



## WE BELIEVE PETS & PEOPLE ARE BETTER TOGETHER

At PURINA® we believe in the magical and unique connection between pets and humans and when people and pets bond, life becomes richer.

This belief is placed at the heart of everything we do and we're passionate about finding ways to make this bond stronger. Our commitments to pets include, helping advance nutrition through the products we make, championing the role of pets in society and working towards a waste free future.

We've been proud supporters of Canine Partners since 2000. Like them, we know just how transformational your relationship with your pet can be – and how much love and joy that can bring to your life.

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Welcome to Let's Go! Summer 2025
Our very special 35th anniversary edition!

This year, we are celebrating two extraordinary milestones: 35 years of transforming lives through our amazing assistance dogs, and the creation of our 1,000th partnership! This achievement reflects the incredible dedication and belief in our mission from everyone who has supported Canine Partners.

It is a privilege to be leading this charity at such a momentous time, having stepped into the role of CEO earlier this year after three years as Director of People. Over the past three and a half decades. Canine Partners has grown from a visionary idea into a pioneering charity, changing the lives of people with physical disabilities by creating dog-human partnerships that provide independence, confidence. and companionship. But none of this would have been possible without you - our devoted staff, volunteers, fundraisers and supporters. Your passion and commitment have built this charity into what it is today.

This special edition of Let's Go! celebrates all we've achieved together. Inside, you'll find inspiring stories from our partnerships, reflections on our journey, and a glimpse into our future. We're also excited to share behind-the-scenes moments from our BBC Lifeline Appeal, which highlighted the national impact of our work.

Thank you for being part of this journey. Here's to 35 years of changing lives and many more to come!

**Lucy Eldred** 

CEO, Canine Partners

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#### Where it all began...

As we mark 35 years of Canine Partners, we take this opportunity not just to celebrate, but to reflect on the incredible journey that has brought us here.

Canine Partners started in 1990. thanks to two amazing women, Anne Conway and Dr. Elizabeth Ormerod. They had a simple but powerful idea: to use the incredible abilities of dogs to help people with physical disabilities.

Anne's interest in this began in 1983. She attended an international conference in Vienna, where she saw firsthand how much a specially trained assistance dog could help someone. It was the amazing bond between them that really struck her. Inspired by the experience, as well as the pioneering work of Bonnie Bergin.



Bonnie Bergin founded the world's first assistance dog programme in California, and Anne knew this could make a huge difference in the UK.

A few years later, in 1986. Anne met Elizabeth at a conference in Boston. Seeing the profound impact of these partnerships, they knew that bringing assistance dogs to the UK had to be done with meticulous planning, ensuring both the wellbeing of the dogs and the highest standards of support for their human partners.

> Their research led them to The SOHO Foundation in the Netherlands, which helped train Canine Partners' first trainer, Nina Bondarenko, and laid the foundation for our work.

but Anne had a motto: "Perfect Planning Prevents Problems!" Everything was carefully considered, from setting high welfare standards to assembling a multi-disciplinary board of experts from both human and animal health fields. Their vision and determination saw the charity grow from an idea into a life-changing programme that has now created over 1,000 partnerships.

Reflecting on this journey, Elizabeth shares:

When we founded Canine Partners, we believed in the extraordinary potential of the human-animal bond. But even in our wildest dreams, we could not have imagined how many lives would be transformed. Every partnership is unique, yet the impact

is always profound - offering independence, confidence, and companionship beyond measure. Seeing the charity flourish over the past 35 years has been humbling and I know Anne would be so proud of what we have all achieved. Each time I meet a partnership, I am reminded of the incredible power of these dogs, and I have no doubt Canine Partners will continue changing lives for generations to come.

As we celebrate this milestone, we're grateful to those who paved the way, and to those who continue to shape our future. Our mission remains the same as it was 35 years ago: transforming lives through these incredible partnerships.



Dr. Elizabeth Ormerod

#### Meet our 1,000th partnership: Sue and canine partner James

Sue lives with Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome, a condition that affects her joints, muscles and ligaments. At one point, she was in constant pain, relying on crutches and a wheelchair, and spent six months bed-bound. Everyday tasks became impossible, and she depended on family and carers for everything. Her world had become incredibly small.

That started to change in 2012, when Sue was partnered with Quizzy, a Golden Retriever who brought the independence and emotional support she had longed for. After Quizzy's retirement, Sue was later partnered with Vinnie, a yellow Labrador. Together, these dogs changed everything.

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I had always been active, working as a nurse and later in human resources, but suddenly, I was stuck at home, unable to do the things I once took for granted. I had lost so much - my independence, my confidence, and even my sense of purpose. I felt trapped in my own body.

"They gave me a reason to get up in the morning. I'd lost all confidence going outside, but with a canine partner by my side, I felt safe again."

Both dogs helped with everyday tasks like picking up dropped items, opening doors and assisting with undressing.



They also became Sue's constant companions, offering comfort during the toughest days. "Quizzy and Vinnie were my rock, adapting so quickly to my needs and giving me the confidence to start engaging with the world again. I even became a Parish Councillor and began public speaking – things I never thought I'd do again."

However, when Vinnie retired, Sue found herself without the full-time assistance she had come to rely on.



Quizzy and Vinnie gave me back my purpose in life, but without them, I wasn't able to live my life properly. I really felt the loss of my independence. I had to rely more on family and carers, which was difficult. Everyday tasks felt challenging and I found it harder to leave the house.

In 2024, Sue was partnered with James. "The moment I met James, I felt like I got a part of my life back. It was as if a weight had been lifted and I could be myself again. James helps me feel safe



and supported, giving me the confidence to go out again. I wasn't sure I would ever regain that sense of freedom, but with James, I've found it."

Although they are still building their bond, Sue can already see James's incredible potential. "James is so clever and eager to help. I know he'll soon be assisting me with more tasks and doing all the little things that make such a big difference to my independence. I feel so lucky to have him in my life."

Sue's husband, Mark, has also seen the transformation. "I've watched Sue go through the highs and lows of life with and without a canine partner and there's no question – these dogs change everything. Having a canine partner means Sue can live her life on her terms again and that peace of mind is priceless."

Sue's story is just one of over 1,000 partnerships made possible by Canine Partners in the past 35 years, highlighting the life-changing impact these amazing dogs have. Here's to the next 1,000 partnerships!



You can help others like Sue by donating towards this year's 35th Anniversary Summer Appeal. Visit caninepartners.org.uk/summerappeal2025 or scan the QR code above to contribute towards our £35k target!



## A timeline of 35 years transforming lives

#### 1990: The beginning

Canine Partners is founded by Anne Conway and Dr Elizabeth Ormerod.



1995: The first female dogs trained

We train our first female assistance dogs, later expanding to breeds like the Italian Spinone, Australian Shepherd and Bernese Mountain Dog x Golden Retriever.











1994: First assistance dog partnership

1995-2000: Rented premises in Hampshire

#### 2024: 1,000 partnerships

We launched our canine companion and canine home assistance services to address the changing needs of our community.

At the end of 2024, Sue and James are partnered, becoming our 1,000th partnership!

2020: State-of-the-Art kennel block completed at our Midlands Training Centre









2025: Celebrating 35 years of life-changing partnerships

#### 2022: Transition to a single site

Our Southern Training Centre was closed and operations move to being done remotely, or in the Midlands at our National Training Centre.

#### 2003: Our Royal Patron

Operations begin at Southern Training Centre.

Our first puppy training hub opens in Southampton.

HRH The Duke of Gloucester KG GCVO becomes our Patron.

2005: HRH The Duke of Gloucester KG GCVO formally opens the Southern Training Centre











#### 2002: The iconic purple

Our brand colours are changed from red to purple.

#### 2004: A royal invitation

We are invited to perform a demonstration at Windsor Castle by Queen Elizabeth II.

2006: New hubs open in Scotland, Hull and Bedford

#### 2015: Celebrating 25 years at Crufts

Our Dog Ambassador Team performs a demonstration at Crufts to mark our 25th anniversary. 2012: Purchased Midlands Training Centre in Leicestershire









2017: Fully accessible facilities open at Midlands Training Centre

#### 2014: The Midlands centre takes shape

The main training building at our Midlands Training Centre is completed, increasing our capacity to train dogs and support new partnerships.



Bradbury Lodge chalets used for Partnership Training opened by Baroness Margaret Thatcher in June.

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Ian was one of the first people to be partnered with one of our assistance dogs back in the '90s, and his Golden Retriever, Alex, changed everything for him. To recognise the profound difference we made for Ian, his mother Janet has pledged a gift in her Will to Canine Partners, so more people can experience that life-changing

"My son Ian was 19 when he had a fall that changed his life. After six months in a spinal unit, he came home but couldn't move anything below his lower arms. Everyday tasks became difficult, and he lost his independence. Then, canine partner Alex, a Golden Retriever, came into his life and they bonded right away.

Alex revolutionised lan's life in so many ways. He helped him dress and gave him the confidence to venture out independently again. Alex would grab items like a tin of soup and add them to the shopping trolley. He was even able to pay the cashier by standing on his hind legs – all day-to-day activities that lan had lost the ability to do.

For lan, Alex was more than just an assistance dog; he was a source of companionship, encouragement, and newfound freedom. With Alex by his side, lan regained confidence, got back out into his community, and felt like he could live life his way. Sadly, lan passed away in 2010, but Janet's support for us never stopped. She's been donating ever since, knowing how much we helped lan and so many others.

When I eventually pass away, Canine Partners are getting a share of my estate. We owe so much to Canine Partners because of how they supported lan. Janet and her husband, Bob

By leaving a gift in your Will, you can help ensure that more people like Ian receive the life-changing assistance of a specially trained dog. Your legacy will provide independence, companionship and hope for generations to come.

To find out more about legacies, please visit our website caninepartners.org.uk/legacies



support.

#### Over a decade of dedication: **Meet volunteer Jim**

For over 15 years, Jim has been a cornerstone of Canine Partners, making a real difference by volunteering in a variety of roles. During that time, he's fostered over 60 dogs! Jim's journey with us began after his daughter completed a work experience placement with Canine Partners. He was inspired to get involved himself and began volunteering following his retirement.

While he no longer fosters regularly, Jim is occasionally on hand to offer foster support, providing our dogs with much-needed rest and relaxation. Now, he focuses his time on providing regular administrative support, using his extensive IT background. He assists with our database, maintains spreadsheets and helps with other admin tasks.

"Volunteering at Canine Partners is an incredibly fulfilling experience, not just because of the amazing people and dogs, but also because of the privilege of witnessing the incredible bond between a partner and their canine partner. Knowing that, even in a small way, I have played a part in changing someone's life is truly priceless.

"I wholeheartedly encourage others to volunteer for Canine Partners. It's a remarkable charity with a warm, supportive environment and the opportunity to make a meaningful impact. After

more than 15 years of volunteering, I can honestly say I've never had a dull moment. Every role I take on is incredibly rewarding and enjoyable!"

Jim is also a vital part of Canine Partners' Volunteer Speaker Network, delivering talks to local community groups such as Masons, WI, U3A, Probus, and Rotary clubs.

Volunteers are the heart of our charity, and there are many ways you can make a difference. Whether it's looking after our puppies, becoming a speaker or offering your professional skills, your support helps us change lives.

To find out more, please visit caninepartners.org.uk/volunteer





#### Love dogs?

#### Volunteer for us!

Help us to raise, train and care for our puppies and dogs with expert support and guidance from our team.

- # Help bring the next generation of life-changers into the world as a Dog Breeding volunteer
- Become a Puppy Training volunteer and help raise a future assistance dog
  - #Foster puppies or dogs, short or long-term
- \* Raise awareness as part of our Dog Ambassador Team
- Get involved in fundraising to support future assistance dogs

Not sure what role suits your lifestyle or location? Please get in touch. We have lots of other ways to volunteer within your local community.

Please visit caninepartners.org.uk/ volunteer or scan the QR code.



#### **Inside Canine Partners: Meet Gemma**



This year, Executive **Assistant and Impact** Manager, Gemma, celebrates her 10th anniversary at Canine Partners.

Her journey with us began in 2012 when her dad, Martin, applied for an assistance dog after a spinal injury. In 2014, he was paired with Keith, a loving yellow Labrador who not only assisted with daily tasks but also brought companionship and confidence, transforming his life. Inspired, Gemma took on a 15,000-foot skydive, raising over £2,000 for Canine Partners before officially joining the team in 2015.

Gemma shares: "Having witnessed firsthand how a canine partner changed my dad's life, I know just

how powerful these partnerships are. It's an absolute privilege to be part of this incredible charity."

Gemma's dedication and enthusiasm make her an invaluable member of our team, and her love for Canine Partners creates a positive impact every day!





#### Celebrating the human-pet bond

As a member of Assistance Dogs UK (ADUK), we work with other charities to maintain the highest standards in training and welfare. Together, we advocate for better accessibility, awareness, and policies for disabled people with assistance dogs.

In January, our CEO, Lucy Eldred, spoke at an APDAWG (All-Party Parliamentary Dog Advisory Welfare Group) meeting in Westminster, about the strong connection between people and animals. This event, organised by the Society for Companion Animal Studies and Our Special Friends, showed how animal-assisted services help vulnerable groups.

The APDAWG works to improve dog welfare through new laws. They bring together experts and people who care about animals to talk about dog welfare in the UK.

Before the meeting, Lucy and Elaine, who has canine partner Bentley, talked to members of Parliament. They explained how assistance dogs change lives and why we need laws to support these partnerships.

During the day, Lucy also met with experts, including our founder, Dr. Elizabeth Ormerod, and representatives from other assistance dog charities. They talked about how to improve assistance dog services in the future.

These discussions are important for driving positive change, encouraging teamwork across the sector and ensuring we can continue to transform the lives of people with physical disabilities.



#### **Fetching the facts** in our 35th year

A Golden Retriever named Angus

became the charity's first assistance dog, marking the beginning of Canine Partners' journey.

#### FEARGAL. a Golden Retriever. became the

35th DOG

> trained by Canine Partners. He was partnered in 1998 and retired in 2008.



Currently.

disabled

people

are on the waiting

list for a canine

assistance canine,

partner, home



of puppies placed with volunteers are bred by Canine Partners, with the remaining sourced from other Assistance Dogs UK charities.

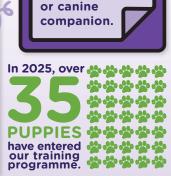


Angus, Alex, Alfred, and Amos, nicknamed the 'A-Team', made up the first litter of dogs trained, laying the foundation for our future life-changing work.

## **IT COSTS**

£50,000 donations. businesses. TO TRAIN A DOG FROM **PUPPY TO PARTNERSHIP** 

Canine Partners relies entirely on public charitable trusts, and legacies, as the charity receives no government funding.



We employ over 70 staff members and are supported by 11 trustees and 971 volunteers.

**60**%

of the dogs we train become fully jacketed assistance dogs,

while 40% take on alternative roles such as a home assistance canine, canine companion or dog ambassadors.

#### Behind the scenes of our **BBC Lifeline Appeal**

In March, we had the incredible honour of being featured in a special BBC Lifeline Appeal, presented by **British actress Helena Bonham** Carter, whose parents helped start Canine Partners 35 years ago.

The appeal showcased the life-changing impact of our assistance dogs through the moving stories of Alan and Hamlin, Sean and Lucas, and Harriet and Fevro. Each partnership highlighted how our dogs not only assist with everyday tasks, but also help restore independence, build confidence and provide constant companionship. The appeal showed how these dogs are so much more than just pets - they are a lifeline.



Filming took place at our National Training Centre in Leicestershire, where the BBC team captured key stages of our dogs' training, giving an exclusive look at how these amazing dogs learn the skills that will one day change someone's life. The filming was a huge team effort, with our staff, volunteers and partners all playing a key role in bringing the appeal to life.

Helena Bonham Carter's involvement brought warmth and authenticity to the appeal. Having been familiar with the charity since our very beginning, she has long understood the impact of our work.

During filming Helena met Daisie, one of our Dog Ambassadors and her handler, Partnership Trainer Ellie.

Helena was amazed by Daisie's skills and even asked if she could empty her washing machine!

We are overwhelmed by the generosity of the

public, whose support has already helped raise £24,500. Every donation will go directly towards providing more life-changing assistance dogs for disabled people across the UK.

To everyone who watched, donated and shared our appeal - thank you! Your kindness and support make our work possible, and together, we can continue to transform lives.

#### Missed the appeal?

Don't worry, you can still watch it on our website. Watch it at caninepartners.org.uk/bbclifeline2025 or scan the QR code below.



See more exclusive behind-the-scenes photos on our blog at caninepartners.org.uk/ bbclifeline2025BTS

#### Partner perspectives: Life with a canine partner

We've been creating life-changing partnerships for 35 years, and our latest partner voice survey reflects just how much our dogs transform the lives of those they support.



#### of our partners

say that their dog helps them live life to the fullest, overcoming daily challenges and breaking down barriers.

And for most...



say their dog has exceeded their expectations, demonstrating the extraordinary abilities these dogs have.

Our dogs provide more than just practical help - they offer companionship, boost confidence, and improve emotional well-being.

OF OUR

agree that their dog positively impacts their care, emotional support, and sense of safety.

#### Thanks to their dog...



need less professional care need less help from family and friends

...leading to stronger personal relationships and greater independence.

Our dogs also enable our partners to work, study, and volunteer, with 53% saying their dog has opened doors to new opportunities.

> We're making progress too. Since our last survey in 2022, 7% more of our partners feel confident, and 15% more feel independent.

As we celebrate 35 years, we're still focused on the challenges ahead - including our waiting lists - and doing all we can to help more people lead independent, fulfilling lives with a canine partner. With a clear five-year plan in place, we're in a strong position to create even more life-changing partnerships.





## Let's talk

Itchy skin Stiff or sore joints

Bad breath

Farts | Squishy poops

#### A CHANGE OF DIET CAN REALLY HELP!

ASK ONE OF OUR EXPERTS

(We promise not to embarrass your dog)









#### **Big Birthday cake recipes!**

As we celebrate 35 years of transforming lives, it's only right that our four-legged friends join the celebration! These simple, dog-friendly cake recipes are a perfect way to mark the milestone.

#### Fish Cake

- 1. Mash a 400g tin of fish (sardines, pilchards, or tuna) in a bowl.
  - 2. Stir in one egg, then gradually add plain or wholemeal flour until a thick dough forms.

    3. Microwave for 8-9 minutes, let it cool, then cut into

  - 4. Add a touch of Marmite for extra glavour.



- · Cut cakes into small chunks and freeze for later.
- Bake at 180°C for 15 minutes for a biscuit-like
- · Add small pieces of carrot, apple, or banana for a

## Peanut Butter and Banana Cake

- Mash one banana with three teaspoons of peanut butter (please ensure it is Xylitol-free so your treats are safe for dogs to eat). 2. Mix in one egg, then add flour until a dough forms. 3. Microwave for 8-9 minutes, cool and serve.

## Canine College

For 35 years, we've been laying the foundation for our puppies' life-changing work by teaching them key tasks like touch, tug and retrieve. These core skills help them prepare for the many tasks they will go on to learn.



'Touch' is a simple action where the dog touches their nose to a person's hand or an object. This skill is incredibly useful for our dogs, helping them press buttons, open doors, and turn on lights.

But 'touch' isn't just for assistance dogs - it is a fantastic and easy trick that any pet dog can learn too! This simple training technique can strengthen the bond with your dog while teaching them a fun and practical skill!

#### Why teach 'touch'?

Teaching your dog to touch your hand or an object on command has many benefits:

- Builds focus: Helps your dog pay attention to you, even in distracting environments.
- Boosts confidence: Encourages shy or nervous dogs to interact with new things.
- \*Provides mental stimulation: Engages your dog's brain and prevents boredom.
- Useful for training: Can be used to guide your dog into different positions or help with recall.

#### How to teach 'touch'

- 1. Hold out your hand: Present your open palm a few inches from your
- 2. Wait for curiosity: Most dogs will naturally sniff or investigate your hand.
- 3. Reward immediately: As soon as your dog touches your hand with their nose, say "yes!" or use a training clicker and reward with a treat.
- 4. Repeat and add a cue: Once your dog understands the action, introduce the word "touch" as they do it.
- 5. Increase difficulty: Gradually move your hand further away or use different objects for your dog to target.



Watch our how to video by scanning the QR code or visiting: caninepartners.org.uk/ how-to-teach-your-dog-touch

#### **Celebrating our** Corporate partnerships

We rely on our corporate partners to create life-changing partnerships; we couldn't transform lives without them. And, as we celebrate 35 years, we recognise their incredible contribution to our journey.



This year marks 25 years of support from Purina. Over the years. Purina has named and sponsored puppies through training, organised fundraising initiatives and provided discounted food for our dogs. Their employees also volunteer at events and take on challenging fundraising activities.





Pets Corner has been a key supporter since 2012, raising significant funds through in-store events and sales.

Become a corporate supporter today and help us create more life-changing partnerships. We offer dedicated support and a fun range of ways to get involved. To learn more, contact our Corporate Team at corporate@caninepartners.org.uk

#### DAVID WILSON HOMES WHERE QUALITY LIVES

David Wilson Homes has provided financial support and expertise to develop our facilities, including a recent accessible bungalow renovation at our National Training Centre.



The CPR Cup, organised by Collins Property Recruitment, is one of our largest corporate fundraising events. Teams from London property firms compete in a football tournament to raise money. To celebrate our 35th anniversary, this year's event aims to raise a record £35,000 for Canine Partners. During a recent visit to our National Training Centre, the team at CPR met one of their sponsored dogs. Howard, who has since been successfully partnered.

We are extremely thankful to all our corporate supporters for their continued support and dedication, which enables us to transform even more lives, one partnership at a time.

#### **Meet our Community Fundraising Team**







**Community Engagement** Officer (South)



Community Fundraising Officer (Scotland) Administrator

Whether you're taking on a challenge, hosting a bake sale or planning a sponsored walk, our friendly Community Fundraising Team is here to support you.

Rebecca, Ellie and Sarah lead our fundraising efforts in the Midlands, South and Scotland. working with individuals, schools, businesses and community groups to turn ideas into successful events. Freya ensures everything runs smoothly, coordinating events, managing donations and providing fundraisers with the resources and support they need to make a difference.



This year, we launched the Strive for 35 Challenge to celebrate our 35th anniversary and the response was amazing! Participants completed 35 miles, minutes or movements throughout March in their own way, at their own pace. People from across the country took part, raising £13,000 of vital funds.

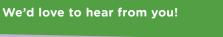
You don't need to take on a big challenge to make a difference there are many ways to get involved! Whether it's a physical activity, creative fundraiser or personal goal, every effort helps us to continue creating life-changing partnerships for the next 35 years.



#### A grant that's changing lives

We're incredibly grateful to The Pets Foundation, who have awarded us a generous £50,000 grant. This funding will directly support our financial assistance fund, ensuring our dogs receive the vital care they need to continue their life-changing work.

Visit caninepartners.org.uk/fundraising, email fundraising@caninepartners.org.uk or scan the QR code to get involved.





By fundraising or donating to Name a Puppy, you can support a puppy on their journey to become a life-changing assistance dog.

We offer four naming levels: Name, Train, Match, and Partner. You'll receive regular updates, following your puppy's progress every step of the way. Some levels even include the chance to meet your named puppy in person!

Name a puppy solo, with friends, through your workplace, or in memory of a loved one. Schools, clubs, and community groups can all get involved and make a real impact.

Start something life-changing today at caninepartners.org.uk/nameapuppy or scan the QR code.



# WIN UP TO £10,000 every week

Support our life-changing work today by entering at lottery.caninepartners.org.uk, scan the QR code or call 01628 200 343



Canine ets Call

