



Tails for You

a publication of Can Do Canines®

**Brady has a valuable
new teammate, thanks
to your support.**



Scoring the goal of a lifetime

Your generosity allowed Brady to take a shot of having an assistance dog.

A young man that zooms on the ice in full hockey gear is generally not what people would envision as an assistance dog handler. When the game is over though, Brady swaps his hockey stick for the leash on his trusted lifeline.

Brady was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes at 11 years old. A few years ago, as he was planning to move away to college and live on his own, he and his family began to worry more about his safety. His family doctor recommended he look into a Diabetes Assist Dog from Can Do Canines, and in late 2020, Brady was paired with Olli.

Olli, a yellow Labrador Retriever, can detect Brady's blood glucose dropping below a safe target range by smelling a change in Brady's body's chemicals. Olli responds to this scent by nudging Brady with his nose, sometimes to the extent of mimicking CPR. Brady can then verify his glucose level by having Olli retrieve his meter. If he is low and too dizzy to move, Olli gets a bottle of juice for Brady to correct his low.

There have already been several times when Olli, by his ability to detect dropping sugar levels, was able to prevent a dangerous low. Brady says, "Since getting Olli I have come to the conclusion that he is more reliable than my continuous glucose monitor, and he is always on top of being able to pick up low blood sugars before my pump is able to."

"He hasn't changed my life for the better, he has changed my life for the BEST!"

Brady is now in his third year attending school at North Dakota State University. He plans to graduate in Spring 2023, with a degree to teach physical education and/or health at the secondary level. During these three years in college, he has also been playing for NDSU's men's hockey team as a left wing (forward). He serves as captain not only of this team, but also of "Team Brady and Olli."

Plus, "Olli loves hockey!" says Brady. "He is my number one fan!" Though Olli always wants to be as close to a

rink as he can get and enthusiastically wags his tail to prove it, Brady has never taken him on the ice due to safety reasons. However, Brady shares that when he first got Olli, he went outside by himself to practice on a backyard pond. "I remember looking up at the living room window and there Olli was sitting and looking out at me skating."

Brady adds that inside the safety of their home, the two of them "always play keep away in the basement, or I will shoot the ball/puck down at the net and he goes and picks it up."



Diabetes Assist Dog Olli holds a puck in his mouth as carefully as he holds Brady's health in his care.

At school, Olli travels with the team for their away games. On those trips, as well as during some practices, Olli stays in his kennel in the locker room while Brady plays. Then, when Brady goes into the locker room for intermissions, Olli unleashes his best skill, sniffing Brady to make sure his blood sugar isn't too low.

Brady says that his teammates and his roommate are very good with interactions with Olli. "They all know that when Olli is at the rink with me that they aren't

Nancy honors Bill's memory with a Qualified Charitable Distribution gift



Bill Kostur and Mobility Assist Dog Phoenix

allowed to pet him or interact with him a lot. When Olli has his cape on, he knows it's work time and so do [they]."

Similarly, Brady's parents, who recently began fostering dogs for Can Do Canines, express their thanks and awe for Olli, saying, "Seeing what these dogs can do and what they offer blows us away! Witnessing this incredible bond between Brady and Olli makes us feel at ease knowing there is someone there to help Brady with this horrible disease. We count our blessings every day that Brady was given this amazing gift."

As for Brady, there is nothing that will ever come between this young man and his dog. "Having him by my side at all times makes me feel more safe and comfortable during my everyday life. He is the smartest, most sweet, loyal and loving best friend I could ever ask for. His caring side of him is the most significant part of him and being there for me when my blood sugars are low and staying on/with me until it is treated. I am speechless whenever someone asks me how he has changed my life because he has done so much for me in the time that I have had him to this day. He hasn't changed my life for the better, he has changed my life for the BEST!"

And the freedom, peace of mind and independence that go with that are better than any hat trick.

Bill Kostur used to refer to his Mobility Assist Dog, Phoenix, as his "queen," saying that she "commands respect." Phoenix, a Standard Poodle, also gave respect, and so much more, as she served Bill for four years, before his passing last year.

Bill's wife, Nancy James, says, "Bill loved Phoenix, and she added to his quality of life, by aiding him with so many little tasks, and to my peace of mind by knowing she watched over him. We contributed to Can Do Canines as we could over the years, and a Memorial Gift felt right. The website for our IRA Administrator explained how a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) would not only go to support an organization we believed in, but reduce my taxable income."

That's why Nancy felt fortunate to honor Bill's memory through a donation to Can Do Canines, using a portion of her annual IRA distribution. A QCD is a distribution of funds from an IRA (other than a SEP or SIMPLE IRA) directly to a qualified charitable organization, such as Can Do Canines. Because the gift goes directly to the charity without passing through the owner's hands, the dollar amount of the gift may be excluded from taxable income, up to a maximum of \$100,000 annually, with some exceptions.

This generous gift is not the only way that Nancy is honoring Bill, though. She and Phoenix completed therapy dog training together and now visit the residents in Carondelet Village's assisted living and memory care units.

Bill said of Phoenix, shortly after they were certified in 2016, "What I cherish most is how she helps me rise each day – from the bed or a chair, using a tug rope." These days, Phoenix is rising to a new task, just as Can Do Canines is using a special QCD gift to help another dog like Phoenix rise to the ranks of an assistance dog.

If you would like more information about making a QCD, please contact Janet Cobus, Development Director, at jcobus@candocanines.org or 763-331-3000, ext. 153.

Vintage is more than just a breath of fresh air

“We often use the phrase “life-changing” when describing our dogs, but when we can legitimately refer to them as “life-saving,” that makes us all the more proud.

Gail’s Mobility Assist Dog, Vintage, fits both descriptors. Gail and Vintage became a team in 2019, but Gail recently relayed an episode that happened earlier this year.

She explains that she has a muscle disease that causes her to frequently choke. She said that one day, when finishing up her lunch, “I started choking quite seriously on a tiny piece of bread.” Gasping and coughing, she was having trouble getting air, and this situation can easily spiral out of control until she might aspirate. Hearing her distress, Vintage came running over to her and pressed his nose down on her lap. “He did not look away or leave my side until I was breathing normally,” said Gail.

She credits Vintage that she was able to slow her breathing way down to gain control, and shared, “I am forever grateful to everyone who made him who he is today.”

Who Vintage is today includes being a life-saver.

Know someone who might benefit from a Can Do Canine? Please encourage potential applicants to email apply@candocanines.org.



Gail and Mobility Assist Dog Vintage

Jessica Kellogg places a priority on giving back

Serving others is a concept Jessica Kellogg knows well. She is a Navy veteran, who proudly served our country as a Public Affairs Officer.



Jessica has also been an active Can Do Canines volunteer since September 2020, and five dogs have experienced her loving care so far.

Most recently, she was a Great Start foster for a young Labrador Retriever named Cedric, pictured here with Jessica.

Her dedicated spirit is not only appreciated by us at Can Do Canines. Her local VFW also wished to acknowledge her and chose Jessica to be featured by Duluth media in October for their #StillServing Campaign.

Asked why she feels giving back is important, Jessica said, “I enjoy puppy raising because it’s a great way to do something I love—working with dogs—while setting them up to provide huge amounts of life-altering freedom and independence to their future clients. It definitely can be hard to send a puppy on to their next phase of training, but when you see them after a couple months or a year, and they’ve gone from this wiggly puppy to a mature and focused dog, and you can really see how this dog is changing someone’s life - that makes it worth it. If I can do something as simple as welcoming a puppy into my home and in doing so help to better someone’s life, it’s a great thing.”

We congratulate Jessica on this honor and thank her, along with all our volunteers, for the way they give their time and energy to make sure our dogs are the best they can be.

Field trainers fill key role for successful teams

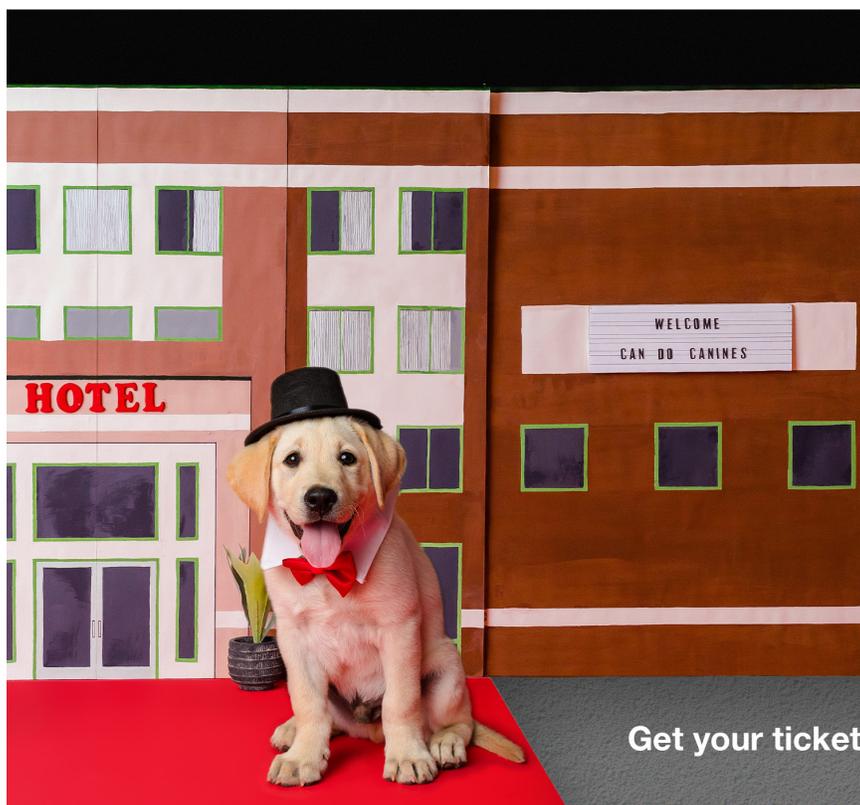
Many steps make up the process of forming a successful assistance dog and human partnership. For clients who live outside the Twin Cities area, one important piece of that puzzle involves field trainers.

Once a client meets their dog and learns the basics of how to work with it at Can Do Canines, the dog moves into the client's home. That's where the field trainer comes in...literally. The role of the field trainer is to provide direct support to the client in mastering proper handling of the assistance dog in their home and community.

One of our Client Services Coordinators (CSC), Elizabeth, who first became familiar with us by working as a field trainer herself, says, "Field trainers are an extension of CSCs." The approximately 25 field trainers who contract with us outside the Twin Cities work with a client for about 20 hours during a time period of usually six to eight weeks. Throughout these interactions, the field trainer—who is typically someone who also teaches dog training courses in their region—helps the client communicate with the dog, navigate experiences in public and continue to learn what it takes to be a successful team. Elizabeth explains that field

trainers especially help the client work on "distance and duration" of skills. Distance may include having the dog learn to retrieve items from farther away, such as a phone from throughout the home. Increasing duration might look like unloading the entire load of clothes from the dryer, rather than just a few items. Elizabeth points out how crucial this adjustment is because the dogs realize, "This isn't training anymore; this is real life." Field trainers need to make sure that the dog is still enjoying their role with this increasing workload, based on the relationship with its human partner.

Since the field trainers stay in regular contact with CSCs, including reports they submit after each client encounter and perhaps even video updates of the team's progress, CSCs can make informed decisions, with input from the field trainer, for when the client team is ready to be certified. Certification often, but not always, marks the time when the client stops working with a field trainer. However, a CSC might still feel a need to have a field trainer serve as a future resource for a client. As Elizabeth states, "Field trainers play a crucial part in making sure the team is set up for success."



The Fetching Ball

*Celebrating
Can Do Canines*

February 26, 2022

Begins at 6 p.m.

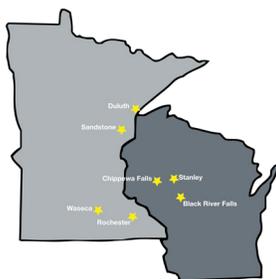
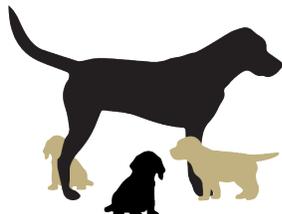
DoubleTree Bloomington
7800 Normandale Blvd, Minneapolis, MN

Get your tickets at candocanines.org/fetchingball

You helped make this possible in 2021

29

Puppies named by
Name-A-Puppy donors



Dogs that
spent time in a
prison program **208**

104

New puppies that began training



Teams certified

41



662

Dog toys and bags of treats
you donated during our Prison
Program Toy Drive

Active working teams who
receive continuous follow-up
and support from us

363



UPCOMING EVENTS

More information is on our website: candocanines.org

Open House

February 5

If you or someone you know might want to learn more about us, check out our open house, being held at our campus on Saturday, February 5, from Noon-2 p.m.

Fetching Ball Gala

February 26

Join us for this fabulous annual fundraiser. Buy your tickets today by visiting candocanines.org/fetchingball.

Spring Graduation

March 26

If you are signed up for our e-newsletter, you'll receive an email on Saturday, March 26. The email will include a video link so you can meet and celebrate the new teams you helped make possible.

Switch to receiving emails rather than postal mail for our marketing materials by visiting can-do.link/mail.



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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