

CANINE LISTENER

DOGS FOR BETTER LIVES • JULY 2024 • NO.146

MAKING INDEPENDENCE POSSIBLE



Facility Dog Tucker

The Journey of Facility Dog Tucker

In the quiet, therapeutic spaces where lives are gently mended and stories unfold, a unique presence often brought comfort and warmth: Facility Dog Tucker. Since 2014, Tucker has served as a dedicated canine co-therapist alongside Brenda, a Licensed Professional Counselor. We recently checked in with Brenda upon Tucker's official retirement to share their story.

The Path to Trust

Tucker had been pulled from a shelter in the Pacific Northwest and worked for months with DBL's trainers to learn his Facility Dog tasks. That meant Tucker, although wonderfully trained, needed some time to warm up.

Tucker's initial timidity was a challenge. But Brenda and her colleagues provided the space and time necessary for Tucker to acclimate to his new role. DBL staff made several visits to help address specific behavioral issues, offering the option to return Tucker if things didn't work out. However, Brenda's determination with Tucker never wavered and everyone was committed to his success, working for 4 months to build trust and make the pairing work.

Transforming Lives

Over his decade-long Facility Dog career, Tucker's presence made a significant impact on countless lives. From casual encounters with strangers needing a bit of doggie love to helping clients feel safe enough to share their deepest stories, Tucker's contributions were invaluable.

One notable moment was with a client who was extremely anxious. Without prompting, Tucker left his comfy dog bed, approached her, and curled up next to her. The client's visible relaxation was immediate, allowing her to finally share a burden she had carried for years.



Facility Dog Tucker performs his 'lap' task with a client who is seated on the floor.

Reflecting on past reports, Brenda found numerous instances showcasing Tucker's impact. In 2017, a new resident struggled to share her story, tearful and anxious until Tucker crawled onto her lap. His comforting presence allowed her to open up, significantly shortening the time needed to build a therapeutic connection.

In 2018, a hallway encounter with a mother and daughter led to a profound breakthrough. The daughter, who had autism and rarely spoke during therapy sessions, talked the entire session when Tucker was present. Their subsequent appointments were scheduled specifically when Tucker could be there, illustrating his vital role in creating a safe, engaging environment for the client.

A Legacy of Love and Healing

Over the years, Tucker worked with approximately 200 clients, touching many more lives along the way. His presence brought joy, warmth, and even a bit of comic relief to the therapy setting. Staff often referred to him as their favorite co-worker, finding solace in his company during difficult days.

Facility dogs like Tucker make an incredible difference, Brenda noted. "They warm hearts, make people smile, and bring joy to otherwise challenging situations. They help not only the clients but the staff as well."

A Well-Earned Retirement

Tucker's retirement came when Brenda changed employment, moving to a setting where formal training or certification for a Facility Dog was not required. Despite retiring from his official duties, Tucker's days remained filled with purpose and joy.

“He'll actually still be going to work with me,” Brenda shared. “Naps and belly rubs are his favorite activities regardless of where he is.”

Tucker's journey from a timid shelter dog to beloved Facility Dog who has impacted hundreds of people in need exemplifies the transformative power of patience, support, and love. Thank you to Brenda for helping Tucker shine in his career, and congratulations to Tucker, on your well-deserved retirement!

From Shelter to Service Dog program reaches record number of shelter dogs in training

Our From Shelter to Service Dog Program is changing lives – and growing! Thanks to our incredible fosters and dedicated training staff, we've increased the number of shelter dogs training to become Service Dogs. Currently, we have seven amazing dogs in training. These future Service Dogs are being carefully trained to assist individuals in need, proving that every dog has the potential to make a profound impact.

To learn more about this unique program, visit dogsforbetterlives.org/shelter-to-service



Types of Hearing Assistance Dogs

Dogs for Better Lives' Hearing Dogs are trained to alert to specific household sounds by making physical contact (jumping on you or nosing you) then leading you to the sound.

Core household sounds include:
smoke alarm, oven timer, name call, baby cry,
door knock, phone, and alarm clock



	HOME HEARING DOG	CERTIFIED HEARING DOG
Awesome at Alerting to Sounds	☑	☑
Excellent Companion	☑	☑
Certified for Public Access	☒	☑

Learn more and apply: dogsforbetterlives.org/hearing-dogs



CHD Albus and Candace

It's been a year since Candace and Certified Hearing Dog, Albus, began their journey together. Albus continues to assist Candace with essential sounds like the oven timer, smoke alarm, doorbell, door knock, and phone alarm, ensuring her safety and independence.

Candace loves taking Albus to work, where he has become a beloved member of her school community. Outside of work, they enjoy various errands and adventures, including trips to the grocery store, Target, local museums, and even the bowling alley.

At home, Albus helps Candace hear important sounds, boosting her happiness and confidence. As Candace says, "Albus is my everything. He fills my heart." Their bond highlights the incredible impact of a certified hearing dog on both practical and emotional levels.

CHD Cookie and David

David and Certified Hearing Dog, Cookie, continue to thrive together. David is delighted with Cookie's assistance, which includes handling the caption phone, alarm clock, oven timer, and door knock. Cookie enjoys accompanying David to doctor's appointments, shopping trips, and daily walks for exercise. Despite being estimated at 11 years old, Cookie remains dedicated and effective in her role, bringing both practical help and joy to David's life.



CHD Mazda and Laura

We can't believe it's already been 10 incredible years for Laura and her amazing Certified Hearing Dog Mazda in Las Vegas! Both are doing well, but it's time for a little change. Mazda, the superstar, is slowing down a bit, and after heartfelt discussions, it's been decided it's time for a semi-retirement plan. Mazda will still be by Laura's side, accompanying her to work and tackling sounds at home like a pro. Mazda's repertoire remains top-notch! She's on duty for the smoke alarm, name calls, oven timer, and door knocks - keeping the household in check and adding that extra layer of safety.

CHD Hammy and Stephen

Stephen and his Certified Hearing Dog, Hammy, have been together for 10 and a half years, forming an incredible bond. They've traveled extensively, including three trips to Europe and stays at their homes in Palm Springs, Seal Beach, and southwest Michigan. Hammy has adapted well to various modes of travel, including planes and a recent train ride from Michigan to California.

Stephen and his partner praise Hammy as the best-trained dog they have ever seen. Hammy assists with the cell phone, door knock, name call, and smoke alarm at all their residences. Despite his age, Hammy remains active and attentive.





HHD Nemo and Brendon

Brendon and his Home Hearing Dog, Nemo, have been a team for seven years. Brendon has relied on Nemo for many milestones, including recently completing a degree in animal health sciences. This degree now helps him assist his father on their farm.

Nemo's alertness was crucial when a midnight smoke alarm went off at Brendon's college, helping him evacuate safely. Despite a few gray hairs, Nemo still works with the same enthusiasm and energy as during his training. He assists with the alarm clock, door knock, phone, smoke alarm, and name call. Brendon and his family credit Nemo with making college possible and keeping Brendon safe throughout his journey.

HHD Fiddler and Laurel

Laurel and Home Hearing Dog, Fiddler, have been together for a year now. Fiddler is energetic and enthusiastic, and Laurel ensures he gets plenty of exercise, which has even helped improve her bone density! Fiddler assists with the door knock, alarm clock, kitchen timer, and smoke alarm. Laurel's previous hearing dog, Ravioli, now 15 years old, still lives with them and follows Fiddler around to get treats with each sound. Their teamwork is a heartwarming sight!



CCD Wheeler

Career Change Dog Wheeler, a charismatic and skilled dog, has been excelling with the National Disaster Search Dog Foundation (SDF). Wheeler recently graduated SDF's training program and was placed with his handler, Alyssa in June. Both Wheeler and Alyssa diligently trained in agility, obedience, direction control, and rubble search in preparation for certification and future deployment.

Witnessing Wheeler's growth and adaptability during this crucial training phase has been incredible. We eagerly anticipate the positive impact this dynamic duo will have in serving their community.

CHD - Certified Hearing Dog: Certified Hearing Dogs respond to sounds in the home and have public access with their person.

AAD - Autism Assistance Dog: Autism Assistance Dogs are specially trained to enhance the safety and well-being of children and families living with Autism by providing a minimum of three tasks to assist with keeping children grounded and focused while presenting a social bridge for relationships and friendships.

HHD - Home Hearing Dog: Home Hearing Dogs are trained to respond to sounds in the home but are not trained/certified to accompany their person in public.

FD - Facility Dog: Facility Dogs go to work with and assist professionals such as physicians, teachers, counselors, police officers, and child advocates.

FEATURED PLACEMENTS

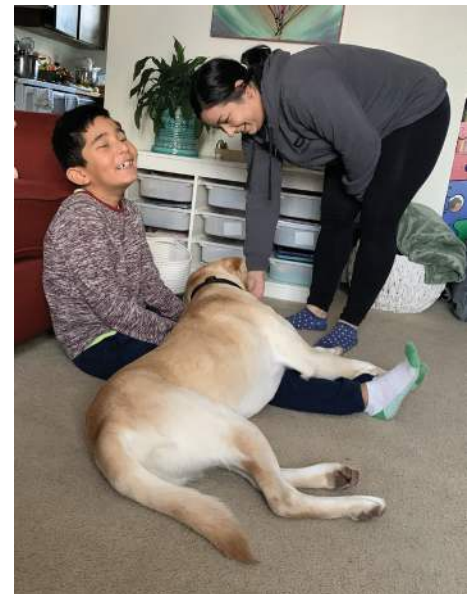


CHD Jetty and Donna

Certified Hearing Dog Jetty was placed with Donna in Arizona! Donna, who was already in love with Jetty before his arrival, fell head over heels when they finally met in person. Living with her adult daughter, two grandchildren, and four cats, Donna is thrilled that Jetty has seamlessly integrated into their family. Jetty has quickly taken on his role, alerting Donna to important sounds such as the doorbell, microwave, smoke alarm, and her name being called. With Jetty by her side, Donna is excited to maintain her independence despite her fading hearing. Jetty is deeply loved and is set to make a significant positive impact on Donna's life!

AAD Dipper and Ismael

Autism Assistance Dog Dipper has been joyfully placed with Ismael in Washington! Samira and Ed, Ismael's parents, had initially applied for a dog from DBL in 2019 and had nearly given up hope of receiving a call. They were ecstatic to learn that Dipper would be joining their family as an early Christmas gift for Ismael. Recognizing Ismael's affinity for animals, even during his nonverbal phases, made it clear that he was a perfect match for an Autism Assistance Dog. Witnessing Dipper's calming influence on Ismael during the placement was truly heartwarming. From the very first day, Samira and Ed noticed Dipper's impact, using his presence to help Ismael regulate when he became frustrated. Questions like, "Would you like Dipper to squish you?" or "I know it's frustrating, would you like to hug Dipper?" consistently helped Ismael calm down and move on to the next task. The family is eager to utilize Dipper's skills in lap, squish, settle, and place to support Ismael in various settings, including busy grocery stores, appointments, and other potentially overwhelming situations.



FD Tulip and Darci

Facility Dog Tulip has been successfully placed with Darci in Oregon! Darci, an Autism Consultant for the Grants Pass school district, was well-prepared and eager to begin this new chapter. Working one-on-one with numerous children, Darci looks forward to making Tulip a regular part of their daily routine and seeing the positive impact she will have on her students. Tulip will be performing tasks such as place, lap, settle, squish, visit, and touch. Darci's favorite moment during the placement was witnessing the profound effect Tulip had on students during a school visit. At home, Darci's young daughter, Jovie, might be the most excited of all, thrilled to have a new friend to play with. We can't wait to see the incredible work this team will accomplish together!

Second year of Bone AppeTREAT a tasty success!

Through sponsorships, contestants fundraising, and your generous donations, we raised more than \$124,000 for our 2nd annual signature event, Bone AppeTREAT held on May 18th. These funds are critical to supporting the training and placement of more Assistance Dogs, making a meaningful difference in the lives of our clients.

A huge congratulations to our Top Dog winners, Bree & Amy, who raised over \$12,000!

Thank you to everyone who made the day so special!

Contestants: Dr. Josh Broadwater, Tara Faye & Angie Monforte, David Cuttrell, and Amy Alton & Bree Bryson

Judges: Cynthia Murray, Dr. Serena Marie Ross, and Jessica O'Connor & Facility Dog Lander

Host: Amy McWhirter

And of course, thank you to all our generous donors and sponsors who made this event possible.



Missed the event or want to recreate those delicious treats?

Visit our website for the replay and treat recipes: dogsforbetterlives.org/bone-appetreat

Thank you to DCH Brunswick Toyota and Board Member, Lisa DeVivo!

Bone AppeTREAT's presenting sponsor DCH Brunswick Toyota has shown incredible commitment to Service Dogs since 2023.

Lisa DeVivo, a DBL Board Member and DCH Brunswick Toyota's General Manager, articulated the company's motivation perfectly,

“ Supporting Bone AppeTREAT and DBL is an investment in the well-being and happiness of our community's beloved pets. We believe in the mission of DBL and are proud to be part of such a meaningful cause.”

DCH Brunswick Toyota's involvement has been instrumental to the event's success, ensuring that we can continue to make a positive impact on the lives of countless dogs and people. Thank you, Lisa, and the entire team at DCH Brunswick Toyota, for your extraordinary support of our dogs in training and our clients.





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