

## Volunteer Dog Fosterer

Canine Partners is a registered charity that transforms the lives of people with physical disabilities by partnering them with assistance dogs. Our amazing dogs bring a greater independence and quality of life to their partners, offering support, security, companionship, and practical help with everyday household tasks.

By volunteering at Canine Partners you contribute to something very special - 'transforming the lives of people with physical disabilities by partnering them with assistance dogs'

### About the opportunity

Canine Partners are looking for volunteers who can provide loving homes for our young dogs, aged 14 months upwards, whilst helping to train them to be canine partners.

By volunteering you will:

- Be a valued member of our Charity
- Know that you are integrally involved in the care and training of a dog that will change the life of a person waiting for their Canine Partner
- Benefit from the companionship and enjoyment of having a dog in your life without life long commitment or costs associated with dog ownership
- Have the opportunity to meet like minded people

'With out the continued hard work and support from our volunteers, we would not be able to provide our clients with our life changing dogs'

### What is involved

- Commitment to providing a loving home, care, and training for a dog for the duration of their time in training
- We consider this a full time role as you, or another approved adult member of the household, will be required to care for the dog for much of the day and overnight
- Our trainers need access to the dogs during weekdays for training purposes. We ask that you commute to and from our training centre when required to drop off/collect the dog. Drop off and collection times are generally between 8.30 -9.30am and 4-5pm
- Availability to attend pre-arranged training sessions at your home, in your local area, and at our training centre.
- With our guidance, and using positive training methods, to continue the training of the dog in various areas. For example:

- Home behaviour
- Social behaviour
- Behaviour around other animals
- Walking on a lead
- Off lead exercise
- Maintaining the dog's health and welfare and, via support and training, to recognise behaviour/health concerns and report them immediately to the dog's trainer

### **What we require from you**

- You live within a 45 minute drive of our training centre (post code GU29 0ED)
- That you, as the dogs main carer, are over 18 years of age
- You have a dog friendly secure garden
- Though desirable, prior dog ownership is not required.
- All members of the household are keen to foster one of our dogs
- There is no more than one pet dog living in your home. The pet dog must be over 12 months of age and would need to undergo our pet dog suitability assessment
- Have the time and ability to commit to the training and care of a young dog. This is a physical role
- Have access to a suitable vehicle to transport the dog
- That you or other approved adult member of the household are at home most of the day, and overnight, to care for the dog
- Have an area of your garden that can be used for toileting the dog – details about this are provided during our home check assessment.
- Understand that the dog in your care remains under the ownership of Canine Partners

### **Support and Training**

- Induction process which includes the submission of an application form, initial phone call, and home visit
- On-going Instruction and support from our dog trainers. This will be in person, via video link, phone calls, handouts etc.
- Holiday cover arranged
- Reimbursement of expenses, such as mileage costs, if requested
- Invitation to join our Official Canine Partners Community Facebook Group

**Ewen has been a volunteer Fosterer for Canine Partners for six years. He is also a Volunteer Speaker, Foster Coordinator and Driver.**

I am a volunteer Fosterer for Canine Partners, taking in a dog for 17 consecutive weeks or short term while they are in the Advanced Training programme. Some are short stay and usually get a spell of cat familiarisation with our two feline hosts, Jazz and Jango, while Paz is the 19th regular visitor who is staying with us for 17 consecutive weekends throughout the Advanced Training course. At the time of this being written (May 2020), Paz is a full time member of our household due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic as restrictions remain in force.



I volunteer as the Foster Coordinator at the Southern Training Centre, which encompasses both the Advanced Training and Aftercare Teams together with handling all website enquiries from people who want to become a Foster Parent.

I am also a Volunteer Driver. I conduct new fosterer home checks, transfer dogs in and out of foster on behalf of the Aftercare Team, and occasionally carry out rehoming checks for a withdrawn or retired canine partner.

Canine Partners is a great charity that makes a real difference to people's lives. I looked for a voluntary role, as I wanted to give something back when I finished my career with the Royal Navy. My job entailed a lot of time at sea and away from home and my family, meaning having a dog had not been possible although I had grown up with one and have always been a dog fan. Canine Partners is local to me as I live on the coast by Chichester, West Sussex, so it brought everything together very neatly.

Canine Partners has a good combination of freedom of action and helpful support – I take on any of the people and admin aspects of fostering, which means the Advanced Training and Aftercare Teams can focus on the dogs and partners. The charity is a friendly and inclusive community with the staff and volunteers. There is a wealth of different volunteering opportunities that can take up as little or as much time. You have the satisfaction of knowing you are helping to make a difference to people's quality of life – and of course, there is always an underlying forest of waggy tails to sweeten the deal!

