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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Raise a Puppy, Change a Life

OCEANSIDE, CA 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. The organization depends on volunteer puppy raisers, who foster future assistance dogs for the first year and a half of their lives. Thanks to the service of these volunteers and the financial support of generous donors, Canine Companions is able to provide these amazing animals completely free of charge to their clients.

Canine Companions, which has a facility in Oceanside, has an immediate and ongoing need for volunteer puppy raisers. Puppy raisers take the dogs into their hearts and homes when they are eight weeks of age. They provide basic training and ample socialization opportunities to the puppies, along with a lot of love. After 14-16 months, puppy raisers return the dogs to Canine Companions for six months of Professional Training with staff instructors. After being taught about 50 commands by the instructors, the dogs train alongside their human partners for two weeks before graduating as assistance dogs.

Canine Companions assistance dogs help adults and children with physical and developmental disabilities. They open doors, activate light switches, retrieve dropped objects and pull manual wheelchairs, among many other daily tasks. Clients also credit their assistance dogs with increasing their feelings of confidence and security. They offer companionship and love 24/7 to people who are often socially isolated because of their disabilities.

Some prospective puppy raisers are intimidated by the thought of bonding with a dog only to give it up. However, many Canine Companions puppy raisers feel so rewarded by their efforts that they do it time and again. "All it takes is meeting one of our clients to understand what motivates puppy raisers," explains Stu Wahrenbrock, Canine Companions Southwest Region Puppy Program Manager. "Canine Companions assistance dogs are nothing short of miracles to people with disabilities. They change people's lives."

For more information or to request a puppy raiser application, please call Canine Companions at (760) 901-4300 or visit www.cci.org/southwest.

About Canine Companions for Independence:

Canine Companions for Independence provides highly-trained assistance dogs to children and adults with disabilities. Established in 1975, Canine Companions has five regional training centers across the country. Canine Companions is recognized worldwide for the excellence of its dogs, and the quality and longevity of the matches it makes between dogs and people. There is no charge for the dog, training and ongoing follow-up services. For more information, visit www.cci.org or call 1-800-572-BARK.

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