

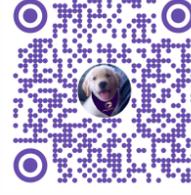


**Home of the  
Assistance Dog Institute**  
10201 Old Redwood Hwy  
Penngrove, CA 94951  
707-545-DOGS (3647)  
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Q3 2021

# QUEST

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF BERGIN UNIVERSITY OF CANINE STUDIES



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INSIDE:

- CELEBRATING 30 YEARS
- 2021 GRADUATES
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## IN QUEST OF:

# CELEBRATING 30 YEARS

### Newsletter Vol 1:1, winter 1991:

In the winter of 1991, after 17 years building my vision of a service dog onto a national reality, I realized that I had painted myself into an administrative corner, miles away from the service dog concept I had invented and put agonizing days, weeks, months and years into developing, a vision I had aptly named “Canine Companions for Independence (CCI)”. Developing the methodologies through multiple failures and successes, and having at last created a reasonable facsimile of the vision I’d had so many years before, my role had now become a dog-less, paper-filled world. This, coupled with the hundreds of requests I was receiving seeking information on how to start a service dog program, was sending a message that it was clearly time to send my first non-profit creation, my first child, off on it own in order to share the how to’s of the service dog concept world-wide.

From my previous life, as an educator, I knew that a mere hour conversation would not provide sufficient know how for someone to replicate and further the service dog concept, so the vision of an educational/research institution focusing on assistance dogs began to come into focus, first as an offshoot of CCI, then as a separately incorporated non-profit, the “Assistance Dog Institute (ADI).”

The headline of our first newsletter, Vol 1:1, Winter 1991, was “FROM DREAM TO REALITY.”

ADI’s first location was at 421 East Cotati Ave, ironically very close to the apartment my husband Jim and I were living in when the vision of a service dog first appeared to me. We started with a staff of 3, Lisa Amaroli Strifler, a brilliant dog trainer and manager who had joined with me to leave CCI in a quest to expand the service dog’s horizons. The third member of our team was a brilliant young man, Tim Bartlett, new to the service dog arena but a powerhouse when it came to the technical side of things. He wrote our first software program comparable to anything I’ve seen subsequently.

Our mission statement;

1. To research current and potential service dog applications;
2. To develop new and better methods and materials for assistance dog program utilization;
3. To educate programs and people about assistance dog work so that more and better assistance dog teams are produced.

We started by focusing our efforts on the smattering of dog research available at that time which led us to developing a Breeding Council comprised of three of the world’s most renowned canine scientists:

- Dr. Paul Scott of the prestigious partnership of canine scientists known as “Scott and Fuller”
- Dr. Benson Ginsburg, renowned for his work in the Guide Dog Breeding Project
- Dr Ray Coppinger, founder of the Livestock Breeding program at Hampshire College.



## Newsletter Vol 1:2, spring 1992:

Our headline story was on Sheila O'Brien, the CEO of New England Assistance Dogs who has subsequently become the Chair of the North American region of Assistance Dogs International (ADI), an organization I had founded years before at a hearing dog program meeting (before the service dog concept was well known). There I proposed we all join together to create an international organization of assistance dog programs that could meet and talk to each other, sharing -- instead of competing.

That same year I had also completed the first iteration of a curriculum for a six-week Service Dog Training Seminar to share knowledge about service dogs. That first class was scheduled to be held in 1993. This seminar, now formally accredited, continues to this day.



## Newsletter Vol 2:1, fall 1992:

This time the headline story featured the Delta Society and its remarkable President, Linda Hines. The Delta Society later morphed into the Pet Partners program, now known worldwide. In that same newsletter we continued our quest to inspire and share some significant statistics about the industry with our readers, with the goal in mind of bringing us all together as separate 501(c) organizations but with similar purposes.

## Newsletter Vol 2:2:

We managed to create both a "Renaissance" and a division. Believing that the strength in the assistance dog world required three strong players, one, the organizations providing the services, two, the clients inputting their actual needs, and three, a professional trainer's organization ensuring the quality of policies and procedures involved in the dog training and client services. Having built that first player, the organizations, I felt it an urgency to bring a second strong body into existence, a council of assistance dog users having input into the provision of program services that actual met their needs, a critical part of the process, ensuring that they were not relegated to the role of beneficiary, but rather an integral part of the process.

Having gotten the client organization off the ground, I found much to my surprise, that my intentions were totally misconstrued. Those individuals whom I had invited to meet about the project, and who initially were so enthused, later defined me as the enemy trying to somehow use this group to my benefit. The good news was the group had coalesced around this concept, so my goal was met. I simply kept silent. Some members of the group who knew of my original vision, asked why I didn't respond to these accusations. My response was, first, nothing had ever been said to me directly, and second, they had renamed themselves the International Association of Assistance Dog Partners, and had begun working together, which was my goal.

## Newsletter Vol 2:3:

The Campaign. Some assistance dog programs were charging for dogs. Many individuals seeking assistance dogs, of which there was and still is, a shortage, could not afford to pay. We created the "Assistance Dog United Campaign" to write grants for money to give to clients as vouchers to help pay for a much needed assistance dog. Recently, with fewer programs charging for dogs, and donations tightening, this program relies on fewer donors and it provides fewer vouchers than at its inception.

## Newsletter Vol 3:1 winter 1993/94:

We headlined the first seventeen graduates of the vigorous Service Dog Training Seminar. Many of them continue to be players in assistance dog program world-wide. Five from overseas, and of the remaining twelve, nine were from different states in the US. The Zukerman Foundation helped sponsor it and would be proud to know how many service dogs were placed as a result of their sponsorship. That year we placed eight service dogs, and continued sharing research and statistics with our readers.

## Newsletter Vol 3:2 had a dual focus:

The first was developing a curriculum to use to place service dogs with kids and several kids benefited from this curriculum. The second was our program taking shelter dogs to the local continuation high school for an intensive two periods a day, teaching the kids how to train dogs that would otherwise have been euthanized. This program received rave reviews and morphed into a program we later began at the county juvenile detention facility. The annual report noted the research we had been working on the past couple years focusing on a dog/client matching method. We use that method to this day, with some tweaks, of course.



## Newsletter

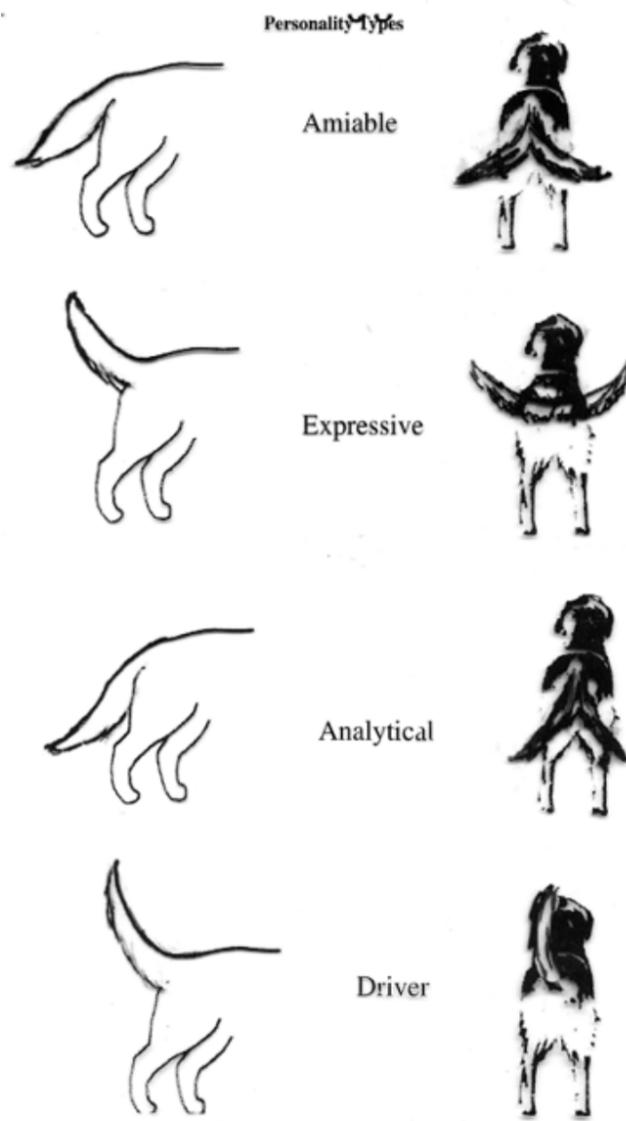
Vol 4:1:

The headline was: "Third Annual Service Dog Seminar." The seminar continued to be a draw with grads again coming from far and wide. Eight service dog instructors and six service dog teams graduated that year. In that newsletter, we also featured all the local veterinarians (and their pics) who had been helping us through the years. Fascinating to remember those emergency calls, those visits, the devotion to caring they all had in common.

## Newsletter

Vol 4:2 fall 1994/95:

The headline read, "EXTRA!!! THE TELL-TALE TAIL". Our research had identified a way to better understand matches in working roles for dogs. Such excitement. But it went a step further, the tail carriage, of course depending on the circumstance, could help determine the best service dog match. Dogs were divided into 4 personality types based on the tail carriage and identified as an amiable, analytical, expressive or driver with some combination of amiable making the best service dog. By then we had also come to realize that even though people were attracted to their opposites, the best service dog matches were with similar dog and human personalities.



## Newsletter

Vol 5:1 spring 1995/96:

It focused on the intense work of the High Schooled Assistance Dog program at the El Camino Continuation High School in Rohnert Park. Ironically, when it closed, the Assistance Dog Institute, soon to be renamed Bergin University of Canine Studies moved there for several years while we looked for our "forever" home.



## Newsletter

Vol 5:2 fall 1996:

It wrote about three amazing changes to our lives. The first was that an amazing person, Denise Getz, became a staff member of the Assistance Dog Institute. Yes, that Denise is still with us these many 23+ years later and her value has grown with each passing year. As COO she runs much of the operation and her prodigious memory keeps us all on our toes.



## That same year...

We were asked to bring our HS A-Dog program to the incarcerated youth at Sonoma County's Rehab Program at the Sierra Youth Center's section of Sonoma County's Juvenile Detention Center. Bringing the dog's special characteristics and loving nature into a rehab program for Sonoma County's at-risk youth was remarkably successful. To this day I run into young men twice as tall with shoulders twice as wide as those fifteen year old boys I taught. And I'm repeatedly told how the dogs changed their lives. They invariably add that they are better dads than their wives are moms due to what they learned training pups and dogs.



Laidlaw donated a bus to us so that we could bring the dogs to the Sierra Youth Center in style. Awkwardly, we only learned later that we should have repainted the bus. Meantime, Sonoma County residents watched in awe as they drove past a school bus full of dog passengers. Not a year to miss.



# Newsletter

Vol 7 fall 1997:

We moved out of the Rohnert Park Shelter to then be housed on the grounds of Sonoma County's Sierra Youth Center at the Los Guilicos juvenile detention center. We no longer had to haul dogs, though the bus ride taught the dogs a lot. Our offices were more spacious, and the dogs stayed overnight there with the kids as caretakers under the watchful eye of their dedicated staff/manager, Guy Cutter. Both the kids and dogs learned more. Several assistance dogs graduated that year, and our annual Service Dog Seminar now expanded the students' learning to aspects of working with kids at-risk. Fall 1999 was also the year we began a year round school of two

semesters: 1st semester concentrating on service dogs and the 2nd semester covering other canine intervention uses.



# Newsletter

Vol 8 spring 1999:

It was a year of significant media coverage. Though still located at the Sierra Youth Center's juvenile detention program, media coverage readily became part of the HS A-Dogs' program. The kids reveled in meeting and helping the cameramen, sound men, photographers, interviewers, all that media exposure entailed, particularly the joy of demoing their dogs. We, both ADI and Sierra staff watched the kids' growth in self-confidence and self-esteem, qualities often lacking in youth at-risk.

# Newsletter

Vol 9 spring 2000:

The twenty-fifth year of the Service Dog drew attention to Kerry and Abdul's previous 16 year relationship. Pictured on the cover of the newsletter was Kerry preparing to say goodbye to Abdul, nearing the end of their sixteen year partnership. Kerry said she thought of this photo as representing the time when she had to start facing the prospect of life without Abdul.

This year was also a beginning of a new category of service dog placements: Home Helpmates. A full-page write-up about service dogs without public access right was published. This same year Bonnie was designated a Presidential Point of Light for her significant contribution to mankind.



# Newsletter

Vol 10 spring 2001:

"Oprah Presents Bonnie Bergin with a \$100,000 'Use Your Life Award.'" I was flown to Chicago to receive the award live on Oprah's TV show. I stood behind the entry screen, trying desperately to keep my composure. I approached the stage to step up and greet Oprah. When I looked up and met her eyes, she was crying (she'd just viewed the video taken of the kids and dogs). Needless-to-say, I lost it. My memory of that event is hazy except my shock at how tall she was.

That same year the Assistance Dog Institute became an Associate of

Science degree-granting college approved by the State of California, a first in the history of the world to offer a degree in dog studies. Finally the dog was given the respect and scholarly attention s/he deserved.

# Newsletter

Vol 11 winter 2001:

Institute dog Ana is recognized by President Bush for her bravery and dedicated efforts at ground zero resulting from the horrendous Sept 11, 2001 terrorist attack. Handler Richard Lee, Ana's partner, searched together during this nightmarish event. At a recent graduation, he spoke about their teamwork and presented us a beautiful portrait of Ana.





## Newsletter Vol 13 fall 2003:

We were also concentrating on furthering our original goals. Mission #1: To research current and potential service dog applications was also becoming a reality. Our research found that dogs could read two-dimensional flash cards of commands. In addition to teaching dogs to read, we developing dog reading programs at our local libraries and schools, including bringing in our reading dogs to inspire them more.



## Newsletter Vol 12 summer 2003:

We moved! In 2003, we purchased a half-acre site at 1215 Sebastopol Road in Santa Rosa. This was a "What goes around, comes back around" type of story. This was the very two buildings I'd built for CCI years before. Dorms for clients, plenty of office, classroom and training space and dogs with indoor/outdoor access from staff offices. Our emphasis was on breeding the perfect service dog. This was also my first invite to teach on a "Cruise with your Assistance Dog" (followed by 5 others) along with the first of three opportunities to bring the Assistance Dog Institute's educational programs to Japan. That same year, Kathy Erspamer and service dog Iris (from ADI), carried the Olympic torch for the 2002 Winter Olympics.

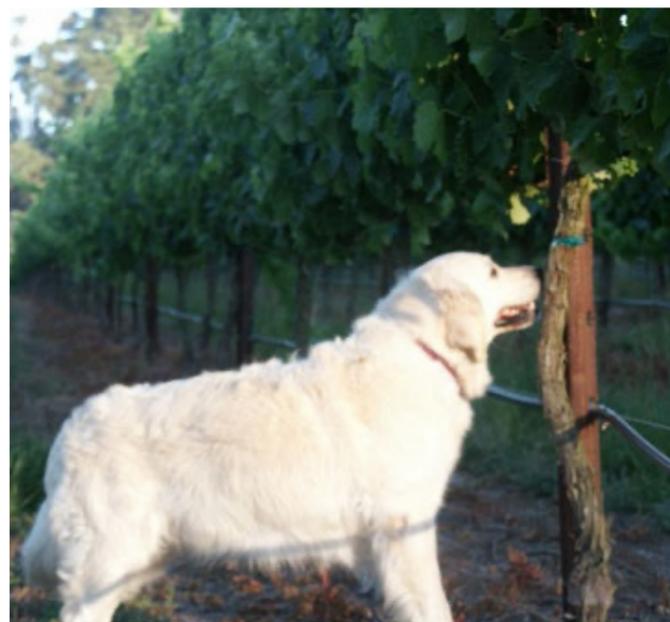
## Newsletter Vol 15 fall 2005:

On this 30th year anniversary of the service dog, the Institute's Mission #2: To develop new and better methods and materials for assistance dog program utilization led us to develop a program in which dogs were trained to sniff out the vine mealybug that was starting to destroy Sonoma and Napa County vineyards. We launched a research project with the Carneros Vine Mealybug Working Group. It was very successful but not financially feasible compared to the use of insecticides, so was put aside for the time being.



## Newsletter Vol 14 fall 2004:

Mission # 3: To educate programs and people about assistance dog work so that more and better assistance dog teams are produced. In 2004, our Master's program began. And it was breathtaking how many of our graduates started service dog programs of their own - worldwide. That year we continued placing new client/service dog teams, graduating even more students, and holding annual client reunions. This year two prestigious events occurred: ADI qualified to offer foreign Student Visas and it was the year the Assistance Dog Institute received accreditation from Assistance Dogs, Int'l.



## Newsletter

*Vol 16 fall 2006:*

This year we launched the newly created Bachelor of Science in Canine Studies (Cynology) program. Today the four semester vocational areas include: Scent Detection and related roles, Assistance Dogs of several types, Shelter-Rescue programs, and a focus on Obedience Dog Training related to starting one's own business. More emphasis was placed on early puppy education showing pups could learn as many as 35 commands by eight weeks of age. That year, the 1st reunion cruise was planned for Institute clients, graduates and staff.

## Newsletter

*Vol 17 spring 2008:*

Paws for Purple Hearts (PPH) was born to help Veterans returning from Afghanistan and Iraq and other wars suffering mental and physical injuries. First PPH program opened at the Palo Alto VA Menlo Park Trauma Care Center. Nine Associates, 3 assistance dog teams and our first Master's graduate, Jorjan Powers, graduated that spring. The Assistance Dog Institute changed its name to Bergin University of Canine Studies (BUCS) to honor its founder.

## Newsletter

*Vol 18 spring 2009:*

With the support of Finmeccanica, Paws for Purple Hearts opens program at Walter Reed Army Medical Center (WRAMC). First dogs arrive to introduce the program. Del Monte rolls out the red carpet for Bergin University staff.



## Newsletter

*Vol 19 summer 2010:*

The headline: ACCREDITATION GRANTED TO THE WORLD'S ONLY UNIVERSITY IN CANINE STUDIES Bergin University of Canine Studies went "where no school has gone before" - in all the world, in the fifteen plus year

history of the human-dog partnership. We became accredited by the prestigious Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools. The dog has formally been accepted as an academic scholarly subject of study by the US Department of Education. Bergin University was also approved to participate in Federal Student Financial Aid. That same year Sae Hokoyama from Japan and a graduate of our AS Assistance Dog Education program becomes BUCS' first Bachelor's graduate.

## Newsletter

*Vol 20 spring 2011:*

Bergin University is committed to community service. When the Bachelor's students began training dogs for the local Humane Society, it helped increase adoptions. Seventy-five percent of the dogs these students trained have been adopted. At Santa Rosa JC, eight to ten Bergin University dogs arrive at Dr. Dan Famini's veterinary tech classes to give his students hands-on experience with dogs.

## Newsletter

*Vol 21 spring 2012:*

Another move for Bergin University staff, students and dogs, as the University outgrew the Sebastopol Road location. The new location, property of Cotati-Rohnert Park School district, 5860 Labath Ave Rohnert Park, became available.

Too small for our long term use, but perfectly situated right off Highway 101 while we searched for a "forever" home. Then the recession hit. Dog jobs were not recession proof, but they were recession resistant, so while our student population decreased, and staffing was reduced, we were still able to operate. Several of our graduating dogs were placed with wounded warriors.



Dave with disabled dog



## Newsletter Vol 22 summer 2013:

Luis Carlos Montalvan, author of New York Times bestseller *Until Tuesday* headlines benefit for Bergin University. Educational program, Dogs Helping Veterans added to University's curriculum. Renowned experts Drs Emily Keram and Michael Jaffe were among the key personnel developing the program. Steve Moore and Dan Fudge were on the instructional staff. BUCS was also developing ways of increasing pups and dogs cognition. And Master's graduate Davis Hawn was in the process of establishing a Havana, Cuba training center. His employee, Beatrix de la Osa, attended the BUCS Service Dog Training Seminar in preparation for putting this program in operation.



## Newsletter Vol 23 spring 2015:

Bergin University Alumni Change the World One Dog, One Person at a Time. Our grads are “top dogs” from US to Canada, Ireland to Down-Under.

## Newsletter Vol 24 fall 2015:

Makenna Eager with service dog Ming sings Star Spangled Banner at graduation. Graduation brings new careers for AS, BS and MS graduates.

## Newsletter Vol 25 summer 2017:

Bergin University and the Sonoma County Sheriff have formed a partnership that benefits the inmates, Bergin dogs, Bergin clients, and employees from both organizations. Under the guidance of Bergin University staff and North County Detention Center staff, inmates are taught to raise and train assistance dogs for people with disabilities. Bergin graduates are very much in demand with numerous assistance dog programs posting job openings on our alumni website. Graduates who are often seeking positions closer to home are being encouraged to interview with the programs to explore the potential of the position being a better fit than initially thought.

## Newsletter Vol 26 spring 2018:

Our Dogs Helping Veterans certificate course that started so many years ago has grown to a must do in order to be hired by the many service dog programs who have added Veterans with PTSD and TBI to their lists of applicants. The Bachelor program that was training shelter dogs has a following in Rohnert Park Shelter manager Mickey Zeldes who says, “Our partnership with Bergin makes so much sense and is a godsend. Here is a school teaching students to be dog trainers and next door (practically) is an animal shelter with lots of dogs with behavioral issues.”

## Newsletter Vol 27 fall 2019:

Our site at 10201 Old Redwood Hwy had still not been completed and we were unable to extend our lease with the Cotati-Rohnert Park School District for the 2018-2019 school year. Luckily we found the Hatchery in Penngrove, though, anticipating a short term lease. We did in fact stay there until the COVID crisis required we hold remote classes from mid-spring semester 2020 until March 1 of 2021. By then we were at the 10201 Old Redwood Hwy location.

Green Mill's amazing history included Bergin University's board chair and fiancée's engagement party held there. And independent of one another, as children, Jim Bergin and I both dined there, he and his family coming from San Anselmo, Marin County, my family and I coming from Willits, Mendocino County.



With COVID upon us, canceling the summer seminar and requiring classes to be held remotely in fall of 2020, and with staff working from home, we moved out of our temporary quarters at the Hatchery in Penngrove.

Simultaneously the new modular campus buildings had come together at last, and while no occupancy permit had been issued as yet, we enthusiastically began moving equipment from there and the storage site to the new campus.

## Newsletter Vol 28:

On October 26, 2020, Kerry Knaus, the first person to ever consider the service dog a viable means of bringing independence into her own life and that of others, died unexpectedly. A historical figure for her willingness and ability to engage with me in bringing my vision of a service dog to fruition. A quadriplegic with very limited strength but with a powerful mind and initiative, she knew what she wanted and needed. Together we brought the vision to light.

## Newsletter Vol 29 winter 2020:

When I was informed that Kerry had died, I was speechless and distraught. I had spoken with her recently and she appeared to be doing well. Kerry, the first person to receive a service dog, but more than that, the person with whom I had placed Abdul as a pup, with the expectation that he would grow up as the first service dog. Abdul, whom Kerry and I had trained together identifying one-by-one the tasks Kerry needed and that Abdul could do for her. What I didn't know about her was that she loved flowers. The eve of being informed of her death, I was told this, and the idea of a memorial was born, for her and Abdul on our "forever" University site.



COMING SOON  
 IN MEMORY OF  
*Kerry & Abdul*  
 SENSORY GARDEN  
 BERGIN UNIVERSITY of CANINE STUDIES

## Newsletter Vol 29 summer 2021:

Finally on site at 10201 Old Redwood Hwy, with COVID lessened, we were able to reach out to the community to help shelter/rescue dogs. Our instructor Devan connected with Dogma Animal Rescue who had rescued a litter of 3 Miniature Pincher/Yorkie pups. Allison, a wonderful volunteer for that organization agreed to bring the pups to the school for our students to train. When the pups reached 9 weeks, all 3, no bigger than a single handful, were adopted. Lots of cheering.



BERGIN UNIVERSITY of CANINE STUDIES

*graduation*  
 2021



# meet the dogs

Meet our Potential Graduates!

Our Associate of Science students spend 5 months working with their assigned dogs in the hopes that those dogs will graduate at the end of the semester.

This semester's Associate of Science dogs are Oprah, Nando, Bosco, Charles, Dash, Dora, Del, and Pepper.

Their evaluations and their training aren't done quite yet, but we're all hopeful that this will be one of our largest graduating classes of dogs ever because these dogs are on track to change someone's life in just a few short months!

Get to know these dogs both here and on social media so you can cheer them on alongside us ahead of their (hopeful) December graduations.

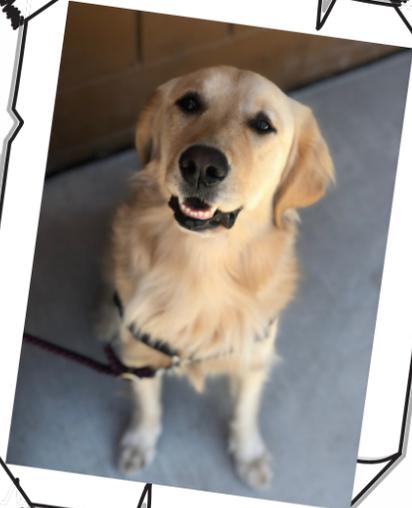
## Charles

Charles is known for his love for treats, going for jogs, and cuddling up at your feet any chance he gets! His favorite command is "lap."



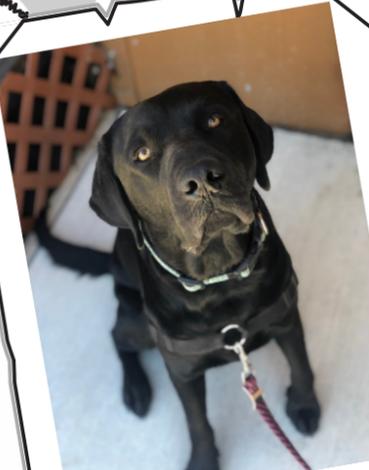
## Oprah

You can find Oprah bringing you a toy as a way of asking for a snuggle. She is known for her love for children and always having a smile on her face.



## Nando

Nando is known for the sweet, calm presence that he carries. He loves helping with the laundry, sunbathing, and taking socks off of feet when asked.



## Bosco

When he's not training, Bosco loves spending time at the beach. One of his favorite tasks is retrieving his leash to give it to his student trainer! Bosco is also known as the goofball in class.



## Dash

Dash is known for his gentle soul. You can often find him napping when he's not working. He loves chasing his friends in playgroups, and commands "sit up" and "visit."



## Dora

Dora enjoys showing off to her classmates during training. Some of her favorites are retrieving items in the refrigerator, working with wheelchairs, and turning in a circle.



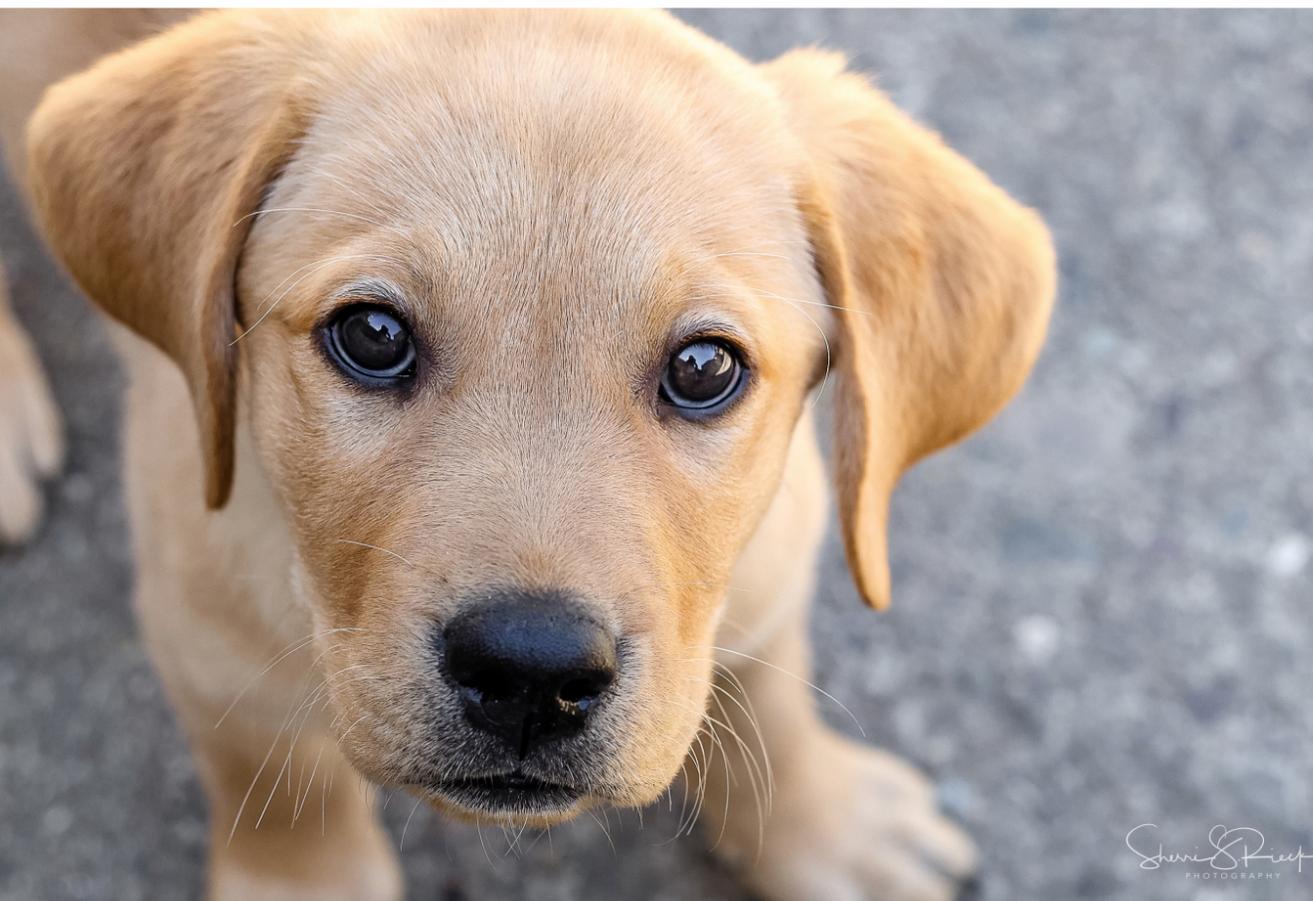


## Del

Del is a goofy boy who takes his job as a service dog in training very seriously. He loves cuddling and sleeping through lectures at school.

## Pepper

Pepper is an easy-going girl who enjoys leisurely walks with her student trainer. She is known for her silly play style when playing with her friends at school.



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