Update from Our Leadership

Disability doesn’t disappear in times of crisis, and neither do we. Even in these difficult times, with the support of our incredible community, we remain strong.

Over the last several months, our team has responded quickly to the impact of the pandemic, making necessary changes to ensure the safety of our staff, dogs and constituents. We evacuated our six campuses, placing dogs in professional training in the homes of staff members and volunteers. Our mission continued to move forward as instructors worked with future assistance dogs, and other staff reached out to clients and donors to check on their health and safety. Innovative use of technology allowed us to develop unique online campaigns and events to keep operations going.

As dogs and small teams of essential employees returned to the campuses in May, we initiated safety protocols to ensure the health of our team. Throughout this challenging time, we have found some silver linings. Awareness of our mission has grown, and we have engaged new supporters and partners. Once again, our community stepped up and provided the resources that were needed.

This has also been a time of reflection and looking at how we can create much-needed change in our community and our organization and serve more people. Our mission — to provide highly trained assistance dogs to people with disabilities — includes all people, regardless of race, gender, socioeconomic class or background. This has always been and will continue to be our intent. We recognize we have work to do in the areas of diversity and inclusion. We are listening, learning and working with leaders who can help us.

Please know that details and updates for our plans for an even more inclusive Canine Companions will be included in the next edition of The Companion.

We hope you and your loved ones are well. Your support of our mission is critical, and we greatly appreciate our Canine Companions community.

Respectfully yours,

Paige Mazzoni, Chief Executive Officer

John McKinney, Board Chair
Canine Companions Steps Up During Crisis

**March - April**
- When the orders were issued at our regional training facilities to shelter in place, we took quick and careful action to ensure the health and safety of our staff and assistance dogs, relocating over 420 dogs from our six campuses.
- Fifty of Canine Companions’ professional trainers trained assistance dogs in their homes.
- Puppy classes went virtual and volunteer puppy raisers were able to log on and work with their puppy program managers to continue training.

**May**
- Staff continued follow-up meetings virtually with graduates to ensure their needs were being met with their assistance dogs during shelter-in-place protocols.
- Dogs continued to be fostered and trained at home.
- Our dedicated team made changes necessary to ensure Team Training would be able to continue in June.
- Critical staff returned to our regional campuses and national headquarters.
- A group of pilots in Santa Rosa, California began volunteering with us to transport puppies to support our mission.
- Most fundraising events transitioned to virtual to prioritize people’s health and still raise money for our mission.

**June**
- Team Training began with social distancing protocols and online seminars to ensure the safety of our clients and staff.
- Plans to recognize puppy raisers and graduates during these small classes and smaller matriculations were implemented.
- Staff and Team Training participants were required to complete the safe and healthy workplace protocols daily while on campus to minimize risk.
- Additional protocols have been put together for students which include: cleanliness in communal spaces, ventilation and airflow, N-95 mask usage and leash protocol.

“There will always be individuals in need of an assistance dog, although things may change with how we are able to fulfill that need. I believe that during this time, we have been able to grow as an organization, collaborate with each other and develop new ways to enhance the lives of individuals with disabilities.”

—Aubree Nicholas, apprentice instructor
Joe and Service Dog Helios at Team Training.
Greater Independence with Helios

Joe Latimer is a talented artist who is known for his stunning motion and design work. He has exhibited at art shows, received a Master of Fine Arts and won numerous accolades for his work.

In December 2015, Joe was riding his bicycle when a driver ran a red light and hit him. This accident left Joe with quadriplegia and dependent on others for even the simplest tasks. For an active young man, this new reality provided motivation for Joe to find ways to bring independence back into his life. He learned about Canine Companions through friends who volunteer with our organization. When they heard of his accident, they knew an assistance dog would provide Joe the independence he needed.

Joe was matched with Service Dog Helios in 2019. The duo has established a solid routine as Joe works from home for Full Sail University creating educational videos for distance learning.

During the pandemic, Joe continued working from home while his girlfriend, Tracy, worked long shifts as a director of nursing with AdventHealth. “She’s on call 24/7, trying to take care of things at the hospital and also making sure I’m taken care of,” Joe explains. But now with Helios, Joe has the help he needs.

Working on his computer all day, sometimes Joe gets caught up in a project, but Helios reminds him to take a break. **During meals, Helios helps open the refrigerator doors, drawers and turns on lights.** “The ‘get’ command is priceless,” says Joe. “The simple act of picking things up and moving them is extremely difficult as a quadriplegic. I can velcro a stylus to my hand to navigate a computer. It gets dropped often and having Helios retrieve it is a real lifesaver. Before Helios, if I dropped something, I had to wait all day just to get it picked up. Helios is happy to help,” he says.

“Before Helios, if I dropped something, I had to wait all day just to get it picked up. Helios is happy to help.”

“Before Helios, if I dropped something, I had to wait all day just to get it picked up. Helios is happy to help.”

Read more about our graduates at cci.org/stories.
Genevieve Is “Hear” to Help

Throughout Rachel Gordon’s life, she has overcome numerous obstacles due to her deafness. Like many deaf children, Rachel did not learn sign language as her first language. Growing up she had limited resources available to her. She did use hearing aids, but it wasn’t until she received her first cochlear implant at the age of seven that most aspects of verbal communication opened up to her.

The cochlear implant has improved Rachel’s ability to communicate in spoken English and has allowed her to work as a nurse. However, it’s not perfect, and every day presents challenges. When she turns the device off, she can no longer hear the world around her. By the end of the day, Rachel is often exhausted from actively listening, an ability that does not come naturally to her.

When Rachel was matched with Hearing Dog Genevieve in November 2019, she knew right away that having a Canine Companions assistance dog would change her life. “Genevieve is so loving, smart, motivated and active,” says Rachel.

Genevieve has been professionally trained to alert Rachel to sounds like someone knocking on the door, a cooking timer going off, phone alarms, keys dropping and fire alarms.

“She makes me feel much more independent and safer at home, especially when my husband is not present,” says Rachel. Besides giving Rachel a sense of safety, Genevieve also fits in to Rachel’s active lifestyle perfectly. Together, they love enjoying the wonderful outdoor activities that Colorado has to offer!

Learn more at cci.org/hearingdogs.

Rachel and her husband, Justin, with Hearing Dog Genevieve.

GIVE INDEPENDENCE MONTHLY

Give a dog a job, receive a tote!* For a limited time, enroll with a monthly gift of $25 or more, and you’ll receive a Canine Companions Give a Dog a Job tote bag as a token of our gratitude.

*Not any time period or model

Enroll at cci.org/givemonthly
Facility Dog Babs Brings Joy to Baltimore

Being in a children’s hospital during a global pandemic makes for a difficult situation, causing fewer visits and more confusion for young patients. Luckily, Canine Companions facility dogs are there to provide comfort. Facility dog handler Lindie at Mt. Washington Pediatric Hospital in Baltimore says spending time with Babs is the highlight of her patients’ days. “We use Babs a lot in different medical-play scenarios. We talk to children about how she has to wash her paws and how she gets cleaned by having us brush her. We have the kids actually physically wash her paws so we can motivate them to in-turn, wash their hands and promote hygiene,” shares Lindie, Mt. Washington’s senior therapeutic recreation specialist. “I think just bringing smiles to our patients’ faces has been the best thing. Their schedules are kind of turned upside down right now. Many of them can’t have visitors and family members here. Babs gives them an opportunity to have something normal.”
Just five years ago, Wendi Locatelli would have never imagined she would need a service dog, but complications from an illness changed her life forever. Wendi, an athletic, determined dental hygienist, became ill with sepsis. When her husband, Jay, brought her to the emergency room in 2016, Wendi had entered septic shock and doctors gave her a one percent chance of survival.

When she woke up after two weeks in a coma, Wendi learned that her arms and legs were no longer viable and needed to be partially amputated. After her surgery, Wendi worked hard for a year to heal, rehabilitate and teach herself how to walk and drive with her new prosthetics. Now, Wendi is a stay-at-home mom with her three children and spends her free time swimming — a hobby she loves.

Though Wendi made the best of her new normal, she knew she could use some additional help. That’s when she decided to apply for a service dog from Canine Companions. Wendi was matched with Service Dog Wazowski, who she lovingly calls “Wazzy,” in February.

“I view Wazzy as a gift that I’ve been granted, and I am so lucky and so blessed.”

Wazzy is professionally trained in over 40 commands to help Wendi live more independently. Wendi shares that since her prosthetics make it difficult to pick things up, Wazzy’s retrieve command is extremely useful for her. With just one word, “get,” Wazzy picks up an item that Wendi has dropped or an item that’s difficult to reach.

Wendi swims regularly and is currently training for the U.S. Paralympic swim team. Wazzy joins Wendi at the pool when she trains at 5 a.m. and doesn’t seem to mind the early mornings one bit, since it also means early breakfast for him. His professional training allows him to lay calmly by the pool and ignore distractions and allows Wendi to be more confident and independent.

Wendi shares, “I view Wazzy as a gift that I’ve been granted, and I am so lucky and so blessed to know that I’m going to have him, and future Canine Companions dogs as a part of my life, for the rest of my life.”

We can’t wait to see what Wendi will go on to accomplish with Service Dog Wazowski by her side.

Help create more assistance dog teams at cci.org/donate.
A New Running Buddy

Members of Ken Breen’s rural community may not know him personally, but many of them certainly recognize him as the man who’s always running with a big American flag in tow. Ken, who lives on a small farm with his wife, coaches cross-country and runs in his free time. Now, this animal-loving husband and veteran has a new running buddy.

Ken, a proud Navy SEAL who served from 1990-1998, has a traumatic brain injury and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) from his time in the military. Ken explains his invisible disability, “Don’t be so quick to judge. When you look at me, I look pretty okay. But I’m so broken on the inside mentally and physically. I was a Navy SEAL. Would you believe that someone of that ability could be so afraid, feel so lost, so insecure within a moment of just feeling fine?” Ken knew he needed something to help with his PTSD symptoms and decided to apply for a service dog from Canine Companions.

Last November, Ken was matched with Service Dog Gavin, and the team has been inseparable ever since. Gavin is professionally trained in over 40 commands, including commands specifically designed to mitigate symptoms of PTSD. Ken shares, “When I’m in public, the ‘front’ and ‘behind’ commands give me space and are amazing. There’s something about him snuggling up behind my legs, it feels so empowering and secure.” Ken also has back injuries and Service Dog Gavin’s ability to retrieve items from the ground and deliver them to Ken is extremely valuable.

Since receiving Gavin, Ken has spoken at elementary schools, educating students about service dogs and hidden disabilities. He also continues to coach and enjoys his daily routine caring for and feeding his horses and other animals with Gavin there to help. As Ken continues to run with his American flag, members of his community may notice a welcome addition at his side — Service Dog Gavin.

“Having my buddy Gavin to run with and not being alone is super empowering,” Ken shares. “Gavin brings so much balance to my existence. He brings a sense of calm. Sometimes I need a reminder that things are okay. Gavin provides that reminder. He’s the yin to my yang and I’m grateful for Canine Companions.”

Supporting our veterans and military is a priority for Canine Companions. Learn more about our Veterans Initiative at cci.org/veterans.

“Gavin brings so much balance to my existence. He brings a sense of calm. Sometimes I need a reminder that things are okay.”
It Takes a Village

Over the past several years, Canine Companions has learned to weather any crisis, thanks to our staff, volunteers, donors and graduates. During the global pandemic, our community continued to grow stronger together. For the health and safety of our staff, dogs and community, we faced six campus evacuations — with hundreds of dogs in professional training needing long-term foster homes.

The pandemic has impacted everyone, but the Canine Companions community stepped up once again to provide foster homes within hours of the call. In a time when the economic stability of our country was on the brink, our donors, new and old, have dug deep and given the gift of independence to move our mission forward.

In our Northeast Region, one donor even set up a dog food fund to ensure that every Canine Companions puppy raiser and assistance dog team could guarantee high-quality dog food at every meal through the crisis. Read more about this donor’s generosity on page 14.

The generosity, empathy, heart and soul of the Canine Companions community is unparalleled. Thanks to our supporters, we can keep looking forward, adapting to our needs and providing expertly trained assistance dogs free of charge. Give today by visiting cci.org/donate.

Looking to the Future

Despite a year filled with uncertainty, we are excited to share that our new campus in the North Central Region continues to take shape into a state-of-the-art facility. Construction remains on time and on budget as we prepare to open our doors in October of this year. We are thankful for our supporters who’ve helped us raise $1.8 million in capital in 2020. This new campus is vital to the growth of our organization. It will ensure the safety of our staff, students and volunteers and will include guest rooms and an accessible kitchen.

The increased space will allow our trainers and kennel staff opportunities to train and exercise dogs, while maintaining appropriate physical distance between each other. Canine Companions will be able to continue impacting countless lives as we grow the number of people we are able to serve.

Available naming opportunities:

- Applicant and graduate program office
- Family kitchen
- Guest rooms
- Pavers

For more information on our new campus in the North Central Region, visit cci.org/invest.
Yellow Capes on Campus

There are some adorable new students on the Texas Tech University campus in Lubbock, Texas and they have four legs and a wagging tail.  The Yellow Caped Raiders is a new student organization at Texas Tech University where students raise Canine Companions puppies to become assistance dogs. Leah Thye, president and founding member, was the first puppy raiser on campus and raised Canine Companions puppy Bleu. Now, the club has expanded to approximately 30 members with four puppies being raised and more students waiting to receive puppies.  

Leah and co-founders Viktoria Haynes and Claire Rahlfs worked closely with the university’s disability office to allow the dogs access on campus and in class. “Seeing dogs on campus and in classrooms is definitely a new thing to most students and professors,” shares Leah. “After class, people would come over and ask to say hi to Bleu and it’s a great time to share more about our club and the great work that Canine Companions does.”  Leah is excited about the club’s growth and has enjoyed raising puppies while in college. “Raising a puppy on a college campus is such a great opportunity. They are able to be exposed to so many different people, sights, sounds and activities that they may not experience otherwise,” says Leah. “Raising Bleu connected me more to Texas Tech and I hope I will graduate knowing we’ve contributed something to the university.”  

Bleu is now in professional training at the South Central Region’s Kinkeade Campus in Irving, Texas. Leah is raising her second Canine Companions puppy Waylon, as she enters her senior year of college. She hopes the club continues to be a part of Texas Tech University for many years to come. Learn more about puppy raising at cci.org/collegepuppyraiser.
Canine Care Staff Steps Up

The Canine Early Development Center (CEDC) housed on the Jean and Charles Schulz Campus is accustomed to being flexible. After all, when puppies are involved, anything can happen! During the COVID-19 evacuation of our campuses, CEDC and veterinary staff continued their important work to ensure puppies received wellness exams and vaccinations before heading out to volunteer puppy raisers.

Volunteer breeder caretakers and staff worked seamlessly to have a “no contact” puppy drop-off and hand-off during the puppies’ stay on campus. Due to flight cancellations and travel restrictions, our veterinary and CEDC staff gladly took on the responsibility of caring for our Canine Companions puppies.

“CEDC staff and veterinary technicians housed litters of puppies in their homes, with one staff person whelping a litter of puppies in her home that were scheduled to be born at the CEDC,” shares Dr. Brenda Kennedy, national director of canine health and research. “Our devoted staff were transporting puppies to the airport and even stopping by people’s homes for driveway pickups.”

Without the commitment of our staff and volunteer breeder caretakers, we couldn’t have delivered our very special puppies to their new puppy raising homes. With innovation and dedication, it was a job well done by all.

Mission Working from Home

When orders were issued at our regional training facilities to shelter in place, Canine Companions took action to ensure the health and safety of our staff and assistance dogs, and to guarantee the mission remained in motion.

We relocated over 420 dogs from our six campuses. Fifty Canine Companions professional trainers continued training assistance dogs. Some trainers cared for as many as five dogs in their home, and all were loved, played with and trained in a new home environment.

“The experience of training assistance dogs in the home was overwhelmingly positive,” says Sarah Birman, director of training and client services. “We got to see our assistance dogs function in a real home with different drawers, surfaces, doors and pets — a rare situation for our trainers.”

Thanks to the dedication of our staff who continued to support our mission in this critical time, our dogs were ready to graduate with their new partners as Team Training resumed in different regions.

Halli James working from home to keep our mission moving.
Canine Companions Puppies Fly in Style

While the coronavirus pandemic is limiting flights for many, it hasn’t stopped Canine Companions from transporting its puppies to volunteer puppy raisers. In fact, Canine Companions puppies are currently flying very luxuriously — on private planes.

Canine Companions supporter and private pilot Martyn Lewis teamed up with fellow pilot Josh Hochberg, who owns the Sonoma Jet Center in Santa Rosa, California. The two have flown many puppies themselves and recruited more pilots to offer their services in our time of need. We couldn’t be more thankful for their support!

So far, volunteer pilots have transported over 180 Canine Companions puppies to their volunteer puppy raisers in all of our regions across the country.

Canine Companions is grateful to all the pilots, staff and volunteers helping our puppies get to their volunteer puppy raisers during this unprecedented time, allowing the puppies of today to become the assistance dogs of tomorrow.

Above: (L to R) Volunteer pilots Josh Hochberg, Jeff Stewart and Martyn Lewis.

Thank You Dr. Susan Ryan

Dr. Susan Ryan is an emergency department physician, Southwest Region board member, donor and volunteer puppy raiser. To say she has made a huge impact on the Canine Companions mission is an understatement. Dr. Ryan routinely takes Canine Companions puppy Wynn to work with her at Rose Medical Center in Denver, Colorado. Normally, this provides a great environment for Wynn to have social interaction and work on basic commands.

During the pandemic, certain precautions were put in place to keep Wynn safe and keep employees healthy, but her presence had a profound effect on frontline staff during an unprecedented time. “We would take one or two minutes during these grueling 12-hour shifts to pet her and snuggle. Wynn gives us a lot of comfort and has changed all of our lives.”

The photo below was captured of Dr. Ryan and Wynn and went viral. It was featured on the Instagram account The Dogist before being featured across the country. You may have seen it on many news outlets including CNN, Good Morning America, The TODAY Show, Fox & Friends, People.com and many more!

Check out cci.org/puppywynn for more details.

Massachusetts Veteran Answers the Call to Serve

WWII veteran Jay Somers served his country in its time of need. 75 years later, he answered the call to assist Canine Companions graduates facing economic hardships during the COVID-19 crisis with a generous gift of $10,000 so they can provide their assistance dogs with high-quality food. Jay recalls, “I was married for 74 years, and have two children, two grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. We all follow Canine Companions for Independence. For us, it’s not about the gift. It’s about hearing the stories of how these dogs change lives. This organization opens up a whole new world for those in need who would otherwise not be able to have the independence these dogs give them. We were very much in favor of this donation going to the Canine Companions graduate fund. We couldn’t think of a better use of the money.”

Thanks to Jay and his family’s generous gift, Canine Companions graduate teams in need will be able to provide for their dogs. Thank you, Jay and family!

Sewing Non-Stop

She’s been a quilt maker for many years, but now Canine Companions puppy raiser Kristina Ackley has turned her talents to sewing masks to help battle COVID-19. With her third Canine Companions puppy Heidi by her side, Kristina answers social media requests from graduates, puppy raisers and anyone else needing masks. Thank you, Kristina, for going above and beyond to help others!

Two Great Events in November

Mark your calendar and support Canine Companions as we virtually honor our nation’s heroes who continue to serve their local communities. Canine Companions Salute Independence will take place Thursday, November 9, and we’ll honor veterans from WWII to Operation Enduring Freedom.

Celebrating 45 years of Canine Companions! Since 1975, Canine Companions has served over 6,500 people with disabilities, and we think that’s reason to celebrate! Join us virtually for our anniversary, “Companions on 45” celebration.

Learn more about both events at cci.org/nerevents.
24th Annual Tales & Tails Gala Goes Virtual!

We invite you to journey to The Wonderful Land of Paws — where the heart, brains and courage of Canine Companions will come to life! The Tales & Tails Gala is the Southeast Region’s most important fundraising event, and this year, it will be presented virtually.

Join us from the comfort of your home to celebrate our extraordinary mission.

DogFest Virtual Success

DogFest Jacksonville made the decision for their March celebration to become virtual to ensure safety for all. The event was hugely successful raising more than $90,000. And in Orlando, more than 13,000 DogFest fans and furry friends engaged in the online virtual event where they could watch demonstrations and connect with other dog lovers.

The DogFest Orlando committee would like to thank Chris Barley and the DPH Fund for their $25,000 matching gift. It helped to attract more sponsors and supporters to the very successful event — raising more than $119,000! We look forward to seeing everyone in Jacksonville and Orlando in 2021.

DogFest Space Coast will be celebrated virtually as well on September 26. Celebrate the community of people and dogs that make it possible for Canine Companions to show that the most advanced technology capable of transforming the lives of people with disabilities has a cold nose and a warm heart. Sign up and begin fundraising at cci.org/dogfestspacecoast.

Providing Independence: Now and Into the Future

The demand for assistance dogs remains strong and is growing, and the Southeast Region wants to be ready to serve even more people. As we celebrate our 20-year anniversary, we are looking to refresh and update the campus.

Through grants and corporate philanthropic support, important improvements were made recently to the kennel, including new ceiling tiles, LED lighting and fun equipment for our dogs in their community run areas. Thank you to:

• Rex V. Stevens and Dulciza Stevens Fund at the Central Florida Foundation — ceiling tiles.
• Knopf Family Foundation — community dog run equipment.
Many Thanks to Our Chapters and Groups

In late March, the North Central volunteer chapters and groups began a fundraising campaign to leave a legacy on our new campus through a naming opportunity, each setting their own goal. We are excited to share that thanks to all the hard work of our volunteers and a generous anonymous donor, all our chapters and groups have met their goals. When visiting the campus everyone will see pavers, benches and more representing the love, dedication and passion of our North Central volunteer family. Collectively, all 13 North Central chapters and groups raised over $58,000 for our new campus. These gifts are the foundation our new campus is built on and will allow us to serve more people!

Welcome Scarlet

We are excited to continue our partnership with NBC4 in Columbus, Ohio, as they follow the journey of a very special puppy named Scarlet. Scarlet arrived in Columbus as everyone was being asked to stay at home. That hasn’t stopped her from bringing smiles to the central Ohio community by joining the NBC4 morning team every Friday live from her home. Be sure to follow her journey on Facebook by searching @ScarletNBC4.

Mark Your Calendars!

We are opening the doors to our future! Save the date to celebrate the grand opening of the new North Central Campus in New Albany, Ohio on October 8, 2020!
DogFest Texas Goes Virtual

DogFest DFW is going virtual to bring you... DogFest Texas! For precautionary reasons related to coronavirus (COVID-19), we are unable to gather in person as planned this year. But we can still gather together virtually from across the state to celebrate the human-canine bond. Last year, DogFest DFW raised over $150,000! In 2020, we’re back with a big fundraising goal and we need your support. Join the fun on our DogFest Texas Facebook event page and celebrate with us on October 3! Register for free and start fundraising today at cci.org/DogFestTexas.

Success with Spec’s

During the month of February, Canine Companions partnered with Spec’s Wines, Spirits and Finer Foods and raised nearly $15,000! Customers had the opportunity to donate to Canine Companions electronically when checking out at over 30 retail locations in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. Volunteers from the Lone Star Chapter offered in-store support, allowing customers the opportunity to meet a Canine Companions puppy or assistance dog and learn about our life-changing mission.

Welcome Dan Rollings, South Central Program Director

Dan Rollings comes to Canine Companions with over 25 years of experience training dogs, and working with staff and clients. In addition to his extensive experience in the assistance dog industry, Dan is a United States Air Force veteran, former law enforcement specialist and canine handler. We are excited about the knowledge, experience and leadership he brings to our team.
India and Nico Make a Perfect Pair

Bay Area resident India is a fun-loving, vibrant woman who lets few things hold her back. Occasionally, her disability slows her normally busy lifestyle. India’s disability causes weakness on one side of her body, making everyday tasks and her work as a mixed abilities dance instructor and massage therapist difficult or impossible at times.

In May 2019, India was matched free of charge with her newest dance partner, Service Dog Nico. India shares, “Nico has totally changed my life. His professional training allows me to do things that were previously unsafe because of my disability. He is my best friend and constant companion.” India and Nico make a perfect pair.

Puppy Pliny

Sonoma County’s Russian River Brewing Company is a longtime supporter of Canine Companions. Now, they’re stepping up their support and engagement by raising a Canine Companions puppy and following him on his journey to become an assistance dog!

Puppy Pliny was named after Russian River Brewing Company’s famous Pliny the Younger and Pliny the Elder beers and is being raised by their director of human resources. Pliny has quickly become the most popular employee at their breweries and will surely be a welcome addition to patrons. Follow puppy Pliny on Instagram at @plinypup!
Los Angeles Chargers Puppy

We are excited to announce our new partnership with NFL team, the Los Angeles Chargers! The Chargers will be following Canine Companions puppy Bolt on his journey to becoming an assistance dog. “The Chargers are excited to partner with Canine Companions for Independence to follow the journey of future assistance dog Bolt,” said Alexis Ruhl, special advisor for philanthropic affairs and co-owner of the Los Angeles Chargers. “Chronicling Bolt’s journey will help us reach a broader audience to share the benefits that animals bring to our lives.” Bolt is being raised in the Los Angeles area and is so excited to attend games and events to help cheer on the Chargers! Learn more about our partnership with the Chargers at cci.org/chargerspup and follow Bolt’s journey on Instagram @ChargersPup.

Virtual Success for Imagine Independence

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, our Wasatch Champions Volunteer Chapter had to swiftly transition Imagine Independence in Ogden, Utah from an in-person event to a virtual event. On April 23, the virtual event took place and had more than 160 registrants and raised more than $136,000! A huge thank you to volunteers Patty and Shane Rose, and the entire chapter for helping to put on this successful first-time virtual event! For updates on events in the Southwest Region for the rest of 2020, visit cci.org/swevents.
A Partner in Advocacy

For over three years, Littler and Canine Companions have been dedicated to raising awareness of the life-changing impact an assistance dog has on a person with a disability. Through educating businesses and employers on accommodating assistance animals, we have made great progress towards inclusion.

Littler Mendelson is a key partner in Canine Companions’ advocacy work, helping to increase access and educate businesses around task-trained service dogs that enhance independence for a person with a disability.

Our expanding partnership led to the development of a new workplace training video that focuses on accommodating assistance animals in the workplace and public-facing businesses. In creating this training video, Littler and Canine Companions are working to bring awareness to impact many people in both public and workplace scenarios.

Adding some fun and joy, Littler is also following the journey of aspiring assistance dog puppy Wes, named after beloved co-founder Wesley Fastiff. Born in December 2018, Wes will be headed to professional training in just a few short months. He’s been enjoying his time and learning over 30 commands in Phoenix, AZ with his volunteer puppy raisers.

For more information on becoming a corporate partner, visit cci.org/partners.

Canine Companions Advocacy Initiative Puts Down Grassroots

This spring, Canine Companions launched the Advocacy Initiative, a grassroots network of supporters who will be able to use their voice to amplify our positions on laws and legislation. Over 7,000 supporters signed their name and added input on our official comments to the Department of Transportation’s proposed changes to the Air Carrier Access Act. This first step helped support our organization’s public comments to stand against service dog fraud during air travel.

We have long advocated for our graduates’ rights to access with their service dogs on an individual, case-by-case basis, as well as hosted educational sessions for corporations and businesses. Now, our community can help.

Canine Companions’ Advocacy Initiative will be ramping up across the country, helping provide valuable support to issues that impact our clients and organization. We have more than 900 people registered to be a volunteer advocate, ready to assist whenever and wherever support is needed.

You can apply to become a volunteer advocate by visiting cci.org/advocate.
Virtual Fun at DogFest

DogFest Phoenix hosted a Leap Day event where hundreds gathered to celebrate the Canine Companions mission and the joy dogs bring to our lives. Due to COVID-19, Jacksonville and Orlando pivoted their DogFests to virtual events with great success. Many 2020 events are moving to creative and interactive virtual events due to public health guidelines. These virtual events will take place on DogFest Facebook event pages, and include photo contests, fundraising challenges, graduate stories and more. So join the fun! Post your photos and stories and raise funds to help place more amazing assistance dogs. To register for DogFest, visit cci.org/DogFest.

2020 Events Across the Country

Northwest Region

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<td>Putting for Pups Golf Classic, San Jose, CA*</td>
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Southwest Region

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<td>August 2</td>
<td>Sit. Stay. Sparkle. Vail*</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 20</td>
<td>Yappy Hour, The Ritz-Carlton, Laguna Niguel Dana Point, CA</td>
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<td>August 28</td>
<td>Enchanted Canines Golf Classic, Albuquerque, NM</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 12</td>
<td>DogFest San Diego*</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 17</td>
<td>DogFest LA/OC*</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 17</td>
<td>Yappy Hour, The Ritz-Carlton, Laguna Niguel Dana Point, CA</td>
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<td>September 18</td>
<td>Dog Days of Summer Golf Classic, Scottsdale, AZ</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 26</td>
<td>Sit. Stay. Sparkle. Orange County*</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 29</td>
<td>DogFest ACO*</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 29</td>
<td>Yappy Howl-O-Ween, The Ritz-Carlton, Laguna Niguel Dana Point, CA</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 9</td>
<td>Canine Companions Invitational Golf Classic, Rancho Santa Fe, CA</td>
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North Central Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September 13</td>
<td>DogFest North Central*</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 8</td>
<td>Campus Grand Opening, New Albany, OH</td>
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South Central Region

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October 3</td>
<td>DogFest Texas*</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 15</td>
<td>Nacho Ordinary Dogs*</td>
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Northeast Region

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September 12</td>
<td>DogFest Long Island*</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 12</td>
<td>DogFest New England*</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 20</td>
<td>DogFest DC*</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 27</td>
<td>DogFest New Jersey/Philly*</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 5</td>
<td>Annual Veterans Day Event*</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 7</td>
<td>45th Anniversary Celebration*</td>
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Southeast Region

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September 26</td>
<td>DogFest Space Coast*</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 24</td>
<td>24th Annual Tales &amp; Tails Gala*</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 26, 2021</td>
<td>Chip in for Canines Atlanta, GA†</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Virtual event
† New date
Gratitude from Our Graduates

While our graduates sheltered in place and socially distanced, they were never alone. They always had their Canine Companions assistance dogs there to pick up a dropped item, alert to a phone call and open doors. Thanks to this incredible help, our graduates were able to stay safe.

“Chance has spina bifida, which means as his legs grow, they tighten up easily. It is important to keep Chance moving and also help him stretch more. Chance’s assistance dog Walden has been a huge motivator for Chance when he needs to stretch or go to a doctor’s appointment.”
—Amanda, Chance’s mother

“Renata makes it possible for me to be independent sheltering at home. I never realized how much I needed her help at home until I couldn’t leave the house. Whether it’s assisting with the dishwasher, retrieving the many things I drop, or helping with showering and dressing, Renata does it with so much joy, no matter what our days hold.”
—Wallis and Renata

“Midas is providing so much support for me during this difficult time. While he is always helpful with providing me more independence, I appreciate how loving and supportive he is right now.”
—Greta and Midas
March & June 2020 Team Training Yearbook

Northwest Region
1 March: Alex with Elliana; Ron with Holiday V; Victor with Violet VI
2 March: Penni with Hartley III; Addi with Vessi; Patricia with Parasol II; Maria with Karolyn; Rod with Turf II
3 March: Scott with Espana
4 June: Amanda with Hickory IV; Carl with Cupcake; Cason & Jennifer with Junebug II; Don with Walla; Emily with Omni IV; Gina with Sibella; Jeremy with Bria IV; Joshua, Rebecca & Scarlett with Charlie VI; Kate with Britney II; Kris with Jammy; Laura with Winslow III; Lisa with Mariogold II;Phillip with Yulia II; Sarah with Mystic III

Southeast Region
5 March: Debbie with Sarabi; Jodi with Blanca IV; Ashley with Secret; Ellen with Pita III; Sarah H. with Harlyn; Sarah B. with Yondu
6 June: David & Bev with Eddie III; Eileen with Mort; Ian, Angela & Marcus with Cooper VI; Jesus & Wendy with Yeldon; Maddi, Casie & Jeff with Yoki III; Te’a, Julie & Jimbo with Argos

Northeast Region
7 March: Mike with Periwinkle; Nick with Hershey; Bob with Rosen
8 June: Kim with Naia; Nico with Jaffa II; Peter with Sugar II; Scott with Twinzy

South Central Region
9 June: Amanda & Kara with Logan V; Helena with Herbie; Kevin with Zabi; Preston with Wifi; Shawn with Wendell III

Southwest Region
10 May: Kelsey with Gumbo
11 June: Elaina with Buck V; Emilia with Noelle VII; Lameka with Thyme IV; Paige with Ocean VII; Robert with Andre III

North Central Region
12 June: Lori with Shakespeare; Mandy with Zane; Mary Evelyn, Greg & Simeon with Bojan; Meghan with Cindylou; Shelby with Oaklyn; Sonny with Yankee V; Teal with Flame

Each team is matched free of charge, thanks to your donations. Visit cci.org/donate or return the enclosed envelope to bring greater independence and confidence to adults, children and veterans with disabilities through the love and help of an expertly trained assistance dog. Thank you!
Puppies flying the friendly skies. See story on page 13.