



BERGIN COLLEGE of CANINE STUDIES

WHERE LOVE MEETS SERVICE.



Your love changes lives forever.

Denise Fleming, PhD, believes in the power of education and how it can make, or break, a person. Entering the workforce before the age of 10 to help with her family's finances, Denise endured homelessness and adverse abuse. Despite her circumstances, she found sanctuary in school; she met caring teachers who modeled human decency and gave her the courage to develop and pursue her own long-term goals. Denise would go on to earn her

doctorate from University of California, Berkeley while simultaneously cultivating a loving and safe home with her husband; this is her greatest pride in life.

Over two decades ago, Denise developed psoriatic arthritis and spinal stenosis. Her symptoms worsened and using a wheelchair and mobility scooter became inevitable. This did not deter her; even though she experiences mobility limitations, Denise believes in living life to the fullest. With the goal of reconnecting to society and gaining a greater sense of safety and control over her life, she sought out a service dog.

She knew that a Bergin service dog would be able to transform her quality of life, physically and mentally. Denise explained that her ability to give back to and care for a service dog would positively affect her own sense of wellbeing. After years of being a devoted foster with Bergin College of Canine Studies, she was paired with her own highly-trained mobility assistance dog. Finley, a two year-old Labrador/Golden Retriever mix, successfully completed our rigorous service dog education training and public access tests.



Denise began her journey with us in sunny Penngrove, California and has supported us during our transition to nature-abundant Canyonville, Oregon. This experience with us has illustrated what it means to lead with empathy and love; she has found that these are the qualities of a genuine educator. This wasn't a solo journey, she explained, but one where students, faculty, and dogs walked alongside her to support in any obstacles she may have encountered along the path. A path where Love meets Service.