Can Do Canines®
ASSISTANCE DOGS

Tails for You

a publication of Can Do Canines®

Thanks to you, Cali is helping Cheryl with her mobility and hearing needs.

Winter 2019
V. 30 | Issue 1

Celebrating 30 Years
1989-2019

A CHANGE OF HEART

The decision to apply changes Cheryl's life

Our senses work together to tell our brain what's happening around us. In an evolutionary sense, they work to keep us safe from danger and help us learn. And in a human sense, they help us make memories and experience the world.

For Cheryl Heinz, growing up legally blind and deaf didn't hold her back. "And I'm grateful for that, because otherwise I wouldn't have had the full experiences that I've had," she explains.

But when one of our senses isn't functioning, our bodies need to react and adapt. And oftentimes, other parts of our body become affected as well.

"As I got older, the ramifications of [my vision and hearing issues] increased," Cheryl says. "And I've had mobility problems for the last few years."

Caused by the combination of her hearing loss and vision problems, Cheryl has trouble with balance and difficulty sensing where her body is. In addition, she's had fibromyalgia for many years, which causes muscle pain and fatigue.

Cali tugs open the refrigerator door for Cheryl

After suffering a concussion a few years ago, Cheryl's symptoms became worse. She became fatigued more easily and relied on a cane for longer distances. Her friend gave her a walker with the idea that Cheryl would use it someday, but Cheryl kept telling herself that she'd get better at dealing with her disabilities. So she passed it on to someone she thought needed it more than her.

Cali gives Cheryl a kiss | Photos by Brian Magnuson | bfmagnuson.photoshelter.com

But unfortunately, Cheryl got to the point where she needed more than her cane. "It was really hard for me just to face the reality of it," she explains. Her denial can, in part, be attributed to her twenty years as a nurse and working in physical therapy. "To be on one side as a provider and then to suddenly be needing the services ... my idea was that I was going to keep working in these areas until I [needed them due to old age.]"

> **"It was really hard for me just to face the reality of it."**

Those in Cheryl's life suggested she get an assistance dog. When she learned of Can Do Canines, she says, "I mulled it over in my head for a couple of years thinking that I wasn't bad enough and other people deserved one more." But she had a change of heart. "I got to a point where I decided I'm gonna try because I do have needs," she explains.

Can Do Canines agreed. She was matched with a spunky Labrador Retriever named Catalina, who now goes by Cali. The assistance dog is multi-talented, helping Cheryl with mobility and hearing needs.

Cali alerts Cheryl to noises like a timer by pawing at Cheryl and directing her to the sound. Or if the smoke alarm is going off, Cali touches Cheryl and then sits on the floor below it. Cali also opens and closes the refrigerator, retrieves items, and tugs Cheryl's walker to her.

Since Cali moved in, Cheryl says her confidence has increased—and not just about her mobility and hearing, but about herself too. "I have abilities, not disabilities," she says. "I'm a whole different person ... a year ago ... I wouldn't have believed in myself, that I could do this, and that I was worth getting a dog."

Cali's help with Cheryl's mobility and hearing needs has made a huge improvement in her life. But Cali has also

Cali nudges Cheryl and then sits on the rug to signal the smoke alarm is going off

helped in an unexpected, and perhaps equally important, way—she has made Cheryl realize her self-worth. "She has done so much for me that I in return have to do the equal amount for myself," Cheryl says.

> "Maybe my purpose is to let people know about these wonderful dogs ... "

She expresses her gratitude in her desire to help in whatever way she can. "Maybe my purpose is to let people know about these wonderful dogs and the people that make them possible," she remarks. "I want to give back. I can't do it financially, I know that, but I want to do it in other ways."

Want to help raise dogs like Cali? Become a Puppy Raiser! Visit can-do-canines.org/puppy-raiser to learn more.

Thank you for making this partnership possible:

Great Start Home: The Stieren family
Puppy Raiser: The inmate handlers at FCI Waseca
Special Thanks: Linda and Stu Wicklund
Dog Donor: Martha Anderson
You: Thank you for your donations!

EVENTS

30th Anniversary Fetching Ball Gala

February 9, 2019 | The Doubletree Bloomington

Help us celebrate our 30th anniversary at the Fetching Ball Gala! Enjoy entertainment, live and silent auctions, dinner and drinks, and learn about the future of Can Do Canines.

We are pleased to present a performance by comedian Louie Anderson.

You can purchase tickets online and pre-register for electronic bidding at fetchingball.com.

Winter Graduation Ceremony

March 30, 1 p.m. | Can Do Canines facility

Graduation ceremonies recognize and honor those who played a role in making the graduating assistance dog teams possible. Join us as we congratulate these new teams!

A FOUR-LEGGED SAFETY NET

Fiona lets Beth and her family feel safe again

For Beth Klingelhofer, a Diabetes Assist Dog is essential. With the dangers posed by rapidly falling blood sugar, the more advanced notice she has, the better.

Fiona was teamed with Beth after her first Diabetes Assist Dog, Faith, a 7-year-old Black Labrador Retriever suddenly passed away. And although the loss of one's assistance dog is naturally difficult, Beth says that she went into the new partnership with the wisdom of important lessons under her belt.

"I knew so much more so I could be a better leader for [Fiona] and not make some of the same mistakes that I made the first time around," she says.

Their bond formed right away. Beth says, "She fit in almost immediately. She was part of the family."

But Fiona also has work to do, and she's determined. "The day she came home she alerted almost immediately," Beth explains. "She has even since figured out that it comes from my breath. Every once in a while she'll come by and take a sniff just to make sure that I'm doing okay."

Fiona's presence has also taken a burden off of Beth's family. "After Faith passed, they [asked] 'How are you doing? How's your blood sugar?'" Beth says. "They were checking on me when they hadn't in the past. I didn't realize how much of a feeling of security that [Faith] had provided to them as well. Now they're absolutely comfortable again ... As long as Fiona is with me, they're comfortable she's going to catch [my falling blood sugar] and don't have to worry about it."

Beth and Fiona at their graduation ceremony

"I had a higher level of anxiety after Faith was gone, because I had the safety net before. She walked with me with the disease. It wasn't only me. If I was up in the middle of the night and I couldn't get my sugar up, she was up with me," Beth explains. "So now I've got that safety net again. And it is such a safe, secure feeling knowing that somebody's got your back and they're going to be there no matter what."

In addition to Fiona's assistance, Beth also has an insulin pump and a Dexcom CGM, a continuous glucose monitoring device. And while it is somewhat unusual for someone to have both a Diabetes Assist Dog and a CGM, in a lot of ways, Beth says Fiona is more reliable and responsive than the man-made medical device.

Fiona gives Beth a kiss

"[Fiona] alerts me, sometimes, when [my blood sugar is] in the 90s and it is falling," Beth says. "She can tell when it is falling fast and she can tell when it's heading that way ... The difference between relying on the CGM and [Fiona] is that the CGM is about 20 minutes behind your actual blood sugar, because the CGM tests your blood sugar in the subcutaneous tissue. It doesn't test it in your actual bloodstream, and [Fiona's] giving it in real-time. It gives you about a 20-minute head start, and in some situations, 20 minutes can be all the difference."

> "You have changed my life."

Beth has nothing but gratitude for everyone who donated their time and money to bring Fiona into her life. "You have changed my life," Beth says. "She allows me to give back, versus having to spend all my time in a bubble, worrying that I am going to drop. There are no words to thank you for all you've done, and I think you need to know that she will carry all the love you gave her ... She's doing a fabulous job and I thank you for all the time and love that you spent with her."

Successor dogs are possible thanks to your support. Visit can-do-canines.org/donate to make a contribution.

Thank you for making this partnership possible:

Great Start Home: Dennis and Joyce Carlson-Rioux
Puppy Raiser: The inmate handlers at FCI Waseca
Special Thanks: Sue O'Connell
Name-A-Puppy Donor: Alyssa Akerman
Whelping Home: Mitch and Wendy Peterson
Breeder Host: The Sears family and The Duncan family
You: Thank you for your donations!

HONORING A LOVED ONE

Connie hopes to give back with Yoga

Connie Roehrich's story with Can Do Canines begins when she was warden at Minnesota Correctional Facility Shakopee. The prison had a puppy program with a different assistance dog program. "It was fun and cute and *it was good,*" Connie says. She remembers an inmate telling her, "This has changed my life totally. I never thought anyone would give me any responsibility again in my life, that I would ever be able to take care of something, or do something that was good for other people. I never thought I would get that kind of opportunity."

Connie left Shakopee around 1999 to become the warden at Minnesota Correctional Facility Faribault. After around five years, she suggested adding a puppy prison program of their own. She told staff, "This will be really good for everybody: the inmates, the dogs, the staff," she says. But they didn't agree. "They thought I was crazy!"

Nevertheless, they came up with parameters for a program and partnered with Can Do Canines. "The staff absolutely loved this program … they said it takes down all the tension in the whole building, people are respectful of the dog, there was not as much inmate posturing. Everybody kind of gathered around the dog," she says. "[Inmates] literally sit on the floor talking baby talk to the dogs," she laughs.

She retired in 2009 but didn't lose touch with Can Do Canines. She began donating, even becoming a monthly donor, as well as attending the fundraising luncheon.

Unfortunately, a couple years into her retirement, Connie's sister Jan unexpectedly passed away due to complications from type 1 diabetes. Diagnosed at 7 years old, Jan battled the disease for 50 years, even undergoing a kidney transplant.

Connie and Yoga

Jan left behind a small, quiet Shih Tzu named Cooper. Although Connie had only ever owned cats, she took him in. "He was really well-behaved," Connie says. He lived the rest of his life with Connie until he passed away at the age of 12 in March of 2018.

Yoga gives Connie her best puppy eyes

A month later, Connie was reading the Can Do Canines newsletter and saw we were looking for foster homes. "I had never thought about being a foster," she explains. But after the passing of her sister and Cooper, she looked at the opportunity in a new light. "I thought this would be a nice thing to do in honor of my sister—getting a dog ready to be with somebody else with a disability."

"I thought this would be a nice thing to do in honor of my sister …"

Connie and her partner, Jim decided to do long-term fostering. They liked that it wasn't as long-term as getting another pet but that it was longer than short-term fostering. Connie especially liked the fact that long-term fostering meant she would train with the dog.

Connie and Jim were given a petite Yellow Labrador Retriever named Yoga in July. With monthly training classes and weekly training in home and on outings, Connie got just what she was looking for. "I've learned a lot of stuff since July," she says. "Once they gave me a process to follow, it's like, 'Oh, I can do this.'"

Training with Yoga and seeing up close how assistance dogs help those with disabilities, Connie thinks of her sister. "I now wish this would have happened for my sister," she says. "This is kind of my way to give back to a person with diabetes or somebody that has a disability."

If you want to give back like Connie, contact Volunteer Coordinator Robyn Rodrigue at 763-331-3000 ext. 119 or rrodrigue@can-do-canines.org.

CELEBRATING 30 YEARS

1989

1989 — Our beginning

As our first Hearing Assist Dog teams graduate, we adopted the name Hearing Dog Program of Minnesota.

1996 — Name change

Our first Mobility Assist Dog team graduates, and we adopt the name Hearing and Service Dogs of Minnesota.

2001 — 100 teams

The 100th assistance dog team graduates from our program .

2003 — Diabetes

Our first Diabetes Assist Dog team is placed.

2005 — Seizure

Our first Seizure Assist Dog team is placed.

2007 — Autism

Our first Autism Assist Dog team is placed.

2009 — 300 teams

The 300th assistance dog team graduates from our program .

2010 — Can Do Canines

We adopted the name Can Do Canines and moved into our new facility in New Hope.

2015 — Paid off mortgage

We paid off the mortgage on our facility and became debt free.

2019

2019 — 30 years of service

Can Do Canines celebrates 30 years of training and placing assistance dogs with people who need them .

2018 — ADI Conference

Can Do Canines hosted the Assistance Dogs International conference in Minnesota.

2017 — 600 teams

The 600th assistance dog team graduates from our program .

Can Do Canines®
ASSISTANCE DOGS

Our Mission
Can Do Canines is dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for people with disabilities by creating mutually beneficial partnerships with specially trained dogs.

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