

Let's Go!

Autumn/Winter 2018

08 | Our new Applicant Engagement Days were a resounding success

Back in the summer we held our first ever Applicant Engagement Days at our Southern and Midlands Centres.

12 | Our pledge to our partnerships

In many ways, advanced training and the creation of a partnership is just the beginning of the journey which is why our dedicated aftercare team is here to support both human and dog for their working lifetime.

16 | Puppy Fund Appeal this winter

To help us re-open our waiting list and meet the growing demand for partnerships, it's absolutely vital that we know we have the funds to select, socialise and train more puppies. Please donate to our Puppy Fund Appeal and help Canine Partners transform lives in 2019 and beyond.



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Partners**

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Welcome



Canine Partners Chair of Trustees, Jackie Staunton

Welcome to the second edition of Let's Go for 2018. I write this as the weather turns autumnal with leaves falling in the garden despite the sun shining. We've had a glorious summer at Canine Partners, and not just in weather terms. Our new Operations Director, Richard Smith joined us in August and introduces himself on page 5. He and Nicola are working with the operations team to develop the way we do things, looking at all aspects of our partnership journey, from breeding and sourcing our puppies, throughout their training, at partnership and for the ten years of aftercare.

The trustees held a two day strategy meeting at the end of September to develop our plans for 2019 and beyond. There are many things to be done, but building our kennel block at our Midlands Centre is a priority. Another focus is managing our waiting list and we have held three very successful engagement days with applicants to keep them engaged and informed.

As we know all our activities are only possible with the support of our fundraising team who have been working hard with our volunteers in community fundraising, our corporate sponsors and trusts

and foundations to reach our targets. I have had the pleasure of attending several events over the past few months and I am continually impressed with the work that goes into making our events such a success.

One event was a joint fundraiser held at the stables of the local Riding for the Disabled Association (RDA) in Somerset. This was a joint effort with partners, puppy parents, staff, sponsors and volunteers all pulling together to create an amazing afternoon. The stars of the show were undoubtedly Ruth Rice, her lovely canine partner Delia, and Starsky her RDA horse who demonstrated another incredible bond of human and animal magic.

I am pleased to report that all these events happening across the UK have resulted in us being on track with our fundraising for 2018. Through the efforts of our operations team, puppy parents, fosterers and other volunteers and staff we are also on track to create 80 partnerships during 2018.

There are still plenty of events to go and I haven't room to mention them all, but this year we have three carol services in December, full details of which are on page 17. We would be delighted to see you at one of them. We are also very excited to participate in The Big Give Christmas Challenge once more, due to the generous sponsorship of Col Alan Jukes and on page 16 I encourage you to read more about our Winter Puppy Appeal.

Due to your continued support we will close on a great year and grow from strength to strength in 2019.

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Front cover photograph: Rachel Rawlings and canine partner Darcey.

P.S. When you have finished reading, please share this magazine with friends and family or donate it to your doctor's, dentist's or hairdresser's waiting area.

Get in touch

We always love to hear from you.

You can follow us on Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and Instagram.

Write to us at:

**Mill Lane, Heyshott,
West Sussex GU29 0ED**

or call **08456 580 480.**

A thank you from Nicola Martin, Canine Partners CEO

I'm delighted to introduce the Autumn edition of Let's Go! and hope that you enjoy reading about some of our inspirational partnerships and the teams of staff and volunteers that make our mission a reality. My first six months have flown by; I've met some of the most incredible people and dogs across the UK that contribute to every aspect of our work. I feel extremely privileged to be working alongside so many dedicated people fundraising, training, awareness-raising and championing our work to support our 420 active partnerships and help us create new partnerships that change lives.

The insight and feedback that has been shared will undoubtedly shape our future plans as we look forward to our 30 year celebrations in 2020, but more importantly provides focus and direction as we look to ensure we have a beneficial impact on as many lives as our funding will allow. Working alongside the Trustees we are shaping plans to enable us to create and maintain even more life-changing partnerships, increase awareness of how we transform lives, grow income to maximise the impact we deliver, and ensure we have the capability to deliver everything we aspire to. This will mean more collaboration; finding ways to measure and evaluate our impact; providing more training and support for our volunteers,

staff and dogs; diversifying and growing our income streams; and ensuring we have the right facilities and systems to support our work.

I am pleased to say that we are now finalising our plans for our new kennel block at our Midlands Training Centre which we are looking to complete next year thanks to the generosity of a wide range of individuals, trusts and corporates. We also hope to be

able to re-open the waiting list in 2019 as well as supporting even more people with successor dogs. I look forward to sharing more of our plans in the next edition of Let's Go! and hope to see many of you at our festive events and activities across the UK. Thank you from all the team at Canine Partners for your ongoing support and commitment to our amazing charity.

The Big Give Christmas Challenge is back! This year, we are hoping to raise a fundraising total of £90,000!

That means that we need your help to raise £45,000, which will be match-funded by Champions, Col. Alan Jukes and Candis Magazine, who have pledged to double your donation! Between midday Tuesday 27 November and midday Tuesday 4 December 2018, any donations made online via The Big Give will be DOUBLED until we reach our fundraising target.

Keep an eye on our website as once the challenge is live, we will be sharing the link here, caninepartners.org.uk/TheBigGive, as well as on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram!



Introducing our new Director of Operations, Richard Smith

Hi Richard, we are delighted to have you as part of the Canine Partners family. Tell us a bit about yourself...

Where do you live?

I live in a small village, deep in the Leicestershire countryside. Having lived in a busy city for a large part of my working life, I appreciate enormously the tranquillity and beauty of this part of the world. Being able to walk out of my house and straight into fields is one of my greatest pleasures in life.

What is your career background that's brought you to this role?

Whilst studying for a degree in international business and modern languages over 20 years ago, I realised that I wanted to apply my learning to the charity sector. I started my career by volunteering for Dogs Trust, a national dog welfare organisation, and eventually took on a role overseeing a network of Dogs Trust rehoming centres, which I did for almost ten years. Since moving to the East Midlands nine years ago, I have worked at a school and centre for children and young people with complex needs and vision impairment and, most recently, at the British Psychological Society.

What do you get up to in your own time?

Family life with my wife and two children occupies the majority of my leisure time. When I have the opportunity, I enjoy a variety of sports including tennis, cycling and running, plus surfing and

skiing on annual family holidays. I take part in the occasional game of cricket and also play piano - what I lack in technique, I make up for in enthusiasm.

Why Canine Partners? What draws you to our charity?

Having worked in the connected world of dog welfare for the majority of my career, I have known of Canine Partners and its life-changing work for many years, and I am delighted to have now been given the opportunity to contribute to this. I have met quite a number of our partners over the last few months, and it has been wonderful to hear their stories and to see first-hand the incredible difference that their canine partner has made to their lives. That, combined with

the enthusiasm and passion of everybody who works at, and volunteers, for Canine Partners, makes this a dream job for me.

What are you most excited about doing in your role here at Canine Partners?

There are a huge number of people throughout the UK who would benefit from partnership with one of our amazing dogs. Sadly, it is not always possible to satisfy this demand. I am very much looking forward to having the opportunity of working with a dedicated team of staff and volunteers to increase the number of people who have their lives transformed by a canine partner.



“Flora has transformed my life and she constantly opens doors for me – literally and metaphorically. An assistance dog changes your life in ways you don’t expect or imagine. My confidence has soared and I feel like I’m living my life to the fullest.”



Partnership story:

Nicola and Flora

Ten years ago, at the age of 22, Nicola Hopkins was diagnosed with a form of Ehlers-Danlos syndrome (EDS) – a group of rare genetic disorders which are caused by a defect in the body’s connective tissue production. In Nicola’s case, she has a tendency to dislocate her joints very easily causing mild to severe pain and chronic fatigue, as well as living with skin, vascular and digestive issues.

With your support we can create more amazing partnerships, like Nicola and Flora’s – it costs £20,000 to fund a partnership from puppyhood to retirement at around 12 years of age. Please visit caninepartners.org.uk/donate or call 0845 658 0480.



Here, Nicola talks about her life before she was partnered with an assistance dog and the many ways that Flora has changed her outlook.

Being born with EDS, Nicola experienced joint pain and dislocation from a young age and assumed this was how everyone felt:

“Running always really hurt and going upstairs was uncomfortable, for example, but I thought that was why other people were reluctant to run or climb stairs – I never knew that the pain I felt wasn’t ‘normal’ because it had always been there. Prior to my diagnosis, I even completed two dance exams with both of my ankles dislocated.

“Looking back, I guess I didn’t think much about the pain in my joints until it reached a critical point. I was in my final year of my Physics degree at Imperial College London when my health really deteriorated and I started to struggle to walk. After finishing my degree it took nine months to get a wheelchair and I was pretty much housebound for that time. A few years later I started work on a PhD in theoretical physics but was forced to cease my research project due to the access issues I encountered and subsequent deterioration of my condition.

“It was soul-destroying to have to abandon my career plans and ambitions. It felt like I was throwing away all the time and hard work I’d invested and I became depressed.”

The turning point for Nicola

Nicola attended one of our Information Sessions about three years ago and, not long after that, she applied for a canine partner. Around 18 months after joining the waiting list, Nicola got the call she’d been hoping for: a partnership was created in July 2017, with a yellow Labrador X golden retriever called Flora.

“Canine Partners go to great lengths to pair you with a compatible canine partner. It’s a real skill and not just about the particular support you’ll need or the task work required but also about personalities.

“Getting onto the waiting list gave me the kick I needed to start a degree with the Open College of the Arts as I wanted to be in a better place when I was partnered. I was so excited when I met Flora but I hadn’t realised how affectionate, friendly, obedient yet quirky dog has changed my life in so many different ways. I’ve started driving again and can go out by myself without feeling like I would have to rely on a member of the public for help if I needed it. I volunteer at my local library and we regularly go to the theatre in Chichester – Flora loves to watch dramatic plays but she’s not so keen on comedy!

Flora doesn’t just pick up dropped belongings and help with doors – she’s given me back the confidence I’d lost. I’ve even performed – last minute – at the Brighton Fringe arts festival!

“As well as helping me with day-to-day activities, Flora also perks me up in the moments when I feel frustrated or upset. Our bond is so strong and she seems to know when I’m in a lot of pain as her behaviour changes – she stays close to me and gives me lots of cuddles. When I dislocate my tail bone (something which happens quite regularly) she’ll help me off the floor, fetch help or trigger the alarm if I need her to.

“Having Flora hasn’t just improved my life, she’s also transformed my parents’. Knowing I have Flora keeping an eye on me, they can enjoy their retirement without worrying all the time. I feel like an adult again – I don’t have to constantly rely on my parents for help and support. Where before I felt like I was just existing, now I love my life!”





Our new Applicant Engagement Days were a resounding success!

Back in the summer we held our first ever Applicant Engagement Days at our Southern and Midlands Centres.

The idea behind our engagement days was to help applicants who are on our waiting list gain a better understanding of the process of being partnered with one of our amazing assistance dogs, including:

- hearing about the two-week residential training course
- learning about life with a canine partner

- meeting our support team
- seeing demonstrations and talks from some of our established partnerships
- learning about our ongoing support

The events proved to be a great success and feedback from our attendees indicated that everyone really enjoyed themselves and found the experience informative and inspiring. We're already planning more of these events, for those who are currently on our waiting list.

When can we re-open our waiting list to new applicants?

We're working hard to provide applicants on our waiting list with the transformative benefits of an assistance dog and – as part of our commitment to ongoing care and support – we're also training successor dogs for our current partners (see page 22/23 to read about Sally Hyder and her successor dog, Cleo).

The good news is that our waiting list is reducing and currently stands at a number of less than 150. We are planning to re-open to new applicants in 2019, in time for our 30th anniversary! Keep checking our website, caninepartners.org.uk, as we'll share any relevant news regarding applications for canine partners online as soon as we can.

“What a day! Great to meet so many people who go to such efforts to help people. Never seen so many people with smiles on their faces. Enjoyed the day so much. Met so many lovely people. Thanks again for a wonderful event.”

Canine Partners applicant

Applicant story: Wilma Lawrie

57-year-old Wilma Lawrie, from Edinburgh, was diagnosed with the genetic condition Osteogenesis Imperfecta (OI) – widely known as ‘brittle bone disease’ – after breaking her arm at the age of two.

The primary feature of this degenerative skeletal condition is a collagen defect – the protein which gives bones their strength and structure is either missing or low in quality or quantity – which results in bones that fracture from minimal impact, as well as ligaments and tendons which tear easily, along with associated chronic pain.

Wilma has been on the waiting list for a canine partner since November 2016 – here, she tells us about her life and hopes for the future:

“I first heard about Canine Partners about 10 years ago, when an occupational therapist recommended that I get an assistance dog. I looked into it and started my application but I felt a temporary easing of my condition and thought it best not to take a dog from someone who’d benefit more.

“However, by 2010 I was back in hospital and the idea of an assistance dog was suggested again. I started my application and, again, my body rallied a little so I thought I wasn’t necessarily ‘ready’ to have one. Living with this condition makes you quite tough – I just have to get on with things as best I can – and I try to be independent and don’t like to ask others for help too often.

“I’ve been through many stages with OI. Sometimes it’s manageable and then, at other times, it’s really pushed me. As with anyone who has this type of condition, I live with a constant level of pain and this has changed my life – I had to retire early from teaching, for example. If I stand for more than a few minutes then my spine really aches, so I rely on a wheelchair to get around. Sometimes I can feel a bone has fractured but I don’t go to hospital these



“Waiting is challenging but I almost feel like it’s part of the process. Sometimes, when I’m having difficulty with something, I think to myself: ‘In a year’s time you might not have to struggle like this.’ and my heart skips a beat!”

days because I know that certain bones cannot be fixed and have to just mend on their own.

“Some time ago I met Nicky Pendleton – she was an occupational therapist and very involved with the charity from the early days, she is now a Trustee – and she told me this: ‘Your dog will watch you. He or she will see what you struggle with and then one day they will just do it for you.’ and that really stayed with me.

“In 2016, I finally felt ready to pursue this channel of support. I completed the forms and was invited for an assessment – which I found incredibly nerve-racking, even though the Canine Partners team was so kind and sympathetic. I worried that my age and domestic arrangements might not be in my favour but I was completely put at my ease. I’ve now been on the waiting list since November of that year and I will be so excited to receive the call – it will be completely life-changing!

“In 1984 I represented Great Britain at the Paralympics – both swimming and wheelchair racing – and I also enjoyed sailing and canoeing but sadly my condition deteriorated and it was unsafe to continue. I loved being in the great outdoors and I’m so looking forward to getting back out into nature with a canine companion by my side. Being a team with my dog fills me with hope for my future.

“I attended an engagement day back in the summer and it was amazing to see the passion and commitment of so many people who are involved in creating a successful partnership, from the puppy parents, to the trainers and support team. I came away thinking: ‘Yes – I can do this!’”



Give the Gift of Independence



Our Gift of Independence scheme enables organisations, groups and individuals to play a crucial role in funding an amazing, life-changing partnership between a person

with disabilities and one of our specially trained assistance dogs.

From the beginning of an assistance dog's journey, through advanced training and his or

her working life, our Gift of Independence scheme allows you to choose how your donation is going to be used to transform a life.

What happens when you give the Gift of Independence?

A generous donation of £5,000 will enable us to purchase and train a puppy in its first year, preparing the puppy for the next stage in their journey to becoming a Canine Partners assistance dog. A donation at this level would give you:

- the opportunity to name the puppy
- regular updates throughout their puppyhood and advanced training

- the opportunity to attend the partnership ceremony when we celebrate the year following the dog being partnered with one of our applicants.

You'll follow your puppy's progress as they learn about the wider world – when they visit their first café or shop; use public transport for the first time; see the sea; discover wildlife; explore the countryside; and visit big cities. We'll keep you up to date with how well they're doing

at classes and whether they're showing the right temperament and behaviour to proceed to the next important stage of their training.

Contributing to this very positive work is immensely rewarding – our sponsors tell us that they are incredibly moved when they see how their donation has enabled Canine Partners to take an adorable eight-week old puppy and train them to the point where they become the centre of someone's world. What better gift than reinstating someone's confidence, helping them to retain their independence and dignity, and look at life in a more positive way.

How much does it cost?

£5,000

Purchases the puppy and supports the puppy socialisation and training, with a volunteer puppy parent, from when the puppy is eight weeks old to 12-14 months old.

£5,000

Funds the dog's Advanced Training Course at one of our training centres, which typically lasts 17 weeks. It also pays for the two week residential training course for the partner and the dog.

£10,000

We are committed to providing ongoing aftercare for the duration of the partnership until the dog retires, at the latest at the age of 12 years.

In total, £20,000

Creates a life-transforming partnership



For more information about the Gift of Independence, please visit caninepartners.org.uk/giftofindependence or call **0845 658 0480**



Greggs have given the Gift of Independence and so much more...

It's easy to be won-over by our adorable puppies but, for the team at popular high street bakery Greggs, it was the life-changing transformation that a Canine Partners assistance dog brings which really captured their hearts.

Greggs began supporting Canine Partners after Marion Bellingham, Regional Manager and Greggs Foundation representative, met Kerenza and her canine partner Whisky during a tour of our Southern Centre. Marion was visibly moved when Kerenza told her how she came to need the support of an assistance dog.

The connection has grown since then. With unrelenting support from Regional Manager, Sarah Boxall and Area Manager, Simon Mockeridge, Greggs' southern region has adopted Canine Partners as their Charity of the Year, regularly volunteering at our events and providing tasty treats for our guests and supporters. In addition, the teams across 400 southern stores supported us with their bucket collection last December and early this year.

Greggs have raised over £20,000 in less than a year and, through our Gift of Independence scheme, they sponsored assistance dog Gregg from puppyhood and through his training to become a canine partner. Just before he entered advanced training, Gregg made a special appearance at their south region conference and he has now been partnered with Rebecca.

This is a fantastic achievement and we were absolutely thrilled



when Greggs told us that they wanted to create another partnership. So, in trots new Greggs' puppy, Hope (pictured left) - which is also the name of their charitable foundation's mascot. Hope joined our training programme in May 2018



Purina: thank you for your ongoing support



Your Pet, Our Passion!

We're proud to have had continued support from Purina Pet Care UK since 2000. The bond gets stronger every year, with Purina providing advice and guidance on puppy and dog nutrition, a team of wonderful volunteers that support us at events and with their skills and knowledge, as well as making a significant contribution to our running costs and uniform to help us create even more life transforming partnerships. We'd like to say a huge thank you to the team at Purina for all their ongoing support.



Our pledge to our partnerships

In many ways, advanced training and the creation of a partnership is just the beginning of the journey which is why our dedicated aftercare team is here to support both human and dog for their working lifetime.

Our committed team of aftercare specialists are on hand to help progress and support each and every partnership, throughout the development of their bond and as lifestyles and health conditions change.

Comprised of experienced problem-solvers and expert dog trainers, our amazing aftercare team is skilled in supporting partnerships and encouraging them to achieve more than they imagined they could.



“In my job, I’m lucky enough to see the results of all the teams that come before me and the work that they put into creating the perfect match. I get to support new partnerships, develop existing ones and see lives changing at every visit. There’s always a point, a few months in to a new partnership where the partner will tell me that they’ve been to a new place, somewhere they never thought they’d go, let alone by themselves and they look down at their dog and there’s a real acknowledgement that it wouldn’t have happened without them. I also love the phone calls I get saying ‘s/he picked up my phone when I dropped it in the supermarket!’ and it’s delivered with total joy.

When I first meet our partners I often hear similar experiences of people not feeling able to go out much or join in, but within a few weeks I hear more and more about the places they’ve gone, the people they’ve met and the circle of Canine Partners friends they have discovered. It can be quite an emotional job and I feel really privileged to be part of that transformational experience.”

Hannah Liebeskind, Aftercare Instructor

Our Canine Partners Award Scheme

We encourage all partnerships to work towards our Canine Partners Award Scheme – a showcase of their achievements as they bond and develop confidence and competence together.

Partnerships complete their bronze award whilst carrying out their training course at our Midlands or Southern Centres. Then, when they return home they are encouraged to carry on with awards ranging from silver through gold, platinum and diamond. Our aftercare team supports each partnership in striving to attain their awards.

At the beginning of a brand new partnership

We have specific visits, scheduled when the partnership first goes home, to ensure that everything is going smoothly and both parties are happy and relaxed. This includes seeing the partnership four times in the first two weeks after the end of the residential training course, to help settle and support the early period and reinforce the training.

At six months

All partnerships complete a final assessment, usually within six months of their placement, to show that they are confident working together around the home and in public areas, and the dog's health and welfare is also monitored.

At one year

We invite partnerships to return to our training centres for a very special Partnership Day. This is a wonderful and emotional celebration where partners have the opportunity to meet with everyone who has contributed to the journey of their assistance dog – from breeders, puppy parents and fosterers to trainers and sponsors who had a hand in bringing their partnership to fruition. It is incredibly moving to hear about the life-changing benefits that our assistance dogs bring to people's lives.

After a year, and until the dog's retirement

Once the partnership has been established for a year, we will see them twice yearly as a minimum (but more frequently, if required). We continue to support the partnership throughout their working life together, offering top-up training and tailoring task work to help meet each individual's needs, as well as checking on the dog's exercise regime – this can take the form of home visits and telephone advice. As a dog matures, we also provide canine health advice and guidance if any behavioural concerns develop.

As part of our aftercare commitment, we also provide successor dogs. To find out more about Sally Hyder and her successor dog, Cleo, **please turn to page 22/23.**



Partnership story: Richard and Shuey

22-year old Richard Armstrong has cerebral palsy, a group of movement disorders that appear in early childhood. Although the symptoms vary from one person to another, in general the condition presents itself as difficulties with coordination, posture and balance, as well as stiff or weak muscles and multiple spasms.

Richard was partnered with Shuter, also known as Shuey, a black Labrador, back in February 2017 – here, he gives an insight into the many ways a canine partner has changed his life.

“When I got the call to say I was on the waiting list for a Canine Partners assistance dog I was so excited but I wasn’t too sure what to expect. While I was waiting for a canine partner I had

my phone on all the time, even in college I told them I wasn’t turning my phone off because I was waiting for the call. My training at the charity’s Southern Centre in February 2017 has to be the most fun, yet toughest, two weeks of my life – it was full on. We literally had to learn the basics, like practicing going through a door in my powerchair together, over and over again. Even though he was young and enthusiastic, Shuey was also very calm and patient.

“Shuey was originally named ‘Shuter’ by his sponsor, The Haberdashers’ Company, one of the great 12 City Livery

Companies of London, but his puppy parents had to change his name a bit because it was causing issues on public transport. When they had to call him, people were afraid that he was posing a bit of a threat to them – which, of course, he wasn’t!

“Before I had an assistance dog, I couldn’t really do anything on my own. Something as simple as going shopping was off limits to me – that would be a big problem. But now that I have Shuey, I can go out independently and he helps me with all sorts of things. He will accompany me around the shops



“ The bond between us is strong – it’s almost like he’s an extension of me. On the very rare occasions that I go somewhere without Shuey, I still find myself giving him the commands or cues out of habit, as if he’s by my side – it makes me realise how much I rely on him. ”

and help me get my wallet so that I can pay. Having said that, I once asked Shuey to get me some cookies off a shelf in the supermarket and a woman who worked there started screaming – I think she thought he was just helping himself!

“Shuey comes with me to the cinema and restaurants, and also when I have hospital appointments. He even comes with me to boccia [a precision ball sport, closely related to bowls and petanque, devised specifically for wheelchair users] he’s never tempted to retrieve the balls, luckily! When we’re

at home, he gives me a lot of support with day-to-day tasks like helping me to take out my sleep system and helping to get me up and dressed in the morning. He’ll retrieve my phone if I need it; he puts all of his toys away; and he helps me to take my hoody off – things like that, which I wouldn’t want to ask my parents to help me with, all the time.

“When Shuey is wearing his purple bandana that says he’s working, we still find that people want to talk to us. It’s a bit distracting but he takes it all in his stride. In fact, I think the

bandana draws more attention to him than if he wasn’t wearing it. As long as we’re not in a hurry then we don’t mind stopping.

“It’s not all work for Shuey. I make sure he gets to enjoy his leisure time as well – he has free runs and, because we live in Birmingham, there are a few other partnerships in the city as well as in Stoke-on-Trent, so we socialise with them when we can. I swear Shuey can recognise another Canine Partner dog as he plays in a different way with them – it’s a lot more energetic and relentless – domestic dogs tire of games much more quickly.

Shuey and Richard’s partnership was made possible because of a generous donation from the trust of the Haberdasher’s Company, one of the great 12 City Livery Companies of London, through our Gift of Independence scheme - to find out more about this, please turn to page 10 and 11, visit our website caninepartners.org.uk/giftofindependence or call **0845 658 0480**.

Our Puppy Fund Appeal

can you support us today?

- £5** could help fund essential preventive medications for two new puppies to protect them as they start their training.
- £10** could help feed a litter of hungry puppies, specialist puppy food for a week as they start their journey to become life-changing assistance dogs.
- £25** could help fund individual training sessions with our specialist puppy trainers throughout their first year.

Your donation – whatever you can afford – will mean we can increase the number of puppies starting their journey with us as soon as possible. Puppies like Flint, who met Her Majesty The Queen when she visited our Southern Training Centre last year.



This winter Canine Partners is facing our biggest challenge, and we're appealing for your help.

As word has spread of the huge difference one of our dogs can make to a person's life, more and more people are realising the need to apply for a canine partner. This is wonderful news, but without increasing the number of puppies entering our training programme in 2019, we simply won't be able to train enough dogs to continue to transform lives in the coming years. Indeed,

demand has been so high that we've had to make the tough decision to close our waiting list, but we're working hard to open it again in 2019, and we need your support today. We're so proud of what our trained assistance dogs can do. It is wonderful to watch the eager, excited bundles of energy that start their training and develop into intuitive, dependable companions. It takes over two

years and more than £10,000 to train a puppy to become a fully-fledged Canine Partners assistance dog; the first 12 months of puppy training alone costs over £5,000. To help us re-open our waiting list and meet the growing demand for partnerships, it's absolutely vital that we know we have the funds to select, socialise and train more puppies.



Meet Flint, a black Labrador born on 5th September 2017. After careful assessment, he was purchased from a private breeder. Our puppies usually cost around £1,000 to purchase. At eight weeks he was carefully delivered to his volunteer puppy parents – the very start of his journey to become a canine partner.

Little did Flint know, that shortly after meeting his puppy parents, who he would

live with for the next 14 months, he would meet an incredibly important visitor to Canine Partners. In November 2017 Flint met Her Majesty The Queen on her visit to the Southern Centre.

Flint's puppy parents are just two of over 150 amazing Canine Partners volunteer puppy parents across the UK.

The wellbeing of all our puppies and dogs is of paramount importance to Canine Partners, so food, equipment and veterinary

costs throughout puppyhood are all taken care of by Canine Partners.

Flint has started his fantastic journey to become a canine partner. But we need your help to make sure we are able to select, socialise and bring more puppies into our programme for 2019.



Please support our Puppy Fund Appeal this winter and help Canine Partners transform lives in 2019, and beyond.

Online: caninepartners.org.uk/PuppyFundAppeal

Phone: 08456 580 480

Don't struggle with gift inspiration this Christmas: sponsor Prancer, Vixen or even both for that special person

Giving loved ones My Amazing Puppy means that everyone's a winner. Our special welcome pack includes a soft toy puppy, a photograph of your chosen puppy, a certificate and regular 'pupdate' newsletters throughout 2019 - and we've added in a little extra festive cheer as a surprise!

Sponsoring a dog through our My Amazing Puppy scheme - for just £4.34 per month or £60 per year - will transform someone's life forever.

Sign up online at myamazingpuppy.org.uk

my amazing puppy



Meet our winter puppies!

Joining 2018 pups Snowdrop and Frosty, Bambi and Thumper, Venus and Federer, Marigold and Finley are special winter additions - Prancer and Vixen.

As we went to press, our winter puppies were turning 10 weeks old but they're already showing plenty of potential. Prancer - a gorgeous golden retriever - is eager to learn and loves a carrot as a treat. Black Labrador Vixen is a confident and very active pup. Her puppy parents tell us that she can be a bit of a diva at times!

Prancer



Vixen



Get in the festive spirit and support us this Christmas at one of our Carol Services!

This December we'll be holding three wonderful carol services - which will also feature Canine Partners demonstrations - with all proceeds raised going to our charity:

Thursday 6th December
Canine Partners North West Carol Service at beautiful Lancaster Priory

Tuesday 11th December
Canine Partners Arundel Carol Service at stunning Arundel Cathedral

Thursday 13th December
Draycott Nursing & Care Carol Service at St Mary Abbots Parish Church, Kensington

Please visit caninepartners.org.uk/events for more details



Providing a home for retired and withdrawn assistance dogs

Have you ever wondered what happens to the dogs withdrawn from our training programme, who don't become fully fledged canine partners? Or our qualified assistance dogs - who have had a fantastic career, transforming someone's life with their help and enthusiasm - and retire at 12 years of age?

We are committed to the health and happiness of every single amazing dog that passes through our charity, from puppyhood to retirement. With this in mind, we are dedicated to finding the best option for each individual dog - here's an update on a few of our rehomed dogs:



Meet Pedro... the perfect family dog

Pedro was withdrawn from training due to being unsettled in and around public transport which sadly took a toll on his confidence. It was such a shame, as he showed great promise as an assistance dog, so we decided he needed a home where he could still be of help to a family.

The Taylors were on our rehoming waiting list and we knew that finding them the right dog could be a challenge. Their young daughter, Nancy, has a rare genetic disorder with

symptoms that include global development delay, muscle weakness and poor eyesight and coordination which meant they would require just the right pet dog to suit their family. We felt that Pedro would be a great match as he'd been in a family home with young children during his puppy training and is very calm and relaxed. Pedro has settled in beautifully, bonding well with Nancy and providing a wonderful source of therapy for her as a very special pet dog.

Meet Kathy... a gentle companion

Kathy was withdrawn from training due to some sensitivities but was a lovely homely dog and had developed a good level of task work, so we felt she'd make a very successful pet.

A new start saw Kathy rehomed with Alison and Nigel as their pet dog to provide companionship. This pet would need to be comfortable around a wheelchair and Kathy was an ideal match. Kathy continues to be a wonderful companion for Nigel and Alison.





Meet Noah...

pursuing a career in security overseas

From day one of his training, we could see that Noah was a highly energetic and active dog not that you would believe it from this gorgeous sleepy puppy picture (left). Although he was obedient and well socialised, Noah struggled to settle and was easily distracted so he was withdrawn from training. We wanted to find him a place where he would channel his energy positively and receive the mental stimulation he craved.

Building on our well-established relationship with Surrey Police Dog Training School, Noah started his trial at Gatwick Airport and it was immediately clear that this was his vocation. Noah has since completed his training and is working in Hong Kong International Airport, having been trained to detect large amounts of currency being brought in or out of the country.

Meet Ullani...

enjoying a peaceful life in Wales

Assistance dog Ullani was placed with partner Sarah Fencott back in 2005. Sarah suffered from Freidreichs Ataxia and Ullani provided her with the day-to-day support she needed. In April 2015, as her loyal canine partner approached retirement age, Sarah was in the process of applying for a successor dog when she sadly and unexpectedly passed away. Sarah's parents, Paul and Sue, had always expressed their intention to have much-loved Ullani in her retirement and so she remained with them.



Applying to rehome one of our dogs

There are a number of reasons that may lead us to taking the difficult decision to withdraw a dog from their training programme. From behavioural issues, such as environmental sensitivities and excessive energy, to ongoing health problems, like joint conditions or allergies, we assess every individual dog to ensure we are meeting their health and welfare needs. We currently only ever rehome our dogs as pets or as working dogs in other avenues such as the police force.

For those applying to join our rehoming waiting list, we carry out a thorough assessment to assess suitability, as well as ensuring the new owner lives within a 50-mile radius of one of our training centres so that we can provide any support that is required. Waiting times can vary, as we rehome according to compatibility and by knowing the temperaments and requirements of each of our dogs. Matching them to ensure they have a fantastic life in a forever home is really important.

The waiting list to rehome a dog from our Southern Centre is currently closed but our Midlands Centre's list is still open.

Please visit caninepartners.org.uk/rehome-one-of-our-dogs/ for more information.

70% of the dogs that enter our Advanced Training programme go on to be partnered with someone living with physical disabilities.

Follow us on social media!

Social media is a great way for us to keep you up to date with our latest news and share our photos - and when you like or share our posts, it helps us to raise our profile:

 Like our Facebook page: facebook.com/caninepartners/

 Find us on Instagram: [@caninepartnersuk](https://www.instagram.com/caninepartnersuk)

 Follow us on Twitter: [@canine_partners](https://twitter.com/canine_partners)



Partnership story: Fiona and Wizal (aka Mr Wiz)

Fiona Bower is 56 and lives in Bexhill-on-Sea with her husband, two daughters and son-in-law. Fiona was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis (MS) in 2000, at the age of 38.

MS is a neurological condition where the myelin coating which protects the nerve fibres is damaged, with the result that messages can no longer pass effectively between the brain and the rest of the body. MS has many varied symptoms which can include difficulties with coordination, eye problems, muscle spasms, chronic fatigue and pain.

Fiona's secondary progressive MS means that she is a full-time wheelchair user. She was partnered with golden retriever Wizal - or Mr Wiz, as she calls him - in May 2016.

"When I was diagnosed with MS my daughters were still small [seven and 10] and I was working full-time as a nursery teacher.

"My condition progressed quickly, which was both difficult and distressing. My confidence plummeted and I became isolated, lonely and frustrated. I retreated from my old life and, realistically, I spent about eight years like this.

"It was my daughter who made me aware of Canine Partners but, to begin with, I felt reluctant to

apply as I had little self-belief. I did eventually submit the forms and about nine months later, when I was being assessed, I realised how transformative this could be for me, as well as my family. About 15 months after my assessment, I was contacted and told that there was a dog who looked as though he could be suited to my needs – Canine Partners ensure that you're matched really well with your assistance dog.

"I was pretty anxious before my advanced training in May 2016: when your hopes are pinned on something like this being a success it can feel very daunting. The training was intense and emotionally-draining but Clare Cannon, one of the trainers, was so patient and it helped that I bonded with Wizal – soon to be known as 'Mr Wiz' – very quickly.

"It's a steep learning curve and I think it's important that prospective partners are prepared for this and do not feel

everyone else finds it easy. But it is absolutely worth it.

"Unfortunately I fell ill right after I got home from the training, so it was decided that Mr Wiz should go back to the Southern Centre while I recovered. Despite this initial set-back, once he was back with me, things took a huge upturn.

"I developed the confidence to do and try more things and my world opened up again. I started volunteering at Gatwick Airport, as part of the passenger advisory group. Mr Wiz even has an airside pass in the form of a lanyard with his photograph on it which describes his role as 'Dog Extraordinaire'!

"The bond was evident very early on in the process and we've grown to be increasingly in tune with each other. Mr Wiz anticipates what I need, without me having to ask, and will often fetch my slippers before I mention it – it really feels as though he cares for me. People

even say that we look alike – we're both blonde, although his is natural and I have highlights!

"Mr Wiz loves a task and is very focused. Daily support includes helping me to get dressed and undressed, as well as collecting the post, changing the bed sheets and helping me with the laundry and dishwasher. He's so patient with me and never



minds how many times I drop things and he has to pick them back up.

"I appreciate Mr Wiz's enthusiasm with his task work but it is almost secondary to the confidence he's given me to get out and embrace my life. I successfully co-led a church retreat with Mr Wiz by my side and I'm also part of the Govia Thameslink railway access advisory panel. Mr Wiz comes to meetings with me – he sits very patiently and politely for up to two hours but after that he gets a little restless and offers me his paw to show that he's ready to go. He also accompanies me to the hairdressers and the beauty salon without complaint. He's quite a sensible character though, and makes it clear that he expects to be home and in bed by 9:00pm.

"Mr Wiz is a really significant part of our family... He was even the ring bearer at my daughter's wedding – one of our aftercare trainers, Hannah Liebeskind, helped him learn this very important extra task!"



“Where would I be without my wonderful Mr Wiz? I was in a really bad way before I applied for a canine partner – my life had become very small and insular – but everything has turned around since then. He's such a lovely boy and has given me so much back.”

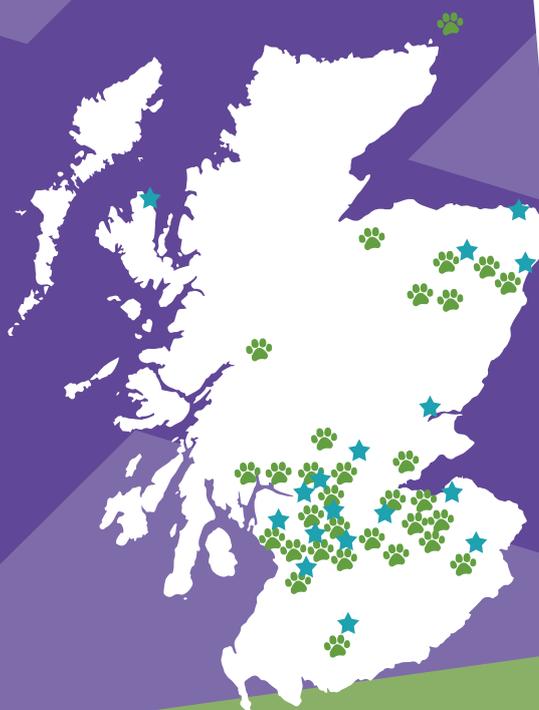
A Scotland update...

Scotland's partnerships

We currently have 31 active partnerships in Scotland, with a further 16 applicants on our waiting list.

Puppy training in Scotland

At the beginning of November, we had 19 puppies in training in Scotland – 10 in the east and 9 in the west.



-  Partnerships living in Scotland
-  Applicants on our waiting list



Scotland's current fundraising total for 2018 stands at over £126,000.

This superb figure has been generated by all the outstanding activity that has taken place throughout the year, including the Bridge of Weir Gala Day, Mayfield Garden Centre collection days, Prestwick Golf Day, Fingask Follies at Dundas Castle and the Race Picnic at Perth Racecourse. More recently the Braehead Shopping Centre fundraising and awareness day, the Bramble Ramble and the Glasgow Central fundraising and awareness day as well as many more have all added much needed funds to the total.

Thank you and well done to all those in Scotland that have worked hard to ensure all of these activities were such successes, raising vital funds to transform the lives of disabled people.

Save the date: a musical extravaganza at Dundas Castle!

Pack up a picnic and join us on Wednesday 1st May 2019 for an enthralling evening of entertainment with the Fingask Follies – a themed performance, involving four professional

singers and two actors. The revue features singing, dancing and poetry recitals and the group pride themselves on being slick, funny and thought-provoking.

For more information, please visit caninepartners.org.uk/event/fingask-follies-dundas-castle/

Successor partnership story : Sally and Cleo

56-year old Sally Hyder lives in Edinburgh with her husband and youngest daughter, and provides long-term foster care to two children. Sally has multiple sclerosis (MS), functional neurological disorder and as a result she's a full-time wheelchair user.

Yellow Labrador x golden retriever Cleo is a successor dog, placed with Sally in May 2017 after her first assistance dog, Harmony,

sadly died. Here, Sally talks about her experiences of having an assistance dog and applying for a successor.

"In 2008 my MS had worsened to the point that I needed to use a wheelchair. I was very active before my diagnosis but I stopped

“ What a lot of people don't know is how Canine Partners truly cares for both roles of the partnership for life. Older assistance dogs are regularly checked and then retire at the age of 12, so that they can relax in their twilight years. Partners are offered the benefit of a successor dog so that we don't have to go back to a life where we're dependent on others. Canine Partners is such a wonderfully supportive and committed charity. ”



going out and engaging with the world which I think is a common experience for a lot of people with this condition.

“My Canine Partners journey starts with Harmony – my first assistance dog. With her support I quickly learned to live again and a lot of my old identity came back, after I had felt as though parts of my character were dormant. She transformed my life which also impacted on my family – when my husband was away then my older daughter had often acted as my carer. My youngest daughter is autistic but Harmony was so intuitive that she provided a very therapeutic presence for her, too, and would snuggle her whenever she became distressed.

“I was inspired to write a book [Finding Harmony], after Harmony re-awakened my sense of adventure – I was compelled to help promote Canine Partners and give others hope.

“For seven years we led a fantastic life together before she got ill, very

suddenly, and died in a matter of days. I felt like I couldn't breathe when Harmony died – I was utterly bereft. It was not something I had allowed myself to think about.

“Initially I didn't want a successor dog – it felt like a betrayal. Meeting Harmony was a real epiphany, so it was difficult for me to imagine being teamed with a different dog. It seemed disloyal and I retreated back into myself, lost confidence and felt isolated again.

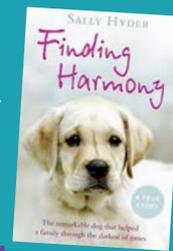
“But there was a conflict within me: I wrote my book to honour Harmony; and I still hated relying on other people – in particular, having to see my husband or daughter pick up after me when I dropped things – so there was still a valid reason to have the help of an assistance dog.

“I had a phone call with Claire, who knew Harmony and was Partnerships Manager, and she gently suggested that a successor would be a legacy to the fantastic work that Harmony had started. Soon after re-applying, my needs

were assessed and I was approved for a successor dog.

“Meeting Cleo was an anxious time. I naturally compared her to Harmony but I've adapted to working with a different dog. Physically they look very similar but they have very different characters. Cleo is quite cheeky – while also being very keen to work – whereas Harmony tended to be more laid back.

“With our busy family life, Cleo takes everything in her stride. She helps me with everything from household chores to my personal care and getting up and dressed. She's a real work horse and I am so very grateful for her being part of our lives. She's reinvigorated my confidence and my world is broader.”



You can purchase Sally's book Finding Harmony online at [amazon.co.uk](https://www.amazon.co.uk)

At Canine Partners, we are committed to the lifetime of the partner and provide successor dogs to them when the time comes for their canine partner to be retired at around 12 years old. 25% of partnerships created in 2018 so far have been successor dogs.

You could support us today by leaving a gift in your will. 1 in 3 partnerships are funded by gifts in wills. Call us on **01730 716026** or visit [caninepartners.org.uk/giftsinwills](https://www.caninepartners.org.uk/giftsinwills).

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