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### Service dog Wyatt III to help Roman be more independent

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Bruce Van Hoorn and his service dog Wyatt III (contributed)

Roman Bruce Van Hoorn recently graduated from two weeks of training and received an assistance dog from Canine Companions for Independence, a non-profit organization that breeds, trains and places assistance dogs for people with disabilities.

Van Hoorn was matched with Wyatt III, a 2-year-old black labrador/golden retriever mix who responds to up to 50 commands. Wyatt assists Van Hoorn, who is a paraplegic, by opening doors, retrieving dropped items and other tasks that enable him to lead a more independent life.

In addition to helping him with physical tasks, Wyatt will offer emotional support and daily companionship. Companion dogs also serve as a social bridge to people who are not used to relating to a person with a disability.

Wyatt is the second dog that Van Hoorn has received from CCI. Van Hoorn said he is looking forward to taking Wyatt along with him on his adventures.

To prepare for Wyatt's arrival, Van Hoorn completed a two-week training session where he learned all of Wyatt's commands and how to

properly care for him.

CCI assistance dogs are provided free of charge, though costs to CCI exceed \$45,000 to breed, raise train and provide ongoing support. Charitable contributions, grants and corporate support fund the substantial costs involved with this process.

CCI has its own breeding program in California. When the puppies are 8-weeks old, they are placed with volunteer puppy raisers across the country who will teach them up to 30 basic commands. When the puppy is 14-16 months old, the puppy raiser returns the dog to one of CCI's regional training centers for six months of advanced training.

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