



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 8, 2013

Contact: Monica Vargas
Department of Consumer Affairs
(916) 574-7744

Jeanine Konopelski
Canine Companions for Independence
jkonopelski@cci.org
(707) 577-1759

Kami Lloyd
Sutter Health
lloydk@sutterhealth.org
(916) 286-6695

Guide Dog Board partners with Sutter Health and Canine Companions for Independence on Service Dog Education

Service Dog tip sheet educates staff, patients and visitors

SACRAMENTO – The California State Board of Guide Dogs for the Blind has formed a partnership with Sutter Health and Canine Companions for Independence to educate hospital staff, patients and visitors on what to do when they encounter a service dog team.

“As both President of the State Board of Guide Dogs for the Blind and a guide dog user for seven years, I am impressed by the proactive approach Sutter Health has taken to provide excellent customer service to service dog teams,” said Board President Eric Holm. “Bringing awareness to not only access issues for service dog users, but also etiquette toward working teams will ensure smooth patient-to-provider contact. I look forward to the rollout of the tip sheet and to our continued partnership on this important issue.”

“Service animals are essential partners to people with disabilities and often fundamental to navigating access to the services they need, including health care,” said Carol Bradley, disability compliance officer for Sutter Health. “By helping to develop this tip sheet, we’re further supporting and educating doctors, nurses, caregivers and others across California.”

“Many people aren’t aware how a service dog can assist a person with a physical disability,” said Nancy Sawhney, a Canine Companions for Independence board member who is partnered with a Service Dog named Becky. “They don’t realize that Becky is capable of opening doors or picking up my credit card. And even though they have good intentions, they sometimes prevent Becky from doing her job – a job that she

loves. Educating the public about these amazing dogs and their skills will help them understand just how independent people like me are.”

Service Dogs are specially-trained to provide assistance supporting each individual's unique disability needs. There are more than 25,000 assistance dogs in the United States which includes guide dogs, hearing dogs and service dogs. California is one of only a few states that licenses guide dog schools and instructors to ensure the high standards necessary to teach these remarkable animals are met.

Click here for the [Service Dog](#) tip sheet.



Guide Dog Board President Eric Holm and Guide Dog Ford



Nancy Sawhney, a Canine Companions for Independence board member, with Service Dog Becky

###

The California Board of Guide Dogs for the Blind licenses and regulates guide dog schools and instructors in California, ensuring that instructors are qualified, training is standardized, and schools are well-managed. For more information, visit www.guidedogboard.ca.gov.

Canine Companions for Independence is the largest non-profit provider of trained assistance dogs with five regional training centers across the country. Established in 1975, Canine Companions provides highly trained assistance dogs to children and adults with disabilities and is recognized worldwide for the excellence of its dogs, and quality and longevity of the matches it makes between dogs and people. There is no charge for the dog, its training and on-going follow-up services. For more information, visit cci.org or call 1-800-572-BARK.