



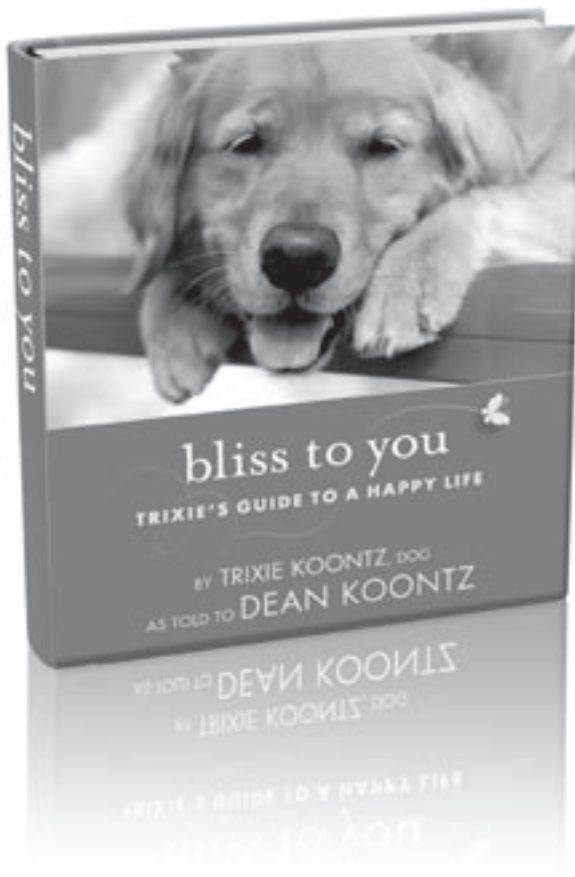
Southwest Companion

The Southwest Region Newsletter of Canine Companions for Independence



Fall 2008 Issue: Dean Koontz to Sign "Bliss to You" at CCI, May 2008 Graduates, Hundreds Gather to Salute Veterans

Bliss To You Trixie's Guide to a Happy Life



Trixie Koontz, dog, lived a life of bliss. From her early days as a CCI assistance dog to her retirement years with best selling author Dean Koontz and his wife Gerda, to her own success as an author—life was good for Trixie. This beautiful Golden Retriever with the heart of an angel passed away in 2007, but her wisdom lives on in a warm, funny and inspiring new book. *Bliss to You—Trixie's Guide to a Happy Life* is set for publication September 16, 2008.

Trixie shared her wise thoughts and humorous life observations via her own blog on author and dad Dean Koontz' website for years. Trixie's trademark sign-off on each blog was "Life is good, bliss to you." Trixie's fun-loving and poignant words earned her a legion of loyal and devoted fans. In 2004, Trixie (with a little help from dad) wrote her first book *Life Is Good, Lessons in Joyful Living*, which was joined by the wonderfully light-hearted title *Christmas Is Good, Trixie Treats and Holiday Wisdom* in 2005.

Author Trixie was not only guided by her dad's literary star but also followed Dean and Gerda Koontz' philanthropic star by directing all author's proceeds from her books to her alma mater, Canine Companions for Independence. The Trixie Fund, which supports catastrophic veterinary care, is funded directly

please see Bliss To You on page 6

Dean Koontz is coming to CCI on Saturday, September 20 for an exclusive book signing of *Bliss To You*. See page 8 for full details.

Director's Chair

by Linda L. Valliant



Sometimes it all comes together!
CCI has been serving veterans representing all branches of the armed forces since our founding in 1975. Among the courageous men and women partnered with CCI assistance dogs are veterans of every military action since World War II. In 2007, CCI established a Veterans Initiative (see page 7) targeted to veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts.

Like you, we were horrified by the number of military troops coming home with disabling injuries. Many of these heroic veterans would clearly benefit from the physical skills and loving companionship of a CCI assistance dog. The need is great and CCI's 33-year reputation as a leader in the industry proves we

have the means to help. The challenge was to connect the dots.

Sometimes the simplest solution is the best!

We shared the initiative through all the regular channels and earned important financial help to support it. Still there was a collective feeling that we were missing something. Recounting our efforts in a meeting one day, the best idea floated to the top. "Why don't we have an open house?" It was an *aha* moment akin to "build it and they will come."

Sometimes the synergy just happens!

We have tens of thousands of military neighbors. Of course we should invite them to get acquainted.

CCI Southwest staff and volunteers dove headlong into the challenge of opening the Dean, Gerda & Trixie Koontz Campus to military veterans, active duty military and their family and friends. We located 51 organizations serving veterans in our area and made contact with each; 1,000 flyers were distributed, and 12

separate television and newspaper stories appeared. Nearly 400 people attended the festive family event to watch assistance dog demos, pet puppies, take tours, win prizes, listen to live music, eat hot dogs and get to know CCI.

Sometimes the best is yet to come!

CCI Salutes Independence has already resulted in eight applications for assistance dogs being distributed to disabled veterans. Two applications for Facility Dog placements to directly serve disabled veterans have been completed. In the months and years ahead, CCI assistance dogs serving their disabled military partners will inspire more veterans to investigate how a highly trained dog can help them navigate the tasks of daily life and put a loyal, loving companion at their side for the tough transitions that lie ahead. The smiles that abounded at *CCI Salutes Independence* will be translated to life-changing joy for many and we look forward to sharing those stories with you.

Linda Valliant

In Her Own Words

by Chris Kittredge

It seems like CCI has been a part of my life forever. I first read about our wonderful organization in *Life* magazine around 1985 and knew immediately that I wanted to be involved raising assistance dogs. That was the beginning of a wonderful ride. I have been a puppy raiser and breeder caretaker and have served on many committees, including the Northwest Board and National Development Committee. It was with great pride that I accepted an invitation to serve on the National Board in 2007. It is an honor to be able to give back to an organization with a mission that I feel so strongly about.



Chris Kittredge, National Board Member, has enjoyed volunteering as a breeder caretaker for almost eight years.

My passion is bringing puppies into the world and giving them a strong foundation during the first eight weeks of their lives. It is indeed eight weeks of constant commitment and challenges, but what fun! Sometimes I hear from the puppy raisers and sometimes I don't, but those I hear from so often become friends through email. Perhaps we will never meet in person, but we share pictures and stories throughout the 15 months of puppy raising... and we also share the joy when the dogs graduate. There is a partnership between the breeder caretaker, puppy raiser, and CCI staff and

please see In Her Own Words on page 3

May Graduates



Jason Devereaux
with Facilitator
Sandra Devereaux
Skilled Companion Dog,
Joy VI
Los Angeles, CA
Ed and Lisa Burger
Altamonte Springs, FL



Annie Faucher
with Facilitator
Carlene Faucher
Skilled Companion Dog,
Trieste II
Santee, CA
Nikki Keely Carlton
Yuma, AZ



Robin Hooper
Facility Dog, Fairfax
Vista, CA
Linda and David Weiskopf
Ogden, UT



Brandon Kaplan
with Facilitators
Dina and Michael Kaplan
Skilled Companion Dog,
Kirin II
Calabasas, CA
Laurie, Sarah and Steven Belmear
Highlands Ranch, CO



Harry Langefeld
with Facilitator
Heidi Langefeld
Skilled Companion Dog,
Oliver VI
Dana Point, CA
Patricia and Jason Urie
Santee, CA



Steve McCarthy
Facility Dog,
Rosen (Rosie)
Prescott, AZ
Patricia Bird
Denver, CO



Tamara Snook
with Training Assistant
Donald McKeague
Service Dog, Terese
West Covina, CA
Sandra, Celia, Abby and Matt
Barker
Parker, CO



Sarina Stern
with Facilitators
Amit and Keren Stern
Skilled Companion Dog,
Benteen
Las Vegas, NV
Kerry and James Pettit
Henderson, NV



Kendall Stier
with Facilitator
Shannon Stier
Skilled Companion Dog,
Bekryn
San Clemente, CA
Sylvia and David Edgar
Tujunga, CA



Nathan Toomey
with Facilitator
Holly Toomey
Skilled Companion Dog,
Rydell
Manhattan Beach, CA
Melanie and John Dutcher
Salt Lake City, UT



Austin Waite
with Facilitator
Judy Waite
Skilled Companion Dog,
Dina III
Murrieta, CA
Marsha and Steven Guckenheimer
Dallas, TX



Samuel Weyrich
with Facilitator
Amy Weyrich
Skilled Companion Dog,
Lolo
Salt Lake City, UT
Marcia and David Fox
Albuquerque, NM



Jacob Wilson
with Facilitators
Pam and Larry Wilson
Skilled Companion Dog,
Durango II
Belton, TX
Donna and Abby Specht
Littleton, CO

In Their Own Words

continued from page 2

trainers. I think all of us know, however, that there are silent helpers along the way that help us all do our jobs. Many of you have heard the saying that it takes a village to raise a pup. It is so true.

Probably the most moving experience I have had with CCI involves one of these wonderful "helpers." My husband, Bob, and I lived in the Sacramento area for many years and there we had our first breeder, Laurel. After she retired, we got our second breeder, Adah. After Adah had two litters, we were relocated

to Tucson, Arizona. This meant that we might have to give up Adah and being breeder caretakers because we would live so far from CCI's national headquarters. Luckily, CCI allowed us to become long distance breeder caretakers because of our extensive experience. However, we were then faced with the huge challenge of transporting Adah for her next three breedings from Tucson to Santa Rosa and back. Also, we would need to get her puppies back to CCI at eight weeks. I think I talked to everyone I knew who might know a pilot who would volunteer their time, plane, and gas to our cause. Incredibly, within 10 days I found this

wonderful person, Jim Cumminsky, who volunteers for a nonprofit, Madine's Wings. He is a full time employee for Boeing, a Marine, an amazing pilot, and now a dear friend. I will never be able to thank him enough!

Bob and I presently live in Tucson with our two retired breeder dogs and two cats. We have three grown sons who live in the Northwest and four grandchildren. Bob is involved in real estate and I am a professional photographer. I look forward to meeting you at future graduations but if you open travel to Tucson, our door is always open!

Volunteer Highlights

Red Earth Chapter

by Dawn Ramsey

The Red Earth Champions have been busy with some important outreach efforts. Puppy raiser Linda McMahan with her puppy in program, Benisa, and Graduate Team Dawn Ramsey and Nero III recently gave a presentation about CCI to employees of the National Cowboy Hall of Fame and Western Heritage Museum in Oklahoma City. Also, Melissa Owens joined Linda and Dawn at *Spotlight on Shawnee* to introduce the Oklahoma Baptist University community to CCI.

In October, Shawnee will host the *Boo on Bell Fall Festival*. This year, the Red Earth Chapter is teaming with three local rescue groups for *Bark in the Park*, the kick-off event for *Boo on Bell*. (The Red Earth Champions will also sponsor the dog costume contest.) On October 25, the groups will join with local veterinarians, groomers, trainers and other pet-related vendors for the *Responsible Dog Owners Day*.

Our Gala was postponed and we hope to have a strong turnout on the new date of September 12. Texas puppy raisers Virginia Devilleneuve and Jackie Jelen will provide the fur fix with their puppies in program, Trista III and Houston IV, respectively.

New Mexico

by Phylis Wright

We hosted the First Annual Enchanted Canines Golf Classic July 25 in Albuquerque and it raised over \$21,000 for CCI! Volunteers from Arizona and Texas came to help the day of the event. A big *Thank You* to all those outside of New Mexico who helped make our first big fundraiser a success! Our tournament committee—including Karen Molony, Midge Sprenger, Phylis Wright, Susan Bloch, Nancy Dann, Emily Gurule, Buddy Hayes, Amy Tasteider, Mary Aynn Shoemate and Zia Telfair—really rallied for the cause. They came up with over 35 silent auction packages, an impressive number of sponsorships, and a crew



Phylis and Nick Wright wait to tee off at the *Enchanted Canines Golf Classic* along with Pat Lawson and her puppy in program, Tavi.

of volunteers that made everything go smoothly for our first ever golf fundraiser. We are also grateful for the support from the Southwest Regional staff, from hosting an early *A Good Dog Morning* breakfast to kick off our public relations campaign, to providing highly profitable silent auction items. Best of all, a couple of staff members even played in the tournament! Way to go New Mexico!

Utah Wasatch Champions

by Linda Weiskopf

This summer has been a busy one, with our newly-formed chapter hosting several events. For instance, in Park City, we met with potential puppy raisers and recipients at an REI store in July. As a result of that meeting we can now welcome a new puppy raiser, Charlene Palmer, who receives her first puppy in September!

Every week we have training sessions led by Brett and Roxanne Jeppesen, owners of Brickyard Kennels. When we are not having sessions at their facility, we “hit the road” on outings with the puppies to places like Lagoon, our local amusement park, Sugarhouse Park, and the Botanical Gardens in Ogden. We certainly appreciate that our trainers are willing to travel to these destinations to help the puppies with distraction training!

The highlight of the summer was the May graduation. Two dogs who were raised in Utah graduated, and a Utah family received a Skilled Companion

Dog. In August, three Utah puppies in program were matriculated and another Utah family graduated with a Skilled Companion Dog! This fall, three local puppy raisers will receive new puppies in program. What fun!

September and October will also be a very busy time for the chapter as we attend 10 different events to educate our local federal employees on CCI. We hope they will choose CCI as a recipient for donations to the Combined Federal Campaign. If you are interested in vol-



Puppies in Program Tanny and Filia enjoy their field trip to Lagoon.

unteering at events, please email Linda at lweiskopf@relia.net for more information. Also, check out the Wasatch Champions Blog at <http://wasatchchampions.blogspot.com/> to learn about our activities.

Valley of the Sun Chapter

by Pat Lawson

It's no secret that it gets a little hot here in Arizona, and the Valley of the Sun Chapter is no exception! June 14 kicked off the summer with the annual CCI-WNBA Phoenix Mercury 50-50 raffle night. Twenty seven volunteers and 13 CCI puppies and Graduate Dogs earned over \$1,750 in a little over an hour and a half! In addition, 11 lucky CCI people were on the floor to greet the WNBA champs at the beginning of the game in front of 9,000 fans. June 24 brought a visit to the National Spina-Bifida Conference in Tucson. Puppy Raising Chair Michaelae Connors and puppy raiser Pat Lawson had CCI puppy in program, Tavi, show off his stuff while educating students and parents about the value of having a CCI assistance dog. The Arizona Diamondbacks baseball team held its annual Service Dog Awareness night on July 18. With over 30 chapter members



CCI Skilled Companion Team Ryan and Holly Cottor and Java VI join a team of young CCI supporters to greet the Phoenix Mercury before their WNBA game.

present, CCI was well represented with a booth and puppies galore available for a meet and greet with the public.

A special puppy has arrived in the Valley of the Sun. "Royal" is named after the mascot for Ryan Elementary school in honor of their fundraising efforts for CCI. He is being raised by chapter president, Kerry Saxby. You can watch his progress with his very own blog at www.cciarizona.org. Finally, the 5th Annual Dog Days of Summer Golf Classic will take place on September 26. The tournament is a sell out for the fourth year in a row and we hope to reach the annual goal of \$50,000. Stay tuned... we will let you know!

Colorado Satellite Office

by Paul O'Brien

This summer has been a very busy time for CCI in Colorado. We are pleased to announce that Kelly Gorman has been hired as the new Colorado Office Assistant. Kelly has a long history with CCI and is currently raising her fourth CCI puppy, Aubrey. Kelly will take over the responsibilities formerly held by Lynda Miller. Lynda continues to be employed by CCI as the National Canine Database Coordinator

and will be based out of the Colorado Office. Look for great things to come from both Kelly and Lynda in their new positions with CCI.

July brought Todd Young, CCI SW Training Manager, and Simi Balter, CCI SW Program Manager, to Colorado for six applicant interviews, a trip to Kit Carson Correctional Center, and 14 graduate visits. The new Colorado Office proved to be

the perfect setting to host applicant interviews and graduate follow up visits.

A very successful Journey to Independence event took place on August 18 in the Vail Valley. Over 200 people attended this amazing evening, which featured an exciting live and silent auction, the annual John and Anne Rainey Service Award (presented to Colorado Hearing Team, Jim Young and Ellea), and a wonderful presentation by Skilled Companion Team Cole and Michelle Massie and Ilia. Cole was so popular and did such a great job that he was enlisted to help the auctioneer bump up bids. Cole may just have a future as an auctioneer himself! The committee was led by National Board Member Anne Roberts, and it included Bob Solon



New Colorado Administrative Assistant, Kelly Gorman, is also a puppy raiser. She is pictured with her current puppy in program, Aubrey,

(National Board Member), Joan Solon, Barbara Benson, Patti Brave, Grace Gamble, Janet Jones, and Gunnel Weiser. They all did a fantastic job of organizing this event and deserve a heartfelt *Thank You!*

On August 17, CCI was once again the recipient of funds raised through the *Good Times Car Show* in Old Colorado City. CCI Graduate Micah Weishaar picked the car that won the CCI Award. The car show raised over \$5,000 for CCI. A great big *Thanks!* goes out to the *Good Times Car Show* committee for choosing to support CCI.



Coming Soon...

CCI Calendars and Holiday Cards!

The 2009 calendar and new holiday cards will be available in the coming weeks. Check online at cci.org or visit our gift shop.

All proceeds benefit Canine Companions for Independence®.



Walk the red carpet on October 4 at the Journey to Independence Gala! Join us for a cocktail hour, gourmet dinner, silent and live auctions, and dazzling entertainment at The Grove of Anaheim. Individual tickets are \$225 and tables of eight are \$1,800. Sponsorship opportunities are available. Call Chuck Contreras at (760) 901-4305 for more information.

Bliss To You

continued from page 1

and generously by the royalties from Trixie's titles. The Trixie Fund has already helped over 130 dogs facing life-threatening health crises whose disabled partners did not have the means to cover veterinary costs.

We have seen a preview of *Bliss To You* and predict it is going to catapult Trixie to the best-seller list! Trixie has plenty of sage advice to share as she takes readers through her eight steps to bliss: Calm, Beauty, Fun, Meaning, Others, Humility, Loss and Gratitude. We know you will want your own copy and will find that *Bliss To You* is the perfect holiday gift for all of your CCI and dog-loving friends.

Here are some enticing excerpts from the book's introduction:

"Bliss to you. Is me, Trixie Koontz, who was dog, is dog, always will be dog ... Dog is the best thing to be. I am dog and dog can't lie. Dog might tease stupid cat when shouldn't. Dog might tie sleeping cat to box-kite, cat wakes up two hundred feet above the earth, looks down, sees dog grinning and waving. ... Am not suggesting this behavior to your dog. Am just saying what naughty dogs might do.... But dogs can't lie.... Anyway this book is about bliss—what it is and how to find it. Humans all want bliss but end up instead in jail or traffic court... All dogs know the secret of how to achieve bliss. And here on the Other Side, in the company of angels who toss tennis balls for us and give us belly rubs, I have learned even more about the subject. I, Trixie, love humans. All good dogs do. Want humans to know true bliss without jail afterward. Road to bliss is paved with dog wisdom. I will show you the way to bliss. Follow me."

—by Linda Valliant

Dean and Gerda Koontz have been dedicated champions of CCI since the late 1980s. The Southwest Regional Training Center was rededicated as the Dean, Gerda & Trixie Koontz campus in August, 2007. Year after year, through monetary donations totaling over four million dollars, CCI is able to serve more people because of Dean and Gerda Koontz' extraordinary philanthropy.



Congratulations to Michele Sigler who was promoted to Kennel Supervisor in January 2008. Michele joined CCI as a Kennel Technician in late 2004 and showed her expertise and dedication to the job from day one. In her new position, Michele is in charge of the care and feeding of our most valuable commodity—the Advanced Training Dogs—and they report that she does an awesome job of it! Michele also oversees Graduate dogs boarding at the kennel, as well as campus cat Bob and resident bunnies Stew and Zeke.

Upcoming Events

September 20

Exclusive Dean Koontz book signing
Bliss To You by Trixie Koontz
as told to Dean Koontz
Dean, Gerda and Trixie Koontz Campus
Oceanside, CA

September 26

Dog Days of Summer Golf Classic
Chandler, AZ

October 4

Journey to Independence Gala
The Grove of Anaheim
Anaheim, CA

October 18

Arizona Puppy Workshop
Phoenix, AZ

November 15

CCI Graduation
Campus Open-House and Dedication
Oceanside, CA

November 18

A Good Dog Morning
Las Vegas, NV

For more information about these events,
please call (760) 901-4308.

Wish List

For the Campus:

- Whirlpool High Capacity Reverse Osmosis System water filter Model #wher25 or similar
- Bean bag chairs
- Easels for posters
- Free-standing magazine rack
- Pediatric stethoscope

For the Dogs:

- Plastic play set with slide (large, for ages 3+)
- Small area rugs with no-slip grip

For the Dorm Rooms:

- Area rugs and throw pillows—navy, red, and light blue colors
- Everest & Jennings rehab shower commode chairs
- Wireless tower for north hall internet access

For Graduation:

- 5 or 6 small floral arrangements for graduation brunch on 11/15/08
- Canon XL2 video camera

Thanks to all those who granted our wishes from the last newsletter! Christina Amoroso, Brent and Jen Baribeau, Kate DeBernardi, Gretchen Heffler, and Hank Mahan all generously donated.



The Canine Companions for Independence Veterans Initiative got a jump-start in the Southwest Region, thanks to the CCI Salutes Independence open-house festival on August 9. *The Veterans Initiative is CCI's targeted effort to place more assistance dogs with disabled veterans, particularly those who served in Iraq and/or Afghanistan.* Nearly 400 people, both military and civilian, gathered at our Oceanside campus to honor the US Armed Forces and introduce disabled veterans to CCI's exceptional assistance dogs!

This massive event required the help of 45 individual volunteers, along with groups from the Camp Pendleton Young Marines, the National Charity League and the Rancho Bernardo Lions Club. CCI could not have conducted this important outreach effort without the help of so many dedicated supporters. *Thank you for all of your hard work!*



The CCI Salutes Independence event drew almost 400 people, both military and civilian.
Photo by Dustin Rosa



The crowd at the open-house was impressed by CCI's highly-trained assistance dogs.
Photo by Dustin Rosa



Training Manager Todd Young and Advanced Training Dog Zander provided demonstrations.
Photo by Dustin Rosa



CCI Southwest Executive Director Linda Valliant (center) accepted a City of Oceanside proclamation recognizing CCI's service to people with disabilities. Oceanside Mayor Jim Wood (left) and City Councilman Jack Feller (right) announced the proclamation at the start of the event.



The Camp Pendleton Young Marines pledged allegiance before the start of the festivities.



Attention: Web Gurus!
Do you or does your company have a website? If so, please consider posting one of CCI's new banner ads. Contact Katie Malatino at (760) 901-4307 or kmalatino@cci.org for more information.

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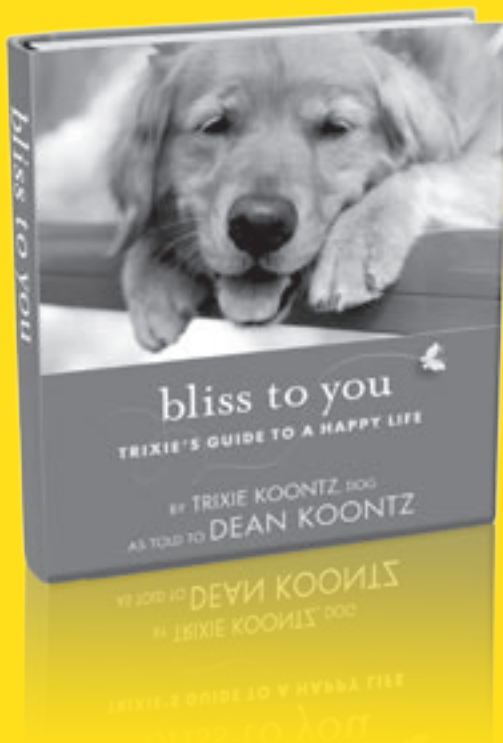


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Mission statement: *CCI is a nonprofit organization that enhances the lives of people with disabilities by providing highly trained assistance dogs and ongoing support to ensure quality partnerships.*



International best-selling author

Dean Koontz

special appearance and book signing of

Bliss To You by Trixie Koontz, dog

at CCI's
Dean, Gerda & Trixie
Koontz Campus

Saturday,
September 20, 2008
beginning at 11:00AM

*Don't miss this rare opportunity
to meet Dean Koontz and hear
about his beloved Trixie!*



*All author's royalties from the sale of *Bliss To You* will be donated to Canine Companions for Independence®.