



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DBL Celebrates National Autism Awareness in April and Every Month

CENTRAL POINT, OR – In April 2016, Dogs for Better Lives (DBL) placed their first [Autism Assistance Dog](#), Ian with a young boy in southern Oregon’s Rogue Valley. Since then the program has grown beyond Oregon, into Washington, and most recently California. 1 in 59 children are diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD) in the US.

DBL is the premier provider of professionally trained Assistance Dogs, including [hearing](#), [facility](#), and autism dogs. To learn more about the application process, visit [here](#).

Now with a waiting list of more than 15 qualified clients across the west, the Autism Assistance Dog program has temporarily closed to new applicants. When the application process reopens in the near future, we will invite applications for children throughout the states of Oregon, California, and Washington who are between the ages of 4 – 11. Eventually, the program will expand to more states and ultimately will become a national program, similar to the hearing and facility dog programs.

“At no cost to the client and their family, we come to them, help set them up to succeed by providing this amazing dog, that we hope will help transform their life(lives),” stated CEO Bryan Williams. “We help change lives every day, it’s what helps me to get up and do it all over again tomorrow.”

Autism Assistance Dogs are professionally trained to act as an anchor to reduce or slow a child’s ability to bolt, apply deep pressure, and to provide companionship dedicated solely to the child. Combined with their professional training, an Autism Assistance Dogs’ calm and caring behavior have shown to decrease anxiety, increase calmness, reduce emotional meltdowns, and foster more manageable bedtime routines.

Throughout the month of April DBL is celebrating National Autism Awareness Month. Rosa Ochoa will never forget the day the doctor gave Julián, her 1 ½-year old son, a diagnosis for autism. She was only just learning English, as she had recently moved to Medford, Oregon from Mexico City. “We thought Julián just needed a shot or something and it will go away,” stated Rosa. “We hear the word ‘autism’ and we don’t know what it means. Everything they give us is printed in English. We felt very alone.”

Despite the initial language barrier, Rosa became a determined advocate for Julián, who is now 9 years old. She learned about Autism Assistance Dogs at Dogs for Better Lives’ Facebook page. “We never had a dog before, but when I see this in the news about autism dogs, my brain is like, ‘Julián can benefit from that,’” noted Rosa. “Julián doesn’t know how to find friends and we want him to be more independent. Since we brought Vanilla to our home, we are seeing a huge difference, and Julián is so happy.” To view Julian & Vanilla’s story, visit [here](#).

“We wish that we could just open the Autism Assistance Dog program nationally, though the reality is, there’s currently more demand than supply,” stated Certified Assistance Dog Trainer Ashley Rosenburger. “One dog at a time, we’re changing client’s lives, the communities they live in, and all for the better.”

To learn more about DBL's Autism Assistance Dog program, visit <https://dogsforbetterlives.org/autism-dogs/>



Dogs for Better Lives is a nationally recognized 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization focusing on the professional training and placement of Hearing Assistance Dogs, Autism Assistance Dogs, and Facility Dogs. Accredited by [Assistance Dogs International \(ADI\)](#) and recognized by [Charity Navigator](#) as a top 4-star nonprofit, Dogs for Better Lives has been rescuing dogs, bettering lives, and providing Assistance Dogs since 1977.

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