

Support Dogs' charity magazine

Aura

Autumn/Winter 2018/19

Edition 33



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

New puppy scheme to help more lives

Read more on page 4-5

Life-saving epilepsy seizure alert dogs

Find out more on page 9

“ I don't know what we'd be like if we didn't have Willow. Thank you Support Dogs.”

Emma, autism assistance client and mum of Sam

AURA FEATURE STORY ON PAGE 10-11

supportdogs 

For Autism. For Epilepsy. For Disability

Developed by Veterinary Surgeon *John Burns*
BVMS MRCVS

Great for all-round health and for dogs prone to...

- Upset digestion • Poo eating • Weight problems
- Behaviour problems • Bad breath • Body odour
- Full anal glands • Tear staining • Fussy eating
- Stiffness • Persistent moulting • Lack of vitality
- Tooth tartar • Itchy skin/ears/feet

...all of these may be diet related

For the best advice service in the business, call our in-house nutritionists on:

**Freephone
08083028508**



Proud sponsors of Support Dogs



**NATURAL
FOOD FOR PETS**
DOG | CAT | RABBIT

www.burnspet.co.uk

MESSAGE FROM RITA...

A growing demand and the need for better regulation

Support Dogs hit the news headlines this summer as the enormous increase in demand for our services was highlighted.

The story that was run across the BBC and papers including the Daily Telegraph focused specifically on the demand for autism assistance dogs. The demand has shot up from just 202 requests in 2012 to 2,310 last year; although the rise in demand is also mirrored in our other two programmes, epilepsy seizure alert and disability. In total over 4,500 individuals and families contacted the charity last year requesting our help.

While our charity strives to grow and help an increasing number of families each year, the fact remains that our waiting lists are lengthy. We have a real concern that if people have to wait to get an autism assistance dog they may go elsewhere, and there are people out there who may be manipulating the system, and charging high prices for poorly-trained dogs.

Our services, like those of other Assistance Dog UK-affiliated charities, are provided entirely free of charge. Our dogs have reached high standards of training set by Assistance Dogs International, whereas dogs trained by non-accredited bodies may not meet those standards. This could put vulnerable people at real risk. This autumn we held a reception at the House of Commons where we urged MPs to look at improving regulations and standards regarding this.

The event also aimed to increase awareness of the extraordinary impact that our support dogs have. While we are a small charity, reliant entirely



Rita with pup-in-training Marky

on voluntary donations, our work saves the NHS an estimated minimum of £3.5 million a year.

Ultimately we want to grow so that we can help everyone who is in need of our services. As part of our continuing steps to achieve this, this year we were delighted to launch our first-ever puppy programme. This programme aims to increase the number of dogs we train each year, adding to those dogs that come to us each year for training from sources including rescue centres and rehoming websites. Through this programme we are sourcing our puppies from well-established, reputable breeders. To date our first eight puppies have joined us through this programme this year, being homed from eight weeks old with volunteer puppy socialisers at the start of a training programme that will take over two years to complete as they strive to become life-changing support dogs.

You can read about several of our newest partnerships in the following pages and I hope you find them as moving and inspirational as I do. We rely entirely on your support and I do hope that you will continue to join us in our journey to improve the lives of many more people.

Rita Howson

Rita Howson
Chief executive

About Support Dogs

It's Support Dogs' passion and commitment to ensure that people affected by autism, epilepsy and physical disability can enjoy a greater level of independence. We aim to do this by providing, training and supporting registered assistance dogs.

We provide:

Autism assistance dogs for children aged three to ten years with autism. The dogs are trained to provide safety for the child and reduce stress in social environments.

Seizure alert dogs for people with epilepsy. The dogs are trained to provide a hundred per cent reliable, 10-55 minute warning prior to the onset of an epileptic seizure, which enables them to get to a place of their choosing and take control of the situation.

In some instances it has been reported that seizure alert dogs have also been shown to reduce seizure frequency.

Disability assistance dogs for people with physical disabilities. The client's own pet dog is trained to perform tasks which are specifically tailored to their individual needs; examples of these tasks include:

- Opening and closing doors
- Raising the alarm
- Fetching the post
- Loading and unloading the washing machine
- Assisting with dressing and undressing

Support Dogs is a registered charity and does not charge for its services. However we rely entirely on voluntary donations and receive no government funding.

Chief Executive: Rita Howson

Chair: Barry Brackner

Honorary President: Angela Rippon CBE

Patrons: The Earl & Countess of Scarborough
Elaine Paige OBE

Contact

Support Dogs
800 Brightside Lane
Sheffield

S9 2RX

Registered Charity Number: 1088281

info@supportdogs.org.uk

www.supportdogs.org.uk

[FOLLOW US @supportdogruk](https://twitter.com/supportdogruk)

[LIKE US supportdogruk1](https://www.facebook.com/supportdogruk)

To sponsor a dog today call Support Dogs on

0114 261 7800

to donate visit

www.supportdogs.org.uk



Pups take centre stage in new scheme to meet growing demand

Over the past few months a chorus of 'oohs' and 'aahs' has been reverberating around Support Dogs' social media channels as we posted yet another photo of a cute puppy on Facebook and Twitter.

But although the pups are undeniably adorable, there is a serious purpose behind the images, as the youngsters are also prospective assistance dogs of the future.

Support Dogs took the decision to add another source of dogs - as well as taking unwanted pets from rescue centres and private homes and from other dog charities - in the wake of unprecedented demand for our services.

Puppies including Westie, Marky, Dan, Derek, Raife, Sally, Cobble, and Burnsie are amongst our first recruits and are currently being cared for by 'puppy socialisers' living near our national training centre in Sheffield, who responded to our appeals.

Clare (pictured right) and Helen in our puppy co-ordination scheme are responsible for

selecting puppies and providing a structured training programme for each individual pup. The puppies get their first taste of training; experiencing a wide range of environments and attending regular classes at the charity's centre before they embark on their proper training at the age of 15 months.

Support Dogs' chief executive Rita Howson said:

"We're training more dogs than ever before but even so we can't meet the overwhelming demand for our services. We hope this new puppy scheme will help to move us a step closer to bridging that gap."

There is still need for more puppy socialisers to come forward as more puppies are recruited from private breeders and other charities.

"Just loving cute puppies is not enough - potential puppy socialisers will have to be prepared to be at home for most of the day, put in some hard work, cope with typical puppy behaviour and are committed to meeting the puppy's physical and mental needs," added Rita.

"But they will have the enormous satisfaction of knowing they are helping us train more much-needed assistance dogs for people with autism, epilepsy and physical disability."

Want to help out?
See how here..



Anyone interested in becoming a puppy socialiser and lives within an hour's drive of Sheffield should contact our volunteer co-ordinator Sarah Cooper on **0114 2617800** or email sarah.cooper@supportdogs.org.uk

Puppy love at the Rover's Return

It was a case of puppy love at the Rover's Return for Coronation Street star Chris Gasgoyne when he enjoyed a close canine encounter with cute assistance dogs of the future.

The actor, who plays Peter Barlow in the long-running soap, is a big dog lover, and was delighted to be asked by Support Dogs to pose with pups Westie and Dan, to help with the launch of our exciting new puppy training programme.

"I'm very happy to promote Support Dogs; they're a fantastic charity and their dogs really do transform people's lives," said Chris. *"Plus, it gives me a chance to have a cuddle with these gorgeous little fellas Westie and Dan. They've clearly got great futures ahead of them as successful support dogs."*



CHALLENGE EVENTS 2018

Help us change the lives of those with autism, epilepsy and disability by taking part in these brilliant challenges. For more details please email fundraising@supportdogs.org.uk or ring 0114 2617800.



Tom completes the dog suit challenge in the Great North Run

Tom Ward hopes to successfully complete THREE demanding charity challenges in as many months in aid of Support Dogs. They include a skydive in the New Year and the 'Hell Up North' half marathon. But the toughest so far was running the Great North Run in the Support Dogs' dog suit! Tom, a sales and solutions manager for ESP Projects, a computer company in Sheffield which has provided IT support for Support Dogs for a number of years, expects to raise several hundred pounds for his favourite charity. Says Tom: "I wanted to do a couple of runs this year, and it made sense to do them for a fantastic charity like Support Dogs, ESP's current charity of the year. I've seen them grow and develop over the years and I'm massively impressed by what they do." Support Dogs' fundraising manager Danny Anderson, said: "We're extremely grateful to ESP for their fantastic support this year and of course to Tom for his superb efforts on our behalf."

If you have the bottle to take on a running challenge in one of our dog suits, and can raise over £200, do get in touch. We can provide the suit!

London to Paris Cycle 24-28 July 2019



Cycling from London to Paris is one of the best cycling experiences in Europe. Add some Tour de France excitement into the mix and you will have enjoyed simply the best road cycling challenge on offer. As you enter Paris in one large peloton, the crowds will be cheering thinking the Tour has reached the city one day early - the atmosphere is simply electric!

Trekfest 6 July 2019



Trek through the Brecon Beacons in this ultimate endurance challenge. Trekfest will test you to your limits with challenging climbs and steep descents. Both the 25km and 50km routes venture to the summit of Pen Y Fan - the highest peak in southern Britain.

Obstacle Colour Rush June/July 2019



This year's challenge events will take place in Windsor, Milton Keynes, London, Newcastle, Brighton, Sheffield, Bath, Uttoxeter, Liverpool, and Windsor. A fun-filled 5k, with 20 obstacles, eight colour stations and 20 music zones. Not to be missed!



CHALLENGES FOR YOU AND YOUR DOG

Dog Jog Across the UK throughout 2019



All dogs (and their humans) whatever breed or size, can take part in this fantastic, fun, relaxed 5km dog jogging event. It's all about getting involved, having fun and enjoying the great outdoors with your favourite four-legged friend!

Canix Autumn to Spring throughout the UK



Canix or canicross is cross-country running with your dog, and there are events of different lengths held up and down the country. You will never find another running partner who gives you more motivation than your four-legged friend! Any breed of dog, large or small can take part with very little training.

Great North Dog Walk June 2019



Bring your best friend along to the world's biggest dog walk! Suitable for all including pushchairs and wheelchairs. There are four walks to choose from, along the South Shields coastline.



Move it in March is back!

Following the success of our Move it in March challenge last spring, we are again setting you the challenge to take on 10km during March 2019 to raise funds for our work. Between 1st and 31st March take on 10km, your speed, your way. Whether you run, walk, swim, skip or anything in between, cover the 10km a little every day or all at once. Why not set your dog the challenge too! Get in touch to receive your goodie bag and get started.

Skydive Choose your date and from locations across the UK



The sky is the limit if you take on this challenge a raise a minimum of £395 for Support Dogs.



'THANK YOU' PUPPY PARTY

Support Dogs held a very special tea party to thank volunteers who are currently devoting their time to bringing up our pups-in-training.

Our puppy socialisers enjoyed an afternoon tea at the Kenwood Hall Hotel in Sheffield, and heard about the progress made by our new puppy training programme. Seven of the pups attended the tea party too and enjoyed a run in the hotel grounds afterwards.

Support Dogs set up the programme of recruiting puppies to boost the number of prospective assistance dogs to meet ever-rising demand from the public.

Puppy socialisers devote 12 months to providing the pups with a loving home and helping with their basic training before they move into training proper.

"We're very grateful to our wonderful puppy socialisers who take on the challenge of looking after our pups until they're old enough to start their training as it's a huge if very satisfying commitment," explained Support Dogs' fundraising manager Danny Anderson. *"We're currently recruiting for more volunteer puppy socialiser and urge people to get in touch to find out more details."*



Support Dogs in the corridors of power

More than 100 MPs, supporters, clients and invited guests enjoyed a Support Dogs' reception in the House of Commons in October.

The event was aimed at building the charity's profile among politicians, many of whom were moved to tears by clients' stories about how their dogs have changed their lives. Guests included Support Dogs' honorary president Angela Rippon, patrons the Earl and Countess of Scarborough and actress Caroline Quentin, pictured right with Support Dogs' chief executive Rita Howson.



Angela Rippon with disability assistance client Andrea Jack

Ann's life-saving canine threesome

We often refer to our wonderful assistance dogs as 'life-transforming' but for Ann Watson her three epilepsy seizure alert dogs have been literally life-saving.

Prior to getting an assistance dog, Ann, now 60, had numerous seizures every day.

She often fell down the stairs or fell and banged her head on the radiator, and on one occasion when crossing the road to catch a bus, she had a seizure and collapsed in the middle of the road, causing a multi-car pile-up. From that day on she was terrified of leaving the house alone.

Life is now very different and Ann says she owes her life to her three seizure alert dogs provided and trained by Support Dogs over the past 20-odd years. First Shadow, a border collie originally from a rescue centre, Victor a black Labrador stray taken in by council dog wardens before being passed on to the charity, and now Barney, another black Labrador.

Says Ann: *"I would not be here without Shadow - he saved me many times from falling down the stairs. Since I've had my three dogs I have never been hurt or had an injury. That's why Support Dogs means so much to me. They actually have saved my life. I don't know what I'd be without them."*

Ann fell and struck her head while out playing at the age of seven, and went on to develop severe epilepsy. As she grew up her problems got worse and she struggled to stay in employment. She kept it secret from her husband Peter when she first met him, but soon had to explain to him what

was wrong with her.

It was her husband who saw a TV programme about Support Dogs and suggested applying for a seizure alert dog. The result was a long and successful partnership with Shadow as the numbers of seizures reduced and her nerves and stress levels became manageable.

Shadow was eventually replaced by Victor. *"I doted on Victor, partly because he alerted me to a seizure on day one - he was the only dog to do that,"* says Ann.



She and Peter moved down to South Yorkshire from Scotland to be closer to Support Dogs' training centre in Sheffield, and again Ann and her second dog enjoyed a long and happy relationship. Victor retired aged ten last year and now

lives with senior Support Dogs instructor Tracey, who adores him.

And so on to Barney. *"I missed Victor very much but again, Barney is completely different,"* explains Ann. *"He is like no other dog I have known and give gives me a 21-minute alert of an oncoming seizure. I can get out and about, jump on the bus and go into town; I'm not worried about going out on my own with Barney. He has never been wrong."*

Ann still gets anxious and has panic attacks when she's with large numbers of people, but is reassured that for the next eight or nine years she and Barney will be an effective partnership. *"It's not just the alert itself; it's the emotional confidence knowing that you are going to be alerted that makes the difference,"* she says. *"It's hard to describe the feeling that having one of these dogs gives you."*

"If it wasn't for Support Dogs I would be house-bound. They are a great charity and I love them. And Barney is my life and I am his."



To find out more about our seizure alert programme go to www.supportdogs.org.uk

How do dogs sense an oncoming seizure?

One of the questions we're often asked at Support Dogs is how our seizure alert dogs can detect an oncoming epileptic seizure - is a different smell or a change in behaviour in their owner that they pick up on?

There is no simple answer to what is a complex issue. Rita Howson, chief executive of Support Dogs explains: *"Dogs are very good observers of humans. Dogs know what is going to happen when you pick up their leash; their behaviour indicates this. Their behaviour can also change when they pick up on more subtle cues - maybe a smell or behavioural change in the client that occurs before an oncoming seizure."*

"Essentially, by careful observation, which might require hours of videotaping, we can hone



in on what that change is, reinforce it, and teach the client to recognise it. It takes time and needs follow up, but it is entirely possible to achieve up to a 50-minute warning with many dogs."

Support Dogs is now working with researchers at Gent University to improve scientific understanding of the changes that our dogs are responding to, which will lead to a much greater understanding of the condition and our ability to help to improve the lives of those affected by epilepsy.

See our website for more news updates:
supportdogs.org.uk/news

WILLOW THE WONDER-DOG MAKES NORMAL LIFE POSSIBLE FOR YOUNGSTER SAM



Sam, who lives in Sheffield with mum Emma, dad Steve and four-year-old sister Ellie, was diagnosed with autism at the age of five. Bright lights, music, crowds, shops all overloaded his brain and he found it difficult to cope.

So what's made such a difference? Step forward black Labrador Willow, who has been working with the youngster and his family for just over a year, and in May Sam and Willow qualified as Support Dogs' latest autism assistance partnership.

The day out at Alton Towers was further proof of the incredible difference that Willow has made to Sam's life. **"He's a little boy who struggles to be happy, who is over the moon,"** she says, as boy and dog sit companionably in their sitting room, and then chase a ball around the garden.

Sam's autism takes very particular forms. He has sensory difficulties - which means he struggles with noise and crowds, has severe anxiety and he also suffers from depression. Unlike lots of youngsters with autism, he is verbal, except when he's very stressed, and, until Willow came into his life, had no sense of danger.

Says Emma: **"Willow can be very calm when she needs to be, but also excitable and daft, gets him playing and distracts him - they are a perfect match. When Sam has a bad day he goes into the garden and plays with Willow and 20 minutes later he is smiling again; she makes him laugh."**

Sam's problems began when he was three and started to struggle at school; lashing out at people in frustration, and covering his ears in class. He spent increasing amounts of time at the school's 'nurture unit, specialist provision for children who struggle in mainstream school.

Over time, his parents could barely get him to school - they couldn't hold his hand because he hated to be touched and he would run off into the road. Keeping him safe became more and more of an issue and Emma and Steve ended up taking him to school in a disability buggy. The number of 'meltdowns' he experienced increased. Emma had to give up her job working in data management with South Yorkshire Police. **"We got to the point where we could not leave the house. We were knocking on so many doors, trying so many things, but nothing was happening,"** says Emma.

They applied to Support Dogs for an autism assistance dog and were invited to an open day. **"I had a gut feeling that a dog might help him, but I never realised it would be as good as it is,"** reports Emma, who did the initial training with Willow before her son and the dog were introduced. A camera crew from CBBC were on hand to record their first ever meeting and it's a touching scene as Sam, initially wary, starts playing ball with Willow, and his face breaks into a lovely smile. His parents watch, tears in their eyes.

And when the CBBC crew came to film three months after their initial visit, he chatted to the presenter who could see an enormous change in him.

Straight away Willow and Sam had a really close bond. Sam struggles with his emotions but is now less anxious because Willow has such a calming effect, acting as his safety net and keeping him calm when they go out. Sam is attached to Willow by a wrist strap, as he doesn't like a harness. Crowded streets and busy places are not a threat anymore and Sam is no longer a danger to himself by running into the road.

"Sam wants to go out now!" says Emma. **"He will actually ask to go to the shops or to the woods. She has given him confidence and makes him feel safe. When he struggles - and he still struggles - Willow is there. Sam will lie down on the floor because he can't run off, and Willow will lie down with him. It makes such a difference and we know that Sam is safe."**

"Although the main reason for getting Willow was to get Sam out of the house in safety, she has also done wonders for his self-esteem and confidence, and Sam will now chat to members of the public when they come up and ask him about her."

As Sam's main carer who bore the brunt of his moods, and on whom Sam was utterly dependent, Emma now reports that Sam has now transferred much of that dependence to Willow, meaning she and her husband can go out together occasionally.

The family are also trying out new things - they went to a café for Sam's granddad's birthday breakfast, which would have been unthinkable a year ago. Getting Sam to bed now takes 20 minutes as he is so much calmer - it used to take two to three hours. Sam is now at a special school in Sheffield and once he settles in Emma hopes to be able to go back to work. They are moving towards a normal life, courtesy of their wonder-dog Willow.

"I don't know what we'd be like if we didn't have Willow. Since we've had her we've had a massive lifestyle change," says Emma. **"The doctors wanted to put Sam on medication for his anxiety, but Willow has reduced his anxiety to such an extent that we can work on it with him without drugs. They had never come across an autism assistance dog and they could so the difference in him. If you had seen him last year you would have seen a very different child. Thank you Support Dogs."**

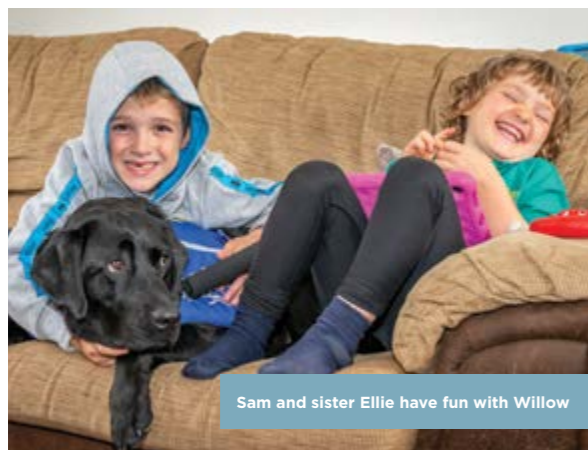
Emma, Sam and Willow walking near their home in Sheffield



To find out more about our autism assistance programme go to www.supportdogs.org.uk



Sam and Willow enjoy a quiet moment in the garden



Sam and sister Ellie have fun with Willow

A pooch 'on prescription' leads to the best medicine for Ian

Flat-Coated Retriever Raven was recommended by Ian and Margaret's GP as a means of improving their health and mobility. Three years later Raven has just qualified as Ian's disability assistance dog.

Over the past three years beautiful Flat-Coated Retriever Raven has been bringing some much-needed light into the lives of Ian and Margaret Chadwick. Ian, now 65, has suffered from a severe, crippling form of inflammatory arthritis called ankylosing spondylitis for many years. Eighteen years ago, while bending over to put a video into a recording machine, he blacked out and woke up in intensive care.

"I'd been suffering from bouts of back pain, and it transpired that my vertebra had collapsed, causing the disc to sever and affect the nerves in my spine," he recalls. *"They told me I would spend the rest of my life in a wheelchair."*

At the time of the incident Ian was in his late 40s. He had a very active life, kept hens and bees, and enjoyed climbing, walking and horse-riding.

With supreme effort he managed to learn to walk short distances "due to sheer bloody-mindedness" using crutches but is in near-constant pain which painkillers barely touch. He has had his right knee replaced, and will need the left knee and both hips replacing. Osteoarthritis has fused bones in his ear and affected his hearing, and the drugs have damaged his kidneys. He had to take early retirement on medical grounds from his job at Customs and Excise seven years ago after working for Royal Mail for almost 40 years.

Ian and Margaret, who also has serious health problems that prevent her being active, had always had dogs in their younger years. But three years ago, Margaret's doctor advised her to get another to encourage them to get out more.

"He jokingly wrote me a pretend 'prescription' that said: 'Any dog, any size, any colour,'" says Margaret. *"So we got Raven for my birthday from a breeder and she was the pick of the litter."*

The smitten couple soon realised that not only was Raven a beautiful dog, but was also extremely smart, and would be an ideal assistance dog for Ian.

"She is the most intelligent dog I've ever owned, and I've owned a lot - she knocks them into a cocked hat," says Ian. *"She is so perceptive and intuitive, and really wants to learn and to please you all the time."*

Ian and Raven were accepted into Support Dogs' disability dog programme last year where she flew through training, and qualified in May. Ian struggles to take his socks off and get his arms out of jumpers and shirts so Raven helps with that, also picking things up he's dropped. Raven also alerts Ian when the smoke alarm goes off, pouncing on him enthusiastically, and has been trained to fetch help if he falls.

But as many Support Dogs' clients attest, the companionship and close bond between man and dog is just as important as Raven's practical assistance. Over the years of his illness Ian has suffered from periods of severe depression and Raven has been essential in helping him to deal with his 'big black dog' of depression.

"She is always there for me when I am low or depressed, and she is such a pick-me-up," says Ian. *"She is always happy to see me, never has an off day, never grumpy or bad tempered. She instinctively knows when I'm struggling and when I'm in pain. She watches me all the time, my little shadow."*

"When I'm chewing my knuckles with pain she will plonk her head on my knee as if to say: 'cheer up dad'. Where I am is a very lonely place to be, and she breaks down those social barriers when I'm out, and makes it easier to talk to people."

Adds Margaret: *"Raven is so confident, and nothing seems to faze her. She follows Ian everywhere and even goes into the bathroom when he's in the bath and puts her nose in all the bubbles. Everything is a game to her!"*

Ian and Margaret and Raven live in a terraced house in Prestwich, which has been adapted for his needs, and Ian, a practical person, keeps busy doing DIY and painting - which he can do sitting down, and has a new hobby of making leather belts.

"When people tell me 'you can't do that' then I have to do it - you only fail when you stop trying," he stresses. *"My faith is important to me, and this little lady, Raven, is a godsend. She's brilliant."* Margaret adds: *"Having Raven made such a big difference to Ian and to me. He can go out with her, and I don't have to go every time. It's freed me up and given him more independence. And it's all thanks to Support Dogs."*



To learn more about applying to have your pet dog trained up to become your disability assistance dog please visit www.supportdogs.org.uk/disability-assistance

We'll meet again - in only four weeks time!

A key stage in the disability assistance training programme is when a client's pet dog comes to live and train away from their owner at our national training centre in Sheffield.

For our clients this is one of the hardest parts of the process; having to say goodbye to their pet for a month, even though they know that this is to enable them to really concentrate on their fun and reward-based training to become a life-changing support dog.

In fact some people even pull out or don't go ahead with the training because they can't face the prospect of losing their four-legged support, even temporarily. But training manager at Support Dogs Katie Burns is keen to stress that although it can be a lonely time for the dog-loving client, the four weeks is a vital part of their development from pet pooch to professional canine.

"A lot of new disability assistance dog clients simply don't like their dog coming to us and staying with a foster carer for four weeks - it's too much of a wrench, having to give up their pet for a month," says Katie. *"But although it's tough, it's worth it, and we want to put people's minds at rest, and remind them why we do it. We want a fresh, blank canvass, get rid of any bad habits; it's crucial to what we do. Then the client comes over and spends a further two weeks reinforcing what the dog has already learnt."*

The Support Dogs' training team are also keen to stress that none of the dogs-in-training spend a single night in kennels during their enforced absence from home, but spend all their evenings and weekends with a foster carer in the city.

Ian and Margaret were worried about the prospect of being without Raven for a month. *"The prospect of Raven being away for so long was terrible,"* says

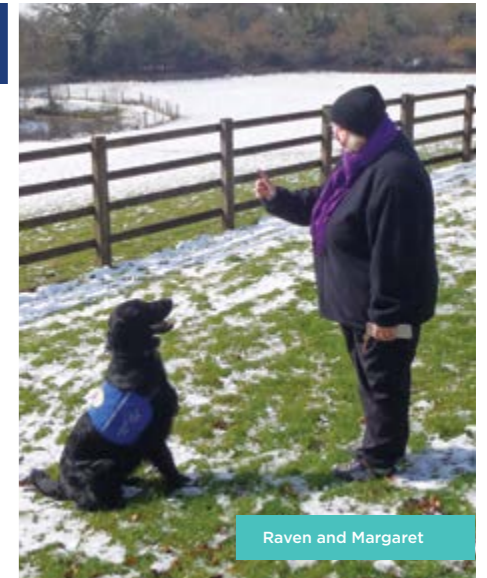
Margaret. *"When it came to leaving Raven - she had always lived inside so wasn't used to kennels - I worried that she would forget us. Ian was lonely without her but not as heartbroken as I was - she was my dog after all!"*

"I knew she was staying with Michelle, a lovely foster carer, as Raven's trainer's Georgina told us. I wasn't worried that she would be ill-treated, but she didn't know anyone except us. We thought she might fret - as we were fretting!"

Ian was less emotional than his wife but still missed Raven.

"What really helped were the phone calls we received from Georgina usually after the weekend telling of how our girl was progressing and hearing Raven's bark when she heard us on the phone," he says. *"She was so excited to see us at the end of the training - she hadn't forgotten us!"* Adds Margaret: *"It was tough while she was away but worth it. I'd say to anyone thinking of applying to Support Dogs' disability dog programme to go ahead and do it. Having Raven made such a big difference to Ian and to me."*

Michelle, who lives in Rotherham, and has been a foster carer for Support Dogs for the past year,



Raven and Margaret

looked after Raven during his training. She says: *"Ian and Margaret were a bit sad and wary about leaving Raven, but when I met them afterwards I was able to reassure them that foster carers do this because they love animals, and that they're going to a good home. All the dogs have their own personality, but Raven was lovely to walk, very well-behaved, and so sweet. Although there's a training element, the dogs have fun with us too."*



Raven

Tokai's double whammy

Support dog Tokai has provided a lifeline for a mother and son for the past eight years.

Trish Bretton's support dog Tokai has not only transformed her own life for the better - but that of her son Luke too.

Trish, aged 52, from Wetherby in West Yorkshire, has suffered from multiple sclerosis for the past 13 years. Over the years it has progressed and affected her mobility, and she now needs a walking frame.

A single mum, Trish originally bought Tokai, a Labrador/whippet cross, as a pet for Luke's 14th birthday, so that he could get out and about with his friends and enjoy his teenage years.

But then she met someone with MS who had a support dog and realised it provided exactly the kind of help that she needed. She applied to Support Dogs for Tokai to be her disability assistance dogs, and Tokai was assessed, then passed her training with flying colours.

That meant when Tokai became Trisha's official disability assistance dog Luke could go out and leave his mum safe in the knowledge that Tokai would look after her.

"I didn't want Luke to be my carer and I didn't want him to be stuck at home with me, or worry about leaving me on my own," explained Trish. "As well as being an invaluable support to me, Tokai has given my son greater independence. He has thrived, and all the things he has done since we got Tokai has been down to her. She has changed two lives - mine, and the life of my son."

Luke, now 22, went to university, and is now a supply teacher and is in the RAF Reserves. He hopes to join the RAF in the future.

Trish's MS has progressed since she was diagnosed in 2005. She describes it as 'like a dripping tap, getting worse over time very slightly.' She has had to give up work, doesn't get out that often, and sometimes struggles to cope.

"I use a frame constantly but I can still drive - my car is like my mobility scooter,



Says Trish. "I could drive from Scotland to Devon, but the problem is when I get out of the car!"

Trish used to be able to walk Tokai in the local park, but now she drives to the park where her dog-walking friend takes Tokai for a free run, as she sits in the car.

Apart from her pride in Luke's achievements, Tokai remains the shining light in Trish's life.

"She is fantastic. She does so much around the house. Because of my balance I drop a lot of things and she is always there to she pick things up for me; the phone, the post, all sorts. And if there is a problem or I have a fall she barks on demand and alerts my neighbour, who knows something is going on. I doubt I would go out at all without her."

"I get very anxious when I'm in company, but when I'm with Tokai the conversation goes straight to her, and that stops me panicking; she is amazing."

Says Luke: *"Having Tokai round definitely took a load of my mind. I was always happy to help but Tokai took away more of the worry associated with the circumstances, and like mum says it allowed me to get on with a number of things that ultimately led to where I am today."*

"Tokai is such a smart dog and despite mum 'borrowing' her, she's definitely still my pet and friend. I'm very grateful for the help she lends Mum but I'm also thankful to Mum as I'm confident that Tokai's presence allowed her to keep me on the right track, making sure I got through all the things I was doing from 14 years old up until now."

"I think we were both somehow relieved by Tokai being around, allowing us both to do what we needed to do."

Tokai is coming to the end of her career as an assistance dog, and once retired will revert to being Luke's pet.

Trish is due to be matched with a new dog by Support Dogs and go through the lengthy process of re-establishing a relationship with another canine companion. *"I'm anxious about losing the one thing that keeps me going,"* she says. *"But of course I will be getting a lovely new dog - thanks to Support Dogs."*



Trish, Luke and Tokai

A big thank you for your Fantastic Fundraising

Support Dogs relies 100 per cent on voluntary donations. We are privileged to have some amazing supporters who give up their time, skills and energy to raise funds to enable our charity to continue our work. We wish we could list everyone, but there is sadly just not enough room. But here is just a flavour of the some of the ways some very kind people have helped:

Klever K9's who raised **£1,500** by organising a dog show. Over 100 dogs took part in this amazing day.

Sam Green who took on the Inflatable Obstacle Challenge raising a whopping **£1,060**.

Sue Howells who kindly donated **£120** in lieu of birthday gifts.

Steeple Barton Parochial Church Council who held a service of animal blessing with nine dogs attending, raising a brilliant **£150**.

Kilsyth Academy who raised **£400** by holding a crazy day full of activities and a talent show put on by staff to the great source of amusement for the pupils!

PHMG Foundation team who took on mountain treks, obstacle courses and a Santa dash to raise a massive **£3,876**.

Midland Bernese Carters who raised **£50** from their ring displays and stands during Earls Barton rally.



Candid Sky team

St Albans Dog Biscuit Company who are kindly donating a share of their profits with Support Dogs and who donated amazing prizes for our dog show.

The team at **Candid Sky** (pictured above) who scaled the heights of Snowdon, taking their toy mascot with them!

Georgie and Aaron who ordered table cards for their wedding from Support Dogs, donating **£100** in lieu of wedding favours for their guests. We wish them all the best for the future.

Sydney Hart aged 12 who organised an indoor fete, with games, competitions and a tombola raising a fantastic **£217**.

The Greystones pub who hosted a fantastic Woofwoofstock night with music from The Telmos and Billy Sandars raising **£324**.

Banjo Jen who played her way to **£40**.

James Pollitt, who auctioned one of his amazing Whippet puppets, raising a fabulous **£562**.

The team from **Abbeymoor Vets and ESP** who took on the Obstacle Colour Rush in Sheffield raising over **£500**.

Football fanatic **Lynn Ratcliffe** who gave up alcohol during the entire summer, including through the World Cup and raised a terrific **£871**.

If you are inspired to help our charity please email fundraising@supportdogs.org.uk or phone **0114 261 7800**

Woofwoofstock a barking success!

Our fantastic doggie-themed virtual music festival, Woofwoofstock will be back in 2019 and we are searching for bands and venues to take part.

Following our success in 2018 with volunteer run music events through the UK, ranging from folk, country and chamber orchestra concerts, we want to make 2019 bigger and better. We are looking for venues, church halls, pubs, bands, groups and choirs who would like to put on an event during September to raise funds for our work.

The festival is the brainchild of Support Dogs' fundraising manager Danny Anderson, who was inspired by the 50th anniversary of the famous Woodstock Festival next year.

"The idea of a festival at one venue over the course of a weekend would be difficult for a small charity like us,

so the idea of a 'virtual' festival where a large number of supporters can get involved and support us with a number of events at different venues over the course of a month was a huge success. Next year's Woofwoofstock promises to be even better, with two events already booked!" he says.

Woofwoofstock 2019 takes place between Aug 25 - Sept 29. If you interest in running an event please email fundraising@supportdogs.org.uk





CONFIDENCE TO LEAVE THE HOUSE

Left by
Peter Beaney
April 2014

SMILE

Left by
Andrew Edney
15 September 2017

TRAINED AUTISM ASSISTANCE DOG

Left by
Margaret White
20 Oct 2018

SAFETY

Left by
Jill Rutter
5 March 2014

Could you leave a legacy to Support Dogs?

A donation left in your will can make a lasting difference in so many ways.

One in every four support dogs has been trained thanks to the wonderful donations left by individuals in their will. This support has been vital to our charity for over 25 years.

If you would like to make a difference to the lives of those affected by some of the most challenging conditions, while also helping us to give dogs a second chance, then please consider leaving a gift to Support Dogs in your will.

By donating in your will you are leaving the legacy of a working support dog partnership that will completely transform a family's life and often that of the dog too, with many of our support dogs starting life in rescue centres or as unwanted pets.

Leaving a legacy does not mean leaving out loved ones or friends. After providing for those who matter most to you, you can make a gift to

the charity to fit your own personal circumstances.

If you would like more information about leaving a gift to support dogs in your will please call Danny Anderson on: **0114 261 7800** email **danny.anderson@supportdogs.org.uk** or visit **www.supportdogs.org.uk/legacy**

Make a will for free and consider a gift to Support Dogs

Making a will is one of the most important things that you can do to ensure that your estate will go where you want it to when you are no longer here. With this in mind, Support Dogs have partnered with McClure Solicitors to offer you a free will service. You can get your will done free of charge, whether your circumstances are simple or complex. All they ask is that you consider making a donation to Support Dogs.

A will usually costs around £150 for a

single client and £240 for a couple. Using the McClureservice means that your wishes will be carried out without any confusion. It also means that your estate will usually be administered quicker and with less expense than if you died intestate (without a will). You might also consider leaving a bequest to our charity but of course that is entirely up to you.

Support Dog would like to encourage all its members who don't already have a

will to take up this very generous offer from McClure Solicitors. In doing so, you can plan for you and your family's future and at the same time you can support our charity's valuable work.

To take advantage of the Free Will Review Service or talk to them about a special offer on Lasting Powers of Attorney you can call Freephone 0800 852 1999 or email: contactus@mcclure-solicitors.co.uk



Support Dogs' merchandise

Sitting dogs



Chocolate Labrador
£11.99



Dalmatian
£11.99



Yellow Labrador
£11.99

Standing dogs



Dalmatian
£14.99



Yellow Labrador
£14.99



Collie
£14.99



Boxer
£14.99

Dog key ring
£3.99



Dog magnet
£3.99



NEW PIN BADGES!



Collie
£2.00



Black Labrador
£2.00



Yellow puppy Labrador
£2.00



Order Form

Item	Price	Qty	Total
Lying down dog in jacket <input type="checkbox"/> Chocolate Lab <input type="checkbox"/> Dalmatian <input type="checkbox"/> Yellow Lab	£11.99		
Standing dog in jacket <input type="checkbox"/> Dalmatian <input type="checkbox"/> Yellow Lab <input type="checkbox"/> Collie <input type="checkbox"/> Boxer	£14.99		
Pin Badges	£2.00		
Key Ring	£3.99		
Magnet	£3.99		
Postage	£2.99	N/A	£2.99
Total:			

Name

Address

Postcode

Tel

Email

Payment method Cash Cheque

(Please tick)

Please complete the form and return with cash or a cheque payable to Support Dogs to:

Support Dogs,
800 Brightside Lane,
Sheffield, S9 2RX

Or order online here:
supportdogs.org.uk/shop

Sponsor a support dog

When you sponsor a support dog you are helping us to transform the lives of adults and children with autism, epilepsy and disability.

You now have the option to sponsor your dog for just £5 a month, or to purchase one year of sponsorship as a gift for someone special for a birthday or anniversary. You can sponsor any of the dogs below...

...or visit our website www.supportdogs.org.uk/sponsor-a-dog to see more.



THOR

Breed: Labrador Retriever cross **Job:** Autism assistance **Home:** Yorkshire **Birthday:** 1 April



AZERLEY

Breed: Labrador Retriever cross **Job:** Autism assistance **Home:** Yorkshire **Birthday:** 5 August



POPPY

Breed: Labrador **Job:** Disability assistance **Home:** Lincolnshire **Birthday:** 3 January



FUDGE

Breed: Pug/terrier cross **Job:** Disability assistance **Home:** Cambridgeshire **Birthday:** 29 December



USHKA

Breed: Black Labrador **Job:** Seizure alert **Home:** North Wales **Birthday:** 10 December



PUPPIES

Meet our heroes in training! These amazing pups are currently in their first stage of training to become a support dog.



When you decide to sponsor a dog you'll receive three updates a year, a sponsorship pack including a special photo certificate of your new pal and a **FREE** cuddly support dog toy!

I WOULD LIKE TO SPONSOR A SUPPORT DOG

THOR AZERLEY POPPY FUDGE USHKA PUPPIES

For Myself As a Gift Giftee Name and Address

Name

Address

Postcode Tel

Email

Monthly Amount:

£5 £10 £15 Other

Bank Name & Address

Acc No. Sort Code

Starting on

Make a Difference with a One-Off Donation

£5 £10 £20 Other

I'd like to donate by: Debit/Credit Card Cheque (Payable to Support Dogs)

Card No.

Card Holder Name

Valid From Exp. Date CV2 No. (3 digits)

Payable to: Lloyds, 14 Church Street, Sheffield, S1 1HP.
The account of Support Dogs Ltd A/c No. 03938225 Sort Code: 30-97-51 or please send a cheque payable to Support Dogs to the address below.

Signature:

giftaid it

Make your donations worth more at no extra cost to you!

Simply fill out the declaration below and we can claim the tax back on your subscriptions and donations.

YES - Please claim Gift Aid on all donations I have made in the last four calendar years, and until further notice.

Signature

Date

To qualify for Gift Aid, what you pay in income tax or capital gains tax must at least equal the amount we will claim in the tax year (currently 25p for every £1 donated). Please notify Support Dogs if you wish to cancel this declaration.

Please send completed forms to:

Support Dogs, 800 Brightside Ln, Sheffield, S9 2RX



Thank you for your support



Thrifty

® Car & Van Rental

10%

DISCOUNT

USE PROMO

CODE WEBSD18



Book online at www.thrifty.co.uk

Offer expires on 31/03/2019. The promotional code must be quoted to obtain the discount and is only valid when using the Thrifty.co.uk website. This discount cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer or promotion. Terms and Conditions apply.

Vehicle types are subject to availability.



Thrifty Car and Van
Rental UK

@Thrifty_UK

@thrifty_uk

Thrifty Car & Van
Rental