

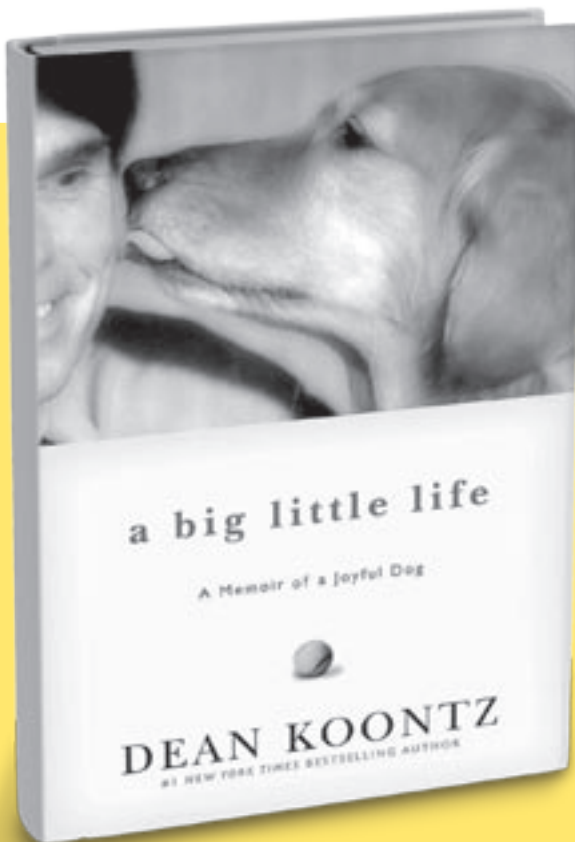


Southwest Companion

The Southwest Region Newsletter of Canine Companions for Independence



Fall 2009 Issue: *Graduates Reunite at Annual Workshop, Welcoming 2010, Have a Ball at the Canine Companions Invitational*



A BIG LITTLE LIFE: A Memoir of a Joyful Dog

by Dean Koontz/ Hyperion

A powerful tribute to a beautiful friend, *A BIG LITTLE LIFE* will remind readers everywhere that the love of our canine best friends is a love that lasts more than a lifetime.

All author's proceeds will be donated to Canine Companions for Independence.

A BIG LITTLE LIFE: A Memoir of a Joyful Dog

The world knows Dean Koontz as a bestselling author; his books have sold over 400,000,000 copies in 38 languages and he has 12 number one New York Times bestsellers to his credit. Canine Companions also knows Dean and his accomplished business partner wife, Gerda, as benefactors of our Southwest Region with contributions totalling over \$5.5 million. We also know Dean and Gerda as mom and dad to Trixie Koontz, dog.

As Dean recalls, "Trixie weighed only sixty-something pounds, I occasionally called her Short Stuff, and she lived less than twelve years. In this big world, she was a little thing, but in all the ways that mattered, including the effect she had on those that loved her, she lived a big life."

Dean and Gerda thought they had everything they needed. They shared the rewards of a thriving writing career of more than thirty years and a happy marriage. The pair, who had been high school sweethearts, were self-described workaholics who balanced their lives with the peace and contentment of a beautiful home. Then along came Trixie, the Canine Companions retired service dog that the Koontzes adopted in 1998.

please see A Big Little Life on page 5

Director's Chair

by Linda L. Valliant



For the Southwest Region's 20th Anniversary in 2006, we asked you to share your most indelible CCI memories. The heartwarming, awe-inspiring, poignant and hilarious Canine Companions moments you shared provided a fitting kaleidoscope of those first two decades.

I hope we follow this tradition when we reach the milestone of our 30th Anniversary in 2016. It will be impossible to select one point in time, but perhaps we can give everyone a chance to nominate three or four. It's only 2009 and I already have at least two of mine in ink!

The \$1,000,000 gift presented by Dean and Gerda Koontz in August 2007 will always be at the top of my list. Dean had shared his intent with me, but the preview did not go any further. The million dollar check was striking in the knowledge of all the wonderful things CCI could accomplish with this extraordinary contribution, but the surprise element was equally stunning and a whole lot of fun!

The August 2009 graduation is another unforgettable memory. The ceremony celebrated our organization's largest-ever graduating class—23 new Canine Companions graduates were introduced on

stage. Individual accomplishments of each of the graduates shined through. Among the skilled companion graduates was a child who has endured literally hundreds of medical procedures; he flashed the biggest smile of his life when united with his new best friend on stage. The service graduates included a physician specializing in rehabilitation medicine who will intern in the same hospital where he received treatment after his disabling injury. The facility graduates included the mom of a service graduate who is a former puppy raiser. She came full circle with CCI as a graduate herself.

And then, there were the veterans. CCI has been honored to serve several veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts in recent months. Four of those brave warriors were presented at the August graduation. When the first military graduate was introduced, his name was announced along with his rank and affiliation - Sergeant, United States Marine Corps. The entire auditorium rose in thunderous tribute to his courage and determination and the sacrifices he made to protect our freedom. The applause continued as he made his way offstage with his new service dog. The Marine was clearly moved and everyone who saluted him was equally impacted. As the other military graduates had their time on stage, the same spontaneous expression of a nation's gratitude erupted with no less sincerity than the first.

Canine Companions' mission creates the landscape for extraordinary moments like these to occur. I look forward to the next installment of wonderful, heart-stopping drama and I hope you will be there to share an indelible memory of your own!

Linda Valliant

In His Own Words

by Dale Feine

Dale Feine has been involved with Canine Companions for over twenty years and has served on the Southwest Region Board for almost eight. Here, he shares why he has remained so dedicated to our mission of providing highly trained assistance dogs to people with disabilities.

Lori, then my wife-to-be, and I first learned of Canine Companions at the Del Mar Fair. We talked to some volunteer puppy raisers who shared their excitement about raising puppies to become service dogs. Learning about these life-changing teammates convinced us that we wanted to be puppy raisers, too. Years later, I joined the Southwest Region Board to encourage others to support Canine Companions. For the past several years, I've been privileged to serve as treasurer.



My favorite moments at Canine Companions are seeing firsthand how these furry friends make a huge difference in the lives of people with disabilities. From inspiring a first word to be uttered by a young person with autism, to picking up a pencil or keys off of the floor for someone with limited mobility, these dogs can open up the world to people with a wide range of challenges. I believe everyone desires to make a difference in this world. When you volunteer to help Canine

Companions or you provide financial support to this organization, you are definitely making a difference! In life there are few guarantees, but know that Canine Companions assistance dogs are guaranteed to make a *huge* difference in their teammates' lives.

May Graduates



Tait Berge
Service Dog Santana
Colorado Springs, CO
Tamie Hunt
Austin, TX



Mark Gilchrist
Service Dog Callender II
Oceanside, CA
Janice & Dan Flynn
Santee, CA



Rayleen Good
With Facilitator
Regina Castillo
Skilled Companion Dog
Vecca
Whittier, CA
Erica & Charlie Forbush
Spanish Fork, UT



Ulf Liljedahl
With Facilitators Monika
Liljedahl and Libby
Christiana
Skilled Companion Dog
Richmond II
La Jolla, CA
Trisha Heckendorn
Chino Hills, CA



Brooke Luker
With Facilitator
Laura Luker
Skilled Companion Dog
Laith
Lubbock, TX
Coffee Creek Correctional
Facility
Wilsonville, OR



**Naval Medical
Center San Diego**
With Facilitators April
Walter, Kristin Vallent and
Jacque Moore
Facility Dog Tommy III
San Diego, CA
Vanessa & Kevin O'Grady
Denver, CO



Brady Sherman
With Facilitators Patricia
and Damon Sherman
Skilled Companion Dog
Palo
Bonita, CA
Victoria Marchica
Mission Viejo, CA



Shelby Lynn Smith
Service Dog Gable III
Tucson, AZ
Susan Spicer
Yorba Linda, CA

June Graduates



Josiah Van Wingerden
With Facilitator
Lynn Van Wingerden
Skilled Companion Dog
Racer II
Colorado Springs, CO
Coffee Creek Correctional
Facility—Wilsonville, OR



Michelle Aguirre
Facility Dog Olwen II
Vista, CA
Eric & Carol Nelson
Phoenix, AZ



Kelly Bussio
Service Dog Tadaki
Sandy, UT
Eileen & Ron Sever
San Clemente, CA



Benjamin Coats
With Facilitators Ryan &
Shannon Coats
Skilled Companion Dog
Weston II
Dinuba, CA
Jackie Larsen
Phoenix, AZ



Susan Daynes
Facility Dog Devi
Salt Lake City, UT
Diane Maza
Glendale, AZ



Melonie Engleman
With Training Assistant
Michael Engleman
Service Dog Foley II
San Diego, CA
Nicole Sylvester & Sigrid
Ruge
Denver, CO



Joshua Hooker
Service Dog Finn III
San Diego, CA
Coffee Creek Correctional
Facility
Wilsonville, OR



Kelsey Horkey
With Training Assistant
Carla Horkey
Service Dog Renoir II
Midland, TX
Brenna & Lynn Morgan
Albuquerque, NM

August Graduates



John Mendez
Service Dog Favian
San Diego, CA
Crossroads Correctional
Facility
Shelby, MT



Pam Newby
Facility Dog Costa II
Oklahoma City, OK
Vicki Matthews
Kirkland, WA



Frank Palmer
Service Dog Zale
San Diego, CA
Coffee Creek Correctional
Facility
Wilsonville, OR



Bram Skinner
With Facilitator
Kimberly McSherry
Skilled Companion Dog
Zeeland
San Diego, CA
Rebecca Stanford
Ogden, UT



Calvin Smith
Service Dog Chesney
Oceanside, CA
Brenda Voght
Bothell, WA



David Van Gorder
With Training Assistant
Mary Van Gorder
Service Dog Devin
Prescott, AZ
Albert Foster
Sacramento, CA



Kirk Ray Black
Service Dog Sergi
San Antonio, TX
Laurie Dume
Oceanside, CA



James Osborne
With Facilitators Angie &
James Osborne
Skilled Companion Dog
Flora VI
Colorado Springs, CO
Kathleen & Robert Love
Mission Viejo, CA



Igor Pinykh
With Facilitator
Galena Pinykh
Skilled Companion Dog
Wendolyn
Salt Lake City, UT
Peter & Brenda Rothermel
Murrieta, CA



Ashley Posson
Service Dog Linda VI
Tucson, AZ
Laura Laxineta
Murrieta, CA



James Rasmussen
With Facilitators Angela &
Brian Rasmussen
Skilled Companion Dog
Alesia II
Salt Lake City, UT
Gloria Nolan
Aurora, CO



Allison Sanchez
With Facilitator
Joni Sanchez
Skilled Companion Dog
Claudia II
Temecula, CA
Mary & Neil Loughran
Littleton, CO



Sarah Shulman
With Facilitator
Lisa Shulman
Skilled Companion Dog
Marley III
San Diego, CA
Roger From
Mesa, AZ



Derek Swanson
With Facilitator
Lisa Swanson
Skilled Companion Dog
Dory II
Avondale, AZ
Cheryl Carroll Miller
Allen, TX



Gwen Walker
With Service Dog Leif III
Albuquerque, NM
Sharon Gesser
McGregor, TX



Gaël Yonnet
With Service Dog Elon
Salt Lake City, UT
Marcia & David Fox
Albuquerque, NM

Volunteer Highlights

Utah Wasatch Champions

by Melanie Dutcher

It has been a summer of great news and numbers for the Wasatch Champions. In August, volunteer puppy raisers Becca Stanford and Shaun Anderson included Canine Companions puppies in their wedding festivities. Their puppy in



Utah puppy raisers Becca Stanford and Shaun Anderson included their puppy in program in their wedding reception.

program, Edna, had a place in their receiving line and each puppy guest received special wedding treats! Matchmaking also took place this summer at Canine Companions for an amazing *five* new Utah graduates and two Wasatch Champion puppies that are now skilled companion dogs. Utah also had three new puppy pairings—one repeat and two new puppy raisers. Congratulations to all!

In July, the Wasatch Champions selected new officers. They are recent graduates Kelly

Bussio and Susan Daynes and puppy raisers Amy Kernan and Melanie Dutcher. For information and current events please email wasatchchampions@gmail.com or visit wasatchchampions.blogspot.com.

The Red Earth Champions

by Dawn Ramsey

We are proud to report that the *Celebrity Waiter Gala* was a great success. Guests enjoyed being served by the *Oklahoma City Victory Dolls* and two teachers from our local middle school. Entertainment included harp music by Champion, Beth Harder; an act by Parsoni the magician; and a live auction announced by Justin Daley. A great time was had by all!

Our next event is *Bark in the Park* on October 24 at Woodland Park in Shawnee, Oklahoma. After *Bark in the Park*, we will look forward to our annual Christmas Party.



Graduate Chad Beard and Skilled Companion Dog Ceylon enjoyed the *Celebrity Waiter Gala* in Oklahoma in August. Chad is pictured with the Oklahoma City Victory Dolls and puppies in program Gusty, August II and Flicka III.

Valley of the Sun Chapter

by Pat Lawson

The August graduation was a milestone not only for our region, but also for our chapter. We were quite proud that seven of the matriculating dogs and four of the graduating dogs were raised in Arizona. The excitement continues on September 25 at our 6th annual *Dog Days of Summer* golf tournament. Stay tuned for results in the next Southwest Companion! On November 7, we are launching our inaugural *Chapter Garage Sale*, giving everyone the opportunity to clean house and donate slightly-used items. We even have several corporate sponsors who are donating unused inventory to support our efforts! Plans for our year-end *Volunteer Appreciation Party* are also underway. Without our volunteers, none of these accomplishments could happen!



The New Mexico Champions held the second annual *Enchanted Canines Golf Classic* on July 24. Pictured are Service Team Buddy Hayes and Ellie with the foursome that Buddy generously sponsored. The tournament raised approximately \$20,000 for Canine Companions.



Arizona puppy raisers treat their charges to a Frosty Paws party before matriculation in August.

Colorado Satellite Office

by Kelly Gorman

The Colorado office had a busy summer. Events included the Colorado Wyoming Petroleum Marketers Association's 12th annual *Glen & Lynn Ann Balenseifen Memorial Golf Tournament* at the Rolling Hills Country Club in Golden, which raised over \$26,000; the 18th annual *Good Times Car Show* at Bancroft Park in Old Colorado City, which raised over \$4,000; and the 6th annual *Journey to Independence* event in Cordillera, which raised over \$130,000. A big CCI THANK YOU to all of the volunteers and supporters who helped make these events so successful!



Volunteer puppy raisers gather to ride the light rail together in downtown Denver.

The fun will continue this fall. A puppy raiser workshop is planned for September. Southwest Puppy Program Manager Stu Wahrenbrock and Instructor Becky Hein will provide our volunteers with lots of helpful information for continued successful puppy raising in Colorado. Becky will also follow-up with some local graduate teams and interview several applicants during her visit. In October, Joe Turcotte will participate in the *Ironman World Championships* to raise money for Canine Companions. Check out Joe's website at www.joeturcotte.com.

Welcoming 2010

This year is proving to be a noteworthy one for Canine Companions. Fulfilling our pledge to provide highly trained assistance dogs for people with disabilities, in 2009 the Southwest Region has already placed 44 new dogs, completed 216 follow-ups with active teams, hosted the second *CCI Salutes Independence* event, and graduated the largest class in the history of Canine Companions. And the year isn't over yet! As we race to the end of 2009, we will exceed placement goals, bringing the total number of active Southwest graduate teams to more than 317. This translates to over 530,000 hours of meaningful assistance and priceless companionship. Canine Companions pledges to continue this success in 2010, which means we cannot and will not reduce or delay our much-needed services. The demand for our life-changing dogs will undoubtedly increase and your vital financial support will enable us to reach our placement and budgetary goals for 2009. With your help, we can prepare and secure a firm fiscal and programmatic future for 2010.

Thanks to friends like you, *Canine Companions helps* by bringing independence to those who have had to rely on others for assistance. *Canine Companions cares* by providing ongoing follow-up support for the entire working life of every graduate team. *Canine Companions leads* by being the largest and longest serving assistance dog organization in the U.S.

As you consider your 2009 year-end charitable contributions, we ask that you include a tax deductible gift to Canine Companions for Independence. A contribution of any amount will make an immediate and long-lasting impact as it helps to change the lives of people with disabilities today and in years to come.

Skilled Companion Team Derek and Lisa Swanson and Dory II were one of 23 teams to graduate in August.



Photo courtesy of Stacey Webb, Scout Photography

A Big Little Life continued from page 1

A *BIG LITTLE LIFE* tells the story of unexpectedly falling in love in middle age. It details Trixie's life with Dean and Gerda and shares endearing glimpses of their own love story. Trixie had a tremendous impact on the Koontz household and she taught them life lessons along the way. Most of all, according to Dean, Trixie restored a sense of wonder that will remain with them for the rest of their lives.

Trixie also acquired her dad's penchant for writing. *Life Is Good* and *Christmas Is Good* were her first titles; *Bliss To You* followed in 2008, soon after Trixie's passing. All author's proceeds are donated to Canine Companions. The Trixie Fund, established by Dean and Gerda to cover extraordinary veterinary costs for dogs living with people with disabilities, is funded by these author's royalties. Trixie's enterprise continues to grow even as she is enjoying life in heaven with angels throwing tennis balls. As Dean says, Trixie is casting a long shadow. In addition to books, the business venture has expanded to include a unique

line of 31 people and pet products. All of these cause marketing endeavors are a part of *Good Dog: Trixie Koontz*,™ a company expressly formed to support Canine Companions. To date, nearly 300 dogs have received quality compassionate care as a result of The Trixie Fund.

This is Dean's first foray into nonfiction writing. It is a lovely and joyful read that presents Trixie in all her complicated glory—her smarts, her lack of vanity and her uncanny knack for living in the present. There is sadness, too. The loss of Trixie is met head-on by Dean with humor, love and longing that will poignantly resonate with anyone who has lost a beloved dog member of the family.

When you visit the Southwest Regional Center, you are greeted by the monument sign reading "Canine Companions for Independence—Dean, Gerda and Trixie Koontz Campus." Dean wrote in the afterword of *A BIG LITTLE LIFE*: "...Each time I see it, I see the proof that her little life, like every life, changed the lives of others, and I take heart that I will meet her again in a place of wonder, at the center of the mystery around which our existence eternally evolves."

Graduates Reunite at Annual Workshop



Graduates fill the training room for a presentation at the 2009 Graduate Workshop.

On July 18, 2009, approximately 50 graduate teams from across the Southwest Region gathered at the Dean, Gerda & Trixie Koontz Campus in Oceanside, California for the annual Graduate Workshop. Instructors, graduates and other experts gave presentations and demonstrations on topics ranging from travel with assistance dogs to doing outreach for Canine Companions. Attendees especially enjoyed the advice given by a canine dental specialist. At the end of the day, teams with special concerns were also invited for one-on-one sessions with instructors.

Facility Graduate Mary Aynn Shoemate summed up the day by explaining, "I enjoyed renewing friendships, making new ones and seeing my graduate dog so happy to visit his 'college' and see his 'professors!'" Instructors were equally happy to catch up with their alumni.



Graduate Kristin Jensen has a laugh after watching her service dog, Kathy II, try the sport of rally obedience at the Graduate Workshop.

Working Dogs Can Change Careers

Approximately 35 to 40% of our dogs graduate to become Canine Companions assistance dogs. We are proud to have graduated well over 3,200 assistance dogs since our founding. This success rate is representative of our high standards and our refusal to put a dog in a role for which it is not suited. The Canine Companions program is designed to ensure that our graduate teams are successful, lifelong partners.



Training Manager Todd Young conducts a test to determine a dog's suitability for search and rescue work. Here, the dog will not give up on retrieving a tennis ball despite the fact that she cannot reach it. This behavior is critical for search and rescue dogs.

In some cases, a dog exhibits the temperament and natural ability to become a working dog of another kind. Upon release from Canine Companions, some dogs have gone on to have successful careers in the police department, border patrol, the DEA and search and rescue, to name a few.

According to Todd Young, Southwest Training Manager, "Some dogs are just not able to ignore their instinct to chase. Obviously, someone with a disability would need to rely on their assistance dog to control their impulses when on leash. However, for dogs who work in search and rescue, this prey drive is a huge benefit. Search and rescue dogs need to pursue their prize no matter what gets in their way."

Canine Companions is proud to support these valuable and, often life-saving, career choices!

Southwest Staff Update



Joe Lenihan is Southwest's new Campus Caretaker/Maintenance Supervisor. During Team Training, he helps students while they are living in the dorms. Joe also takes care of everyday campus maintenance.



Abby Diels joined the Southwest Region as our new Volunteer Coordinator. Abby is enjoying getting to know all of the amazing volunteers who raise puppies, staff booths, give presentations, and organize fundraising events for Canine Companions.



Facility Dog Jonah II, Staff Sergeant Jennifer Kerr and CCI Southwest Executive Director Linda Valliant watch from the stage while the Young Marines kick off the *CCI Salutes Independence* event. Jonah works alongside Staff Sergeant Kerr at the Wounded Warrior Battalion West on Camp Pendleton.

Photo courtesy of Stacey Webb, Scout Photography

CCI Salutes Independence

On July 11, Canine Companions Southwest opened our campus to the public to raise awareness of the *Wounded Veterans Initiative*. Thanks to the hard work of more than 50 volunteers along with the determined staff, hundreds of attendees learned about our efforts to help wounded veterans and people with disabilities from all walks of life. At least 15 disabled veterans attended who are considering applying for an assistance dog. They enjoyed the opportunity to meet several of the nine dogs placed with veterans or veteran-serving organizations within the last year. Thank you to everyone who helped make *CCI Salutes Independence* a success!

A Festival for Dogs & People



Save the date!

April 10, 2010 - Balboa Park, San Diego

www.cci.org/woofstock

Sponsorships are available now by calling (760) 901-4306.

Upcoming Events

September 25

Dog Days of Summer Golf Classic
Ocotillo Golf Resort
Chandler, AZ

October 16

Canine Companions Invitational
Golf Tournament
The Crossings at Carlsbad
Carlsbad, CA

November 14

CCI Graduation
Mission San Luis Rey
Oceanside, CA

December 5

Champions Holiday Party
Dean, Gerda & Trixie Koontz
Campus
Oceanside, CA

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

Wish List

- Easels for posters
- Gift cards for volunteer recognition—movie theaters, restaurants, etc.
- Plastic play set with slide (large, for ages 3+)
- Two-story rabbit hutch
- Everest & Jennings Rehab Shower Commode Chairs
- Sound machines
- Three foldable, canvas camping chairs
- Adjustable height tables (8' long x 2.5' wide x 22 to 32" high)
- Dog crates - XLG (500)

Thanks to all those who granted our wishes from the last newsletter! Helen Alexander, Ron Cote, Hank Mahan, Beverly and Mike Matteucci, Gene and Marilyn Nuziard, RPM Distributing, Nancy Shelton, Lance Weir, and Carole and Bill Zaima all generously donated.

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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.



Friday, October 16, 2009 at 1:00PM
The Crossings at Carlsbad
Carlsbad, CA
www.ccigolf.org


THE CROSSINGS
AT CARLSBAD

Registration fee of \$175 per person or \$700 for a foursome includes golf, practice tee, tournament golf shirt, golfer gift bag and more!

Join us for the awards dinner at 6:00PM to enjoy prize presentations and a silent auction. Bid on art, sports memorabilia and fabulous getaways online at www.ccigolf.org.

Sponsorship opportunities are available starting at just \$300. Contact Chuck Contreras at (760) 901-4305 for more information.

