bussio

Three puppies in program arriving in Utah the same day and four in one week is something to celebrate! Our local Fox News affiliate recently featured the excitement of the Wasatch Champions' growth on the evening news. The Wasatch Champions have been focused on community education and the effort has paid off.

Our key goals have been to bring Wasatch Champions together and reach out to the members' communities from several directions. We are happy to report that the numbers of puppy raisers, volunteers and applicants are all up! "We have more of everything since we set our chapter goals," explained Amy Kernan, a volunteer on the local leadership team. Plus, a formal puppy sitting program will be launched soon.

The Wasatch Champions' annual potluck dinner was held on June 19 and the Membership Meeting will be held at Camp Bow Wow on July 15. You can support the Wasatch Champions fundraiser by submitting recipes and reserving a copy of the first Wasatch Champions Cookbook at [wasatchcookbook@gmail.com](mailto:wasatchcookbook@gmail.com).



The Wasatch Champions gathered at the airport for the arrival of three new Utah puppies in program in May. The story was covered by Fox News. Pictured are Charlene Palmer and Belize II; Facility Team Susan Daynes and Devi; Shaun and Becca Anderson and Cheri; Melanie Dutcher and Pascha II; Amy Kernan and Berlin; Service Team Kelly Bussio and Tadaki; and Abigail Alamia.

# Canine Companions for Independence® Salutes Independence

## FREE COMMUNITY EVENT

Canine Companions for Independence® is a nonprofit organization that enhances the lives of people with disabilities by providing highly trained assistance dogs and ongoing support completely free of charge.

Our WOUNDED VETERANS INITIATIVE was established to place assistance dogs with injured service members from the Afghanistan and Iraq conflicts.

Join Canine Companions on September 4 for an afternoon of family fun! This is a special event for military veterans, active duty service members, their families and friends. Free and open to the public, CANINE COMPANIONS SALUTES INDEPENDENCE will feature:

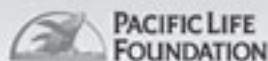
- Opportunities to Meet Veterans and their Service Dogs
- Assistance Dog Demonstrations
- Video Tour of the Training Center
- Canine Companions Puppies in Program
- Great Photo Opportunities
- Live Entertainment
- Games, Prizes and Face Painting
- All-American Refreshments



CANINE COMPANIONS  
FOR INDEPENDENCE®

for more information visit  
[cci.org/veterans](http://cci.org/veterans)

FUNDING PROVIDED BY



## JOIN US

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 4, 11AM - 3PM

Fiesta Gardens Building & Patio

2101 Jesse Segovia Street, Austin, TX 78702

(760) 901-4300

Event information: [cci.org/salutes](http://cci.org/salutes)

# Wounded Veterans Initiative in Action

The Southwest Region of Canine Companions has made great strides in our goal of placing assistance dogs in roles that help wounded veterans. Meet some injured service members who recently graduated.

## Service Team Matthew Keil and Gus Class of November 2009, US Army



"I was in the Army for seven years before being shot by a sniper in Iraq. Until that day in February 2007, I was able to do everything by myself. Now, my wife, family and friends help me with various daily tasks. It is hard to always ask other people to do things for me. With my new buddy, Gus, I am able to have him pick things up off the floor, open the door to my house... and do a number of other things for me.

"My independence is my biggest struggle. Trying to find things I can do on my own is difficult, but with a service dog, now I can go out in public by myself."

## Service Team Jason Morgan and Napal II Class of November 2009, US Air Force

"Being ten years in a chair, I felt like I've almost done everything I can do. I mean, I'm involved in a lot of sports and stuff, but now I'm just amazed at how many more things I can do now that I have a service dog. It's going to be exciting to see how much further we can go. It's like a new beginning for us."



## Service Team Kirk Ray Black and Sergi

### Class of August 2009, US Army

"I think that Team Training was much more than I ever expected it to be. I was not sure how it was going to affect me.



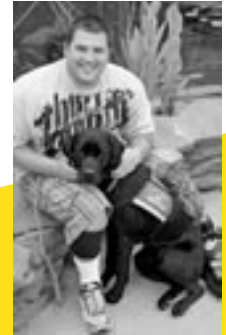
I thought, coming here, that I knew a lot about dogs since I've had them, basically, most of my life. I shortly found out that I knew very little on how to teach dogs and how to work with dogs properly. The facility and the staff are not only super generous but very, very smart when it comes to teaching these dogs the things that they know.

"Sergi is just there for me. I have severe pain issues and the pull command is the one that he helps me with the most. But I think just having him there with me throughout the day is more of an attribute than anything else."

## Service Team Joshua Hooker and Finn Class of June 2009, US Army

"I'm pretty capable of doing things on my own, but towards the end of the day, I really can't move or walk. I know Finn is going to help retrieve things such as my prosthesis or whether it be a remote on the ground or keys... and just save my back throughout the day.

"For me and the other wounded vets in this class, we're very thankful for the opportunity to not only come and enjoy canines for two weeks but to be able to take one home, and have them be there for us for the next ten years of our lives and helping us out in the daily tasks that we wouldn't be able to do without them."



## Service Team Calvin Smith and Chesney Class of June 2009, US Marine Corps



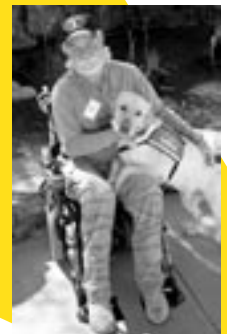
"Having Chesney is awesome. From the littlest things like picking up a remote... if I drop it, it's hard for me to bend over... to helping me get out of bed on the days when my back is hurting real bad... to turning off lights.

"Plus, he's a great companion as far as just being around all of the time. Before when I needed stuff, I would have to ask someone for help. So with him, it's almost like not being injured. It's like having your life back because of being able to do stuff without having to rely on someone else to do it all of the time."

## Service Team Bill Callahan and Taylor VI Class of February 2009, US Army

"One of my counselors through the VA told me about CCI and, fortunately, I was selected to be able to be here and be part of the program.

"There is no really price on these dogs because they're priceless once they get into your heart and they start working with you and they start taking care of you. I don't think there is any program in the world that could beat this place here. It's great here."



Canine Companions  
turns 35 on July 4, 2010 -  
Independence Day!



# Bark if You Enjoyed

# Woofstock

The 2010 WOOFSTOCK: A Festival for Dogs and People was a fantastic success, with record revenue and attendance. This San Diego event raised more than



Service Team Pete Wolcott and Connor IV explained the Canine Companions program to WOOFSTOCK 2010 attendees. WOOFSTOCK photos by Stacey Webb, Scout Photography

\$40,000 for the Southwest Region of Canine Companions for Independence! Approximately 3,000 attendees enjoyed browsing for unique dog products and delicious food at the 80 vendor booths. Presentations by Canine Companions graduate teams, the Ballistic Racers Flyball Team and Disc Dogs in Southern California wowed the crowd.

Special thanks to the WOOFSTOCK 2010 Title Sponsor, Disney VolunteARS, for their support of Canine Companions. Other WOOFSTOCK sponsors included San Diego County Credit Union, Holiday Pet Hotel, PETCO and the PETCO Foundation, The Honest Kitchen, Veterinary Imaging Center of San Diego, SPRINKS Animal Care Therapies, Federal Heath Sign, Magic 92.5 and 105.7FM The Walrus.



The crowd at WOOFSTOCK appreciated the skills of Disc Dogs of Southern California.

WOOFSTOCK kicked off with the *Peace, Love & Walk N' Roll* fun dog walk through Balboa Park. Walk participants had the opportunity to raise funds for Canine Companions, and receive prizes based on the donations they collected. Tessa Rocker, who raised over \$2,600, was the WOOFSTOCK 2010 Top Dog Fundraiser. Tessa won a custom painting of her dog by artist Deirdre O'Byrne. Our thanks to Tessa and all of the WOOFSTOCK fundraisers and donors!



Volunteer puppy raiser Tessa Rocker was applauded for earning the Top Dog Fundraiser prize at WOOFSTOCK 2010.

Of course, the WOOFSTOCK Festival would not be possible without the efforts of the volunteer event committee. Cheryl Crawford, the committee chair, worked tirelessly to make the event a huge success. She was supported by WOOFSTOCK 2010 committee members Lyn Berry, Karyl Carmignani, Lyn Comunale, Willie Crawford, Patty Giddings, Davi Huffman, Kristin Jensen, Suzanne McKellar, Cath Phillips, Becky Rios and Jay Scrivener. Thanks to all for your great work!



Canine Companions Southwest Regional Director of Development Chuck Contreras accepted a \$10,000 check from Disney VolunteARS, the title sponsor of WOOFSTOCK 2010.

Great news for Trixie Koontz fans! A children's wooden puzzle featuring an irresistible picture of Trixie on a trampoline and the text, "Bliss to you. Bliss to you! Is me, who is dog, Trixie Koontz, happy dog," has arrived. Only \$10 at our gift shop in Oceanside. Call (760) 901-4300 to place your order. All proceeds benefit Canine Companions.





## News from the Staff

Seamus Cashin and Becky Miller are the Southwest Region's newest instructors. This major accomplishment represents the completion of three apprenticeship levels, all of which required hard work and intensive study followed by practical and written exams. Congratulations, Seamus and Becky!



On May 22, Downtown Disney guests were treated to a demonstration by artist and Canine Companions graduate Tommy Hollenstein. Rather than the traditionally handheld paintbrush, Tommy uses the tires of his wheelchair to paint (along with the occasional paw print from his service dog, Hiley!) Crowds gathered for his fascinating demonstrations, and skilled companion teams in attendance were given the opportunity to learn Tommy's special painting technique. Instructor Becky Miller gave periodic training demonstrations, and staff and dogs in Professional Training mingled with the crowd. A tee shirt featuring Tommy's art was sold at the event for \$15, and Tommy generously produced a limited edition, custom-painted and autographed version for \$50. A small supply of these unique shirts is still available. Call (760) 901-4300 if you are interested. All proceeds benefit Canine Companions.

Photos by Stacey Webb, Scout Photography Logo by malatinodesign.com



## Upcoming Events

**July 23**

Enchanted Canines Golf Classic  
Sandia Golf Club  
Albuquerque, NM

**August 14**

Canine Companions Graduation  
Mission San Luis Rey  
Oceanside, CA

**August 16**

Journey to Independence  
The Timber Hearth Grille  
Cordillera, CO

**September 4**

Canine Companions Salutes  
Independence  
Fiesta Gardens Building and Patio  
Austin, TX

**September 10**

Dog Days of Summer Golf  
Tournament  
Troon North Golf Club  
Scottsdale, AZ

**October 29**

Canine Companions Invitational  
St. Regis Monarch Beach  
Dana Point, CA

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

## Wish List

- Gift cards for volunteer recognition—movie theaters, restaurants, etc.
- Child friendly Wii games
- Sound machines
- Two electric heating pads
- Large, live, potted plants with vines
- Dog crates—XLG (500), M (300), S (200)
- Tennis balls
- Plastic play set with slide (large, for ages 3+)
- Two plastic kiddie pools
- Three CD players
- Compact flash card for camera (1gb or higher)
- Flash drives

In addition to the items mentioned above, we need a separation panel constructed for the puppy arrival pen on campus. Please call (760) 901-4300 for more information.

Thank you to Christina Amoroso, Patty Giddings and Hank Mahan for granting wishes from our last newsletter.

## Years of Service

continued from page 1

experience it all from their seat, which is inevitably next to a volunteer holding a small puppy, or a graduate with a working dog resting at his feet or a supporter beaming with pride.

It is easy to understand Canine Companions' mission after attending a Graduation, speaking with a puppy raiser or meeting a graduate. However, there are areas of the country where the odds of encountering anyone involved with Canine Companions are decidedly slim. Canine Companions is growing every year, yet there are still many communities where more outreach needs to be done.

One such place is the great state of Texas. A giant geographic area, Canine Companions graduates, volunteers and supporters are scattered throughout. Late last year we resolved to bring the Texas Canine Companions community together in 2010, to get more people involved and work to ensure that potential applicants understand our great organization. Headway has been made.

November 2009 Graduate Jason Morgan has been instrumental in boosting our outreach efforts in his home state. An Air Force veteran, avid athlete and proud Texan, Jason regularly shares how Service Dog Napal II has changed his life. "I remember how tough it was when I was first injured," Jason explains. "I was constantly focusing on my new limitations and it was frustrating and depressing. I can't tell you how awesome it was to gain so much hope through my Canine Companions assistance dog. I don't think there is a greater gift you can give than hope for greater independence."



At the May Graduation, Executive Director Linda Valliant announced that assistance dogs in the Southwest Region have given a combined 6,744 years of service to their human partners.

So far, Jason has introduced Napal and Canine Companions to 13,000 attendees at NAPE, Texas Governor Rick Perry, the Texas Senate Veteran Affairs and Military Installations Committee, staff and inmates at Bryan Federal Prison Camp for Women, patients at a Dallas hospital who are facing challenging recoveries and fellow injured veteran athletes at the recent Warrior Games. Jason is looking forward to his presentation at *Canine Companions Salutes Independence* on September 4 in Austin. At this landmark event, he will speak to military veterans about the benefits of assistance dogs. Jason's work is already

inspiring support for Canine Companions' *Wounded Veterans Initiative* and encouraging veterans with disabilities to apply for a dog of their own. (See page 6 for more information.)

Another target area for Canine Companions' growth is Los Angeles County. Thanks to the visionary support of the Shirley McKernan Courage Foundation, Canine Companions recently opened a Los Angeles field office at 2312 Westwood Boulevard. The weekend of May 1 marked the office's grand opening, celebrated with the *Puppies in the Park* event to encourage community support for Canine Companions through volunteering and puppy raising. This outdoor gathering featured graduate and puppy raiser presentations, training demonstrations and the opportunity to observe a puppy obedience class. The following day, Shirley McKernan graciously hosted a garden party, where guests had the opportunity to speak with graduates and puppy raisers, learn about Canine Companions' expansion in Los Angeles and enjoy some puppy love.

Now, we are reaching out to children in Los Angeles County to participate in an art contest called *Art Unleashed: A Contest for Kids*. Artists up to age 14 are invited to submit original pieces that feature a Canine Companions graduate dog or puppy in program. The submissions will be displayed at the Los Angeles field office and on our website, where the public can vote for their favorite piece. The winner will be announced at the Southwest Region November 2010 Graduation and finalists' artwork will be featured in the *Southwest Companion*. The winner will have an opportunity to name a puppy in program and receive a Canine Companions gift basket. Visit [www.cci.org/artunleashed](http://www.cci.org/artunleashed) for more details.

As Linda Valliant said at our May Graduation, "Graduates, let us hear you. Puppy raisers; past, present and future; we could not move from square one without you. Supporters and volunteers, if you've ever given one dollar, told one person about this great organization or worked at one event, you qualify! Let us hear you." On our 35th Birthday, Canine Companions would like to thank all of you for making it possible. 6,744 and counting...



# Assistance Dogs Aren't Born, They're Raised

Canine Companions relies on volunteer puppy raisers to foster future assistance dogs for the first 14-16 months of their lives. Volunteers receive eight-week-old bundles of Labrador and Golden Retriever fur, and they provide socialization opportunities and basic training until the puppies are ready for their final six months of Professional Training with staff instructors. Volunteer puppy raising is not



Photo by Stacey Webb, Scout Photography

for everyone; it requires unwavering dedication to Canine Companions' mission, the means to provide for a puppy's well-being, lots of patience and a huge heart. It is not easy to return a puppy to Canine Companions, but the pride that comes with seeing the dog you raised graduate to help someone with a disability is infinitely rewarding.

Last year, the Southwest Region graduated a record 50 assistance dogs. The number of puppies assigned to the Southwest Region is expanding with the increased number of applicants we serve. **Help Canine Companions grow. Help provide highly-trained assistance dogs completely free of charge. Learn more at [www.cci.org/swpuppy](http://www.cci.org/swpuppy).**



**Recently, Southwest Region Training Manager Todd Young and Professional Training Dog Dennie went to Dodger Stadium.** They visited with baseball greats Joe Moeller and Don Sutton, and had the privilege of watching the Los Angeles Dodgers and Atlanta Braves warm up! Joe, Don and a host of other MLB stars are serving on the Honorary Committee of the *Canine Companions Invitational Golf Classic*. Check it out at [www.cci.golf.org](http://www.cci.golf.org).

## Golf Across the Southwest to Benefit Canine Companions



Photo by Pat Lawson

For the second year in a row, Canine Companions is holding golf tournaments in Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona and Southern California. Colorado's 13th Annual *Glen and Lynn Ann Balenseifen Golf Tournament* was the first up on June 7, and with \$29,000 raised for Canine Companions, the event was a great success. Join us as we continue our tour at some of the most spectacular courses in the Southwest!

The *Enchanted Canines Golf Classic* will be on July 23 at the Sandia Golf Club in Albuquerque. The Club's 7,772-yard golf course was designed by Scott Miller and features panoramic views of the Sandia Mountains.

The *Dog Days of Summer Golf Classic* will be on September 10 at Scottsdale's Troon North Golf Club. This immaculately groomed course stands as the hallmark of the desert golf experience, with customer service that matches the outstanding scenery.

The *Canine Companions Invitational Golf Classic* will round out the tour at the Monarch Beach Golf Links on the Southern California coast on October 29. Enjoy the view of the Pacific Ocean and rugged bluffs while you play the course that PGA Pro Tom Watson compared to Augusta National.

The courses' views will only be enhanced by the irresistible puppies in program in attendance! Register online at [www.cci.golf.org](http://www.cci.golf.org) today.



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**Mission statement:** *Canine Companions for Independence 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.*

## Canine Companions Invitational Golf Classic on October 29



Enjoy a magnificent day on the links and support Canine Companions for Independence at the *Canine Companions Invitational Golf Classic and Celebration Dinner* on Friday, October 29 at the Monarch Beach Golf Links and St. Regis in Dana Point, California.

The *Canine Companions Invitational Golf Classic* offers a unique golf experience few can match. The blend of stunning natural beauty and variety of challenges of the Robert Trent Jones, Jr. designed course offers an unending variety of play. Following golf, participants will enjoy an evening of celebration! A cocktail hour, gourmet dinner and silent and live auction in the elegant St. Regis Monarch Beach Resort Pacific Ballroom will cap off a perfect day.

The *Canine Companions Invitational Golf Classic and Celebration Dinner* will be our major fundraising event of the year and your participation will help ensure that the tournament is a success. Register today as a single player, foursome or dinner guest. Individual golf is \$200 per golfer and a foursome is \$800. Polo shirts, golfer gift bags, and dinner are included with golf registration fees. Non golfers and guests may purchase Celebration Dinner tickets for \$125 or a table of eight for \$1,000. Sponsorships are available from a prestigious Title Sponsor to the highly visible Tee-Box Sponsorships.

Register online at [www.ccigolf.org](http://www.ccigolf.org) and click on the Southern California tab. For more information, call Chuck Contreras at (760) 901-4305.

[www.ccigolf.org](http://www.ccigolf.org)