

# Let's Go!

Winter 2020



Canine Partners

Amazing dogs. Transforming lives.

30  
years



30 years  
of making a  
difference

[caninepartners.org.uk](http://caninepartners.org.uk)

# Welcome to the Winter 2020 issue of Let's Go!

30 years  
of making a  
difference

The Covid-19 pandemic has changed all our lives this year. Nicola Martin, CEO of Canine Partners, talks about meeting the challenges of a very different 30th year for the charity in 2020.



Nicola Martin  
CEO of Canine Partners

**“None of us could ever have expected our 30th year to turn out the way this one has. When Covid-19 reached the UK and lockdown became a reality we were faced with tough choices and difficult decisions.**

“It was heartbreaking to stop our on-site training courses, pause our breeding programme and cancel fundraising events, including our 30th celebrations. It became clear our income would be significantly impacted too, with an anticipated funding shortfall of over £1 million.



“With both our Training Centres temporarily closed to staff and visitors and all face-to-face contact postponed, our operational teams had to quickly adapt to the new restrictions. Using technology, they have increased contact with our partners to ensure they have the support they need. They have also used technology to help our amazing volunteers too, as they stepped in to provide full time care and training for our puppies and dogs.

“We quickly moved to home-based working for all our staff and we took advantage of the Government’s



“It is hard to convey into words how a canine partner transforms lives. Many dedicated people have supported Canine Partners over the years, and I am very grateful to all who are and have been involved. Canine Partners has changed our perceptions of what is possible.”

Dr Elizabeth Ormerod BVMS CF  
Co-Founder and Vice President

Job Retention Scheme from April with up to 50% of our workforce furloughed, allowing us to manage costs at such a difficult time. The impact on our teams and volunteers was huge, with small numbers of staff working hard to continue to keep services running and generating much-needed income as well as supporting our volunteers. Our Training Centres have now re-opened for our Training Teams, but many staff will continue to work remotely for the coming months.

**“30 years is a significant milestone and I am so proud of the way we have adapted to the unprecedented challenges we have faced.** Throughout this difficult year, we have remained committed to the passionate people and amazing dogs that make our vision a reality. Now, as we reach the end of this unique year in our history and reflect on the extraordinary events that have impacted us all, I am delighted to share this special issue of

*Let's Go!* with you. Our 30th year may not have unfolded as we originally planned, but thanks to the resilience, determination and hard work of our teams, and the generosity, commitment and support of our wonderful community, we still have much to celebrate.

“I have been humbled by the generous support of you, our donors, sponsors, partners and friends – you truly have helped to ‘protect our future’. We continue to be incredibly grateful to our amazing volunteers who have so readily adapted in lockdown and continued to provide vital support with training our puppies and dogs.

“Our **BBC Lifeline Appeal** aired on TV less than a week into lockdown in March and warmed the hearts of millions of viewers across the UK, raising much-needed donations at a crucial time. Our **‘Protect our Future’** appeal was also a success and, thanks to your wonderful support the donations raised mean that we have been able to focus on

This issue is kindly supported by Nestlé Purina Petcare

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We always love  
to hear from you.

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Write to: **Canine Partners, Mill Lane, Heyshott, West Sussex, GU29 0ED.**  
Email [info@caninepartners.org.uk](mailto:info@caninepartners.org.uk) or call **03456 580 480.**



supporting people who have one of our assistance dogs through this difficult period. At the end of July we celebrated the launch of our brand new **Canine Partners Weekly Lottery** with our first draw. With over 100 winners so far, our lottery players are raising valuable funds every week. Our fantastic fundraisers have embraced virtual fundraising this year, celebrating our 30th birthday with a virtual **'Paws for a Cuppa'** event, and supporting the launch of our **Fit for 30 Challenge** in September. We've also been generously supported by our corporate partners, and trusts and foundations too.

"The unique work we do at Canine Partners, training puppies and dogs, and creating and supporting partnerships, has always been life-transforming. But the events of this year have made it clear just how vital our amazing dogs are to the lives of the people we support and the essential lifeline they have been in lockdown.

"As you'll read in the heartwarming stories in this issue, our canine partners really do make a difference, providing companionship and

emotional support. As we continue to adapt our training and work to create partnerships safely, the wellbeing of our 441 partnerships is a priority for us. It's so important that we help our dogs and partners through this uncertain time so we're launching our **'Make a Difference'** appeal this winter. Will you 'Make a Difference' with a donation that will help us continue to provide vital support to our dogs and partnerships in the months to come? Visit [caninepartners.org.uk/makeadifference](http://caninepartners.org.uk/makeadifference) to find out more.

"As we navigate the months ahead, our charity still faces uncertainty from the continued impact of the pandemic. With your support, we are looking forward with optimism and will continue to make a difference to the lives of many more people in the coming years, continuing what was started 30 years ago by our visionary founders, Liz Ormerod and Anne Conway. I hope you enjoy this issue of *Let's Go!* A heartfelt thanks for your support from all at Canine Partners."



Olympian Iwan Thomas MBE presented our BBC Lifeline Appeal in March 2020



**BBC**  
Lifeline  
Appeal

Did you miss our BBC Lifeline Appeal? Don't worry! You can still watch it at [caninepartners.org.uk/bbclifeline](http://caninepartners.org.uk/bbclifeline)



## Celebrating 20 Years of Supporting Canine Partners to Transform Lives

At Purina, we're dedicated to improving the lives of pets and those who love them. We're also committed to creating a better society for people and animals, including supporting charities whose assistance dogs really do transform people's lives. Which is why we've proudly supported Canine Partners for 20 years. We make tasty and nutritious food, great for dog health and well-being, meaning that the dogs in Canine Partners' training are given the best possible start.

**Find out more about how we support Canine Partners.**

Visit [www.purina.co.uk/meet-purina/charity-partnerships/canine-partners](http://www.purina.co.uk/meet-purina/charity-partnerships/canine-partners)



Your Pet, Our Passion.®

**Lockdown Partnership story****Lauren and Fliss**

In 2011 Lauren, a dancer from Tyne and Wear, was diagnosed with Ehlers Danlos Syndrome, a degenerative condition affecting the immune system.

Lauren and canine partner Fliss enjoyed taking part in the Fit for 30 Challenge in September 2020.



**Devastated at losing her mobility and independence, Lauren's determination to rebuild her life became possible when she met canine partner Fliss three years ago. But the Covid-19 pandemic was to be the biggest test of their partnership yet.**

"My whole household isolated due to the Covid-19 pandemic, as I am more at risk. Ehlers Danlos Syndrome causes a lot of problems particularly if I contract any form of virus or infection.

**If I had to sum up my partnership with Fliss in three words, I would choose happiness, independence and pride. I am so fortunate to have Fliss in my life, thanks to Canine Partners.**

"The lockdown and isolation meant I was starting to physically struggle as all my outpatient treatments were stopped.

"Fliss is able to help me on so many levels, which has allowed both me and my carers to have some space despite isolating in the same household, which is vital for our mental health. I have a whole new level of appreciation for the fact I am lucky enough to have Fliss by my side during such a hard time.

Take on a virtual challenge like Lauren and help to change lives please visit [caninepartners.org.uk/challenges](https://www.caninepartners.org.uk/challenges)

"Fliss helps me with so many things, such as fetching my medicine bag and helping me get undressed. I actually never expected Fliss to have such an impact on my whole family, but they can now leave the house or sleep in their own beds knowing that she can raise the alarm if an emergency occurs.

I don't need someone to watch over me 24/7.

"Despite the toll that lockdown has taken on my health this year, I was determined to take part in the Fit for 30 Challenge for Canine Partners this September to help transform other lives, like mine."

## Your invitation to play the Canine Partners Weekly Lottery

Canine Partners  
Weekly  
**Lottery**  
Play today. Transform a life.

Get your paws on our prizes!

**£1**  
to play

We've launched the Canine Partners Weekly Lottery - a new and fun way to support Canine Partners and help train amazing dogs that will make a difference. With a draw **every Friday**, you could be a winner!



Sign up at [lottery.caninepartners.org.uk](https://lottery.caninepartners.org.uk) or call 01628 200343

1st prize  
**£10,000**

2nd prize  
**£1,000**

3rd prize  
**£25**

4th prize  
**£5**



“ Play the Canine Partners Weekly Lottery and help train more amazing dogs like Buggy, to transform more lives, like mine. ”

Samantha and canine partner Buggy



BeGambleAware.org

Entry is open to adults aged 18 and over, resident in the UK excluding the Channel Islands, Isles of Scilly or Isle of Man. Visit [lottery.caninepartners.org.uk/rules](https://lottery.caninepartners.org.uk/rules) for the latest rules. Canine Partners is registered with Chichester District Council as a non-commercial society under the Gambling Act 2005. Registration Number: 3815/17/00265/GASSL. Responsible person - Clive Murray, Canine Partners, Mill Lane, Heyshott, Midhurst, West Sussex, GU29 0ED. Canine Partners registered charity in England and Wales (803680) and Scotland (SC039050).

# Amazing Volunteers

Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic our community of volunteers stepped up and helped us to continue training our amazing dogs.

Our volunteer Fosterers and Puppy Parents provide our dogs and puppies in training with loving homes, and many of them took on much more responsibility than normal over the period of strict lockdown.

## Meet Fosterers Sarah and Darryl



**Sarah and Darryl live in Derbyshire, just eight miles away from our Midlands Training Centre. They began fostering in 2015.**

“We both work full time and having a dog of our own just isn't ideal but the opportunity to foster sounded really appealing – and we were right!

“We feel absolutely blessed to be given the opportunity to support Canine Partners by having our current foster dog, Smartie, during

**Sarah and Darryl say:**  
 “We get quite emotional when we think about the benefits the dogs bring to their respective partners - assisting with a disability and all the clever tasks the dogs do is one thing but the emotional support the dogs can give is something quite unique.”

the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown. Having her 24/7 has been a dream. She has been the perfect girl and is so patient when we've been working from home. Neither of us were furloughed and it's been a very busy time, but we made sure that she's been stimulated during the day and kept up with the weekly tasks and activities set up by the Canine Partners training team, who kept in touch with us throughout. She's such a willing learner.”

## Could you?

Could you provide a foster home like Sarah and Darryl? To find out more, please visit [caninepartners.org.uk/foster-a-dog](https://caninepartners.org.uk/foster-a-dog)

The work our volunteers do is incredible and their support is so important to us at all times, but especially during the Covid-19 crisis. They play a vital role in the socialisation and training of our future canine partners, before sending the dogs and puppies off to continue their journey to become life-changing assistance dogs.



## Meet Puppy Parent Julie



**Julie, from West Sussex, has been a Puppy Parent with her husband, Martyn, since January this year after meeting a partnership at the local hospital.**

“It just seemed like fate as we had already been researching and had decided Canine Partners was the charity we wanted to support. We knew we were going to proceed with becoming Puppy Parents after that chance meeting.

**Julie says:**  
 “The most rewarding thing about volunteering and being a Puppy Parent is knowing that at the end of the process, Chase will go on to enhance someone's life for the better.”

“Being a Puppy Parent during lockdown was better than we could have hoped for. We had only had Chase for seven weeks at that point, so it meant we could spend more time with her and dedicate more time to training her. The support from the Puppy Trainers was fantastic. They have been available for us on the phone or on video chat whenever we have needed them. The continued training lessons online have been fun and informative. We have nothing but praise for our trainers, and I'm so proud of how Chase is developing her skills.”

## Could you?

Could you be a Puppy Parent like Julie? To find out more, please visit [caninepartners.org.uk/puppy-parents](https://caninepartners.org.uk/puppy-parents)

30 years  
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difference

# Lockdown

## Partnership story

# Miriam and Laurel

Miriam from Leicestershire was a fit, healthy and career-driven mum-of-five until complications during an operation in June 2014 left her with permanent paralysis of her right leg.

Now, six years after her surgery, Miriam talks about life with her canine partner Laurel and how they've got through the Covid-19 pandemic together.

"I decided to self-isolate during the pandemic as my immune system isn't very strong. Lockdown was extremely challenging. I am an essential worker for my local council, and like many people I have been working long hours from home. In my role I help to provide essential support services to vulnerable people in the local community. It's an emotional job and, at times in the past few months it has felt overwhelming.

"Laurel has always been a phenomenal emotional support for me and now more than ever she is my one constant. Her routine keeps me grounded and her cuddles help to drain negativity and worry from me. Laurel's daily presence beside me is so reassuring, and helps to motivate me on difficult days too.



"With a gentle nudge from her, she helps me out of bed and then helps me to dress. She supports me with all sorts of household jobs, including helping to tidy up after the kids! When I'm working she passes me notebooks and pens when I need them. I don't actually know where I'd be without her.

"She knows when I get sad or anxious and has started pushing her head under my arm to force me to cuddle her. I don't know where she has picked that up from, as it wasn't taught by Canine Partners, but it makes me switch my head from worrying thoughts to focussing on her and that is worth so much right now. I used to say she was my shadow, but during this crisis she is almost a physical part of me."

To read Miriam's full story on our blog, please visit [caninepartners.org.uk/miriamandlaurel](https://caninepartners.org.uk/miriamandlaurel)



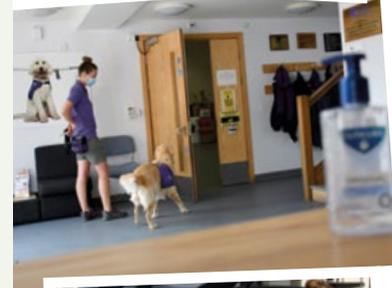
# Training future assistance dogs during Covid-19

Our specialist Advanced Training Team are back on site following the lockdown earlier this year and our two Training Centres are Covid-secure to enable them to train our dogs safely.

Our teams are working in 'bubbles' to reduce the number of staff and dogs on site at one time.

Our amazing volunteers have stepped in to support us by fostering the dogs-in-training full time. They bring the dogs to the centres for training when their 'bubble' is on site, usually two to three times a week. Back at home, our Fosterers receive regular training support and guidance from the Training Team through phone or video calls to ensure the dogs' skills are progressing.

The dogs are training in the community again, with our teams taking them to towns and public spaces, whilst following the Government guidance **Hands, Face, Space**. Just like we all have, the dogs are getting used to people in face masks, as well as learning to be patient while queuing to get into shops or while the trainer is using hand sanitiser stations.



The dogs are really enjoying being back on site at the Training Centres, as this is where they learn the specialist skills and specific task work that will enable them to go on to help their new partner.

Canine Partners is closely following Government and local authority guidelines and restrictions. Further changes to our operational activities may be put in place if restrictions change. All information in this issue is correct at the time of printing.



# A cracking canine Christmas!

It's that time of year to treat yourself and loved ones to something really special, so why not shop and support Canine Partners this Christmas.



**🐾 We have five brand new Christmas and Seasonal Greeting cards** to choose from and two gorgeous Labrador cards, back by popular demand.

**🐾 We're sure you'll love our new 2021 calendar**, packed full of our practically perfect pups, including handsome Petey, shown here on the front cover.

**Card references:** 1. Ready to Party Dogs 2. Penguin Huddle 3. A Christmas Treat 4. Baby it's cold outside 5. Santa's Here 6. Snow drops on noses 7. Dove

Visit our online shop to see our full range at [caninepartners.org.uk/shop](http://caninepartners.org.uk/shop)

Can't get online? Call 01730 716004 to request a flyer and place your order



**The Big Give Christmas Challenge is back for 2020! and we are inviting you to take part.**

For one week only, you can donate to Canine Partners and the value of your donation will be DOUBLED by The Big Give 2020 Christmas Challenge. The challenge takes place from midday on 1 December 2020 to midday on 8 December 2020. Please visit [caninepartners.org.uk/thebiggive](http://caninepartners.org.uk/thebiggive) to find out more and donate.

This year we are hoping to raise **£110,000** to help us to continue training more of our amazing assistance dogs.

Keep an eye on our website and social media channels - once the challenge is live, we will share the link to donate.



## Sponsor our Amazing Christmas puppies



[myamazingpuppy.org.uk](http://myamazingpuppy.org.uk)

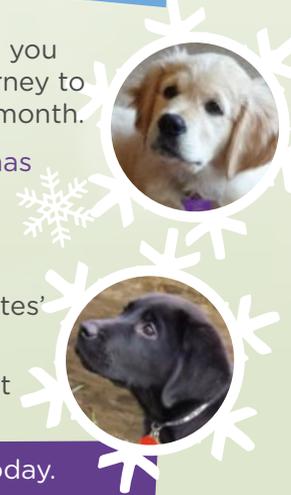
Sign up to support our **My Amazing Puppy** Scheme, and you can help start one of our puppies on their incredible journey to become a fully trained assistance dog - for just £4.34 a month.

This festive season, we welcome our two special Christmas puppies. **Donner** is a beautiful female Golden Retriever who loves belly rubs, and **Blitzen** is a cheeky male black Labrador who likes getting into trouble.

When you sponsor a puppy you'll receive regular 'pupdates' and a special welcome pack to say thank you.

My Amazing Puppy also makes the perfect gift - why not sponsor a puppy for a special someone this Christmas?

Visit [myamazingpuppy.org.uk](http://myamazingpuppy.org.uk) to sign up today.



**Lockdown Partnership story****Richard and Ace**

Army veteran Richard's spinal injury and arthritis meant he was prone to falls, and combined with the debilitating effects of PTSD, he used to fear leaving his house.



"Having Ace beside me reduces my anxieties in certain situations and I can do things I never would have had the confidence to do without him.

"I have been shielding during the Covid-19 pandemic. If I catch it I could die, and that's very scary. Being stuck at home has made me dwell on the bad things from my past more than before. After getting Ace my world started to open up and sadly, during the pandemic, it has shrunk again.

"Having Ace at this time is incredible though. He is amazing at anticipating what support I need including retrieving items, such as my walking stick to assist me to stand up, or helping me to get undressed. The pandemic has made me feel more anxious, but Ace helps keep me calm and lifts my mood. Our bond keeps on getting stronger as we find more ways he can support me."

**Now, two years after being partnered with 'wonder dog' Ace and regaining his confidence, Richard talks about how his canine partner has helped him during the Covid-19 pandemic.**

**"I am incredibly grateful to Canine Partners and I think it is an amazing organisation as it offers such life changing support."**

Donate to our **Make a Difference** appeal and help Canine Partners continue to support people like Richard. Please visit [caninepartners.org.uk/makeadifference](https://caninepartners.org.uk/makeadifference) to donate today.

**Thank you to our fantastic fundraisers**

**30 years**  
of making a  
difference

**This year has been unlike any other due to the Covid-19 pandemic. But our fantastic fundraisers and supporters have risen to the challenge and continued to raise much needed funds and awareness for the charity in a variety of wonderful ways!**



Many supporters took time to **'Paws for a Cuppa'** virtually, or even socially distanced, to help celebrate our 30th year. **Cheers!**



In September, we joined the fun at **Dogstival** in the New Forest at our first event since lockdown. **Pawsome!**



With **virtual challenges** running throughout the summer, our community got stuck in – from Joey the tortoise completing a garden assault course, to spinning a Hula Hoop every day for a month. **Smashed it!**



Our **BBC Lifeline Appeal**, which was broadcast at the start of lockdown, was a huge success, raising awareness of our work and much-needed funds. **Amazing!**

**Amazing!**

To see more of what our fantastic fundraisers have been up to this year please visit [caninepartners.org.uk/blog](https://caninepartners.org.uk/blog)





Thank you. In these difficult times, your support really does make a difference.

We've loved seeing the photos you've shared with us this year - please follow us on social media to see more



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