



A Dog's Job



photos by Liz Kaye/ICANdog.org

Mini Fact:

Service dogs also become beloved friends.

Have you seen a dog helping someone with a disability? Service dogs are specially trained to help people with a wide variety of tasks. This week, The Mini Page learns more about these special animals.

The Seeing Eye

Guide dogs were first used to help blind people. A school in Germany trained dogs for veterans of World War I who had lost their sight. An American woman named Dorothy Harrison Eustis visited the school and wrote an article about it for a popular magazine in 1927.

A blind man, Morris Frank, wrote to Dorothy and asked her to help him. He went to Switzerland and was trained to work with a dog guide. Two years later, Dorothy and Morris founded a dog guide school in Nashville, Tennessee, called The Seeing Eye.

Expanding duties

Around the 1970s, duties for service dogs expanded. The animals were trained to help people with balance, with retrieving items, or with hearing a phone ring or an alarm sound.

Today, service dogs can assist people with other kinds of disabilities, including:

- **seizures** — A dog can find help or push an alert button, or even speed-dial for emergency services.
- **autism** — Dogs can lie on a person's lap to calm them down or nudge a person to stop a repetitive motion.
- **Type 1 diabetes** — Dogs can smell a person's breath or saliva and know if the

person is suffering from low blood sugar.

• **PTSD** — Veterans of war who suffer from **post-traumatic stress disorder** use service dogs to help with fear and anxiety. These dogs can be taught to interrupt a bad dream or turn on a light before a person enters a dark room.

Dogs can even help a person use a credit card at a store or ATM!

Training dogs

Experts who train service dogs say the dog's **temperament**, or personality, is the most important quality. Dogs must be able to focus and behave well in public. They shouldn't be excitable.



Laborador retrievers and golden retrievers are generally good breeds, but not every dog will have the right traits to be a service dog.

Dogs are usually **socialized**, or taught to be around people and be calm, from the time they're puppies. Foster families train them basic skills for 18 months to two years to get them ready for their service training.

Getting a service dog

People can get dogs from a training organization or from a professional private trainer, or they can train dogs themselves. Usually a person will work for about two weeks learning how to use a service dog. Dogs may be free or cost up to thousands of dollars.

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If a service dog owner asks you not to pet his or her dog, don't feel bad. The owner may know that the dog has trouble focusing if it gets attention from strangers.

Service dog etiquette

When you see a service dog wearing a harness, remember that the dog is working. If you approach or pet the dog, make eye contact, or speak to it in a sing-song voice, it's hard for the animal to stay focused.



Instead, always talk to the person with the dog first. Ask if it's OK to pet the dog, and don't feel bad if the owner says no.

If you have your own dog with you, keep control of it. Make sure your dog doesn't run up to the service dog.

Resources



On the Web:

- bit.ly/MPservicedogs

At the library:

- "Buddy: The First Seeing Eye Dog" by Eva Moore
- "Animal Helpers for the Disabled" by Deborah Kent

Try 'n' Find

Words that remind us of service dogs are hidden in this puzzle. Some words are hidden backward, and some letters are used twice. See if you can find:



APPROACH, AUTISM,
BEHAVE, BLIND,
DIABETES, DISABILITY,
DOG, FOCUS, FOSTER,
GUIDE, PTSD, PUPPY,
SCHOOL, SEIZURE,
SERVICE, SOCIALIZE,
TASK, TEMPERAMENT,
TRAIN, VETERAN, WAR,
WORK.

S E T E B A I D W A R A N E C
G O D I S E R V I C E U A D Z
O R E T S O F P T S D T R I H
B F D P U P P Y G U I I E U T
E R U Z I E S W O R K S T G R
H T Y T N E M A R E P M E T A
A A P P R O A C H G K K V W I
V S W S C H O O L F O C U S N
E K N I D I S A B I L I T Y R
B L I N D R E Z I L A I C O S

Mini Spy Classics

Mini Spy and Basset are exploring a volcano in Hawaii. See if you can find the hidden pictures. Then color the picture.



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- exclamation mark
- question mark
- number 3
- dolphin
- ruler
- arrow
- pencil
- fish
- bat
- elf
- letter A
- man in the moon
- snail
- bell
- mushroom
- lima bean
- number 6
- toothbrush

Mini Jokes



Denise: What works best for a dog with a fever?
Devin: Mustard. It's good for hot dogs!

Eco Note



All life on Earth, and the places that support it, are together known as the **biosphere**. Life thrives on Earth in a zone that stretches from the ocean depths up into the lower atmosphere. Living things flourish in the oceans, in fresh water and on land, including in caves and in the soil. There are an estimated 8.7 million species on Earth. Most of them live on land.

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Thank You



The Mini Page thanks Sally Irvin, interim executive director of Assistance Dogs International, for help with this issue.

Teachers: For standards-based activities to accompany this feature, visit: bit.ly/MPstandards. And follow The Mini Page on Facebook!



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